

**Summaries of the Papers Read at the Twenty-eighth Annual Meeting of
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On the Prepositional Phrase in the Resultative Construction

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This joint research deals with the prepositional phrase which functions as a resultative phrase in the resultative construction (henceforth, RC), as in (1):

- (1) a. The outlaw shot the sheriff to death.
- b. She stunned him into silence.

For the ease of reference, we call this kind of the construction Prepositional Phrase Resultative Construction (PPRC).

There is another kind of the resultative construction, where an adjectival phrase occurs as a resultative phrase, called here Adjectival Phrase Resultative Construction (APRC). It is worth noting that it is not an idiom. Observe the following:

- (2) He wiped it clean / dry / smooth / *damp / *dirty / *stained / *wet.

(Wechsler (2005:20))

According to Wechsler, only maximal endpoint closed scale adjectives like *clean* can occur in APRC. The difference in the acceptability follows from this constraint. A more important point here is that other adjectives than *clean* also appear in (2). This shows some adjectives are permissible in a sentence. Hence, APRC is not an idiom.

PPRC is not an idiom, either. The same prepositional phrase can co-occur with various verbs, as shown in (3):

- (3) dashed itself / pecks its nest mates to death (cf. Morita (1998))

Furthermore, the preposition *to* or *into* can take various NPs as its complement:

- (4) to a crisp, to / into pieces, to a pulp, to / into shreds, to smithereens, into slices, into cubes, into a puddle (Suzuki (2007:129))

These data confirm that expressions occurring in PPRC can vary from one instance to another.

More generally, the two types of the construction show a similar behavior. Consider the following sentences:

- (5) a. John hammered the metal (flat). (Levin and Rappaport (1995:35))
- b. John broke the vase (into pieces).
- (6) a. Dora shouted herself *(hoarse). (Levin and Rappaport (1995:35))
- b. Nancy danced herself *(to fame).

The RCs with transitive verbs in (5) are acceptable even if the result phrases are not added. On the other hand, the RCs with intransitive verbs in (6) are not acceptable when they have no result phrases. This observation supports the view that PPRC and APRC are alike in character.

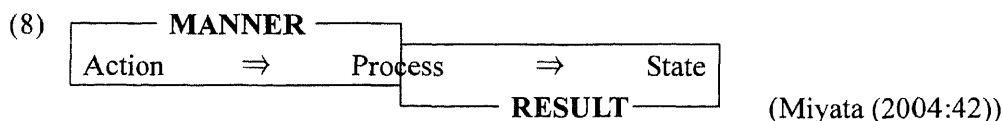
As with APRC, PPRC has a constraint on the resultative phrase. Consider the

following sentences:

- (7) a. John shot Mary to death.
 b. John broke the vase into pieces. (= (5b))
 c. He slapped himself out of a long daze. (Morita (1998:331))
 d.* He worked himself along / through / away from / across / toward death.
 (Nakamura (1997:503))

In (7a, b), the prepositions *to* and *into* specify the endpoints (i.e. *death* and *pieces*). As for (7c), the prepositional phrase has only the starting point, but the sentence is acceptable because the endpoint is determined pragmatically. In contrast, all the prepositions in (7d) do not specify the endpoints in any way. The acceptability of (7) depends on whether the prepositional phrase denotes an endpoint. Note that the constraint on the prepositional phrase closely resembles that on the adjectival phrases.

One interesting property of the resultative constructions is that they are sometimes ambiguous, i.e., have a result reading or an excessive reading. In order to account for this interpretation property, Miyata (2004) introduces the idea of a manner focus and a result focus. This idea is represented in (8):



According to Miyata, the interpretation of a resultative sentence is calculated on the basis of our world knowledge. When Action and Process (i.e. MANNER) are focused, a manner reading (i.e. an excessive reading) is required. On the other hand, when Process and State (i.e. RESULT) are focused, a result reading is required.

Keeping it in mind, let us consider the sentences in (9). Sentences (9a, b) are interpreted as the result reading and as the manner reading, respectively. Sentence (9c) is ambiguous between the result reading and the manner reading:

- (9) a. John cried himself to sleep.
 b. John danced himself to dust.
 c. John worked himself to death.

In (9a), RESULT is focused, so that it is interpreted as the result reading. In fact, the situation that John slept can naturally take place as a result of the crying event. In contrast, in (9b), MANNER is focused, so that it is interpreted as the manner reading. This sentence cannot be interpreted as the result reading, because it is impossible for people to become dust as a consequence of dancing. In (9c), when the death (i.e. RESULT) is focused, it is interpreted as the result reading; when the working event (i.e. MANNER) is focused, it is interpreted as the manner reading.

In this research, we showed PPRC and APRC can be treated in the same way.