

## On Pragmatically Motivated Constructions\*

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### 1. Introduction

There are some constructions which are unacceptable on their own, but accepted in certain contexts, and a series of studies by Osawa (2007, 2008, 2009a) suggest that *cause-causative passives* (\**Body temperature is caused to drop.*), *make-causative passives* (??*The mushrooms were made to come out.*), and *peculiar passives* (*The city has been fought many battles over.*) are such constructions. Osawa (2009b) refers to these constructions as “the pragmatically motivated (or licensed) constructions,” and proposes a pragmatic condition on them as a descriptive generalisation. The aim of this paper is to confirm the validity of the generalisation by concerning with the case when two non-passive constructions require a pragmatic condition in order to be licensed: one is the prenominal possessive, which is not a sentence but a phrase, and the other is the double object construction, which is not a passive sentence.

### 2. The Pragmatic Principle of Topic Requirement

This section gives a brief review of a constraint proposed by Osawa (2009b) on pragmatically licensed constructions. The following is the constraint:

(1) The Pragmatic Principle of Topic Requirement

When a pragmatically motivated construction is licensed,

- a. it must have an entity which functions as a topic, and
- b. it must be supplied in context with enough information to make it consistent with the condition satisfied by the more general construction of which it is an instance.

(Osawa (2009b:73))

Henceforth, we will abbreviate this generalisation simply as “PPTR.” To see how the PPTR works, let us take the *cause-causative passive* construction.

Previous studies such as Mittwoch (1990) and Mair (1990) claim that *cause-causatives* cannot be passivised, as shown in (2):

- (2) a. The inflation caused prices to rise.

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- b. \*Prices were caused to rise (by the inflation).

(Mittwoch (1990:119))

The *cause-causative* passive is alleged to be ungrammatical, as seen in (2b). However, there are certain contexts in which *cause-causative* passives can actually be used:

- (3) The Negro came to the United States of America in 1619. [...] Before the Mayflower, [...] *hundreds of Negroes [...] were caused to perish in the middle of the sea*, simply because the mean and cruel task master, the white man, would walk down the aisle and stumble over Negroes chained to the ship and say, “We have too many on board. Dump them over into the sea.” (Osawa (2009b:17))

As the italicised part shows, the *cause-causative* passive is acceptable and actually used in (3).

Osawa (2009b) explains the reason why *cause-causative* passives are not acceptable on their own as follows: *cause-causative* passives cannot meet the affectedness constraint by intrasentential information (see Osawa (2009b)). The affectedness constraint requires that the subject of a passive sentence be construed as a patient (see Bolinger (1975)). In the case of *cause-causative* passives, the subject cannot be construed as a patient and the sentence is not acceptable on its own. This, however, does not mean that *cause-causative* passives are always unacceptable. In fact, they are accepted when embedded in the context which makes the subject function as the topic of the sentence and enables us to construe it as a patient. This means that *cause-causative* passives are acceptable if the subject functions as the topic and the affectedness constraint is satisfied by contextual information. The notion of topic is defined as follows: when an NP in a sentence or phrase is construed as the topic, the referent of the NP has already been introduced into discourse, or is inferable from the preceding context, and the sentence or phrase denotes a proposition about the given entity (see Lambrecht (1994:131) and Osawa (2009b:14)). The topichood and the patienthood of the subject can be illustrated by the following examples:

- (4) a. \*Prices were caused to rise (by the inflation). (= (2b))  
 b. The oil crisis caused a serious inflation in the 70's in Japan. Inflation lead to a general increase in prices and a fall in the purchasing value of money. Needless to say, *prices were caused to rise* in this country. (Osawa (2009b:49))

While the *cause-causative* passive is unacceptable in (4a), the allegedly unacceptable sentence is accepted in (4b). In (4b), the subject of *cause-causative* passive is introduced in the preceding discourse, and the sentence in question describes what happened to the subject. Thus, the subject serves as the topic of the sentence. We can also regard the subject as a patient from the context. The context points to *inflation* as the cause of the event and tells us that inflation has a power of raising prices. Furthermore, most of us know that inflation is a rise in the general level of prices of goods and services in an economy over a period of time. Therefore, the subject of the passive *prices* can be regarded as a patient that gets some effect brought about by inflation, and the sentence is felicitous in (4b).

Let us illustrate the PPTR in accordance with the behaviour seen in (4). As to the former part of the PPTR, the subject of a *cause-causative* passive must function as the topic of the sentence. Indeed, as seen above, the subject works as a topic. The other is that the affectedness constraint must be satisfied by contextual information in the case of *cause-causative* passives. If we posit the premise that passives must satisfy the affectedness constraint in order to be licensed, then *cause-causative* passives necessarily fulfil the constraint by contextual information, since their lexical information cannot identify their subjects as patients and the constraint is not satisfied (see Osawa (2007)). The example in (4) shows that the contextual information helps us to construe the subject of the *cause-causative* passive as a patient.

The relation between the first and the second condition in the PPTR is important: the fulfilment of the first condition induces the second condition to be satisfied. That is, first of all, an entity in the construction can be construed as a topic, and as a result of it, the required condition is fulfilled because of contextual information. When an entity is construed as the topic, the discourse develops in relation to the topic, which means that further information as the topic is described in the discourse. For example, in *cause-causative* passives, once the subject is regarded as the topic of the sentence, the context tells us what happened to the topic and at the same time the patienthood of the topic entity. The intrasentential information may not be enough to regard the subject as a patient, but if context gives us relevant information for that purpose, then the affectedness constraint is fulfilled and the sentence is licensed.

According to Osawa, besides *cause-causative* passives, *make-causative* passives and peculiar passives are also unacceptable on their own but they are licensed by contextual information, and they are pragmatically licensed constructions. These constructions are in perfect accordance with the PPTR (see Osawa (2007), (2009a)).

In this paper, we shall show that the PPTR also holds for the NP-level phenomenon and the non-passive construction with prenominal possessives and double object constructions. Let us consider the case of prenominal possessives first in the following section.

### 3. Prenominal Possessives

This section deals with the possessive construction that has an “object reading” in the sense of Taylor (1994, 1996). It is illustrated by phrases like the following:

- (5) a. the city’s destruction  
b. the picture’s defacement

(Bresnan (2005:1))

We will refer to phrases of this kind as the prenominal possessives (construction) or simply the possessive.<sup>1</sup> In this construction, the possessor nominal is semantically interpreted as the object of the deverbal noun (e.g. *The enemy destroyed the city.*).

Previous studies point out that not all prenominal possessives are accepted. Observe the following:

- (6) a. \*the event’s recollection  
b. \*the picture’s observation  
c. \*the film’s enjoyment

(Taylor (1996:223))

Anderson (1978), Fiengo (1980), Rappaport (1983), Giorgi and Longobardi (1991), and Taylor (1994, 1996) account for the acceptability of the construction, and propose a number of constraints on it.

On the other hand, Bresnan (2005:2) draws attention to the data where the possessive alleged to be unacceptable is actually used (Taylor (1994, 1996)):

- (7) a. \*the event’s observation  
b. But the standard idea that an event is inseparable from *its observation* is just scientific silliness.

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<sup>1</sup> We are not concerned with prenominal possessives with “subject reading,” as in (i) and possessive constructions in general, as in (ii):

- (i) the enemy’s destruction (of the city)  
(ii) John’s book.

The following subsection shall show how the ill-formed prenominal possessive is licensed in context, and propose a licensing condition.

### 3.1. *The Affectedness Constraint*

We will begin by surveying the finding of two previous studies in terms of the so-called affectedness constraint. Anderson (1978) proposes the constraint and explains how the prenominal possessive is licensed. That is, “an object reading is possible only if the possessor entity is ‘affected’ by the activity denoted by the head noun” (Taylor (1994:204)). The constraint can explain the grammatical contrast between the following instances:

- (8) a. the city’s destruction (= (5a))  
 b. \*the cliff’s avoidance (Anderson (1978:14))

In (8a), the deverbal noun *destruction* represents an action which affects the referent of the possessive nominal *the city’s*: the action of destruction changes in the physical condition of the city. Hence the acceptability of the possessive in (8a). On the other hand, in (8b), though the cliff is the object of the avoidance, it is not directly affected by the avoidance, that is, it does not change at all. It is for this reason that (8b) is unacceptable.

Although the affectedness constraint seems to be able to account for the distribution of prenominal possessives, Taylor (1994, 1996) states that the notion of affectedness is fuzzy, and the constraint needs to be derived from more general principles of a semantic nature. He argues that possessor nominal have to be topical and informative relative to the possessee. Here, “topical” is equivalent to the notion of topic referred to in section 2: an entity is a topic when it is already introduced into the preceding discourse and further information on it is added. According to Taylor, the prenominal possessive is judged ungrammatical due to the low topicality of the possessor. When embedded in a context which enhances the possessor’s topicality, the construction achieves a high degree of acceptability. Observe the following:

- (9) a. \*the event’s recollection  
 b. Concerning those events, their recollection still frightens me.  
(Taylor (1996:223))

The expression in (9a) violates the affectedness constraint, since the activity of recollection does not affect the event at all. On the other hand, the construction is

acceptable when sentence (9b) is arranged to make the possessor the topic.

Taylor also argues for a further requirement that the possessor nominal must be informative. Broadly speaking, the notion of informativity in the possessive is summarised as follows: the activity denoted by the deverbal noun is identified by the possessor nominal, and in this respect the possessor nominal is informative (see Taylor (1994, 1996)).<sup>2</sup> For example, in *the city's destruction*, *the city* ('s) helps identify whether the destruction has been actually done or not. So, the possessor *the city's* is informative, and the construction is impeccable. On the other hand, in *\*the cliff's avoidance*, there is no point in examining the cliff to see whether it had been avoided. As Taylor (1996:247) notes, "a cliff that has been avoided looks no different from a cliff that has not been avoided." Hence the unacceptability of this possessive.

Taylor (1994:231) notes that the notion of informativity enables us to "arrive at essentially the same results as those predicted by the affectedness constraint, [and] the informativity requirement falls out from the very semantics of the possessive construction. [That is] the affectedness constraint turns out to be reflex of the construction's semantics."

Based on his arguments, we assume that it is the affectedness constraint that is imposed on the prenominal possessives. The construction is acceptable if it satisfies the constraint. Note that we assume that the affectedness constraint for the prenominal possessive is compatible with the affectedness constraint for passives proposed by Bolinger (1975): a passive sentence needs a patient that is construed to be affected by the action of the verb. This is because the possessive has a passive interpretation:

- (10) a. the city's destruction by the enemy  
 b. The city was destroyed by the enemy.

As seen above, the possessor nominal is semantically interpreted as the object of the deverbal noun, and the interpretation of the possessive in (10a) is expressed by the passive sentence in (10b). In both constructions, the city is affected by the action of destruction and is construed as a patient.

The observation so far concludes that the prenominal possessive is acceptable if it satisfies the affectedness constraint by lexical information, and it is not

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<sup>2</sup> The notion of informativity is characterised as follows:

- (i) An entity E is informative with respect to a relation R in proportion to the number, and specificity, of inferences that may be drawn with respect to E, given a characterisation of R. (Taylor (1996:247))

acceptable when failing to satisfy it.

Recall here that Taylor states that an ill-formed possessive can be acceptable when the possessor is topical in context. Observe the example in (9), repeated below as (11):

- (11) a. \*the event's recollection  
 b. Concerning those events, their recollection still frightens me.

Furthermore, Bresnan (2005) provides examples where the possessor nominal is contextualised to maximise topicality:

- (12) a. \*the event's observation (= (7a))  
 b. But the standard idea that an event is inseparable from *its observation* is just scientific silliness. (= (7b))

The possessives in (11a) and (12a) are accepted in contexts like (11b) and (12b), respectively, despite the fact that their possessor nominals are not affected. The contexts in (11b) and (12b) ensure only the topicality of the possessor. Here, a question arises whether it is the topicality requirement of the possessor alone that licenses the construction. In other words, what exactly is the relation between context and the affectedness constraint? In the following subsection, we will consider this question.

### 3.2. A Pragmatic Licensing Condition for Prenominal Possessives

This subsection investigates how prenominal possessives alleged to be unacceptable on their own are licensed in context. Let us observe some examples found on the web besides those provided by Bresnan (2005). We take up the following three examples here:

- (13) Certainly, between the presentation of information to the senses and *its recollection*, various cognitive processes take place. (Bresnan (2005:2))  
 (14) [...] the National Park Service[']s [...] main mandates are to preserve the land's wilderness quality and its wildlife habitats, and as much as possible to allow for *its enjoyment by people*. (USA by Campbell et al.)  
 (15) In this essay, I'm going to introduce to the reader a topic not touched a lot because of its complexity and *its avoidance by conservative adults*. This topic is, of course, Rock Music.

(<http://www.essaygalaxy.com/papers/43/189000.htm>)

In these examples, the possessor nominals are construed as topics. The definite pronouns corefer with the immediately preceding phrases: in (13), *its* corresponds to *information*, to *the land* in (14), and to *a topic* in (15). Thus, the referents of the possessor nominals have been introduced into the discourse. Furthermore, the deverbal nouns express what happened to the possessors. This is confirmed by the fact that the possessor can be paraphrased into the passive sentence (see example (10)).

Do the possessives have only to fulfil the topicality requirement? Recall that the possessives in (6) are infelicitous on their own because they cannot satisfy the affectedness constraint by lexical information. If the prenominal possessive must satisfy the affectedness constraint in order to be licensed, then the possessive alleged to be unacceptable necessarily meets the constraint by contextual information, not by its intraphrasal information. Thus, the possessor nominal must be regarded as a patient exactly in context.

Actually, closer inspection reveals that the contextual information tells us how the possessor nominals are affected. In (13), the context tells us that information (from emotion and the colours seen) is processed by one's recollecting.<sup>3</sup> Information changes into a target which should be processed. In (14), the discourse shows that a part of land in the USA can be used effectively if people enjoy it. The land is preserved and made best use of. We can find that the possessor nominal is affected and construed as a patient from contextual information. Likewise in (15), the context tells us that a topic (Rock Music) is recognised as a kind of anathema, and the impression on the topic is affected by people avoiding it. Here, the possessor nominal is regarded as a patient. In these examples, the way we perceive the possessor nominals is changed. So, we can infer that they are construed as patients.

As seen above, when an ill-formed possessive is accepted in context, the possessor nominal is construed as a topic and at the same time as a patient. The observation so far naturally leads us to propose the following licensing condition:

- (16) An allegedly ill-formed prenominal possessive requires a context where its possessor nominal can function as the topic of the phrase, and can also be regarded as a patient.

Space does not permit a discussion of showing the validity of the condition, and for detailed arguments for this condition, see Osawa (2009b). If the proposed

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<sup>3</sup> The example in (13) is extracted from a scientific article available at [[http://www.clas.ufl.edu/ipasa/journal/2004\\_rusinek01.shtml](http://www.clas.ufl.edu/ipasa/journal/2004_rusinek01.shtml)]. In the original text, enough contextual information helps us to construe the possessor nominal as a patient.

condition successfully captures the behaviour of the allegedly unacceptable possessives, it is predicted that although an ill-formed prenominal possessive is not acceptable on its own, it becomes acceptable in a context which satisfies the condition. This prediction is borne out, as shown by the following examples:

(17) a. \*the cliff's avoidance

- b. John Smith, a famous European climber, has overcome some of the world's most notoriously difficult climbs. Both cliffs and mountains have been scaled by this real-life "Spiderman." However, there is one cliff in the far North of Scotland that has defeated him time and time again, and finally he gave up swearing he would never return. *The cliff's avoidance* by the climber has brought it fame, and climbers from around the world have flocked to the cliff and attempted to scale what John Smith could not. So far, none have succeeded.

(Osawa (2009b:144))

The possessive in (17a) is said to be unacceptable because it cannot satisfy the affectedness constraint, but it is actually used and accepted in (17b). Here the referent of the possessor nominal has been introduced into the discourse and the phrase in question describes what happened to that referent. Therefore the possessor nominal serves as the topic of the phrase. Furthermore, it is clear from the context how the impression of the cliff has changed: that is, it has become famous because a famous climber avoided the cliff. So the possessor nominal can be fully regarded as a patient, and then the phrase is felicitous. The example illustrates that even prenominal possessives assumed to be unacceptable on their own can be used in contexts which satisfy the condition in (16).

We have argued that ill-formed prenominal possessive can be licensed in a context where the possessor nominal is construed as the topic and is also regarded as a patient. Possessives like *the cliff's avoidance* are not accepted since they cannot meet the affectedness constraint from intraphrasal information. However, once the possessor nominal is construed as the topic, the discourse should develop in relation to the topic, and further information as to the topic will be given in the discourse. Put otherwise, the topic entity acquires various sorts of information about itself and becomes "informative."<sup>4</sup> Such interphrasal information enables us to regard the topic entity as a patient. The intraphrasal information may not be enough to regard the possessor nominal as a patient, but if context conveys relevant information for

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<sup>4</sup> Taylor (1994, 1996) claims that the possessor nominal must be topical and informative in order for the possessives to be licensed. Even though not filled by lexical information, the requirement – especially, the informativity – can be achieved by contextual information.

that purpose, then the affectedness constraint is fulfilled and the possessive is licensed.

Consequently, an ill-formed prenominal possessive is impeccable in a context which fulfils the condition in (16), and thus this kind of possessive is a pragmatically motivated construction. This conclusion is in accordance with the PPTR.

Another important consequence is that the PPTR also holds at the phrasal level, which together with the argument for *cause*-causative passives and peculiar passives, proves that the PPTR is valid irrespective of the syntactic level of the construction in question. The *cause*-causative passive and the peculiar passive are sentences, and the prenominal possessive is a phrase. Although their forms are different, they all express passive meaning. So it is natural and reasonable that the same generalisation holds for these constructions.

#### 4. Double Object Constructions

It is said that “verbs of continuous imparting of force in some manner causing accompanied motion” (Pinker (1989)) and “verbs of manner of speaking” cannot occur in the double object construction (Green (1974), Oehrle (1976), Pinker (1989), Goldberg (1992, 1995), Krifka (2001), among others). We will refer to the former as “*carry*-type verbs” and the latter as “*shout*-type verbs” for the sake of simplicity. Typical members of *carry*-type and *shout*-type verbs are listed in (18) and (19), respectively:

(18) carry, pull, push, schlep, lift, lower, haul

(19) shout, whisper, yell, mumble, bark, mutter

Both types of verbs are not compatible with the double object construction:<sup>5</sup>

(20) \*I {carried/pulled/pushed/schlepped/lifted/hailed} John the box.

(Pinker (1989:111))

(21) \*John {shouted/screamed/murmured/whispered/yodelled/yelled/barked}

Bill the news.

(Pinker (1989:112))

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<sup>5</sup> We refer to sentences like (i) as the double object construction, and sentences like (ii) as the prepositional-dative construction:

(i) Mary gave John a book.

(ii) Mary gave a book to John.

Also, we call the indirect object in the double object construction (i.e. *John* in (i)) the dative NP.

However, Bresnan and Nikitina (2003) (henceforth, B & N) provide examples where *carry*- and *shout*-type verbs appear in the double object construction and the sentences are acceptable:

- (22) As *Player A pushed him the chips*, all hell broke loose at the table.  
(B & N (2003:6))
- (23) “Hi baby.” Wade says as he stretches. *You just mumble him an answer.*  
You were comfy on that soft leather couch. (B & N (2003:7))

There has been a good deal of discussion in the literature as to the syntax and semantics of the double object construction, and also as to the dative alternation, in terms of verb semantics and information structure (Halliday (1970), Green (1974), Oehrle (1976), Smyth et al. (1979), Erteschik-Shir (1979), Givón (1984), Pinker (1989), Thompson (1990, 1995), Levin (1993), Marantz (1993), Hawkins (1994), Collins (1995), Goldberg (1995), Arnold et al. (2000), Akashi (2006), among others). In this section, without going into the details of such discussion, we shall concentrate on investigating the fact that allegedly unacceptable double object constructions are actually used in a certain context. Based on the study by B & N (2003), we propose a descriptive generalisation of the use of the double object construction with *carry*- and *shout*-type verbs. We further argue for the validity of the generalisation about the pragmatically motivated construction, the PPTR.

#### 4.1. *The Semantic Compatibility between Verbs and the Double Object Construction*

On the basis of previous studies, this subsection examines the reason why *carry*-type verbs and *shout*-type verbs cannot occur in the double object construction.

It is generally observed that the prepositional-dative construction and the double object construction alternate with each other. Observe the following:

- (24) a. I threw the box to John.  
b. I threw John the box.
- (25) a. John told a story to Mary.  
b. John told Mary a story.

However, not all the verbs are allowed to occur in both versions of the alternation. For example, *carry*- and *shout*-type verbs cannot appear in the double object construction, while they are accepted in the prepositional-dative one:

- (26) a. \*I {carried/pulled/pushed/schlepped/lifted/hailed} John the box.  
 (= (20))  
 b. I {carried/pulled/pushed/schlepped/lifted/hailed} the box to John.  
 (B & N (2003:6))
- (27) a. \*John {shouted/screamed/murmured/whispered/yodelled/yelled/barked}  
 Bill the news. (= (21))  
 b. Susan {whispered/yelled/mumbled/barked/muttered} the news to  
 Rachel. (B & N (2003:7))

Previous studies explain the fact that the dativisability is different verb by verb in terms of the semantic compatibility between verbs and constructions. That is, a verb cannot occur in a construction when its lexical meaning is not compatible with the semantics of the construction. The semantic compatibility between verbs and constructions brings three possible occurrence patterns of verbs like the following: (i) the verb can occur in both the prepositional-dative and the double object construction; (ii) the verb can occur in only the prepositional-dative construction; and (iii) the verb can occur in only the double object construction. The present section considers the second case alone: the case of *carry*- and *shout*-type verbs.

It has been held in the literature that the argument structure of the prepositional-dative construction, [NP<sub>1</sub> V NP<sub>3</sub> to NP<sub>2</sub>], and that of the double object construction, [NP<sub>1</sub> V NP<sub>2</sub> NP<sub>3</sub>], are associated with the following semantic structures, respectively:

- (28) X CAUSES Z TO GO TO/BE AT Y (B & N (2003:3))  
 (29) X CAUSES Y TO HAVE Z (Pinker (1989:73))

In these structures, variables X, Y, and Z stand for the participants in the event and are linked to the subject, the indirect object, and the direct object, respectively. As shown by the structures in (28) and (29), the syntax of the prepositional-dative construction is associated with the allative meaning, while that of the double object construction is associated with the possessive meaning. The core meaning of the double object construction is “successful transfer”: the subject referent (an Actor) acts to cause transfer of an object to the indirect object referent (a Recipient), and the Recipient actually receives it (see Goldberg (1995:32)). The reason why *carry*- and *shout*-type verbs cannot occur in the double object construction is that their meaning is incompatible with the possessive meaning. According to Pinker (1989:65), *carry*-type verbs can be construed only as meaning “cause to go,” and

they are not construed as having a meaning of transfer of possession. Therefore, their meaning does not suit the possessive meaning, and thus they cannot appear in the double object construction. As for *shout*-type verbs, they usually describe noncommunicative activities. Verbs of this type do not involve communication: they do not express transfers of the possession of information. So, *shout*-type verbs are also incompatible with the double object construction.

The discussion so far concludes that *carry*- and *shout*-type verbs resist occurring in the double object construction, since their meanings are not compatible with the core meaning of the construction. Put otherwise, in order for verbs to occur in the double object construction, their lexical meaning must meet the semantics of the construction. Verbs have such a compatibility constraint on their occurrence. The next subsection investigates the relation between the compatibility constraint and the context where the double object construction with *carry*- and *shout*-type verbs is used.

#### 4.2. *The Double Object Construction in Context*

We have assumed that double object constructions with *carry*- and *shout*-type verbs are not acceptable because the verbs cannot satisfy the compatibility constraint. As mentioned before, however, B & N point out that despite the reported ungrammaticality of the constructions with *carry*- and *shout*-type verbs, we can find the allegedly unacceptable constructions are actually used and accepted.

- (30) a. As *Player A pushed him the chips*, all hell broke loose at the table.  
 b. Therefore, when he got to purgatory, *Buddha lowered him the silver thread of a spider* as his last chance for salvation. (B & N (2003:6))  
 c. Nothing like heart burn food. “I have the tums.” Nick joked. *He pulled himself a steaming piece of the pie*. “Thanks for being here.”  
 (B & N (2003:6))
- (31) a. “Hi baby.” Wade says as he stretches. *You just mumble him an answer*. You were comfy on that soft leather couch. (= (23))  
 b. Shooting the Urasian a surprised look, *she muttered him a hurried apology* as well before skirting down the hall. (B & N (2003:7))  
 c. I still can’t forget their mockery and laughter when they heard my question. Finally a kind few (three to be exact) came forward and *whispered me the answer*. (B & N (2003:8))

These examples suggest that although double object constructions with *carry*- and *shout*-type verbs are not accepted when the lexical information of the verb is not

compatible with the semantics of the construction, yet they are licensed when the constraint violation is overridden by contextual information. In light of this, we propose the following hypothesis:

- (32) When allegedly unacceptable double object constructions are accepted in context, contextual information ensures successful transfers of possessions.

If verbs must satisfy the compatibility constraint in order to occur in the double object construction, then *carry*- and *shout*-type verbs in the construction are necessarily construed as having an implication of the transfer of possession by contextual information, not by its lexical information. That is, the dative NP must be regarded as a possessor in context. We shall examine the hypothesis below.

When we observe the data carefully, we can find two common features there: one is concerned with the dative NP; the other is concerned with the role of context. Let us take examples (30b) and (31c), repeated here in (33):

- (33) a. Therefore, when he got to purgatory, *Buddha lowered him the silver thread of a spider* as his last chance for salvation.  
 b. I still can't forget their mockery and laughter when they heard my question. Finally a kind few (three to be exact) came forward and *whispered me the answer*.

In (33a), the dative NP *him* corresponds to the underscored NP *he* in the preceding sentence, and thus the referent of the dative NP is already introduced into the discourse. Furthermore, we assume that the entities except the dative NP in the VP express a proposition about the NP, since the VP can be paraphrased as *he had the silver thread lowered*. Likewise in (33b), the dative NP *me* corefers with the underscored NP *I* in the first sentence, and the VP in the double object construction describes what happened to the dative NP. We regard an entity as the topic of the phrase when it is already introduced in the preceding discourse and the phrase denotes a proposition about it. Therefore, we can assume that the dative NP is construed as the topic of the phrase. Tsubomoto's (1981) analysis bears out this assumption. Tsubomoto claims that the dative NP semantically functions as a kind of "subject" for the VP. This is illustrated by the following examples:

- (34) a. ?\*John, Mary taught linguistics.  
 b. \*John is tough to give a present.

(Tsubomoto (1981:234))

Generally, the dative NP cannot be preposed, as shown in (34). According to Tsubomoto, since the dative NP is already construed as the topic of the VP phrase, it need no longer be moved out of the VP into the topic position.

The argument thus far leads to the conclusion that the dative NP in the double object construction with *carry*- and *shout*-type verbs in context functions as the topic of the phrase.<sup>6</sup>

Next, as to the role of context, B & N (2003:6) note that in the examples in (30) and (31), the verbs in the double object construction are “construable as depicting changes of possession.” Let us consider example (30a), repeated here as (35):

(35) *As Player A pushed him the chips, all hell broke loose at the table.*

According to B & N, the context of (35) describes a tournament poker game. Our background knowledge about poker games makes it possible to construe the verb *push* as having a meaning of transfer of possession. That is, in poker games, the poker chips are usually pushed across the table to the winner. Given this knowledge, we can easily understand that the referent of the dative NP received the chips. Hence, the sentence is acceptable. Although the same line of argument seems to apply to the other examples in (30) and (31), it is difficult to figure out their context due to the lack of information. Unfortunately, most of the examples provided B & N do not exist on the web any more, and we cannot fully inspect the contexts. So, we provide other relevant examples from the web and observe them:

(36) When Thornton finished his argument *the deputy carried him the paper*. Thornton read it, his face flushed a little and leaning forward, and he penned an answer.

([http://www.nevadaobserver.com/Reading%20Room%20Documents/harry\\_i\\_thornton%20\(1913\).htm](http://www.nevadaobserver.com/Reading%20Room%20Documents/harry_i_thornton%20(1913).htm))

(37) Therefore, when he got to purgatory, *Buddha lowered him the silver thread of a spider* as his last chance for salvation. He grabbed hold of the thread and climbed up it: but halfway up he made a mistake.

(<http://www.leaderu.com/humanities/fujimura-1mofGr.html>)

(38) Since his action is really conflicting with my personal beliefs, *I muttered him a question*, “Sir, why did you look so confident [...]” He gently

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<sup>6</sup> Tsubomoto (1981) claims that the dative NPs in double object constructions must always function as the topic of the VPs. Our assumption that when the allegedly unacceptable double object construction can actually be acceptable, the dative NP is construed as the topic of the phrase accords with the topicality requirement proposed by Tsubomoto.

answered me with an inspiring tone, [...].

([http://a07bessays.blogspot.com/2008/01/res-toration-of-faith-in-human-race\\_8224.html](http://a07bessays.blogspot.com/2008/01/res-toration-of-faith-in-human-race_8224.html))

In these examples, we can find that the referents of the dative NPs are possessors from the linguistic cues. The underscored expressions tell us that the referent of the dative NP has received the object in question. For example, in (36), because Thornton received the paper, he was able to read it. In (37), because he (Jean Val Jean) reached the thread, he was able to grab it. In (38), he (Mr. Kumar) perceived what she (the referent of I) asked in a mutter, and thus he answered her.<sup>7</sup> These obvious expressions enable us to recognise that the referent of the dative NP receives the object and is construed as a possessor.

We conclude that when an allegedly unacceptable double object construction is acceptable, the dative NP is construed as a possessor from contextual information. Hence the validity of our hypothesis in (32).

The argument above naturally leads us to propose the following descriptive generalisation about the acceptability of double object constructions with *carry*- and *shout*-type verbs:

- (39) Double object constructions with *carry*-type verbs and *shout*-type verbs require a context where the referent of the dative NP can be construed as the topic of the VP, and can also be regarded as a possessor.

We have argued that the double object constructions in question cannot be acceptable in an out-of-blue context, whereas it can be licensed in a context where the referent of the dative NP is construed as the topic and is also regarded as a possessor. Constructions with *carry*- and *shout*-type verbs like *Max carried John a box* are not accepted because the semantics of the verbs and the construction is not compatible. The lexical information of the verbs cannot suit the semantics of the construction. However, once the referent of the dative NP is construed as the topic, the discourse should develop in relation to the topic. In other words, the topic entity acquires various sorts of information about itself. Such contextual

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<sup>7</sup> Kogusuri (2009) claims that contextual supports make it possible for manner of speaking complements [i.e. complements to *shout*-type verbs] to approximate syntactically and semantically to complements of verbs of saying. Roughly speaking, in an adequate context, *shout*-type verbs can behave like the verbs of saying which express the successful transfer of possession of information. Though this argument is supporting evidence for our hypothesis, we do not provide a clear argument as to whether the meaning of *shout*-type verbs in the well-formed double object changes from the “cause to go” to “cause to have” (cf. B & N (2003)). We only assume that the dative NP is construed as a possessor from contextual information.

information enables us to regard the topic entity as a possessor. While the lexical information may not be enough to regard the referent of the dative NP as a possessor, if context conveys relevant information for that purpose, then the double object construction in question is acceptable.

We have clarified how double object constructions with *carry*- and *shout*-type verbs are licensed. Through this analysis, we find that double object constructions of this kind are pragmatically motivated constructions. That is, they are not accepted by themselves but can be licensed in the context which fulfils a certain requirement. This conclusion accords with the PPTR.

The double object construction does not express a passive meaning, a point which is different from prenominal possessives discussed in the preceding section. However, we can assume that the notion of possessor involved in the construction is a kind of patient. A referent who owns nothing comes to hold something by the action of the verb, and the referent becomes a possessor. That is, a possessor undergoes a change of states from having nothing to possessing something. A patient is also a referent who undergoes a change of states. Therefore, a possessor role and a patient role share a common feature.<sup>8</sup> This means that when double object constructions with *carry*- and *shout*-type verbs are acceptable, the topic entity must be regarded as a patient. In this respect, the double object construction in question parallels the prenominal possessive construction, and it is natural that the same generalisation holds for them.

## 5. Conclusion

We have discussed that some prenominal possessives and double object constructions require pragmatic conditions in order to be licensed. In these cases, the conditions are in perfect accordance with the pragmatic principle of topic requirement, which is proposed by Osawa (2009b) for pragmatically motivated constructions. Our investigation has shown that the prenominal possessive and the double object construction dealt with in this paper are pragmatically licensed constructions. Through concerning with these constructions, we have shown the validity of the pragmatic principle of topic requirement and demonstrated that this generalisation holds for not only a passive sentence, but also a non-passive sentence.

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<sup>8</sup> Kaga (2007) claims that both possessor and patient are classified into the macro-role of LOCATION syntactically.

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