

**A Construction Grammar Approach to Constructions
with Intensifying Readings in English:
With Special Reference to Fake Object Resultative
Constructions, Body Part Off Constructions,
and V the Hell Out of Constructions**

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Shun KUDO

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Acknowledgements

We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed;

We are perplexed, but not in despair.

2 Corinthians 4:8 - King James Bible

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Chapter 1

Introduction

The main purpose of this thesis is three fold: (i) to illustrate the constructional characteristics of intensifying constructions, i.e. constructions which can be interpreted excessively and figuratively, (ii) to convey how they are related from the viewpoint of construction grammar, and (iii) to reveal that there exists constructional hierarchy among them in terms of idiomaticity. In particular, I limit my discussion to Fake Object Resultative Constructions (FORCs), Body Part *Off* Constructions (BPOCs), and *V the Hell Out of* Constructions (VHOCs), all of which can be interpreted excessively.

The reason why I select FORCs, which one might consider sub-constructions of resultative constructions (RCs), is that while transitive RCs do not get the excessive interpretation, FORCs do. This thesis focuses on the intensifying reading of FORCs and I do not attempt to investigate the characteristics of transitive RCs, which are not usually regarded as intensifying constructions.

This thesis comprises five chapters except for the present and the last chapters. In Chapter 2, I investigate the characteristics of FORCs, BPOCs, and VHOCs. I particularly would like to focus on their syntactic behaviors. The constructions I deal with in this thesis have their own word order (i.e. [NP V NP XP (resultative phrase)]) and it is formally fixed. The main

purpose of Chapter 2 is thus to sketch out their idiosyncratic characteristics. I do not thoroughly investigate their semantic and pragmatic aspects in this chapter. It is because they will be shown in Chapters 5 and 6 from the viewpoints of construction grammar and phraseology.

In Chapter 3, I sketch out previous studies on FORCs, BPOCs, and VHOCs. FORCs, as sub-constructions of RCs, have been investigated by a great number of researchers from various perspectives. On the other hand, BPOCs and VHOCs have not been analyzed until recently and the number of earlier studies on them is small compared with the studies on FORCs. In addition, previous researches on BPOCs and VHOCs mainly focus on the formal and interpretational idiosyncrasies in comparison with those on FORCs. This is because they share the similar form and meaning. I closely look at their analyses and point out their problems.

In Chapter 4, I consider which approach is the best to describe FORCs, BPOCs, and VHOCs. I particularly deliberate three possible approaches: the lexical-semantic approach, the cognitive approach, and the construction grammar approach. It is true that those three approaches have their own advantages. However, I argue that the construction grammar approach, which Goldberg (1995) originally advocates, thoroughly describes the characteristics of the constructions in question.

In Chapter 5, I would like to describe the characteristics of FORCs, BPOCs, and VHOCs from the viewpoint of construction grammar. The main purpose of this chapter is to reveal the constructional relationship

among them. Although their syntactic and semantic characteristics have already been investigated in previous studies, it has not been argued yet how they are related. The construction grammar approach allows us to reveal not only how they are related but also what associates them. To be more specific, the way of inheritance among the constructions is made clear by virtue of inheritance links. This is one of the advantages adopting the construction grammar approach. Furthermore, this framework makes it possible to illustrate the relationship between the constructions in question and other related constructions such as transitive RCs or caused-motion constructions (CMCs).

In Chapter 6, I shall investigate the idiomaticity of FORCs, BPOCs, and VHOCs. These constructions are often called “constructional idioms.” That is, they have some idiomatic aspects. In this chapter, I introduce the traditional syntactic measurement method offered by Nunberg et al. (1994), i.e. modification, quantification, topicalization, ellipsis, and anaphora. In the previous studies of idioms, these diagnostics have originally been used to measure the idiomaticity of phrasal idioms. This chapter attempts to apply them to FORCs, BPOCs, and VHOCs, and suggests that there exists idiomatic hierarchy among these constructions, as is the case with the hierarchy in phrasal idioms.

Chapter 7 is dedicated to concluding remarks and makes a brief overview of issues which I do not deal with in this thesis. One might think it possible to account for the constructions in question from the viewpoint

of discourse analysis, because the discourse analysis would reveal the condition where FORCs, BPOCs, and VHOCs are interpreted literally or excessively. Unfortunately, however, there are few data available for that purpose. For this reason, I will leave the discourse analysis of the constructions to future research.

Chapter 2

The Characteristics of Fake Object Resultative Constructions, Body Part *Off* Constructions, and V *the Hell Out of* Constructions

2.1. Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to briefly sketch out the characteristics of Fake Object Resultative Constructions (FORCs), Body Part *Off* Constructions (BPOCs), and V *the Hell Out of* Constructions (VHOCs). In particular, I would like to focus on the formal fixedness of these constructions.

In previous studies, these constructions have been considered to be related constructions, because they behave in the same way in terms of their syntax. In particular, BPOCs have been analyzed, at all times, together with FORCs (Jackendoff (1997a, b), Sawada (2000), Espinal and Mateu (2010) etc.), because of their formal and semantic iconicity. However, as I will argue in the following chapters, they have distinct characteristics. This chapter focuses on their seeming similarities.

It must be noted that this chapter investigates both syntactic and semantic characteristics of FORCs, BPOCs and VHOCs, but I will minimize the discussion on the semantic characteristics in this chapter, because they will be discussed in the following chapters from the viewpoint of construction grammar. Here, I would like to concentrate on their syntactic characteristics.

2.2. The Characteristics of FORCs, BPOCs, and VHOCs

2.2.1. The form and interpretation of FORCs, BPOCs, and VHOCs

To begin with, let us consider the most typical characteristics of FORCs, BPOCs, and VHOCs. Observe the following examples:

- (1) a. The joggers ran the pavement thin. (Goldberg (1995:184))
b. Dean laughed/danced himself crazy/silly.

(Jackendoff (1997b: 552) with slight modifications)

- (2) a. Susan worked/swam/danced her head off last night.
b. Fred talked his head/his ass/his butt off, but to no avail.

(Jackendoff (1997b:551))

- (3) a. They beat the hell/fuck/shit/bejesus out of him.
b. The police kicked the hell/fuck/shit/bejesus out of them.

(Hoeksema and Napoli (2008:359))

First, I would like to focus on the formal aspect of these constructions. The sentences in (1) are examples of FORCs. In (1a), for example, although the verb *ran* is inherently intransitive, it is followed by the noun phrase *the pavement* together with the adjective *thin*. This object is not directly selected by the verb (i.e. an unsubcategoryed object). That is why this type of postverbal elements is called “fake object.” The sentences in (2) are instances of BPOCs. BPOCs employ noun phrases relevant to our body parts as their object together with the particle *off*. As

is the case with FORCs, although the verbs *worked/swam/danced* are originally intransitives, they are followed by noun phrases such as *one's head* or *one's butt* together with the particle *off*.¹ The sentences in (3) are examples of VHOCs. As with FORCs and BPOCs, the postverbal NPs *the hell/fuck/shit/bejesus* in VHOCs follow the verbs *beat* and *kick* together with the prepositional phrase *out of*.²

¹ In this thesis, the particle *off* is used to cover the particle *out*, because BPOCs sometimes employ the particle *out* as their XP. Observe the following examples:

- (i) a. Sam programmed/yelled his heart out. (Jackendoff (1997b:551))
- b. He cried his eyes out. (Miyata (2004:108))

Some of the studies treat these sentences as resultative constructions, because the particle *out* describes the result state of the referent of the postverbal NPs *his heart* in (ia) and *his eyes* in (ib). In this study, I regard the sentence including the particle *out* as an example of BPOCs. The reason is that they employ body part objects and describe the excessiveness of events expressed by verbs. See Nakau and Nishimura (1998), Imoto (2004), and Miyata (2004) for detailed discussions on the particle *out* in BPOCs.

² One might think of VHOCs as non-productive constructions, because verbs and postverbal NPs which can occur in VHOCs are seemingly limited. However, there is a wide variety of verbs and nominals which can occur in the verbal and postverbal position of VHOCs. Omuro (2005) investigates such verbs and nouns, using The British National Corpus (BNC), The Bank of English (BoE), and WebCorp:

- (i) verbs (BNC)
 - a. *scare/frighten*-type (14): **scare (9)**, **frighten (4)**, terrify (1)
 - b. *beat*-type (12): **beat (5)**, bash (1), crush (1), hammer (1), kick (1), knock (1), smash (1), spank (1)
 - c. others (5): try and run (1) (*beat*-type?), tax (1) (*beat*-type?), train (1), shake (1), kiss (1) (*beat*-type?)

(Omuro (2005:79))
- (ii) verbs (BoE)
 - a. *scare/frighten*-type (82): **scare (57)**, **frighten (19)**, tease (2), stir (2), charm (1), frustrate (1)
 - b. *beat*-type (67): **beat (26)**, rinse and beat (1), knock (7), kick (6), punch (4), yell and punch (1), thrush (3), thump (3), bash (2), belt (2), pound (2), batter (1), blast (1), bomb (1), club (1), duff (1), hammer (1), hit (1), rip (1), spank (1), whale (1)
 - c. others (6): gripe (1), reinforce (1), spin (1), suck (1) (*beat*-type?), sue (1) (*beat*-type?), tax (1) (*beat*-type?)

Interestingly, these constructions share the same syntactic configuration below:

(4) [NP VP NP XP]

Here, XP covers noun phrases, adjective phrases, or particles.

Second, I would like to observe the semantic aspect of the examples in (1), (2), and (3). The fact that they share the configuration as in (4) with typical resultatives might lead us to predict that they share a meaning akin to them: ‘a postverbal entity changes its shape or state as a result of the action expressed by a verb.’ However, it is not the case. The examples express the excessiveness of actions, though there are no intensifying words such as *very* or *so*. For example, the sentence in (1a) describes a situation where the joggers ran very hard as if the pavement were worn out. In this case, the state of the pavement does not necessarily change.

It should be noted that, however, it is the case that some of the FORCs may be interpreted literally. For instance, the expression *bark someone awake* has only literal interpretation. In fact, resultatives which are

-
- (iii) object NPs (Omuro (2005:79-80))
- a. the shit (38), the crap (36), the bejesus (22), the hell (11), the xxxx (4), the fuck (2), the tarnation (1), the snot (1), the sheisse (1), the begebbers (1), the dickens (1)
 - b. the daylight (10), the wits (8), the life (3), the censored (1), the tar (1), the stuff (1), the emotion (1), my appetite (1), the pudding (1)
 - c. that (1), what (1)
- (Omuro (2005:80))

regarded as hyperbolic expressions are the particular part of FORCs. We presuppose that FORCs observed in this thesis can be interpreted excessively.

As is the case with FORCs, the examples of BPOCs in (2a) do not express the actual detachment of the head. In this case, the postverbal sequence *her head off* functions as an intensifier of the actions denoted by the verbs *worked/swam/danced*. The sentence, thus, means as follows: ‘Susan worked/swam/danced very hard as if her head came off.’

By the same token, the examples of VHOCs in (3) express the furiousness of actions. Note that the actual patient of the verb *beat* in (3a) is not *the hell/fuck/shit/bejesus* but *him*. In these cases, the postverbal NPs do not have their own meaning, but merely intensify the verbal meanings. Hence, the sentences are construed as follows: ‘they beat him furiously.’

The formal similarity (i.e. the sequence [NP V NP XP]) and the interpretational parallelism (i.e. ‘V excessively’) among these constructions, thus, lead previous researchers to investigate these constructions together.

2.2.2. *The Impossibility of the Omission of XPs from FORCs, BPOCs, and VHOCs*

The former section observed the similarities among FORCs, BPOCs, and VHOCs in terms of their syntax and semantics. In addition to the formal commonality among FORCs, BPOCs, and VHOCs, they show the

same reaction to several syntactic operations.³

The first syntactic operation which I would like to introduce here is the omission of XPs. In the study of resultative constructions in English, it is widely acknowledged that unergative resultative constructions (i.e. FORCs) do not permit the omission of resultative phrases (cf. Levin and Rappaport Hovav (1995), Wechsler (2005), Nogawa (2007) etc.). Observe the following examples, all of which are ungrammatical:⁴

- (5) a. * Dora shouted herself.

(Dora shouted herself hoarse.)

(Levin and Rappaport Hovav (1995:35))

- b. * The dog barked him.

(The dog barked him awake.)

- c. * You may sleep the unborn baby again.

(You may sleep the unborn baby quiet again.)

(Levin and Rappaport Hovav (1995:36) with slight modifications)

Unergative verbs are inherently intransitive and cannot originally take any object NP. Thus, the sentences in (5) in themselves are not acceptable. The co-occurrence with XPs (i.e. the resultative phrases), however, makes

³ A detailed semantic and constructional investigation will be shown in Chapter 5.

⁴ The sentences enclosed in parentheses are the original grammatical sentences.

these sentences impeccable.⁵

BPOCs show the same phenomenon with respect to the omission of the particle *off*. Observe the following:

- (6) a. * They worked their butts when they were young.

(They worked their butts off when they were young.)

(Sawada (2000:366))

- b. * She laughed her head at the party.

(She laughed her head off at the party.)

(Sawada (2000:366))

- c. * Sylvester cried his eyes.

(Sylvester cried his eyes out.)

(Nogawa (2007:95))

The verbs *work* in (6a), *laugh* in (6b), and *cry* in (6c) are inherently intransitive. So, they originally cannot take any nominal as their object.

⁵ The following examples are resultatives whose verbs are transitive, but select unsubcategoryed object NPs:

- (i) a. Sudsy cooked them all into a premature death with her wild food.
b. I'm glad you didn't stay at the Club drinking yourself dottier.
(Rappaport Hovav and Levin (2001:788))

The transitive verb *cook* in (ia) usually takes things related to food substance such as cake or pasta as its object. In sentence (ia), however, the object NP *them* is not subcategoryed by the verb *cook*, and denotes a person who ate the foods Sudsy made. In sentence (ib), the reflexive pronoun *yourself* is not a true direct object which the verb *drink* usually takes. It usually takes objects about beverage such as beer or juice. For this reason, we often call unsubcategoryed postverbal NPs "fake objects."

However, the addition of the particle *off* or *out* changes their acceptability. Therefore, it is reasonable to consider that both postverbal NPs and the particle *off* or *out* are indispensable for the acceptability of BPOCs.

VHOCs also show the same phenomenon with respect to the omission of XPs. Observe the following sentence:

(7) * She beat/scared the hell.

(She beat the hell out of me.)

(Yoshikawa and Igarashi (2011:183))

As is obvious from example (7), VHOCs are unacceptable without the prepositional phrase *out of me*. Note that the objects *the hell/daylights* are not true patients of the actions of beating and scaring. They are considered ‘fake objects’ and function as intensifiers. The real patient of the actions is *me* following *out of*.

So far, I have briefly looked at the omissibility of XPs in FORCs, BPOCs, and VHOCs. The constructions in question show parallelism in terms of that syntactic operation.

2.2.3. *The Impossibility of the Replacement of Postverbal NPs and XPs in FORCs, BPOCs, and VHOCs*

FORCs, BPOCs, and VHOCs have another syntactic commonality: the impossibility of the replacement of postverbal NPs and XPs. Let us first

consider the cases of FORCs:

- (8) a. * I poured dry the glass.

(I poured the glass dry.)

(Bolinger (1971:75))

- b. * He laughed silly himself.

(He laughed himself silly.)

(Seuren (2002:203))

In (8a), the resultative phrase *dry* cannot precede the postverbal NP *the glass*. In (8b), by the same token, the resultative adjective *silly* cannot precede the postverbal reflexive *himself*. The impossibility of the replacement, as well as that of the omission of XPs, suggests that the linear order of FORCs is highly fixed.⁶

BPOCs are also inflexible in terms of their word order. Observe the following examples:

- (9) a. * Susan worked off her head.

⁶ Some of the transitive resultatives, on the other hand, permit the replacement of postverbal NPs and XPs:

- (i) a. John wiped the table clean.
b. John wiped clean the table.

(Williams (1994:103))

This possibility of replacement implies that transitive resultatives and FORCs have distinct constructional characteristics. Therefore, I consider them different constructions, although they are similar.

(Susan worked her head off.)

(Jackendoff (1997b:551))

b. * John laughed off his head.

(John laughed his head off.)

(Miyata (2004:130))

c. * They worked off their butts (when they were young).

(They worked their butts off.)

(Sawada (2000:366))

In the sentences in (9), it is obvious that the particle *off* cannot occupy the postverbal position. This inflexibility implies that the word order of BPOCs is also strictly fixed, as is the case with FORCs.

By the same token, the prepositional phrase *out of XPs* in VHOCs cannot precede the fake objects *the hell/shit*. Observe the following examples:

(10) a. * She beat out of me the hell/shit.

(She beat the hell/shit out of me.)

b. * She scared out of me the hell/shit.

(She scared the hell/shit out of me.)

The examples above suggest that the word order of VHOCs is highly fixed.

2.3. Summary

In this chapter, I have briefly observed the typical syntactic behaviors of FORCs, BPOCs, and VHOCs. As we have observed above, they share the same configuration as in (4) and the same interpretation ‘V excessively.’ Furthermore, these constructions do not permit the omission of XPs and the replacement of postverbal NPs and XPs. Given the syntactic and interpretational parallelism, it is plausible to assume that they are constructionally analogous. However, they have distinct characteristics when we observe them in terms of construction grammar. I would like to consider the issue again in Chapter 5. The next chapter introduces several previous studies on the constructions in question.

Chapter 3

Previous Studies on Fake Object Resultative Constructions, Body Part *Off* Constructions, and *V the Hell Out of* Constructions

3.1. Introduction

Chapter 3 aims to take a close look at several previous studies on Fake Object Resultative Constructions (FORCs), Body Part *Off* Constructions (BPOCs), and *V the Hell Out of* Constructions (VHOCs).

Because resultative constructions have been analyzed from the various points of views (cf. Simpson (1983), Jackendoff (1990), Rapoport (1993), Levin and Rappaport Hovav (1995), Boas (2000), Wechsler (2005), Iwata (2008), and so many others), I restrict myself to previous studies treating FORCs, i.e. resultatives which employ intransitive verbs and can express exaggerating actions such as the one expressed by *cry one's eyes out*.

In contrast to well-known FORCs, BPOCs have received attention recently, together with excessively-interpreted resultatives, Cappelle (2005, 2007, 2008), Culicover and Jackendoff (2005), Espinal and Mateu (2010), Goldberg and Jackendoff (2004), Jackendoff (1997a, 1997b, 2002), Sawada (2000) etc.).¹ Some linguists consider that BPOCs and FORCs have clearly distinct semantic and aspectual statuses (e.g. Jackendoff (1997b),

¹ Since BPOCs have been analyzed in comparison with FORCs, I would like to review studies which compare these two constructions, focusing mainly on BPOCs.

Morito (2011) etc.). On the other hand, from the analogy with the form and meaning of FORCs (i.e. syntax: [NP V NP XP], semantics: ‘V excessively’), Kudo (2011) argues that it would be reasonable to treat BPOCs as a subtype or variant of FORCs.

As for VHOCs, the number of studies on it is very limited. The concerns on VHOCs are their origin (Hoeksema and Napoli (2008)), semantic status (Morito (2012)), and cognitive interpretative processes (Yoshikawa and Igarashi (2011)).

In what follows, I observe the way FORCs, BPOCs, and VHOCs are treated in previous studies, and point out their problems in some respects or others.² Here, I would briefly like to note the approach which the previous studies below adopt. Jackendoff (1997b) in 3.2, Morito (2011) in 3.4, Cappelle (to appear) in 3.5, and Yoshikawa and Igarashi (2011) in 3.7 investigate these constructions in terms of lexical semantics. Sawada (2000) in 3.3 takes the semantic and cognitive approaches to these constructions. Hoeksema and Napoli (2008) in 3.6 observe them from the viewpoints of semantics and historical linguistics.

3.2. Jackendoff (1997b)

Jackendoff (1997b) takes observes the semantic status of BPOCs, and investigates them together with FORCs for the reason that they apparently

² It should be noted that we do not investigate the characteristics of the constructions in question in this chapter because we have already observed them in Chapter 2.

have similar syntactic and semantic characteristics. He claims that, although BPOCs and FORCs are syntactically and semantically similar, BPOCs are independent constructions of FORCs and are stored in the long-term memory.

To begin with, let us observe the characteristics of BPOCs and FORCs again:

- (1) a. John worked his ass off. (an example of BPOCs)
- b. Joggers ran the pavement thin. (an example of FORCs)

They share the sequence [NP V NP XP]. In spite of the formal parallelism, Jackendoff argues that BPOCs are constructionally independent of FORCs. To be more specific, BPOCs and FORCs are independently registered in the lexicon, with their meanings limited to the exaggeration. He concludes that BPOCs should be treated as a kind of idiomatic intensifier. The configuration and the meaning of BPOCs can be illustrated as in (2):

- (2) a. [_{vp} V [bound pronoun]'s head off]
- b. 'V intensely'

(Jackendoff (1997:554))

His claim is motivated by aspectual characteristics of BPOCs. As Tenny (1994) suggests, the adverbial adjunct *in X time* signals the

completion of an event, while the time adverbial *for X time* signals the duration of an event. In the case of FORCs, as is the case with transitive resultative constructions (transitive RCs), they do not usually co-occur with *for*-phrases, and specify the endpoint of actions, since they represent the resultant state described by postverbal NPs and resultative phrases (cf. Tenny (1994), Miyata (2004), Rothstein (2004), Wechsler (2005) etc.). Consider the following examples:

- (3) a. Mary hammered the metal flat {*for an hour/in an hour}.
b. John sang the baby asleep {*for an hour/in an hour}.

(Rothstein (2004:5))

In (3a), for instance, the postverbal sequence *the metal flat* describes the result state of the metal being flat, so that this sentence is compatible with *in*-phrases, not with *for*-phrases. The same explanation is applied to (3b).

In contrast, BPOCs usually co-occur with *for*-phrases. Consider again the following examples:

- (4) a. Sue worked her butt off {for/*in an hour}.
b. The frog sang his heart out {for the whole night/*in a night}.

(Jackendoff (1997:551))

Because of the world knowledge about our body parts, sentence (4a) is not construed as follows: “Sue’s butt actually comes off.” Rather, it describes the durative situation in which Sue worked very hard. Therefore, BPOCs, which describe an excessive event, are compatible with *for*-phrases, which do not specify any endpoint of time. The same explanation is applicable to (4b).

Apparently, the observation proposed by Jackendoff seems plausible. BPOCs are normally considered as describing the excessiveness of events, because our knowledge about the inalienability of our body parts prevents us from reaching the literal interpretation. So, it seems possible to think that the meaning of BPOCs is fixed to the exaggeration, and BPOCs themselves are stored in the long-term memory. I basically agree with his claim that these expressions should be treated as one which is stored in the lexicon.

However, the aspectual evidence in (4) does not necessarily constitute the corroborating evidence for his claim that BPOCs are only construed excessively. A careful examination reveals that it is clearly possible for BPOCs to be interpreted literally in appropriate contexts. More specifically, although BPOCs generally describe the excessiveness of actions, a fictional context allows them to be interpreted as expressing real events. Consider the literally-understood BPOCs in the following sentences embedded in appropriate contexts (relevant portions are italicized):

- (5) a. The android was half-broken, but the engineer recklessly kept using it for making sports clothes. As a result, *the machine finally sewed its fingers off*, and they dropped under the sewing machine.
- ‘The fingers of the android came off as a result of sewing.’
- b. John, who is actually an alien, is really bad at studying. When the final exam was coming, *he finally studied his head off*, and his friends passed out upon seeing it on the floor.
- ‘John’s head came off as a result of studying.’
- c. The android was half-broken, but the engineer recklessly kept using it. As a result, *the machine finally worked its tail off*, and its body split away.
- ‘The tail of the android came off as a result of working.’

In (5a), for instance, the subject referent *the android* is the artifact of the human being. It evokes the fictitious situation in which an unfeasible event possibly occurs. This fictitious context thus enables us to interpret the expression *the machine finally sewed its fingers off* as meaning “the fingers of the android actually broke off as a result of sewing action.” By the same token, the event described in (5b) is understood to express an actual event, given that John is an alien. The same explanation is applied

to (5c).³

The fact that BPOCs can be interpreted literally in appropriate contexts is further attested by the following examples, where BPOCs co-occur with the adverbial adjunct *in X time*:

- (6) a. The android was half-broken, but the engineer recklessly kept using it for making sports clothes. As a result, *the machine finally sewed its fingers off in a day*.
- b. The android was half-broken, but the engineer recklessly kept using it. As a result, *the machine finally worked its tail off in a day*.

The science fiction-like context allows BPOCs to be interpreted literally, and they go well together with *in*-phrases which indicate the completion of an event. For instance, the expression *the machine finally sewed its fingers off* in (6a) is indeed compatible with an *in*-phrase, since this expression describes the telic event where the hard work of the android caused its fingers to come off in a day. The same explanation is applied to (6b).

If the argumentation proposed by Jackendoff (1997b) were on the

³ To understand BPOCs as describing actual events, some contextual conditions must be involved. Although this contextual issue should be considered more specifically, I do not investigate it any further here, because the main concern of this chapter is the overview of previous literature on FORCs, BPOCs, and VHOCs.

right track, BPOCs with *in*-phrases then would be ruled out. As is obvious from the data in (6), however, BPOCs do co-occur with the time adverbial *in*, if we take contexts into account. Therefore, the sentences in (4) do not constitute the corroborating evidence for his claim that BPOCs describe an atelic event.

While it seems that the postverbal sequence in excessive BPOCs does not have any meaning and functions only as an intensifier, there exist BPOCs whose postverbal sequence carries the literal meaning, as in (5). This difference leads us to consider that there are two subtypes of BPOCs in terms of their interpretation. In fact, I treat them as different constructions in the framework of construction grammar, which I will argue in Chapter 5.

3.3. Sawada (2000)

Sawada (2000) investigates the meaning of BPOCs in relation to that of FORCs, introducing a pragmatic model of mental representation. He claims that the semantics of BPOCs are overlapped with those of FORCs in that they share the intensifier reading. Consider the following instances of BPOCs:

- (7) a. "... I've skied my butt off," said Moe, a square-jawed, square-talking Alaskan.
- b. They danced their butts off at the party.

(Sawada (2000:363))

The sentence in (7a) expresses an event of exaggeration, interpreted as “I have enjoyed skiing very much as if my butt would come off.” The same explanation goes for (7b).

As well as BPOCs, FORCs can describe the actions of excessiveness (cf. Goldberg (1995), Jackendoff (1997a, b), Miyata (2004), Espinal and Mateu (2010) etc.). Look at the following examples of FORCs:

- (8) a. Mary ate herself sick. (Miyata (2004:35))
b. The joggers ran the pavement thin. (Goldberg (1995:184))

Sentence (8a), for example, can be construed as follows: “Mary ate something to the extent that she became sick.” By the same token, the sentence in (8b) describes the situation in which the joggers ran so hard that the pavement would almost be worn out. In this case, the sentence does not necessarily describe the actual attrition of the pavement. Both BPOCs and FORCs share the excessive interpretation. This interpretive parallelism leads Sawada to claim that BPOCs can be viewed as an instance of FORCs, though not identical.

Sawada also proposes that the intensive meaning of BPOCs is derived from our world knowledge of body parts. When we hear someone utter a statement like ‘John laughed his head off,’ for example, we fall in an

interpretive conflict because of the unfeasibility of the event. To resolve the conflict, a certain process of reconciliation is required. To satisfy the requirement, he proposes the processes of interpretive reconciliation as the following:

- (9) a. Avoid an interpretation against the knowledge of body part integrity.
- b. Seek another way of interpretation, if available.

(Sawada (2000:376))

Besides, the following rule is invoked:

- (10) Rule of construal for intensification

Interpret the postverbal sequence as an intensifying complex.

(Sawada (2000:376))

Sawada claims that, through the rules in (9) and (10), the excessive meaning of BPOCs is derived.

However, there is one thing to be considered: the fact that BPOCs do allow the literal interpretation when we assume some fictitious contexts:

- (11) a. The android worked/danced/laughed its head off, and it fell to the ground.

- b. The robot talked its butt/ass off, and the people around it were very surprised.
- c. The robot pitched its arm off, and finally it broke down.
- d. The android danced its feet off, and finally it broke down.

Furthermore, as will be shown in the overview of Morito's (2011) analysis in the following section, the semantic behaviors of literal BPOCs such as those shown in (11) and those of excessive BPOCs such as those shown in (7) above are clearly distinct. For example, while excessive BPOCs do not co-occur with an *in*-phrase, literal BPOCs do. Given the difference, it is natural to posit that literal BPOCs themselves should be considered to be independent of excessive BPOCs and be stored in the long-term memory without any pragmatic reasoning processes, as Sawada (2000) proposed. I will come back to this point in the following section.

3.4. Morito (2011)

Morito (2011) compares BPOCs with FORCs, focusing on their aspectual differences. His basic concept is that FORCs and BPOCs are distinct constructions. More specifically, he argues that while the event described by FORCs is activity in Vendler's (1957) terminology, the event expressed by BPOCs is accomplishment. He offers four aspectual dissimilarities between FORCs and BPOCs.

The first dissimilarity Morito offers is the (im)possibility of

co-occurrence with time adverbials *in/for X time*. As I mentioned above, a telic event is compatible with *in*-phrases, which describe the completion of an event, whereas an atelic event can co-occur with *for*-phrases, which signal the duration of an event. Morito claims that while FORCs are compatible with *in*-phrases, BPOCs are compatible with *for*-phrases.⁴ Compare the following examples:

- (12) a. The audience laughed the actor off the stage *in/*for* ten seconds. (FORCs)
- b. Sue worked her butt off *for/*in* an hour. (BPOCs)
- (Morito (2011:160))

The sentence in (12a) describes the situation in which the actor was moved off the stage, because he felt embarrassed by the audience's laugh. Here, the event type is categorized into accomplishment, and the telic adverbial *in ten seconds* rather than the durative time adverbial *for ten seconds* can co-occur with this sentence. Sentence (12b), on the other hand, does not necessarily denote the result state of Sue's butt coming off, but represents how hard Sue worked. Therefore, the event type is categorized into activity, and this event is compatible with *for an hour*, which does not specify any temporal boundary.

The second evidence which Morito offers is the (im)possibility of

⁴ This is clearly the same claim as what Jackendoff (1997b) proposes.

repetition of verbs. As Kageyama and Yumoto (1997) point out, the repetition of unergative verbs denoting activity highlights their action. Following their claim, Morito advocates that unergative verbs denoting activity such as *cry* and *laugh* can be repeated in BPOCs, but not in FORCs. Observe the following contrast:

(13) a. She cried and cried her heart out until her eyes turned red.

(BPOCs)

b. * The audience laughed and laughed the actor off the stage.

(FORCs)

(Morito (2011:161))

In the example of BPOCs in (13a), the unergative verb *cry* can be repeated and the meaning of the verb can be highlighted, since the sentence itself describes the excessiveness of the crying activity, not the result state of her heart literally coming out. On the other hand, the verb *laugh* in sentence (13b) cannot be repeated, because this sentence expresses the accomplishment of the actor moving off the stage.

The third evidence is concerned with the (a)telicity of aspect. Observe the following examples:

(14) a. The audience laughed the actor off the stage *completely*.

(FORCs)

b. * He laughed his butt off *completely*. (BPOCs)

(Morito (2011:161-2))

The addition of the adverb *completely*, which clearly indicates the temporal endpoint, is permitted in FORCs, but not in BPOCs.⁵ This is because, in Morito's theory, while FORCs describe a telic event, BPOCs express an atelic event. Hence, the sentence in (14a) is acceptable, but the sentence in (14b) is not.

As the fourth evidence, an object of FORCs can be passivized, but that of BPOCs cannot. Observe the following pair:

(15) a. The actor was laughed off the stage by the audience.

(FORCs)

b. * Her head was laughed off. (BPOCs)

(Morito (2011:162))

As Bolinger (1971) and Dixon (1982) argue, whether or not a referent of postverbal NPs is affected by the action denoted by a verb can be attested by the possibility of passivization. That is, if the passivization of postverbal NPs is allowed, then the referent of object NPs is considered to

⁵ That the adverb *completely* indicates the temporal endpoint is further exemplified by the co-occurrence with the adjective *dry*, but not with the adjective *cool*. Since the adjective *dry* implies the state of drying out, we can speak of *completely dry*. On the other hand, the adjective *cool* does not imply the maximum endpoint, so that we cannot speak of **completely cool*.

be affected by the action of verbs. In other words, those object referents are thought of as patients. For example, because the subject referent *the actor* in (15a) felt embarrassed by being laughed (i.e. affected), he ran off. On the other hand, the subject referent *her head* in (15b) is not affected, because the original sentence *she laughed her head off* does not describe such an event where her head literally came off as a result of laughing.

Morito argues that these four pieces of aspectual evidence confirm that, while the events described by BPOCs are essentially categorized into activity (i.e. atelic), the events denoted by FORCs are categorized into accomplishment (i.e. telic). However, as I have offered before, the aspect of BPOCs depends on the context in which BPOCs occur. Hereafter, I adduce counterexamples to the instances in (12) to (15).

First, under the science fiction-like context, BPOCs do co-occur with the adverbial adjunct *in X time*, which usually does not co-occur with figuratively interpreted BPOCs:⁶

- (16) a. The android worked/danced/laughed its head off *in an hour*,
and fell to the ground.
- b. The robot talked its butt/ass off *in an hour*, and the people
around it were very surprised.

⁶ According to my informant, although the sentences in (16) are not perfectly acceptable, we can think of a few possible contexts where they might seem more or less normal.

The second conjunct *fell to the ground* in (16a) implies that the head of the subject referent *the android* actually came off as a result of working/dancing/laughing. This means that the described event in (16a) is thought of as accomplishment. Therefore, the sentence in (16a) can co-occur with *in an hour*, which clearly denotes a telic event. The same explanation goes for the sentence in (16b). Thus, the examples in (16) constitute the counterexamples to what Morito offers with respect to (12b).

Second, BPOCs under such contexts as science fiction also do not allow the repetition of unergative verbs:

- (17) a. * The robot pitched and pitched its arm off, and finally it broke down.
b. * The android danced and danced its feet off, and finally it broke down.

It is usually allowed that unergative verbs such as *pitch* and *dance* are repeated in BPOCs, because these constructions do not provide any temporal definite endpoint, but express the excessiveness of events under normal conditions. That is, the aspect of BPOCs without any context is categorized into activity. If we take contexts into consideration, however, BPOCs are allowed to be interpreted literally, their aspect is considered accomplishment, and the repetition of verbs is not permitted. The sentences of BPOCs in (17), therefore, are the counterexamples to (13a).

Third, BPOCs under fictitious contexts even permit the addition of the adverb *completely*:

- (18) a. The android worked/danced/laughed its head off *completely*,
and fell to the ground.
- b. The robot talked its butt/ass off *completely*, and the people
around it were very surprised.

As is the case with the possibility of the co-occurrence with *in X time* as in (16) and the impossibility of the repetition of unergative verbs in (17), the science fiction-like context affects the aspectual status of BPOCs. That is, their aspect changes from activity to accomplishment. So, it is logical that the addition of the adverb *completely* is permitted, which explicitly specifies the temporal endpoint.

Finally, let us consider the possibility of passivization. As Morito argues, BPOCs cannot be passivized. In fact, it is the case that the impossibility of the passivization means the absence of the affectedness. However, there is a problem with the data which he provides. Consider the example in (15b) again, repeated here as (19):

(19)* Her head was laughed off.

(= (15b))

In this case, the unacceptability of this sentence stems from not the absence of affectedness but the possessive determiner *her*. Although pronouns usually have antecedent, the case in (19) does not. Therefore, the referent of *her* is opaque, and as a result, this sentence is regarded as unacceptable.

The examples from (16) to (18) confirm that the event type of BPOCs may be accomplishment (i.e. telic) in appropriate contexts. In addition, the cause of unacceptability in (19) is not the absence of affectedness but the possessive determiner *her*. The sentences which Morito offers, therefore, do not constitute the corroborating evidence for his claim that events denoted by BPOCs are temporally unbounded at any time.

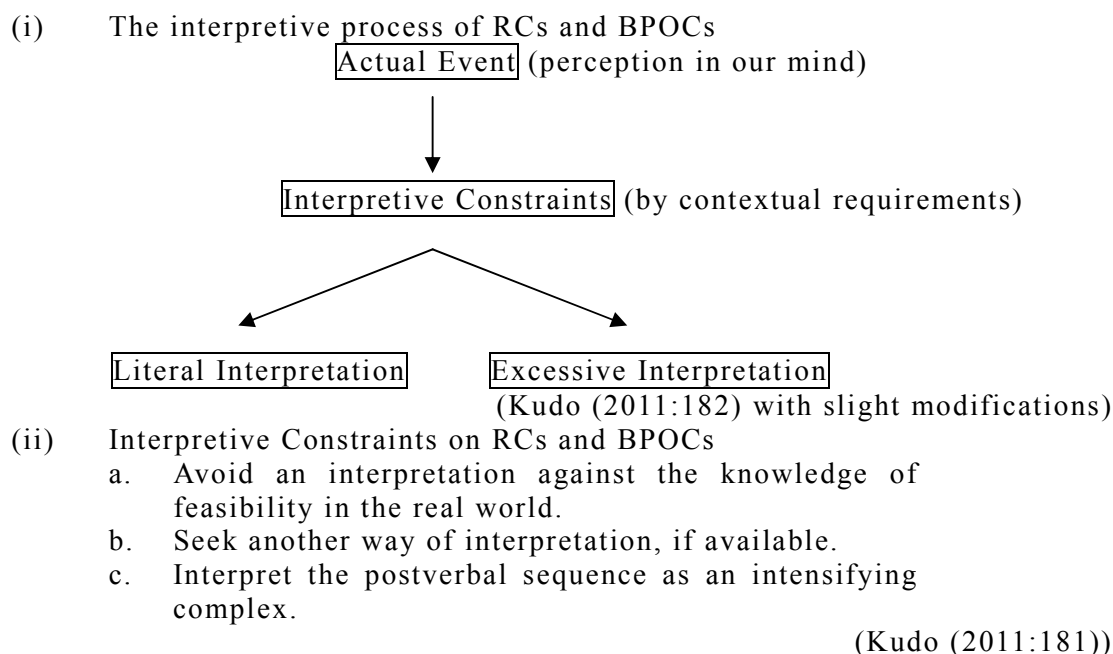
3.5. Cappelle (to appear)

A quite interesting observation is made by Cappelle (to appear), in which BPOCs are “families” of caused-motion constructions or, more generally, resultative constructions (RCs) in the sense of Goldberg and Jackendoff (2004). His main claim is that the excessive interpretation of BPOCs is not derived through some pragmatic inference as my previous study (Kudo (2011)) suggests, but based on general reasoning skills.⁷ I

⁷ My earlier study proposed that the interpretive process of RCs and BPOCs is parallel. More specifically, I claimed that, by positing the interpretive mechanism roughly schematized as in (i) and the constraints in (ii), we can capture the parallelism of construal between RCs and BPOCs. Consider the following schema and constraints which are the modified versions of what Sawada (2000) proposes:

partially agree with his argument. In what follows, I will take a close look at his argumentation and refute his claim in some respects.

Cappelle (to appear) claims that there exist no pragmatic interpretive processes when we use some kind of excessive expressions or constructions like BPOCs. In other words, speakers of English have to ‘learn’ or ‘know’ BPOCs as form-meaning patterns. He claims that, if we could posit that the excessive interpretation of BPOCs is derived through a pragmatic process or constraint, they would be cross-linguistic, and there would be similar constructions as BPOCs cross-linguistically, to which the process and constraint are applicable. To put it differently, the derivational rules must be language-independent, and by virtue of those rules, it is predicted



Briefly speaking, both RCs and BPOCs base their meanings on an actual event in our mind, and the excessive interpretation is derived through the constraints in (ii), if necessary. On the other hand, as a matter of course, if not necessary, the constraints in (ii) are not applied, hence the literal interpretation is derived. For more details, see Kudo (2011).

that we need not store literal and excessive usages separately in the lexicon. However, Dutch, which is even linguistically close to English, may exhibit highly specific conventions. For instance, unlike English BPOCs, Dutch has a variety of conventionalized excessive examples of causative property resultatives, in which the meaning of verbs affects an entity which is regarded as a patient.⁸ Nevertheless, they do not have counterparts of English BPOCs. Observe the following examples of causative property resultatives in Dutch:

- (20) a. Het vriest de stenen uit de grond.
 it freezes the stones out the ground
 ‘It’s freezing very hard.’
- b. We betalen ons blauw.
 we pay us blue
 ‘We’re paying an awful lot of money.’
- c. Ik lach me rot!
 I laugh me rotten
 ‘I’m rolling on the floor laughing!’

(Cappelle (to appear))

According to Cappelle, the closest Dutch expression to English

⁸ Causative property resultatives are similar to, but not identical with transitive RCs in English.

BPOCs is one which has characteristics of caused-motion constructions.

Observe the following Dutch cases:

- (21) a. Ze zong haar longen uit haar lijf.
she sang her lungs out-of her body
'She was singing her lungs out.'
- b. Hij huilde zijn ogen uit zijn kop.
he cried his eyes out-of his head
'He cried his eyes out.'
- c. Die jongen traint zijn ballen van zijn lijf.
That boy trains his balls off-of his body
'That boy is training his ass off.'

(Cappelle (to appear))

These patterns select a more restricted body part object NP than that of English. Moreover, while the particle *off* alone follows object NPs in the English case, the preposition *van* 'off' or *uit* 'out of' followed by NPs is possible in the Dutch case.

Furthermore, he adduces Dutch conventionalized excessive double-object expressions with a reflexive pronoun and a full noun phrase, which English does not have. (cf. Cappelle 2011):

- (22) a. Ze zong zich de longen uit het lijf.

she sang herself the lungs out-of the body

‘She was singing her lungs out.’

b. Hij hilde zich de ogen uit de kop.

he cried himself the eyes out-of the head

‘He cried his eyes out.’

c. Die jongen traint zich de ballen van het lijf.

That boy trains himself the balls off-of the body

‘That boy is training his ass off.’

(Cappelle (to appear))

In this pattern, not a possessive determiner but the definite article is employed:⁹

On ground of the data showing that conventionalized excessive expressions of Dutch are realized differently from those of English with their variety, Cappelle claims that excessives should be treated as distinct constructions. The following figure represents the constructional networks of excessive expressions in English:¹⁰

⁹ In addition, Cappelle (to appear) adduces an instance of causative pattern in Dutch, as follows:

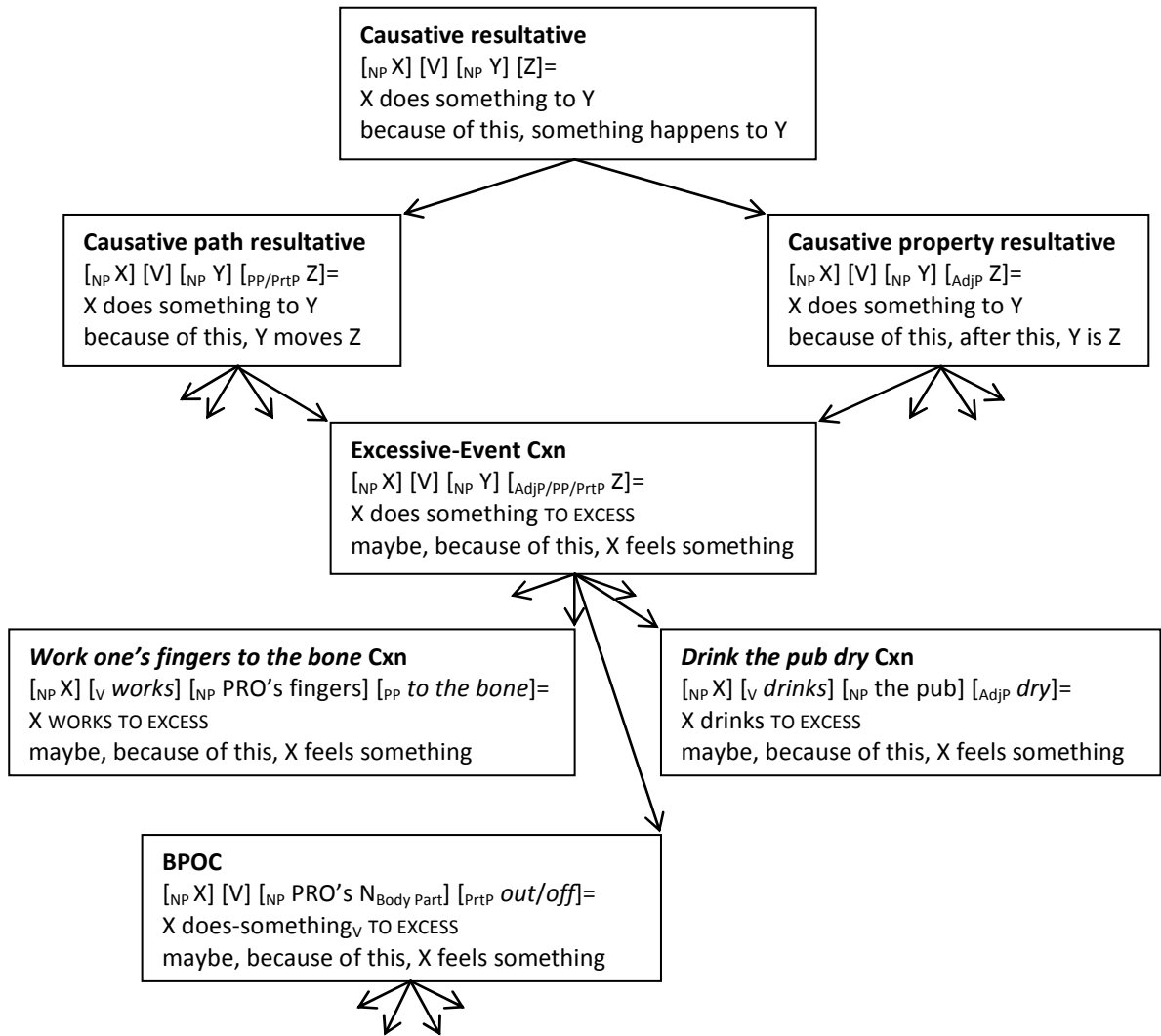
- (i) *zich de ogen uit het hoofd schamen*
(literally: *to shame oneself the eyes out of the head*, i.e. ‘to be terribly ashamed’)

Here, the pronoun *zich* is considered to be a possessor rather than to be a reflexive pronoun used with the verb *schamen*.

¹⁰ Cxn represents Construction.

(23) Constructional Network of English Excessive-Event Constructions

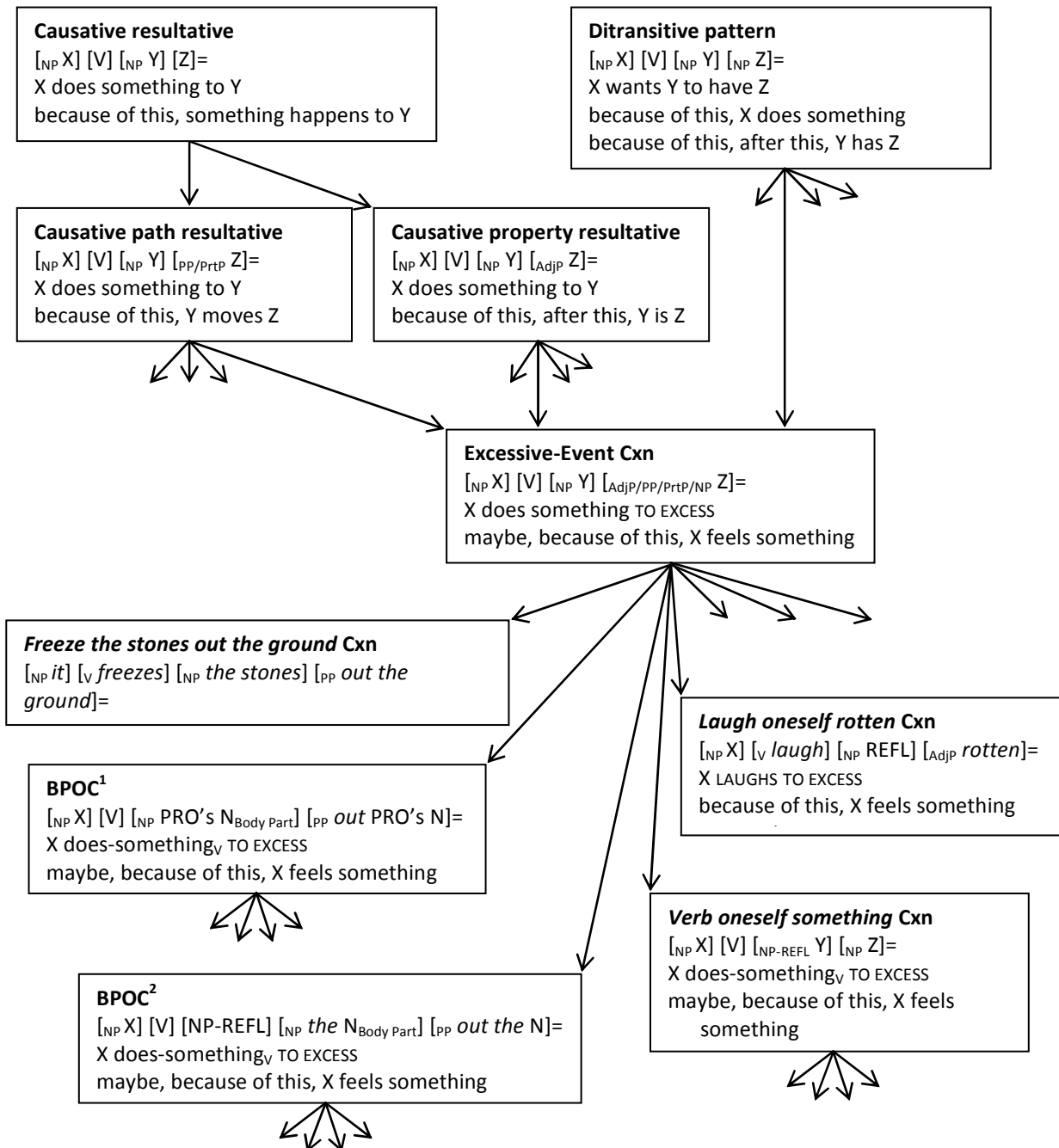
(Cappelle (to appear))



The figure in (24), which describes the constructional network of excessive expressions in Dutch, includes more excessive variations than those of English:

(24) Constructional Network of Dutch Excessive-Event Constructions

(Cappelle (to appear))



As is obvious from the figures in (23) and (24), the number of derived

excessive-event constructions in Dutch is much more than that of derived excessive-event constructions in English. Furthermore, in English, excessive-event constructions inherit only causative path resultatives and causative property resultatives, as shown in (23). On the other hand, in Dutch, ditransitive constructions, as well as two subtypes of resultatives (i.e. causative path and causative property types), are involved in excessive constructions, as is obvious from figure (24). This is reflected in the following examples:

- (25) a. Ik schrik me een hoedje.
 I start me a little-hat
 ‘I’m startled out of my wits.’
- b. We verveelden ons de tering.
 we bored us the phthisis
 ‘We’re bored to death.’
- c. Ik lach me een bult!
 I laugh me a hunch
 ‘I’m rolling on the floor laughing!’

(Cappelle (to appear))

In addition to the contrast of the variety of excessive constructions in Dutch and English, Cappelle conducted a corpus study, drawing on the

Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA).¹¹ The result of the COCA research revealed the usage patterns of English BPOCs. The table in (26) shows the distribution of the verbs and the postverbal sequences in BPOCs:

¹¹ “[T]en search strings were used, each time consisting of an open position (for a verb), followed by a possessive pronoun, a body part noun known to occur in the pattern (including a couple of the less frequently used alternatives for *ass* and *butt*) and the particle *off* or *out*. Table in (26) shows the twenty most frequently used verbs in this pattern, with token frequencies for each post-verbal sequence.”
(Cappelle (to appear) with slight modifications)

(26) The Usage Patterns of BPOCs in English by COCA

(Cappelle (to appear))

| | <i>one's ass off</i> | <i>one's heart out</i> | <i>one's head off</i> | <i>one's eyes out</i> | <i>one's butt off</i> | <i>one's tail off</i> | <i>one's guts out</i> | <i>one's lungs out</i> | <i>one's balls off</i> | <i>one's tush off</i> | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|-----|
| <i>work</i> | 66 | 19 | 1 | | 69 | 43 | | | 1 | | 199 |
| <i>cry</i> | | 17 | 4 | 80 | | | 2 | 1 | | | 104 |
| <i>scream</i> | 2 | 2 | 44 | | | | 3 | 13 | | | 64 |
| <i>laugh</i> | 25 | | 30 | | | | | 1 | | | 56 |
| <i>bawl</i> | 1 | 2 | 4 | 39 | | | 1 | | | | 47 |
| <i>sing</i> | 1 | 43 | 1 | | | | 1 | | | | 46 |
| <i>freeze</i> | 24 | | | | 8 | 1 | | | 8 | 1 | 41 |
| <i>play</i> | 2 | 16 | | | 5 | | 3 | | 1 | | 27 |
| <i>puke</i> | | | | | | | 19 | | | | 19 |
| <i>dance</i> | 8 | 8 | | | 1 | 1 | | | | | 18 |
| <i>run</i> | 4 | 5 | | | 3 | | | | | | 12 |
| <i>bark</i> | 1 | | 10 | | | | | | | | 11 |
| <i>sob</i> | | 9 | | 2 | | | | | | | 11 |
| <i>fight</i> | | 5 | | | 2 | | 2 | | | | 9 |
| <i>talk</i> | | | 8 | | | | 1 | | | | 9 |
| <i>sweat</i> | 2 | | | | 1 | | 1 | | 4 | | 8 |
| <i>cough</i> | 1 | | | | | | | 6 | | | 7 |
| <i>lie</i> | 3 | | 4 | | | | | | | | 7 |
| <i>yell</i> | | | 5 | | | | | 2 | | | 7 |
| <i>cheer</i> | 1 | 1 | | | | | | 3 | | | 5 |
| hapaxes | 22 | 14 | 13 | 6 | 11 | 4 | 9 | 5 | 2 | 1 | 87 |
| total tokens | 162 | 145 | 136 | 129 | 100 | 47 | 43 | 31 | 14 | 1 | 807 |
| hapaxes per tokens | 14% | 10% | 10% | 5% | 11% | 9% | 21% | 16% | 14% | 100% | 11% |

Grey-shade legend

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--------------------|---|-----|-----|-----|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|------|
| tokens | | 1 | 2 | ≥ 3 | ≥ 5 | ≥ 8 | ≥ 11 | ≥ 17 | ≥ 26 | ≥ 38 | ≥ 57 |
| hapaxes/tokens (%) | 0 | 1-3 | 4-6 | 7-9 | 10-12 | 13-15 | 16-18 | 19-21 | 22-24 | 25-27 | ≥ 28 |

The left-most column describes the verbs used for BPOCs. The top-most row shows the postverbal sequences (functioning as intensifiers). The number of the table signifies the frequency of the sequence of a verb and a

postverbal intensifier. The table also represents the number of *hapax legomena* or *hapaxes*, verbs which combine with that postverbal sequence only once.¹² The point of the data in (26) is that there is a variety of verb-postverbal NP patterns comprising BPOCs in English.

From the fact that there are numerous conventionalized expressions in Dutch, Cappelle concludes as follows: there is no such pragmatic derivational model of mental representation cross-linguistically, when we interpret excessive expressions. Basically, I go along with his argumentation. In particular, I agree with the point that BPOCs in English convey some causative-construction-like property. Indeed, as we will observe in Chapter 5, BPOCs do have causative features and are similar to caused-motion constructions.

However, there are two points with respect to which I have to make comments against his argumentation. They are concerned with the way of inheritance and the motivation of intensifying interpretation.

Let us start with the way of inheritance from causative resultatives to BPOCs. As shown in the network of English excessive constructions in (23), he posits that BPOCs inherit the constructional characteristics of causative path and property resultatives by way of excessive-event constructions. However, as will be obvious in Chapter 5, BPOCs are constructionally more analogous to caused-motion constructions than

¹² He also presents the distribution of verb and postverbal NPs comprising intensifying ditransitives in Dutch (web-based evidence). For more details, see Cappelle (to appear).

resultatives. Although he does not explicitly discriminate resultative constructions from caused-motion constructions in his argument, they should be treated clearly differently, as Goldberg (1995) argues. I will refer to this point again in Chapter 5 in relation to construction grammar.

In addition to the point, it must be noted that besides BPOCs, there are several constructions in English which describe excessiveness, such as resultative constructions with unsubcategory objects (i.e. FORCs) and *V the hell out of* constructions, as we have observed. In these constructions, the way of inheritance is different. If his constructional network in (23) were plausible, then it would follow that all the constructions which express the excessiveness of actions have some resultative features. However, some of the constructions inherit caused-motion constructions rather than resultatives. If my prediction is on the right track, then we do not have to establish excessive-event constructions and should predict another way of inheritance. I will look at the constructional relationship among BPOCs, FORCs, and VHOCs again in Chapter 5.

Let us move to the second point: the motivation of intensifying interpretation. Cappelle denies cognitive reasoning processes such as the one I have proposed when we interpret excessive expressions. However, it may be the case that pragmatic inference, including metaphors, of some sort must be needed. Consider the following pair:

- (27) a. He worked/danced/laughed his head off.

- b. The android worked/danced/laughed its head off, and it fell to the ground.

While the examples in (27) share exactly the same form *work/dance/laugh one's head off*, their interpretations are clearly distinct (i.e. the literal or hyperbolic interpretation). In addition to the difference of their construal, their aspectual status is also different, as I mentioned in 3.4. This leads us to subcategorize BPOCs into literal and excessive BPOCs. If we observe these subtypes in the framework of construction grammar, we have to posit a link of inheritance which connects literal and excessive BPOCs. In this regard, some of the researchers have suggested metaphors which associate the literal interpretation with the excessive interpretation. Given this, some pragmatic processes including metaphors must be involved when we observe these constructions. I will consider this problem again in the following chapter.

It must be added that the very purpose of positing metaphors is just to explain the constructional relationship between literal and excessive BPOCs. Along with Cappelle's claim, there is no need to introduce any pragmatic model of mental representation to interpret excessive BPOCs, since they are stored in the long-term memory as distinct constructions from literally-understood BPOCs.

3.6. Hoeksema and Napoli (2008)

Hoeksema and Napoli (2008) investigate the nature of constructions which contain taboo terms such as *hell*, *fuck*, *shit* etc. and observe them from the viewpoint of syntax, semantics, and historical linguistics. To capture their points, let us look at the following expressions containing taboo terms:

- (28) a. Let's get the hell out of here.
b. Get the hell off my property.
c. Shut the hell up.
d. Leave her the hell alone.
e. Why don't you go the hell away.

(Hoeksema and Napoli (2008:348))

- (29) I beat/kicked/annoyed/punched/surprised/irritated the hell out of him.

(Hoeksema and Napoli (2008:348))

Hoeksema and Napoli assume that there are two types of English taboo term constructions: the G-construction and B-construction. The examples of the former are shown as follows:

- (30) G-construction (or GET-THE-HELL-OUT):
a. Let's get the hell out of this cow town.

- b. Back the hell off!

(Hoeksema and Napoli (2008:352))

“G” in the G-construction is the initial letter of the intransitive verb *get*, which is a representative of verbs occurring in the G-construction. The sentences in (28) thus fall under the G-construction.

The second subtype is the B-construction, as exemplified by (31):

(31) B-construction (or BEAT-THE-HELL-UP):

- a. They’re beating the hell out of Jones.
- b. She scares the hell out of me.

(Hoeksema and Napoli (2008:352))

As in the case with the G-construction, “B” in the B-construction stands for the intransitive verb *beat*, which is a representative of verbs occurring in the B-construction. Thus, the sentence in (29) falls into the B-construction.

Hoeksema and Napoli provide the detailed characterization of G- and B-constructions. I will not observe their characteristics any further here, because we have already observed syntactic and semantic characteristics of VHOCs in the previous chapter. In what follows, I will overview their investigation and point out their drawbacks, focusing on the B-construction.

According to Hoeksema and Napoli, the origin of the B-construction

is exorcism. In the earliest stage, the taboo term expression *beat the devil out of X* describes either a real exorcism or a beating action. However, it seems impossible to identify when the B-construction exactly started to be in use, because it is difficult to distinguish the earlier exorcism interpretation from the later intensifier reading.¹³ Consider the following examples in the context of exorcism:

- (32) Yes, Loubitza will beat the devil out of her when she gets her home
– her and her broken jar!

(Hoeksema and Napoli (2008:371))

- (33) When ‘Charlie’s Angels’ beat the Beelzebub out of Adam Sandler’s ‘Little Nicky,’ bringing the second week gross of Drew Barrymore, Cameron Diaz, and Lucy Liu’s T&A blockbuster to a heavenly \$75 million, the triumph of seraphim over Satan seemed divine. And in true Hollywood tradition, the next question wasn’t ‘How do I thank thee, Lord?’ but rather ‘How fast can we make a sequel?’ For Sony, it’s not going to be a piece of angel food cake.

(Hoeksema and Napoli (2008:371))

The first appearance of the B-construction found in Google Books was in 1895 (sentence (32)). As time advances, the meaning of exorcism was

¹³ The best guess of Hoeksema and Napoli (2008) is that the B-construction dates back at least to the posterior half of the 19th century.

getting bleached to the extent that taboo terms function as an intensifier. The sentence in (33), which is found chronologically subsequent to the sentence in (32), is also ambiguous between religious or intensifier use.

Hoeksema and Napoli also offer the process of the substitution of *the hell* for *the devil* in the B-construction. This substitution is greatly influenced by an earlier change in English: *what the devil* has been substituted by *what the hell*. The shift including *wh*-words started in the late 18th or early 19th century, long before the first appearance of *beat the hell out of X*. The sentences in (34) are the examples involving *what the hell*:

- (34) a. I wonder what the hell brings us here again?
b. Him! why what the hell is he but a priest?

(Hoeksema and Napoli (2008:372))

In these cases, *what the hell* does not mean anything and functions as a mere intensifier. From the examples, we can assume that the shift from *the devil* to *the hell* has been highly influenced by the earlier change from *what the devil* to *what the hell*.

The substitution of *the hell* for *the devil* also accounts for the reason why *hell* is preceded by the definite article *the*. Until about the 1920s, the typical variant of the B-construction was *beat hell out of X*, where the definite article is absent. Observe the following examples:

- (35) a. Sheridan [...] used some rather strong language and said that he would ‘knock hell out of Stuart if he could get at him’.
- b. Tom Tarkington also testified that Goodman told him during the day that he was going to whip hell out of the appellant.
- c. One of them mots that do be in the packets of fags Stoer smokes that his old fellow welted hell out of him for one time he found out.

(Hoeksema and Napoli (2008:372))

The addition of the definite article *the* to *hell* was presumably influenced by the earlier employment of *the hell* in *wh*-questions. In fact, in present-day English, while *hell* must follow *the* as in (36a), the omission of the definite article *the* is allowed only when *hell* occurs with the preposition in *wh*-questions, as shown in (36b):

- (36) a. What *(the) hell are you doing?
- b. What in hell are you driving at?

(Hoeksema and Napoli (2008:372))

Note that the example in (36b) is very rare. In this way, *hell* without the definite article has chronologically been shifted to *the hell*.

I have observed the study offered by Hoeksema and Napoli. To sum

up their argument so far, the use of taboo terms as intensifiers has spread from the *wh*-constructions to the B-constructions. Besides, it has spread to the degree intensifier constructions.

Now, I point out their drawback. It would be true that the use of the NP *the hell* in the B-construction has been shifted from *the devil* as a literal use. However, if we consider this kind of expression synchronically and pragmatically, the relation between *V the devil out of X* as a literal expression and *V the hell/fuck/shit out of X* as an intensifying expression is still unclear. They do not mention the relationship. I will consider it in Chapter 5 from the viewpoints of construction grammar.

3.7. Yoshikawa and Igarashi (2011)

Yoshikawa and Igarashi (2011) investigate the characteristics of VHOCs from the viewpoint of historical linguistics, as Hoeksema and Napoli (2008) do. Furthermore, they propose the process of the construal of VHOCs as intensifying constructions from the viewpoint of the lexical conceptual structure (LCS).

First, let us sketch out their proposal from the viewpoint of English history. Chronologically considered, the nominal expressions *the daylight*s and *the hell* in VHOCs were used with verbs of physical impact. According to Yoshikawa and Igarashi, the first appearance of VHOCs with *the daylight*s and *(the) hell* are as follows:

- (37) a. 1848: We'll catch the fever and ager, ... and that'll *shake the day-lights out o' us*.
- b. 1922: His old fellow *weltd hell out of* him.
- c. 1944: If I could find a stick I'd grab it and *beat the daylight*s out of you.

(Yoshikawa and Igarashi (2011:185-186))

The sentences above include verbs of physical contact such as *shake* in (37a), *welt* in (37b), and *beat* in (37c). In fact, in an early stage, VHOCs nearly exclusively employ verbs of physical contact. In light of this, we can assume that the recent uses of VHOCs with “abstract” impacts such as the one expressed by *scare the hell out of X* have been derived from the physical uses. Indeed, there is a variety of verbs in the current use of VHOCs, as shown in the original data from Hoeksema and Napoli (2008) below (Yoshikawa and Igarashi (2008:186) cited it in a simplified manner):

(38) Verbs in the B-construction

| VERB | N | VERB | N | VERB | N | VERB | N | VERB | N |
|-------------------|----|-------------|----|--------------------|----|----------|----|----------|-----|
| admire | 1 | creep | 1 | kick | 34 | raze | 1 | sue | 1 |
| advertize | 1 | crush | 1 | knock | 36 | recruite | 1 | surprise | 1 |
| amuse | 1 | curse | 1 | laugh | 1 | repress | 1 | taunt | 1 |
| annoy | 10 | cut | 2 | lick | 5 | resent | 1 | tax | 1 |
| bad- mouth | 1 | dash | 1 | like | 2 | respect | 1 | tear | 2 |
| bash | 7 | dent | 1 | love | 5 | ride | 1 | tease | 1 |
| batter | 1 | depress | 1 | market | 1 | rip | 3 | terrify | 2 |
| beat | 98 | distract | 1 | mash | 1 | rout | 1 | thank | 1 |
| belt | 1 | eat | 1 | masturbate | 1 | sand | 1 | throw | 2 |
| bend | 1 | edit | 1 | miss | 1 | scare | 94 | tickle | 2 |
| bite | 1 | e-mail | 1 | misunder- stand | 1 | scratch | 1 | train | 1 |
| blast | 3 | embarrass | 1 | mix | 1 | screw | 1 | trash | 1 |
| blow | 5 | enjoy | 3 | mother | 1 | shake | 3 | walk | 1 |
| bomb | 4 | excuse | 1 | nuke | 1 | shell | 1 | wallopp | 3 |
| bore | 3 | fidget | 1 | pamper | 1 | shock | 1 | wear | 1 |
| bother | 2 | frighten | 8 | pester | 1 | shoot | 8 | welt | 1 |
| bug | 2 | frustrate | 1 | pistol-whip | 1 | sing | 1 | whack | 3 |
| bum | 1 | gripe | 1 | pound | 3 | slap | 3 | whale | 1 |
| burn | 1 | hammer | 1 | practice | 1 | slash | 1 | whip | 1 |
| challenge | 1 | hype | 1 | promote | 3 | smash | 5 | worry | 1 |
| confuse | 2 | impress | 10 | pummel | 1 | sock | 1 | | |
| cook | 1 | intimidate | 1 | punch | 3 | splash | 2 | TOTAL | 482 |
| corrode | 1 | investigate | 1 | push | 1 | spoil | 1 | | |
| counter- punch | 1 | irritate | 5 | race | 1 | squeeze | 1 | | |
| cover | 1 | jam | 1 | rape | 1 | stomp | 1 | | |
| crayon | 1 | jar | 1 | rattle | 1 | suck | 2 | | |

(Hoeksema and Napoli (2008:357))

Furthermore, as in the case of verbs, it is known that various types of postverbal NPs can occur in the current VHOCs:

(39) Taboo Terms in the G- and B-constructions

| ITEM | G | B | TOTAL |
|----------------------|-----|-----|-------|
| a living hell | | 1 | 1 |
| hell | | 28 | 28 |
| Satan | | 1 | 1 |
| spots | | 1 | 1 |
| he Beelzebub | | 1 | 1 |
| the bejeebies | | 3 | 3 |
| the bejesus | | 16 | 16 |
| the bloody bejeebies | | 1 | 1 |
| the bloody fuck | 1 | 3 | 4 |
| the bloody hell | 1 | | 1 |
| the breath | | 2 | 2 |
| the crap | | 21 | 21 |
| the creeps | | 1 | 1 |
| the daylights | | 3 | 3 |
| the deuce | 2 | 3 | 5 |
| the devil | | 7 | 7 |
| the dickens | | 1 | 1 |
| the everlasting shit | | 1 | 1 |
| the ever-living shit | | 1 | 1 |
| the everloving fuck | 1 | | 1 |
| the everloving shit | | 1 | 1 |
| the fickety fuck | 1 | | 1 |
| the flying fuck | 1 | | 1 |
| the fuck | 174 | 13 | 187 |
| the fucking fuck | 1 | | 1 |
| the heck | 26 | 50 | 76 |
| the hell | 290 | 121 | 411 |
| the holy hell | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| the holy shit | | 1 | 1 |
| the life | | 20 | 20 |
| the literal hell | | 3 | 3 |
| the living bejesus | | 3 | 3 |
| the living crap | | 9 | 9 |
| the living daylights | | 36 | 36 |
| the living doo squat | | 1 | 1 |
| the living dooky | | 1 | 1 |
| the living fuck | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| the living fudge | | 1 | 1 |
| the living hell | | 7 | 7 |

| ITEM | G | B | TOTAL |
|------------------------|-----|-----|-------|
| the living piss | | 3 | 3 |
| the living pudding | | 1 | 1 |
| the living shit | | 5 | 5 |
| the living smurf | | 1 | 1 |
| the living snot | | 1 | 1 |
| the living tar | | 1 | 1 |
| the motherfucking fuck | 1 | | 1 |
| the piss | | 3 | 3 |
| the proverbial fuck | 1 | | 1 |
| the shit | | 71 | 71 |
| the snot | | 4 | 4 |
| the spit | | 2 | 2 |
| the stuffing | | 8 | 8 |
| the tar | | 15 | 15 |
| the tarnation | 1 | 3 | 4 |
| TOTAL | 503 | 482 | 985 |

(Hoeksema and Napoli (2008:357))

Based on these data, Yoshikawa and Igarashi conclude that VHOCs with the postverbal NP *the daylight*s in an early stage were used to describe an event where someone loses her/his consciousness as a result of physical impacts like *shake*, *welt*, and *beat*. Here, the literal meaning of *the daylight*s (i.e. eyesight or consciousness) was still preserved. As time goes by, however, its literal meaning has been lost and the expression became a mere intensifier which emphasizes an action described by the verb with *out of*. This shift can be thought of as the main cause of the occurrence of various taboo terms in the object position of VHOCs like *hell*, *shit*, *fuck*, and *bejesus*. At the same time, VHOCs take not only verbs of physical contact, but also various types of verbs whose function is also to

intensify an action.

Yoshikawa and Igarashi (2011) also propose an interpretive process of VHOCs. They suggest that the aspect of events described by VHOCs including *the daylights* or *the devil* in their object position is inherently accomplishment (i.e. temporally bounded) in Vendler's sense. For example, the expression *beat the devil out of X* usually describes an event where someone drives off a demon. Here, the aspect is accomplishment. This is because, once a demon is removed from one's body, the beating action is also done.

On the other hand, while the aspect of the expression *beat the hell out of X* appears to be categorized into accomplishment in terms of its structure, its actual aspect is activity. In fact, this type of VHOCs permits the progressive form:¹⁴

- (40) a. John was annoying the hell out of me.
b. And then if they knew --- I think someone said that, Well, we all knew that O.J. was beating the hell out of Nicole.

(Yoshikawa and Igarashi (2011:187))

¹⁴ In fact, however, events whose aspect is categorized into accomplishment can actually form the progressive:

- (a) John is destroying the house now.

Yoshikawa and Igarashi do not mention this issue, but I do not refer to this any further here, because the main purpose here is to observe the differences between literal VHOCs and excessive VHOCs.

The possibility of forming the progressive implies that the aspect of described event by VHOCs with *the hell/fuck/shit* can be activity. This is because of its excessive interpretation. For example, the event “Nicole was gang bashed by O.J.” in (40a) does not basically contain any temporal endpoint. Thus, we can conclude that, while the apparent form of VHOCs with *the hell/fuck/shit* implies that these constructions describe accomplishment, their actual aspect is categorized as activity.

Yoshikawa and Igarashi explain why this “mismatch” of form and meaning happens, offering the following lexical conceptual structure:

- (41) *beat the N out of NP*: [x ACT ON y] CAUSE [y BECOME out of z]
 → [x ACT] CAUSE [the hell_y BECOME out of z]
 → [x ACT] & [<EXTENT_y> z]
 → [x ACT <EXTENT_y> ON z]
 (where EXTENT_y = hell/shit/crap/...)

(Yoshikawa and Igarashi (2011:188))

When the postverbal NP described by *the NP* (represented by the argument *y* in the LCS) merges with *out of*, this expression gains the meaning of extent, described by <extent>. The addition of <extent> changes the aspect of this expression from accomplishment to activity. This is because we cannot understand the situation in which the fictional place *hell* is removed from the inside of one’s body described by *the hell out of X*. Assuming the LCS

above, then the shift of the aspect can be explained.¹⁵

However, when we consider the expression *beat the devil/satan out of X* along with the LCS, there arises a problem. All the nominal arguments in postverbal position do not necessarily constitute the excessive expression. It is the case that we can explain the case of *the hell*, but not the case of *the devil*, since the latter expression can be interpreted literally. This becomes obvious from the following contrast:

- (42) a. They beat the hell/fuck/shit/bejesus out of him.
* The hell/fuck/shit/bejesus was beaten, and it literally came out of him.
- b. Loubitza beat the devil/satan out of Mary.
OK The devil/satan was beaten, and it literally came out of Mary.

Postverbal nominal arguments such as *hell/fuck/shit/bejesus* in (42a) actually function as intensifiers. This is exemplified by the infelicity of the paraphrase (represented by the asterisk). On the other hand, when *the devil/satan* occurs in object position, as in (42b), it can be literally understood in exorcism contexts.

As Goldberg (1995) claims, if there is a remarkable constructional difference between A and B, then they should be regarded as distinct constructions. If we follow her claim, then it would be plausible to

¹⁵ See Yoshikawa and Igarashi (2011:187-188) for more details.

consider that *V the hell out of X* and *V the devil/satan out of X* are distinct expressions. In Chapter 5, I assume literal VHOCs and figurative VHOCs, and propose a metaphor which associates the literal and figurative use.

3.8. Summary

I have observed the analyses proposed by Jackendoff (1997b), Sawada (2000), Morito (2011), Cappelle (to appear), Hoeksema and Napoli (2008), and Yoshikawa and Igarashi (2011), and pointed out their problems.

The problem of Jackendoff's (1997b) analysis lies in the presupposition that BPOCs only describe the excessiveness of events. His claim, therefore, can give no explanation for the case in which BPOCs are interpreted literally.

Sawada investigates the nature of BPOCs and offers the model of construal from a perspective of cognitive linguistics. The problem with his claim is that the interpretive mechanism presupposes only the excessive interpretation. However, the literal reading of BPOCs is permissible, when we consider the science fiction-like context. This problem is analogous to what Jackendoff (1997b) poses.

Morito observes BPOCs from the viewpoint of aspect. His main claim is that BPOCs describe telic events. That is why BPOCs allows the co-occurrence with the temporally-bounded adverbial *in* and the adverb *completely*, but does not allow passivization and the repetition of unergative verbs. However, contextual factors may change the aspect of BPOCs.

Cappelle (to appear) also investigates BPOCs. He claims that there is no need for assuming any pragmatic interpretive process, when we construe excessive expressions such as BPOCs. I basically agree with this claim. However, his claim that all the excessive constructions inherit the characteristics of resultatives is not the case, since, as will be discussed later, BPOCs inherit the characteristics of caused-motion constructions rather than resultatives. In addition, although he denies the pragmatic model, a metaphor which associates literal BPOCs with excessive BPOCs must be required in the framework of construction grammar.

Hoeksema and Napoli (2008) sketch the origin of VHOCs. They claim that taboo terms such as *beat the devil out of X* are originally used to express exorcism. Later on, they came to mean ‘V excessively.’ However, the relation between literal and excessive VHOCs remains unexplained.

Yoshikawa and Igarashi (2011) also consider the origin of VHOCs and posit the LCS as in (41). They claim that if we assume the LCS, the intensifying interpretation of *beat the N out of NP* can be explained. However, all the nominals in postverbal position do not necessarily constitute the excessive expression (e.g. *beat the devil/satan out of X*). Given this, I argue that there are two sub-constructions of VHOCs in terms of their interpretations. I will leave this issue for Chapter 5. Before that, I shall compare the possible approaches in the next chapter.

Chapter 4

Comparison among the Lexical-Semantic Approach, the Cognitive Approach, and the Construction Grammar Approach

4.1. Introduction

This chapter is concerned with a comparison among semantic theories which can explain the relationships among Fake Object Resultative Constructions (FORCs), Body Part *Off* Constructions (BPOCs), and V *the Hell Out of* Constructions (VHOCs). In particular, I will introduce the following three possible approaches: the lexical-semantic approach, the cognitive approach (the billiard-ball model in particular), and the construction grammar approach. In what follows, I will consider which approach is the best to describe the relevant constructions, and show that the constructional approach is the one which best describes the relationships among FORCs, BPOCs and VHOCs.

4.2. The Lexical-Semantic Approach

Many of the semanticists have been interested in the meaning of resultative constructions (Levin (1993), Levin and Rappaport Hovav (1995), Washio (1997), Kageyama (1996, 2001), Boas (2000, 2003), Wechsler (2005), Iwata (2006) and so many others).¹ They have mainly focused on

¹ It must be noted that the reason why I take resultative constructions into consideration, which are not main focus of this study, is that FORCs are, in fact, related to resultative constructions, as the name Fake Object “Resultative

the lexical meaning of verbs and have classified resultatives in terms of verb type. In addition to verb type, they also consider the status of XPs.

Observe the following examples:

- (1) a. Mary painted the wall green.
b. The boy broke the vase to pieces.
c. She ran her sneakers ragged.
d. The lecturer talked himself hoarse.
e. He drank himself into a stupor.

The verb *paint* in sentence (1a) is inherently transitive. In this case, we can predict the resultant state of the wall from the verbal meaning. More specifically, the painting action almost always entails the change of the color of an object. Sentence (1b) also employs the transitive verb *break*, but what is different from (1a) is that this sentence takes the prepositional phrase *to pieces* as a result phrase. The sentence in (1c) is somewhat weird in that the intransitive verb *run* appears to take the object NP *her sneakers*. In this case, *her sneakers* can be thought of as an unsubcategory NP, and the sentence is not accepted unless the postverbal NP co-occurs with the resultative phrase *ragged* (i.e. *She ran her sneakers.). In addition, the running action does not necessarily imply the formal change of a sneaker, in contrast to the case of (1a) and (1b).

Constructions” implies.

Resultatives are also allowed to take unsubcategoryed reflexives as their object NPs, such as *himself* in (1d). Furthermore, resultatives which contain reflexives also permit the occurrence with a prepositional phrase in the position of the result phrase, as in (1e).

Semanticians have classified resultative constructions, depending on the types of verbs and resultative phrases. However, the lexical-semantic approach which mainly focuses on the verbal meaning and the type of XPs of resultatives causes several problems.

First, there is a wide variety of verbs compatible with resultative constructions. In fact, Boas (2000) gives an enormous quantity of verbs which can appear in resultative constructions.² This means that it is almost impossible to identify which verb type can occur in resultatives.

In addition, the lexical-semantic approach has to assume all the possible meanings of verbs. Goldberg (1995:1) mentions as follows: “[I]t is argued that an entirely lexically-based, or bottom-up, approach fails to account for the full range of English data. Particular semantic structures together with their associated formal expression must be recognized as constructions independent of the lexical items which instantiate them.” Besides, she gives the following sentence as an example:

² For a space constraint, I do not observe his examples here. See Boas (2000) for more details.

(2) Dan talked himself blue in the face.

(Goldberg (1995:9))

The verb *talk* is not intuitively an intransitive verb, and does not require the reflexive object *himself* in nature. If the lexical-semantic approach best described resultative constructions or other related constructions, then it would have to postulate a special lexical meaning of *talk* like ‘X CAUSES Y to BECOME Z by talking.’ However, it is highly ad hoc and violates the principle of economy. In this way, the lexical-semantic approach cannot cover the full scope of resultatives.

Furthermore, other than examples of resultative constructions, there are many examples whose verbs are used idiosyncratically. Observe the following expressions:

- (3)
- a. Despite the President’s efforts to cajole or frighten his nine million subjects into line ...
 - b. My father frowned away the compliment and the insult.
 - c. Sharon was exactly the sort of person who’d intimidate him into a panic.
 - d. I cannot inhabit his mind nor even imagine my way through the dark labyrinth of its distortion.
 - e. Pauline smiled her thanks.
 - f. The truck rumbled down the street.

(Goldberg (1995:10))

With the examples in (3), too, it is almost impossible for us to predict their sentential meanings from the verbal meanings. Goldberg argues that the best way to account for the sentences in (2) and (3) is to assume the existence of constructions. I will discuss this issue in section 4.4.

The second problem on the lexical-semantic approach lies in the productivity of constructions. So-called “marginal” constructions are traditionally treated as non-productive constructions, since they only permit a particular form and meaning. In the case of BPOCs and VHOCs, for example, the sequence [NP V NP XP] and the meaning ‘V excessively’ are almost fixed, (cf. Konishi (1981), Jackendoff (1997b), Hoeksema and Napoli (2008), Morito (2012) etc.). For instance, as we observed in Chapter 2, XPs cannot precede the postverbal NPs in BPOCs and VHOCs:

(4) a. * Susan worked off her head.

(Susan worked her head off.)

(Jackendoff (1997b:551))

b. * John laughed off his head.

(John laughed his head off.)

(Miyata (2004:130))

c. * They worked off their butts (when they were young).

(They worked their butts off.)

(Sawada (2000:366))

(5) * scare *somebody* out of the hell/devil

(scare the hell out of *somebody*)

(Morito (2012:184))

The postverbal NPs in BPOCs and VHOCs must precede the particle *off* or the prepositional phrase *out of* NPs. That is, the linear order of BPOCs and VHOCs is highly fixed. Furthermore, these examples do not usually permit the resultative reading “X CAUSES Y to BECOME Z.” Instead, an idiosyncratic reading (i.e. ‘V excessively’) is given, although there is no intensifying word such as *so* or *very* in these expressions. Given the inflexibilities of their syntax and the idiosyncrasy of their semantics, many previous researchers have considered these constructions to be listed in the lexicon like words.

I agree with the claim that these constructions are stored in the long-term memory, as I have mentioned in the former chapter. However, the claim that these constructions are non-productive is not true. In fact, as Cappelle (to appear) shows, there is a wide range of verbs which occur in BPOCs, though they are all intransitives:

(6) The Usage Patterns of BPOCs in English by COCA

| | <i>one's ass off</i> | <i>one's heart out</i> | <i>one's head off</i> | <i>one's eyes out</i> | <i>one's butt off</i> | <i>one's tail off</i> | <i>one's guts out</i> | <i>one's lungs out</i> | <i>one's balls off</i> | <i>one's tush off</i> | |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|-----|
| <i>work</i> | 66 | 19 | 1 | | 69 | 43 | | | 1 | | 199 |
| <i>cry</i> | | 17 | 4 | 80 | | | 2 | 1 | | | 104 |
| <i>scream</i> | 2 | 2 | 44 | | | | 3 | 13 | | | 64 |
| <i>laugh</i> | 25 | | 30 | | | | | 1 | | | 56 |
| <i>bawl</i> | 1 | 2 | 4 | 39 | | | 1 | | | | 47 |
| <i>sing</i> | 1 | 43 | 1 | | | | 1 | | | | 46 |
| <i>freeze</i> | 24 | | | | 8 | 1 | | | 8 | 1 | 41 |
| <i>play</i> | 2 | 16 | | | 5 | | 3 | | 1 | | 27 |
| <i>puke</i> | | | | | | | 19 | | | | 19 |
| <i>dance</i> | 8 | 8 | | | 1 | 1 | | | | | 18 |
| <i>run</i> | 4 | 5 | | | 3 | | | | | | 12 |
| <i>bark</i> | 1 | | 10 | | | | | | | | 11 |
| <i>sob</i> | | 9 | | 2 | | | | | | | 11 |
| <i>fight</i> | | 5 | | | 2 | | 2 | | | | 9 |
| <i>talk</i> | | | 8 | | | | 1 | | | | 9 |
| <i>sweat</i> | 2 | | | | 1 | | 1 | | 4 | | 8 |
| <i>cough</i> | 1 | | | | | | | 6 | | | 7 |
| <i>lie</i> | 3 | | 4 | | | | | | | | 7 |
| <i>yell</i> | | | 5 | | | | | 2 | | | 7 |
| <i>cheer</i> | 1 | 1 | | | | | | 3 | | | 5 |
| hapax es | 22 | 14 | 13 | 6 | 11 | 4 | 9 | 5 | 2 | 1 | 87 |
| total tokens | 162 | 145 | 136 | 129 | 100 | 47 | 43 | 31 | 14 | 1 | 807 |
| hapax es per tokens | 14% | 10% | 10% | 5% | 11% | 9% | 21% | 16% | 14% | 100% | 11% |

Grey-shade legend

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--------------------|---|-----|-----|-----|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|------|
| tokens | | 1 | 2 | ≥ 3 | ≥ 5 | ≥ 8 | ≥ 11 | ≥ 17 | ≥ 26 | ≥ 38 | ≥ 57 |
| hapaxes/tokens (%) | 0 | 1-3 | 4-6 | 7-9 | 10-12 | 13-15 | 16-18 | 19-21 | 22-24 | 25-27 | ≥ 28 |

(Cappelle (to appear))

As is the case with BPOCs, as Hoeksema and Napoli (2008) claim, VHOCs also take a wide variety of verbs, as shown in (7):³

³ See also Omuro (2005) for verbs which occur in VHOCs.

(7) The Verbs Occurring in VHOCs⁴

| VERB | N | VERB | N | VERB | N | VERB | N | VERB | N |
|-------------------|----|-------------|----|--------------------|----|----------|----|----------|-----|
| admire | 1 | creep | 1 | kick | 34 | razz | 1 | sue | 1 |
| advertize | 1 | crush | 1 | knock | 36 | recruite | 1 | surprise | 1 |
| amuse | 1 | curse | 1 | laugh | 1 | repress | 1 | taunt | 1 |
| annoy | 10 | cut | 2 | lick | 5 | resent | 1 | tax | 1 |
| bad- mouth | 1 | dash | 1 | like | 2 | respect | 1 | tear | 2 |
| bash | 7 | dent | 1 | love | 5 | ride | 1 | tease | 1 |
| batter | 1 | depress | 1 | market | 1 | rip | 3 | terrify | 2 |
| beat | 98 | distract | 1 | mash | 1 | rout | 1 | thank | 1 |
| belt | 1 | eat | 1 | masturbate | 1 | sand | 1 | throw | 2 |
| bend | 1 | edit | 1 | miss | 1 | scare | 94 | tickle | 2 |
| bite | 1 | e-mail | 1 | misunder- stand | 1 | scratch | 1 | train | 1 |
| blast | 3 | embarrass | 1 | mix | 1 | screw | 1 | trash | 1 |
| blow | 5 | enjoy | 3 | mother | 1 | shake | 3 | walk | 1 |
| bomb | 4 | excuse | 1 | nuke | 1 | shell | 1 | wallop | 3 |
| bore | 3 | fidget | 1 | pamper | 1 | shock | 1 | wear | 1 |
| bother | 2 | frighten | 8 | pester | 1 | shoot | 8 | welt | 1 |
| bug | 2 | frustrate | 1 | pistol-whip | 1 | sing | 1 | whack | 3 |
| bum | 1 | gripe | 1 | pound | 3 | slap | 3 | whale | 1 |
| burn | 1 | hammer | 1 | practice | 1 | slash | 1 | whip | 1 |
| challenge | 1 | hype | 1 | promote | 3 | smash | 5 | worry | 1 |
| confuse | 2 | impress | 10 | pummel | 1 | sock | 1 | | |
| cook | 1 | intimidate | 1 | punch | 3 | splash | 2 | TOTAL | 482 |
| corrode | 1 | investigate | 1 | push | 1 | spoil | 1 | | |
| counter- punch | 1 | irritate | 5 | race | 1 | squeeze | 1 | | |
| cover | 1 | jam | 1 | rape | 1 | stomp | 1 | | |
| crayon | 1 | jar | 1 | rattle | 1 | suck | 2 | | |

(Hoeksema and Napoli (2008:357))

⁴ Hoeksema and Napoli (2008) divide VHOCs into the B(eat)-construction and the G(et)-construction. While the former takes transitive verbs, represented by the verb *beat*, the latter takes intransitive verbs, represented by the verb *get*. The listed verbs in (7) are the ones which occur in the B-construction. See also the former chapter and Hoeksema and Napoli (2008) for more details.

As the data in (6) and (7) show, it is the case that many verbs are compatible with BPOCs and VHOCs. This means that the constructions in question are no longer non-productive. What is more, it is difficult for us to predict the type of verbs which occur in these constructions. In other words, even if we consider the meanings of verbs on the lexical-semantic approach, we only describe the partial nature of BPOCs and VHOCs.

Rather, it is better to take the construction grammar approach, as I will show later. This approach stipulates the form and meaning of constructions, and assumes “a syntactic empty slot” into which possible participants can enter. I will return to this approach in section 4.4.

4.3. The Cognitive Approach

Resultative constructions have also been analyzed in terms of cognitive linguistics (Broccias (2003), Tsuzuki (2004) etc.), though the number of the previous studies is relatively small, compared with that of the lexical-semantic approach. In particular, the billiard-ball model or the causal chain (Langacker (2008), Croft (1991) etc.) apparently seems to be the most suitable approach to explain and describe the characteristics of FORCs, BPOCs, and VHOCs.

The billiard-ball model, originally introduced by Langacker, is motivated by Talmy’s “force-dynamics” – how entities interact with respect to force (Talmy (1985:293)). The billiard-ball model incorporates the

characteristics of the force-dynamic theory. The following quotation is an outline of the billiard-ball model:

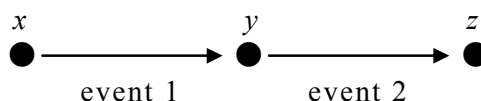
- (8) We think of our world as being populated by discrete physical objects. These objects are capable of moving about through space and making contact with one another. Motion is driven by energy, which some objects draw from internal resources and others receive from the exterior. When motion results in forceful physical contact, energy is transmitted from the mover to the impacted object, which may thereby be set in motion to participate in further interactions.

(Langacker (2008:103))

In short, the billiard-ball model describes how entities in a sentence interact with each other with respect to the involved force.⁵

⁵ Croft (1991) considers the causal chain (i.e. the billiard-ball model) as follows:

First, it requires that causally related events share individuals since the individual at the endpoint of one event is the initiator of the next, causally connected, event ($x, y, z =$ participants):



The second advantage is that it imposes a (possibly partial) ordering of participants in the causal chain of events: x precedes y in the causal chain, and y precedes z in the causal chain. This will prove to be a crucial feature in formulating linguistic universals, and it is absent from the other two representations of causation.

(Croft (1991:162-163))

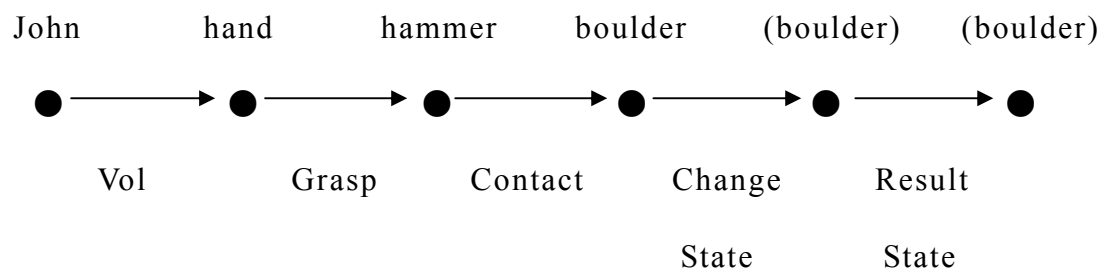
To make clearer what the billiard-ball model is, let us consider the following example from the viewpoint of this approach and how the interaction of participants is represented by this model:

(9) John broke the boulder with a hammer.

(Croft (1991:166))

According to Croft, the causal sequence in (9) can be decomposed into several atomic events. This is represented by the following chain of actions:

(10) John broke the boulder with a hammer.



(Croft (1991:166))

First, John uses his hand volitionally, represented by Vol. Second, his hand grasps the hammer, represented by Grasp. Third, the hammer grasped by John's hand hits the boulder, represented by Contact. Fourth, the

What is crucial here is that the representation of the causal relations allows us to identify the relation among participants, and to represent multiple events in a single sentence and force dynamics of each event.

boulder changes its shape by the contact, represented by Change State. Finally, the resultant state of the boulder comes out, represented by Result State.

As is obvious from representation (10), the billiard-ball model allows us to scan atomic events of a seemingly single event described by a sentence and to represent the force dynamics of each participant or atomic events.

It seems that the billiard-ball model also explains the constructional meaning of resultative constructions better than lexical-conceptual structure (LCS). According to Kageyama (1996), an event described by resultatives can be decomposed into two sub-events. Consider the following LCS, which represents the sub-events of resultatives:

(11) [x ACT ON y] + [y BECOME [y BE AT-z]]

→ [x ACT ON y] CAUSE [y BECOME [y BE AT-z]]

(Kageyama (1996:253))

The first event represented by [x ACT ON y], which we call upper event, describes a situation in which the participant *x* takes action to the participant *y* by a physical contact of some sort. The second event represented by [y BECOME [y BE AT-z]], called lower event, describes a situation in which the participant *y* changes its shape or state. The embedded sub-event [y BE AT-z] describes the resultant state of the participant *y* after its change. Here, BE AT denotes not only the change of

location, but also the change of state of the participant *y*. Furthermore, we can predict that there is a causal relation between the upper and lower events, because the change of state usually requires some “igniter” (i.e. a trigger to cause the change). Therefore, the upper event can be thought of as the cause of the lower event, represented by CAUSE in LCS (11).

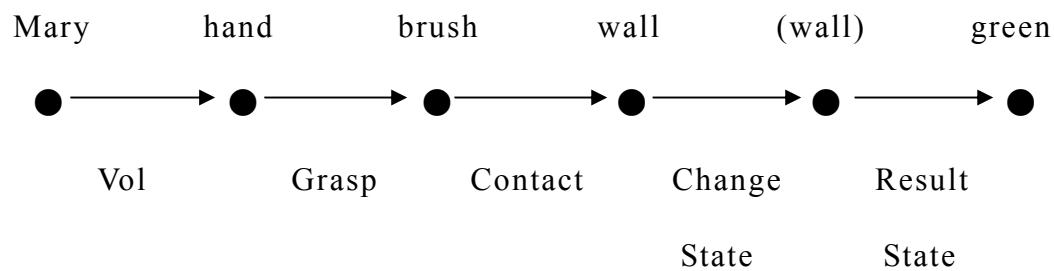
Let us re-consider the upper and lower events with the following example:

(12) John broke the door open.

Here, John’s action affects the state of the door, and as a result, it finally opened. We can assume that there is a causal relation between the upper event (i.e. John’s breaking the door) and the lower event (i.e. the door’s opening). Therefore, LCS reminds us of the fact that an apparent chunk of event expressed by resultative constructions can actually be decomposed into two sub-events.

We can see sub-events and force-dynamics of resultative constructions more precisely by the billiard-ball model. Let us first consider the example of transitive resultatives and its representation:

(13) Mary painted the wall green. (= (1a))



The event described by sentence (13) can roughly be decomposed into the following five sub-events:

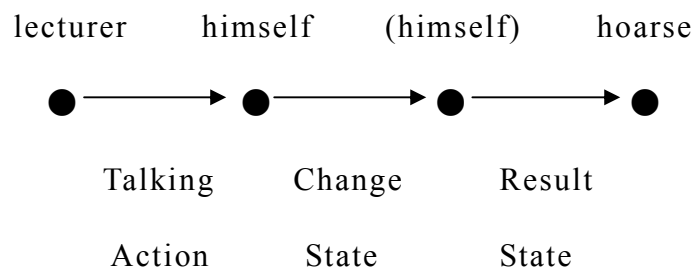
- (14) a. Mary moves her hand.
b. Mary grasps a brush.
c. The brush contacts a wall.
d. The color of the wall changes by the painting action.
e. The color of the wall becomes green.

While LCS decomposes resultative constructions into the upper and lower events, the billiard-ball model enables us to decompose them into at least five events. First, Mary consciously moves her hand to grasp a brush, represented by Vol and Grasp. Although the participant *brush* does not appear in the sentence, we can identify its existence, since we understand that it is almost impossible for us to paint a wall without any brush. The brush grasped by Mary contacts a wall and its color changes, represented by Contact and Change State. Finally, the color of the wall becomes green,

represented by Result State. By virtue of the representation of the causal relation, we can identify not only these sub-events in a single sentence but also the force-dynamic relationship among the participants.

The billiard-ball model can even explain an intransitive case. Observe the following:

(15) The lecturer talked himself hoarse. (= (1d))



The events described by sentence (15) can roughly be decomposed into the following three sub-events:

- (16) a. A lecturer talks about something.
 b. The talking action affects the state of his throat.
 c. His throat becomes hoarse.

First, a lecturer talks about something, represented by Talking Action. Second, the talking action affects his throat, represented by Change State. Note that in this case the reflexive *himself* represents his throat metonymically. Finally, his throat becomes hoarse, represented by Result

State.

The LCS analysis reveals that resultative constructions are composed of two sub-events called upper event and lower event. On the other hand, the billiard-ball analysis allows us to understand not only how many participants there are in a single sentence but also how participants interact each other with respect to the force-dynamics. Therefore, when we consider the relation between participants and described events, the billiard-ball model is better than the LCS analysis.

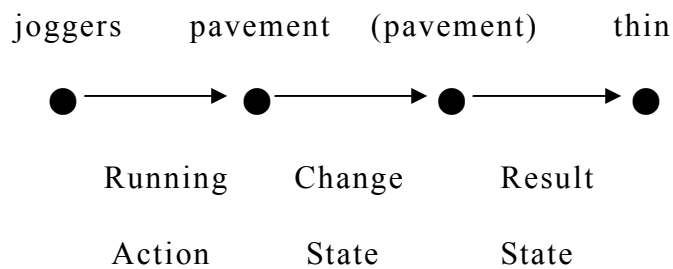
However, there is a problem on the billiard-ball model, particularly when we consider the interpretation of resultatives and other similar constructions. As we have observed in the previous chapters, some of the resultatives, unergative resultatives in particular, often have the excessive interpretation. Observe the following examples:

- (17) a. The joggers ran the pavement thin.
b. He worked himself to death.

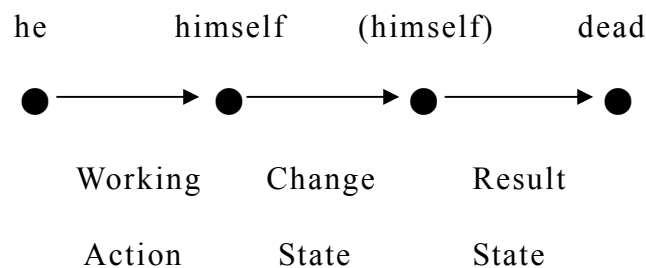
Most of native speakers of English construe this sentence as follows: “the joggers ran very hard as if the pavement became thin” (i.e. the excessive interpretation). Here, the actual abrasion of the pavement is not necessarily implied. The same explanation goes for sentence (17b). From these idiosyncratic interpretations, the syntax of the sentences in (17) does not correspond to their semantics.

When we try to represent the sub-events and force-dynamics of the sentences in (17), we will first encounter a notational problem. Consider the inappropriate representations of the sentences in (17), as follows:

- (18) a. The joggers ran the pavement thin.



- b. He worked himself to death.



The fatal notational problem is that the representations in (18) include the result state.⁶ The representation in (18a) describes an actual abrasion of the pavement, and the representation in (18b) describes an actual dead of the subject referent. However, these representations do not reflect the actual meanings of the sentences. In fact, the postverbal sequences *the pavement thin* in (17a) and *himself to death* in (17b) intensify the meanings

⁶ Even if we could solve the notational problem, as shown later, there is still a remaining problem.

of the verbs *run* and *work*. Therefore, the billiard-ball model fails to describe the actual interpretation of resultatives which are interpreted excessively.

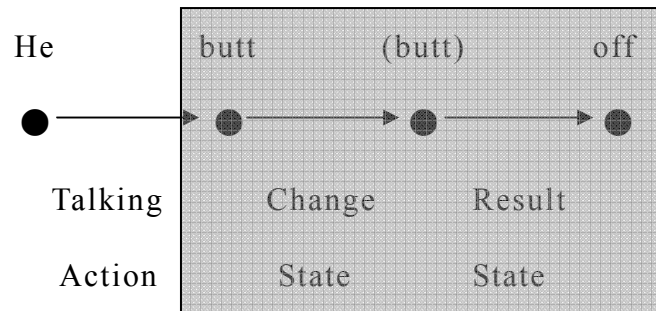
The same problem also arises in BPOCs. As we observed, BPOCs and VHOCs have both literal and excessive interpretations:

- (19) a. He talked his butt off last night.
b. The robot talked its butt/ass off, and the people around it were very surprised.
- (20) a. Mary beat the hell out of him.
b. Loubitza beat the devil/satan out of Mary.

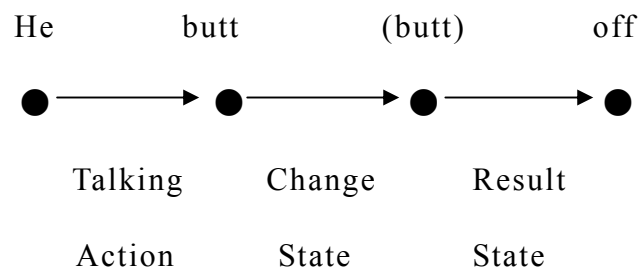
While the sentences in (19a) and (20a) are interpreted excessively, the sentences in (19b) and (20b) are usually interpreted literally. Put it differently, while the form of (19b) and (20b) corresponds to their semantics, that of (19a) and (20a) do not. Hence, we run into difficulty on the notation, when we consider the interpretation of the constructions in question.

As one of the solutions, the sentences in (19) and (20) could be represented as follows:

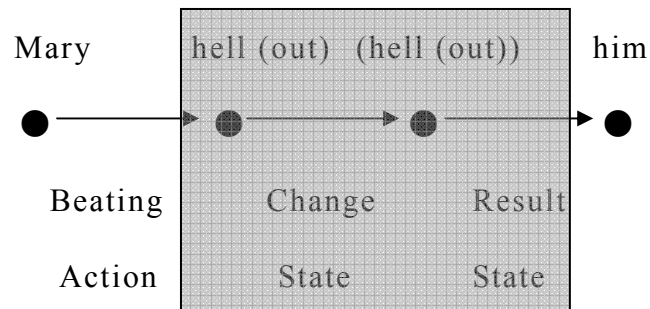
(21) a. He talked his butt off last night.



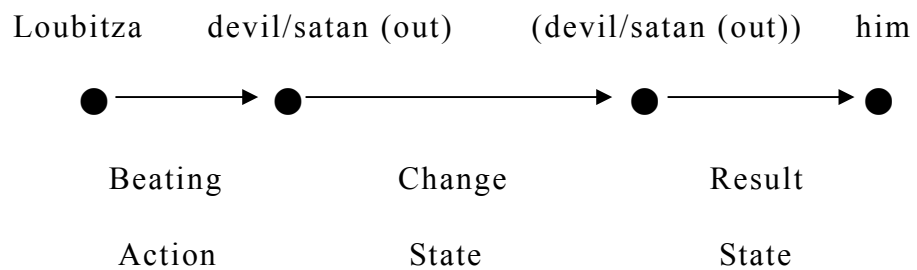
b. The robot talked its butt/ass off, and the people around it were very surprised.



(22) a. Mary beat the hell out of him.



b. Loubitza beat the devil/satan out of Mary.



The gray-shaded parts in (21a) and (22a) denote that these parts function as intensifiers. These gray-shaded parts are required only when the sentences of BPOCs and VHOCs are interpreted excessively. Thus, the gray-shaded part tentatively avoids the notational problem of the billiard-ball model. However, even if the notational problem were avoided by the introduction of the gray-shaded part, there is still a remaining problem.

The billiard-ball model does not assume constructional units. This causes a problem like this: we cannot see the relationships among constructions. In other words, even if we can understand the relationship of participants and events by the force-dynamics, it is impossible for us to see how the constructions are related (i.e. the way of linking in construction grammar). As the main purpose of this study is to clarify the relation among FORCs, BPOCs and VHOCs, this problem must be solved. In addition, the reason why the excessive interpretation is derived from these constructions is still unclear. To solve it, we have to consider these sentences in construction grammar. In what follows, I will show that the construction grammar approach best describes the relation among FORCs, BPOCs and VHOCs.

4.4. The Construction Grammar Approach

The construction grammar approach, originally proposed by Goldberg (1995), resolves the problems with the lexical-semantic approach and the cognitive approach. In what follows, I will briefly observe the essence of

the construction grammar approach.

First, remember the disadvantage of the lexical-semantic approach: it has to postulate all the possible meanings of verbs. For example, let us consider the usage of the verb *talk*:

- (23) a. English people love to *talk* about the weather. (LDOCE⁵)
b. John *talked* with a radio station.
(LDOCE⁵ with a slight modification)
c. The lecturer *talked* himself hoarse. (= (15))

According to LDOCE⁵, the central meaning of *talk* is defined as follows:

- (24) to say things to someone as part of a conversation

The usage of the verb *talk* in (23a) is compatible with the definition in (24). In contrast, the meaning of *talk* in (23b) is somewhat ‘marginal,’ in that it means to interact with someone by telecommunication device of some sort. Sentence (23c) requires a special lexical meaning of *talk* ‘X CAUSES Y to BECOME Z by talking.’ The lexical-semantic approach assumes that all the possible meanings shown above are stored in the long-term memory. However, the assumption is non-productive and violates the principle of economy.

The construction grammar approach presupposes the existence of

constructional units such as ‘X CAUSES Y to BECOME Z (i.e. resultatives).’ Here, *X*, *Y*, and *Z* are “empty slots” into which possible entities/participants (e.g. agent, patient, theme etc.) can enter. Given the constructional unit and the empty slots, we need not stipulate almost infinite meanings of verbs.

Second, remember the defects inherent to the billiard-ball model (i.e. the cognitive approach). This approach raises two problems: (i) the notational difficulty and (ii) the relational opacity among the constructions. The first problem could be solved by introducing representations such as those in (21a) and (22a). In what follows, I will show how the second problem of the billiard-ball model can be solved.

This construction grammar approach aims to describe a network of existing constructions and how they interact. For example, caused-motion constructions (CMCs) and resultative constructions (RCs) apparently share the sequence [NP V NP XP]. Observe the following examples:

- (25) a. Frank sneezed the tissue off the table. (CMCs)
b. Mary pounded the metal flat. (RCs)

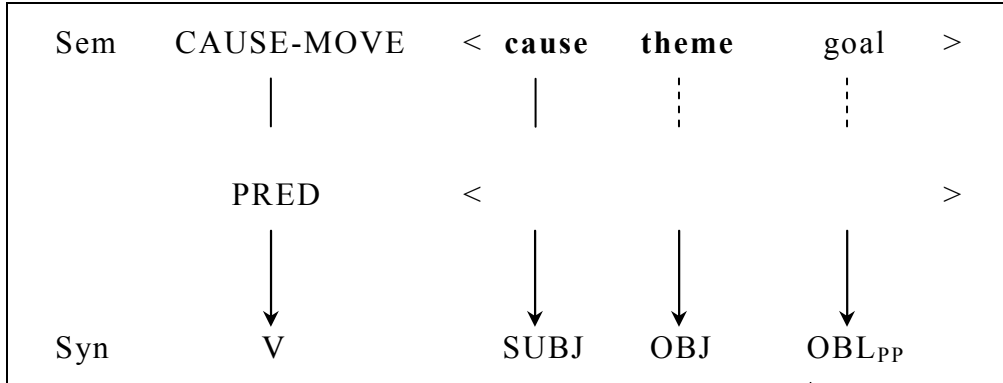
These sentences are apparently similar, but in fact, they have distinct properties. The billiard-ball model cannot specify what kind of relationship they have in common, since this approach only captures the force-dynamics of the participants and events of these sentences.

The construction grammar approach posits “links,” which show the relation between arbitrary constructions A and B. There are four types of links: a polysemy link (I_P), a subpart link (I_S), an instance link (I_I), and a metaphorical link (I_M).⁷ These links enable us to capture the type of relation among constructions. For example, the following representation clearly shows the relation between CMCs and RCs:

⁷ For more details on the links, see Goldberg (1995).

(26) The Inheritance Relation between CMCs and RCs:

Caused-Motion Construction

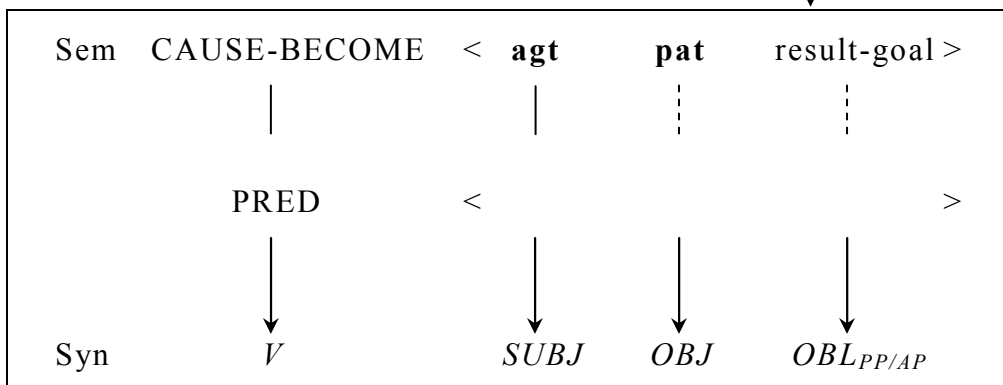


e.g. CMC: Frank sneezed the tissue off the table.

RC: Mary pounded the metal flat.

I_M

Resultative Construction



Here, the following metaphor is involved:

(27) “STATES ARE LOCATIONS”

This metaphor is originally suggested by Lakoff and Johnson (1980). This

metaphor says that the transfer of ownership can be recognized as the physical transfer. Given the metaphor, then the constructional relation between CMCs and RCs becomes explicit.^{8, 9}

By virtue of the representation, we can see that RCs inherit the constructional characteristics of CMCs via metaphorical inheritance (I_M). The construction grammar approach can represent how constructions are associated with each other, which the billiard-ball model cannot. In addition, construction grammar approach makes explicit semantic roles. Furthermore, this approach clearly shows how these semantic roles are realized in the syntax. The representation above can show the relationship between semantics and syntax, as well as the relationship between constructions.

4.5. Summary

Here, let us briefly summarize the characteristics of three approaches observed above.

The lexical-semantic approach observed in 4.2 tries to describe the relation between a verb and other element in a sentence focusing mainly on verbal meanings. This approach, however, cannot describe the characteristics of resultative constructions. It is the case that many types

⁸ One might argue that the introduction of metaphor into the cognitive approach allows us to describe the characteristics of the constructions in question. However, the billiard-ball model only explains the relation among sentences and does not assume the existence of constructions. Therefore, even if we apply metaphor to this approach, the relation among constructions is still opaque.

⁹ I will explain the way of inheritance more specifically in the next chapter.

of transitive and intransitive verbs are compatible with resultative constructions (See Boas (2000)). In other words, it is almost impossible for the lexical-semantic approach to identify which verb type can occur in these constructions. What is more, the lexical-semantic approach has to assume all the possible meanings of verbs, which is highly ad hoc and violates the principle of economy. In contrast to the lexical-semantic approach, the construction grammar approach assumes the existence of construction rather than specifies individual verbal meanings. By doing so, we can identify the relation between verbal and constructional meanings.

The billiard-ball model (the cognitive approach) observed in 4.3 illustrates the force-dynamics of participants. One might consider this model could describe the characteristics of the constructions in question. However, as is the case with the drawback of the lexical-semantic approach, even if we introduce this model, the constructional relationship among FORCs, BPOCs and VHOCs is left unclear. This is because the billiard-ball model only considers the force-dynamics of participants in a sentence, and does not assume constructional units. As I mentioned above, construction grammar presuppose constructional units, which enables us to reveal the whole relation among the constructions.

In the next chapter, I will consider the relation among FORCs, BPOCs, and VHOCs in terms of their interpretations and offer their constructional network.

Chapter 5

A Construction Grammar Approach to Fake Object Resultative Constructions, Body Part *Off* Constructions, and *V the Hell Out of* Constructions

5.1. Introduction

The objective of this chapter is to explore the relationship among Fake Object Resultative Constructions (FORCs), Body Part *Off* Constructions (BPOCs), and *V the Hell Out of* Constructions (VHOCs) in terms of construction grammar approach. In addition to these constructions, I would like to consider the constructional characteristics of Caused-Motion Constructions (CMCs), since CMCs are deeply related to the constructions in question. Furthermore, I need to investigate Resultative Constructions (RCs), because FORCs have been considered to be a part of RCs in many works. As for RCs, I will follow the investigation by Goldberg (1995).

As I have mentioned in the previous chapters, not until recently have peripheral constructions such as FORCs, BPOCs, and VHOCs been in the focus of study (Goldberg (1995), Jackendoff (1997b), Sawada (2000), Miyata (2004), Hoeksema and Napoli (2008), Espinal and Mateu (2010), Morito (2011), Yoshikawa and Igarashi (2011) etc.). Indeed, the number of studies related to these peripheral constructions, BPOCs and VHOCs in particular, is rather small.

In the previous literature of these constructions, it has been said that these are a kind of idiomatic expressions. Furthermore, most of the studies especially focus on the semantic and aspectual characteristics, since their form and interpretation share the similarities: the word sequence [NP V NP XP] and the interpretation ‘V intensely.’ In the case of VHOCs, although it is possible for VHOCs to be analyzed in relation to FORCs and BPOCs, there is, to the best of my knowledge, no study investigating these three constructions all together. In accord with the history of the constructional investigation, this chapter tries to compare these constructions together in the framework of construction grammar. More specifically, I would like to clarify the inheritance relation among RCs, FORCs, BPOCs, VHOCs, and CMCs.

Before getting down to the elaborate discussion, there is one thing to be mentioned: when there is remarkable difference in constructional meaning between arbitrary constructions A and B, we have to consider them as different constructions, even though they share the same form. Let us consider the following example of BPOCs:

- (1) The android worked/danced/laughed its head off, and it fell to the ground.

As I will discuss in the following argument, in most every case, BPOCs are construed as a hyperbolic expression. That is, their construal is usually

limited to the intensifying. However, it is the case that example (1) can be interpreted literally in such a fictional context as “the head of the android actually came off as a result of working/dancing/laughing too much.” This interpretation is guaranteed by the context of the second conjunct. The fact that sentence (1) is literally interpreted is further exemplified by the implication of this sentence as the following:

(2) The head of android actually moved off.

According to my informants, the implication of example (1) can be expressed as in (2). From this, we can understand that BPOCs do have the literal counterpart.

Given the Goldberg’s definition of constructions and the fact that BPOCs have a literal counterpart, we have to assume that there are two sub-categorized constructions of BPOCs in terms of their interpretation.

Another reason I distinguish between constructions which share their form but have different interpretation is the selectional restriction on the object. Let us look at the following examples of VHOCs:

- | | | |
|-----|--|----------------------------|
| (3) | a. * beat the hell out of him | (Literal Interpretation) |
| | b. ^{OK} beat the hell out of him | (Excessive Interpretation) |
| (4) | a. ^{OK} beat the devil/satan out of him | (Literal Interpretation) |
| | b. ^{OK} beat the devil/satan out of him | (Excessive Interpretation) |

When *the hell* occurs in object position, this expression only permits the excessive (i.e. figurative) interpretation as in (3b), and the possibility of the literal interpretation is eliminated, as shown in (3a). This is because an affected entity of beating is not *the hell*, and *the hell out of* itself functions as an intensifier. In contrast, when *the devil/satan* occurs in object position, both the literal and excessive interpretations are allowed, as in (4a) and (4b).¹ The reason comes from the fact that *the devil/satan* takes a role as an affected entity of the action expressed by the verb *beat*. Hence, we need to distinguish between constructions, even if they share the same form.

As is obvious from the observation so far, it is the case that FORCs, BPOCs, and VHOCs each have the literal and excessive interpretations. In this thesis, I shall divide these constructions in terms of their interpretations. That is, there are six sub-constructions about these constructions: Literal FORCs (LFORCs), Figurative FORCs (FFORCs), Literal BPOCs (LBPOCs), Figurative BPOCs (FBPOCs), Literal VHOCs (LVHOCs), and Figurative VHOCs (FVHOCs)).

Then, one issue arises: what is the relation among these constructions? In the following discussion, I individually investigate the inheritance relationship among these six constructions together with RCs

¹ In other words, there are no VHOCs which are exclusively interpreted literally.

and CMCs, from the viewpoint of construction grammar.

5.2. Inheritance Relation between Caused-Motion Constructions and Resultative Constructions

5.2.1. The Differences of Semantic Behaviors between CMCs and RCs

This section explores the behavioral differences between CMCs and RCs. Goldberg (1995) argues that it is the case that RCs and CMCs are related constructions, but they are constructionally distinct.

The first reason why she distinguishes RCs from CMCs is a complementary distribution of the verbs. For example, the verb *make* can occur in RCs but cannot in CMCs:

- (5) a. It made him sick/into a better man.
b. ?*It made him into the room.

(Goldberg (1995:87))

What RCs originally describe is the change of state. The sentence in (5a) expresses that the object entity changes his health condition or personality. In this case, the sentence itself describes the change of state. On the other hand, CMCs originally represent the change of location. Therefore, the causative verb *make*, which mainly describes the change of state, cannot occur in CMCs, and sentence (5b) is not acceptable.

In contrast to the examples in (5), the verb *move* can occur in verbal

position in CMCs, but not in that of RCs:

- (6) a. He moved it onto the top shelf/away.
b. * He moved it black.

(Goldberg (1995:87))

Because the constructional meaning of CMCs can roughly be expressed as ‘X CAUSES Y to MOVE Z,’ the verb *move*, which expresses motion, is compatible with this construction, but not with RCs, which have such constructional meaning as ‘X CAUSES Y to BECOME Z.’

The second reason that we must make a clear distinction between RCs and CMCs is the patienthood of an entity occurring in object position. According to Goldberg, the entity in the object position of RCs must be categorized as patient. An entity following verbs in CMCs, on the other hand, is not patient but theme. To clarify this, let us look at the following examples:

- (7) a. Joe moved it onto the table.
b. Joe ran out of the room.

(Goldberg (1995:87))

In (7a), an instance of CMCs, the prepositional phrase *onto the table* functions as a goal argument. In (7b), in contrast, *out of the room* serves

as a starting point. In both cases, the prepositional phrases cannot function as the patient of the verbs. The patienthood becomes more obvious from the paraphrases “what X did to Y” and “what happened to Y,” both of which were proposed by Lakoff (1976) as diagnostics of patienthood. Observe the following:

- (8) a. ??What Joe did to it was he moved it.
b. ?*What happened to Joe was he ran.

(Goldberg (1995:88))

The unacceptability in (8) clearly suggests that the object entities in CMCs are not patient but theme.

Moreover, RCs must code an end of scale, while CMCs do not have to.

Look at the following sentences:

- (9) a. He threw it toward the door.
b. He put it near the table.

(Goldberg (1995:87))

These are the examples of CMCs. In contrast to the preposition *to*, which usually provides an endpoint for an event, the prepositions *toward* and *near* do not.²

² For more detailed discussion, see Goldberg (1995), and for more detail

From these semantic differences between RCs and CMCs, it should be reasonable to distinguish between these two constructions, though they share the formal similarity.

5.2.2. *The Inheritance Relation between CMCs and RCs*

Then, what relates CMCs to RCs, when we observe them from the viewpoint of construction grammar? According to Goldberg (1995), the following metaphor is involved in the CMCs-RCs inheritance:³

(10) “STATES ARE LOCATIONS”

The well-known metaphor in (10) was originally suggested by Lakoff and Johnson (1980). In the cases of CMCs and RCs, physical transfer (CMCs, the source construction) is metaphorically comparable to the transfer of ownership (RCs, the target construction).

Therefore, the inheritance relation between CMCs and RCs can be illustrated as follows:

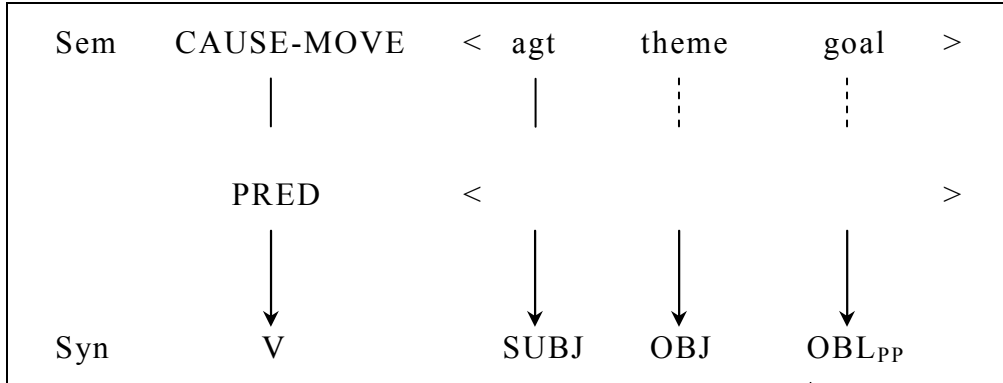
about the scale, see Wechsler (2005).

³ Goldberg (1995) defines inheritance links as follows:

- (i) To capture relations of motivation, asymmetric *inheritance links* are posited between constructions which are related both semantically and syntactically. That is, construction A motivates construction B iff B *inherits* from A. Inheritance allows us to capture the fact that two constructions may be in some ways the same and in other ways distinct. (Goldberg (1995:72))

(11) The Inheritance Relation between CMCs and RCs:

Caused-Motion Construction⁴

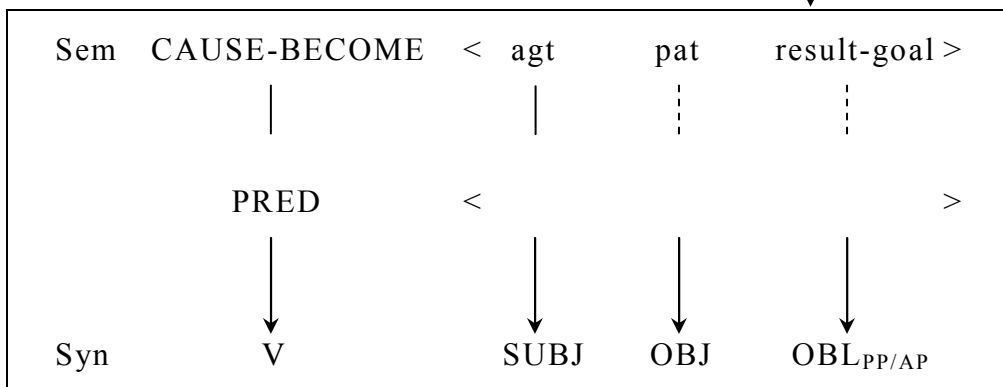


e.g. CMC: *Frank sneezed the tissue off the table.*

RC: *Mary pounded the metal flat.*

I_M

Resultative Construction



Let us sum up the discussion so far, referring to the representation in (11). First, the object entity of RCs must be classified as a patient argument. Directionals in CMCs, on the other hand, do not have to be

⁴ Goldberg originally uses “cause” instead of “agt (agent)” in the representation of CMCs. However, a subject which is regarded as a causer or initiator of an action has been usually regarded as agent. For formal uniformity, I would like to adopt agt instead of cause in the following discussion.

construed as patient, but rather considered as theme.⁵ Second, although result phrases of RCs must encode the end of scale, those of CMCs do not have to do so. Third, while the sentential meaning of CMCs involves the change of location, that of RCs the change of state. Their constructional characteristics are then related by the metaphor “STATES ARE LOCATION.”⁶ It is expressed by I_M in representation (11).

5.3. Inheritance Relation between Resultative Constructions and Literal Fake Object Resultative Constructions

5.3.1. RCs and FORCs

In section 5.2, we have considered the inheritance relation between CMCs and RCs. Before getting down to the discussion on the interpretation of RCs, let us look at the syntactic and semantic status of RCs. As shown in the former section, RCs are the constructions which inherit from CMCs through the metaphorical extension (“STATES ARE LOCATIONS”). One of the characteristics which typical RCs have is that the verb occurring in this construction is transitive. In other words, object elements in transitive RCs must be specified as a patient argument of the action denoted by verbs. Consider the following examples:

⁵ According to Goldberg (1995), the goal argument in (11) covers whole directional expressions such as *in/from/for/toward* etc. In other words, they may represent a source or goal argument. Henceforth, OBL in CMCs covers whole directional expressions.

⁶ It should be noted that construction grammar does not posit a dominance relation among constructions. In other words, there is no superiority among constructions.

- (12) a. He hammered the metal flat.
b. Terry wiped the table clean.

In these cases, the verbs *hammer* and *wipe* are transitive, and the objects *the metal* and *the table* are the entities which are classified as patient.

However, verbs which occur in this construction are not restricted to transitives. Consider the following examples:

- (13) a. “Paulo, who had *roared* himself *hoarse*, was very willing to be silent”
b. “The Germans *cri’d* their throats *dry* with calling for a general Council.”

(Goldberg (1995:180), cited from Visser (1963))

The verbs *roar* and *cry* in (13) are originally intransitive verbs, and they cannot be originally followed by any object entity. However, this type of RCs permits postverbal NPs like the reflexives *himself* and the unsubcategorized object *throats* to follow the verbs. Note, however, that these kinds of objects do not bear a semantic relation to the verbs. This is exemplified by the unacceptability of the omission of result phrases:

- (14) a. * He roared himself.

b. * The Germans cried their throats.

(Goldberg (1995:180))

From the ungrammaticality above, they are considered to be exceptions to the semantic constraint of patienthood. We call these kinds of objects “fake objects,” as Simpson (1983) puts it. This is why I call this type of construction Fake Object Resultative Constructions (FORCs).

5.3.2. *Syntactic Behaviors of RCs and FORCs (Carrier and Randall (1992))*

There are quite a few researchers who assume that the postverbal NPs in FORCs are not arguments of the verb, while those in transitive resultatives actually are (Bresnan and Zaenen (1990), Jackendoff (1990), Rappaport Hovav and Levin (1991), Napoli (1992)). Carrier and Randall (1992) argue that transitive RCs undergo three syntactic operations that apply only to verbs whose postverbal NPs function as direct internal arguments.

The first operation is middle formation. Compare the acceptability of RCs and FORCs, as follows:

(15) Middles from RCs

a. New seedlings water *t* flat (easily).

(NP water the new seedlings flat)

b. My socks won't scrub *t* clean (easily).

(NP won't scrub my socks clean)

c. Permanent press napkins iron *t* flat (easily).

(NP iron permanent press napkins flat)

(Carrier and Randall (1992:191))

(16) Middles from FORCs

a. * Competition Nikes run threadbare (easily).

(NP run competition Nikes threadbare)

(Carrier and Randall (1992:191))

b. * Those tires drive bald easily.

(He drove his tires bald.)

(Goldberg (1995:182))

As is obvious from the examples in (15) and (16), while the middle formation from RCs is impeccable, that from FORCs is not.

The second evidence which indicates that postverbal NPs in RCs are verb's direct internal arguments concerns the adjectival passive formation.

Observe the following contrast:

(17) Adjectival passives from RCs

a. the stomped-flat grapes

b. the spun-dry sheets

c. the smashed-open safe

- d. the scrubbed-clean socks

(Carrier and Randall (1992:195))

(18) Adjectival passives from FORCs

- a. * the danced-thin soles
- b. * the run-threadbare Nikes
- c. * the crowed-awake children
- d. * the talked-unconscious audience

(Carrier and Randall (1992:195))

Whereas the adjectival passives from RCs in (17) are all acceptable, those from FORCs in (18) are not.

The third operation which Carrier and Randall adduce is the possibility of nominalization. Let us look at the following contrast between (19) and (20):

(19) Transitive resultative nominals

- a. The watering *of tulips* flat is a criminal offense in Holland.
- b. The painting *of fire engines* the color of schoolbuses is strictly prohibited by state law.
- c. The Surgeon General warns against the cooking *of food* black.

(20) Intransitive resultative nominals

- a. * The drinking *of oneself* sick is commonplace in one's freshman year.

- b. * The talking *of your confidant* silly is a bad idea.
- c. * The jogging craze has resulted in the running *of a lot of pairs of Nikes* threadbare.

(Carrier and Randall (1992:201))

The nominalization is possible for RCs, but not for FORCs. These contrasts explicitly indicate that the postverbal NPs occurring in transitive RCs are internal direct arguments, while the postverbal NPs in FORCs are not.

5.3.3. Counterexamples (Goldberg (1995))

Goldberg (1995) points out that these regularities which Carrier and Randall (1992) offer are not necessarily true, when we further observe the instances of RCs and FORCs. For example, the examples in (21) are middle constructions derived from RCs. In these cases, their grammatical behavior is quite parallel to that of FORCs:

- (21) a. * Pat kicks black and blue easily.
- b. * The washer loads full easily.
- c. * His face washes shiny clean easily.

(Goldberg (1995:182))

Moreover, some adjectival passives and nominalizations derived from RCs

are ungrammatical (cf. Jackendoff (1990)). Consider the following examples in (22) and (23):

(22) Adjectival Passive derived from RCs

- a. * the washed-shiny-clean face
- b. * the shot-dead man
- c. * the kicked-black-and-blue dog.

(Goldberg (1995:183))

(23) Nominalization derived from RCs

- a. * the shooting of the man dead
- b. * the washing of the face shiny clean
- c. * the driving of him crazy

(Goldberg (1995:183))

Offering these ill-formed examples as pieces of evidence, Goldberg concludes as follows: “although there may well be an implication that if X occurs in the middle construction and adjectival passive construction and nominalization construction, then X is an argument, the converse is clearly false. So we cannot use these constructions to argue that fake object cases are *not* arguments.”⁷

⁷ Okuno (2003) argues in a similar way. She claims that the kind of semantic arguments should be defined purely semantically or pragmatically. She adduces the following paraphrases:

- (i) a. What Tom did to **himself** was to talk himself hoarse.

5.3.4. *Inheritance Relation between RCs and FORCs*

The main claim of Goldberg (1995) is that, although fake objects are not syntactic arguments, they should be treated as semantic arguments. Then, how should the argument occurring in the object position of FORCs be treated? One clue to solve the issue lies in the affectedness of entities in object position, suggested by Takami (1997):

- (24) a. Mary shouted herself hoarse.
b. The dog barked the baby awake.
c. The joggers ran their Nikes threadbare.

(Takami (1997:39))

Although the verbs *shout*, *bark*, and *run* are intransitive verbs, which do not originally have any causative meaning, it seems that the object elements *herself*, *the baby*, and *their Nikes* are actually affected in some way. In (24a), for example, as a result of Mary's shouting, her throat was damaged (e.g. she might be thirsty). The same explanation holds true of (24b) and

-
- b. ? What the dog did to **the neighbor** was to bark him awake.
c. What John did to **his feet** was to dance them sore.
d. What they did to **the pub** was to drink it dry.
e. * What the chef did to **the kitchen walls** was to cook them black.
f. What Cinderella did to **her fingers** was to scrub them to the bone.
(Okuno (2003:163))

If the paraphrases *What X did to <patient> was* and *What happened to <patient> was* could be the thorough diagnostics for patienthood, then the examples in (i) must be consistently unacceptable. It is not the case, however. In the course of these results, Okuno concludes that the kind of arguments cannot be defined by syntactic diagnostics, but it should be based on semantics or pragmatics. For more detailed discussion, see Okuno (2003).

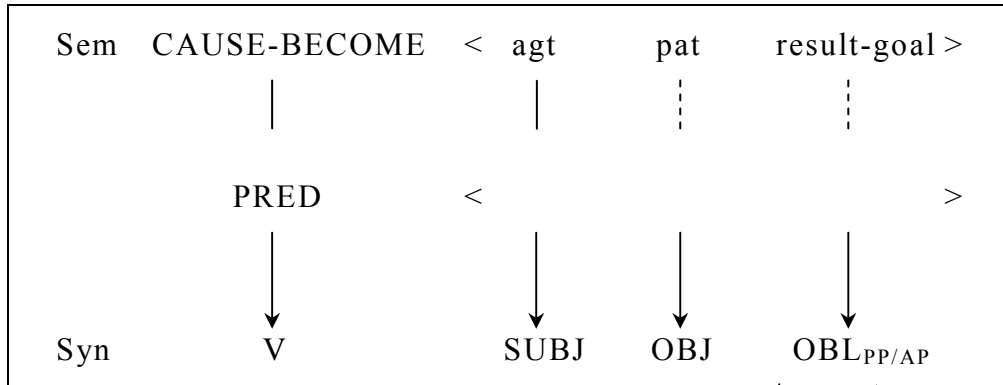
(24c).

Furthermore, Goldberg also suggests as follows: “resultatives can only apply to arguments which potentially undergo a change of state as a result of the action denoted by the verb; that is, resultatives can only apply to arguments which can be categorized as patient arguments.”

Following Takami’s and Goldberg’s claims, we can argue that the postverbal NPs of FORCs can be thought of as patient arguments, as is the case with RCs. In sum, the inheritance relation between RCs and FORCs can be represented as follows:

(25) The Inheritance Relation between RCs and FORCs:

Resultative Construction



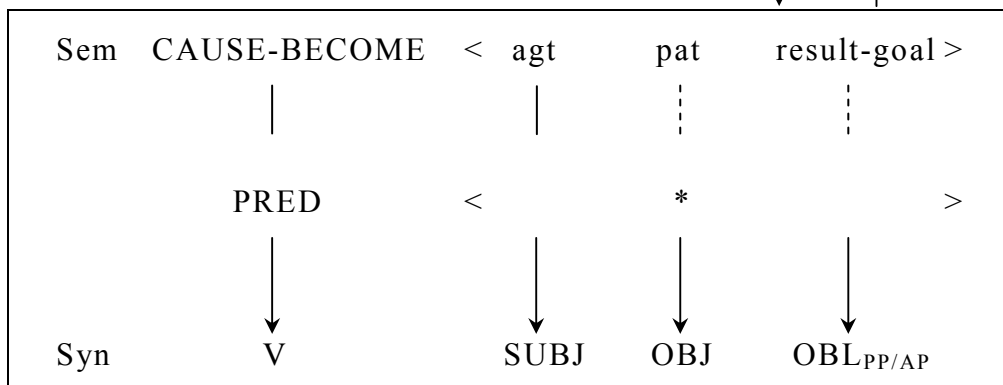
e.g. RC: *John pushed the door open.*

LFORC: *He ate himself sick.*

I_I

I_S

Literal Fake Object Resultative Construction



* has to be *oneself* or an element unselected by verbs

The semantic roles of RCs and FORCs are exactly the same, and they share the constructional meaning “X CAUSES Y to BECOME Z.” However, the patient argument of FORCs must be reflexive or ‘unselected’ element (i.e. the element which is not selected by verbs). In other words, the entity

which can occur in object position in FORCs is more restricted, compared with RCs. Given this difference, FORCs can be thought of as subcategory or instance of RCs. In other words, FORCs inherit from RCs via instance links (I_I). Conversely, FORCs are constructions which are proper subparts of RCs. So, RCs enter into constructional relationship with FORCs via subpart links (I_S).⁸

5.4. Inheritance Relation between Literal Fake Object Resultative Constructions and Figurative Fake Object Resultative Constructions

5.4.1. Introduction

In this section, I explore the constructional difference between literally- and figuratively-construed FORCs. As we have observed in the previous chapters, FORCs have two possible interpretations: “X CAUSES Y to BECOME Z” and “V intensely.” Consider again the following examples:

- (26) a. He cried his eyes red.
b. She ate herself sick.

The sentence in (26a), for example, describes the result state of his eyes

⁸ For more details about the relation between instance links and subpart links, see Goldberg (1995:78-81).

becoming red, a state that occurs as a result of crying (i.e. the literal interpretation), or the excessiveness of events described by the verb (i.e. the excessive interpretation). In the same fashion, the sentence in (26b) is also construed in two ways: “she became sick as a result of eating” or “she ate too much as if she became sick.” For the latter case of interpretation, the result state of being sick is not necessarily implied.

As Goldberg argues, if there is an explicit difference in meaning between constructions A and B, then they must be thought of as different constructions. Given this, hereafter, I call FORCs which have the literal interpretation *literal FORCs (LFORCs)*, and ones which have the figurative (excessive) interpretation *figurative FORCs (FFORCs)*, for convenience. In the following sections, I observe the aspectual difference between LFORCs and FFORCs, and review a conceptual metaphor which relates the literal interpretation to the figurative interpretation, suggested by Espinal and Mateu (2010).

5.4.2. *Aspectual Difference between LFORCs and FFORCs*

This section shows an aspectual difference between LFORCs and FFORCs. In previous studies, it has been revealed that the literal and figurative interpretations of FORCs reflect their aspectual behavior. The difference becomes clear by the addition of the time adverbial *in/for X time*, as we observed in the previous chapter. Here, let us consider the diagnostics again.

As Tenny (1994) suggests, a telic event can co-occur with the time adverbial *in*-phrases, which signals the completion of events, whereas an atelic event can co-occur with *for*-phrases, which signals the duration of events. As for LFORCs, they can co-occur with both *in*-phrases and *for*-phrases:

- (27) a. He cried his eyes red for/in an hour.
b. She ate herself sick for/in an hour.

(Miyata (2004:47))

The combination of co-occurrence depends on its interpretation. When FORCs are interpreted literally (i.e. LFORCs), they are compatible with *in*-phrases, because the described event specifies the end point of scale. On the other hand, if FORCs are interpreted figuratively (i.e. FFORCs), they co-occur with *for*-phrases, since FFORCs do not express a result state of the verbal action, but the excessiveness of the action. In (27a), for instance, they have two possible interpretations: “his eyes turned red as a result of crying action” or “he cried furiously as if the color of his eyes turned red.” In the same fashion, the sentence in (27b) can be interpreted as either “she got sick as a result of eating” or “she ate too much as if she became sick.” In the former case, this sentence is compatible with *in*-phrases. In contrast, in the latter case, the sentence in (27b) goes

together with *for*-phrases.^{9,10}

So far, I have observed the aspectual behavior which distinguishes LFORCs and FFORCs. As Goldberg claims, constructions must be distinguished when their meaning differs, even if they share the same syntactic form. Therefore, LFORCs and FFORCs are closely related but independent constructions. Here, one question arises: where do the aspectual and interpretational differences come from? In what follows, I consider this issue in detail, referring to metaphors suggested by Espinal

⁹ It is obvious that transitive RCs are compatible with *in*-phrases, because this type of RCs does not have metaphorical meaning. Rather, the interpretation of this type is limited to the literal interpretation. It is exemplified by the following aspectual behavior:

- (i) a. Terry wiped the table clean *in*/**for* five minutes.
 - b. John broke the door open *in*/**for* ten minutes.
- (Miyata (2004:46))

Furthermore, there are FORCs whose interpretation is restricted only to figurative meaning.

- (ii) a. He drank himself blind.
- b. He cried his eyes blind.

The construal of this type of FORCs is limited to figurative meaning. So, these can be categorized into FFORCs. Of course, these examples are compatible only with *for*-phrases:

- (iii) a. He drank himself blind *for*/**in* an hour.
 - b. He cried his eyes blind *for*/**in* an hour.
- (Miyata (2004:48))

¹⁰ FFORCs allow the progressive form:

- (i) a. We were yelling ourselves hoarse.
 - b. We were worrying ourselves sick.
 - c. We were laughing ourselves silly.
- (Espinal and Mateu (2010:1407))

The possibility of progressive implies that the events described by FFORCs are innately activity. See Wechsler (2005) for the discussion on the aspect of resultatives.

and Mateu (2010).

5.4.3. *A Conceptual Metaphor between LFORCs and FFORCs*

To consider the constructional relationship between LFORCs and FFORCs, let us begin by observing the interpretations of LFORCs and FFORCs once again. As we have observed above, the constructional meaning is absolutely different, although they share the same syntactic form, as follows:

(28) He ate himself sick.

Form: [NP V NP XP]

LFORCs: X CAUSES Y to BECOME Z

FFORCs: DO EXCESSIVELY

In describing the constructional relationship between LFORCs and FFORCs, a conceptual metaphor proposed by Espinal and Mateu (2010) plays an important role.¹¹ They propose such a conceptual metaphor as in (29):

(29) (AN EXTREME) INTENSITY IS (AN EXCESSIVE) CHANGE OF

¹¹ Their proposal largely reflects conceptual metaphors originally proposed by Lakoff and Johnson (1980, 1999). They give critical remarks on Jackendoff (1997a, b; 2002), which treat such idiomatic constructions as FORCs or BPOCs as being stored in the lexicon as a kind of idioms. They are also critical to Glasbey (2003, 2007), which take the aspectual approach to FORCs and BPOCs.

STATE¹²

(Espinal and Mateu (2010:1407))

This conceptual metaphor allows us to explain the relation between LFORCs and FFORCs. Observe the following examples:

- (30) a. We yelled ourselves hoarse.
b. We worried ourselves sick.
c. We laughed ourselves silly.

(Espinal and Mateu (2010:1407))

In (30a), for example, the intensity of the activity (i.e. to yell) is related to the change of state (i.e. we became hoarse). Therefore, the postverbal sequence *ourselves hoarse* comes to function as an intensifier of the figurative action denoted by the verb *yell*. The same explanation holds for (30b) and (30c). If the sentences in (30) are interpreted literally, they are

¹² The metaphor in (29) is a hybrid of the following basic conceptual metaphors:

- (i) a. “CHANGES OF STATE ARE CHANGES OF LOCATION”
b. “(AN EXTREME) INTENSITY IS (AN EXCESSIVE) CHANGE OF LOCATION”

(Espinal and Mateu (2010:1406))

As for the metaphor in (ib), Espinal and Mateu consider that the intensity of a specific activity (e.g. to laugh, to cry, to work, to talk etc.) is related to the extreme situation of extracting (e.g. *John laughed his butt off*) or exhausting (e.g. *John cried his eyes out*) an inalienable part of human bodies. In addition, the metaphor in (ib) expresses that the extreme intensity in the target domain is conceptualized as excessive physical change of location in the source domain. For more details, see Espinal and Mateu (2010).

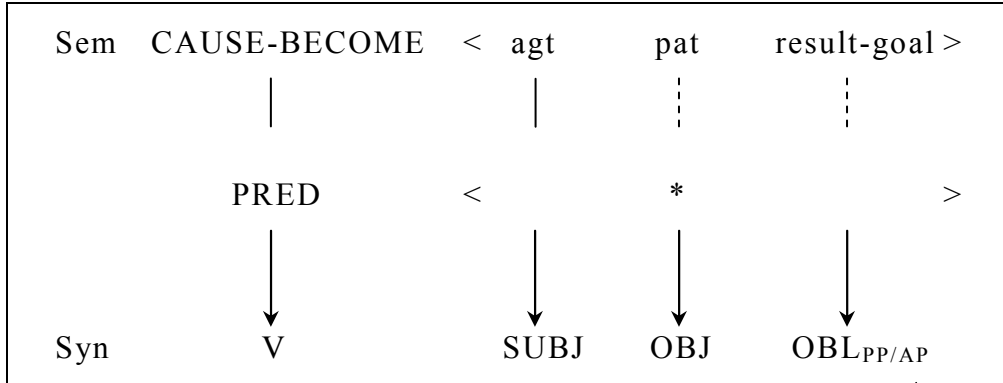
considered to be LFORCs and, of course, the metaphor in (29) will not be activated.

5.4.4. *Summary*

To sum up the discussion so far, the inheritance relation between LFORCs and FFORCs can be illustrated as follows:

(31) The Inheritance Relation between LFORCs and FFORCs:

Literal Fake Object Resultative Construction



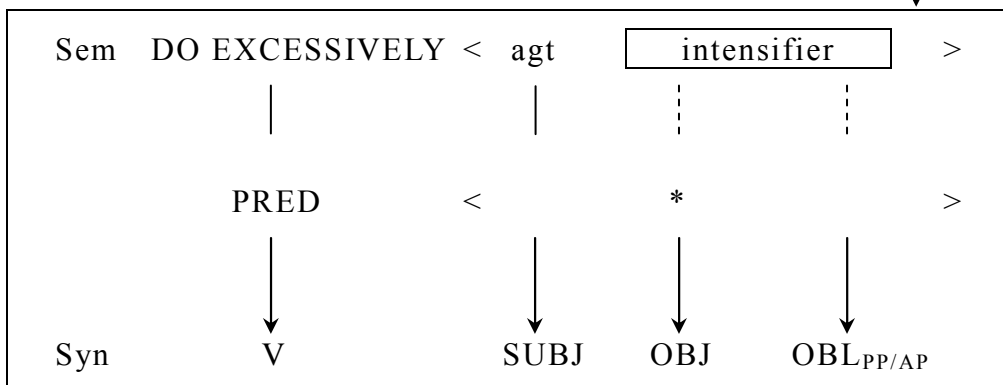
* has to be *oneself* or an element unsubcategoryed by verbs

e.g. LFORC: *He ate himself sick.*

FFORC: *He ate himself sick.*

I_M

Figurative Fake Object Resultative Construction



* has to be *oneself* or an element unsubcategoryed by verbs

The most notable difference between LFORCs and FFORCs is their construal. In the case of LFORCs, they are interpreted as “X CAUSES Y to BECOME Z.” In the case of FFORCs, on the other hand, their construal is “DO EXCESSIVELY.” This interpretational difference depends on

whether or not the conceptual metaphor “(AN EXTREME) INTENSITY IS (AN EXCESSIVE) CHANGE OF STATE” in (29) works. Thus, FFORCs are constructions which inherit from LFORCs through metaphorical extension (I_M). As a result of the activation of the metaphor in (29), the sequence of arguments [pat result-goal] of FFORCs comes to function as a mere intensifier. In this case, the intensifier can be thought of as a kind of adverbials and does not have any thematic role. It is illustrated by the word *intensifier* enclosed by the square, as in (31).¹³

Another difference between LFORCs and FFORCs is, as we have observed above, when FORCs are interpreted figuratively (i.e. FFORCs), the aspect changes into activity. This is because FFORCs do not code an end of scale, whereas LFORCs do.

In addition, as is mentioned in footnote 12, the metaphor in (29) involves the basic conceptual metaphor “CHANGES OF STATE ARE CHANGES OF LOCATION.” This metaphor is activated when RCs inherit the constructional characteristics from CMCs. This implies that the way of RCs-CMCs inheritance and that of LFORCs-FFORCs inheritance are similar. From this, we may say that FFORCs are indirectly related to CMCs in some way, but I will not discuss this issue any further in this thesis, and it must be a matter for future research.

¹³ Sawada (2000) and Yoshikawa and Igarashi (2011) investigate the interpretational process of BPOCs in terms of cognitive science and lexical conceptual structure.

5.5. Inheritance Relation between Literal Body Part *Off* Constructions and Figurative Body Part *Off* Constructions

5.5.1. Introduction

In this subsection, I explore the constructional meaning of BPOCs. By virtue of the development in linguistics in recent years, the syntactic and semantic properties of BPOCs have been revealed little by little. Let us look at the examples of BPOCs again, the characteristics of which I have already sketched out in the previous chapter:

- (32) a. Susan worked/swam/danced her head off last night.
b. Sam programmed/yelled his heart out.

(Jackendoff (1997b:551))

As long as we look at the constituents and word order of these sentences, BPOCs might appear to describe bounded (i.e. telic) events, because it appears that the postverbal sequence [NP *off/out*] specifies an end of scale. However, it is not the case. These sentences describes unbounded events (i.e. the excessiveness or exaggeration of events). In (32a), for example, it has such an interpretation as “Susan worked/swam/danced very hard” (the unbounded interpretation), not as “Susan’s head literally came off as a result of working/swimming/dancing” (the bounded interpretation). Here, the postverbal sequence *her head off* functions as an intensifier of the action. The same hold for (32b).

Scholars who study this construction consider BPOCs to be one of the constructional idioms because of the mismatch between syntax and semantics and, in addition, their bizarre interpretation. Jackendoff (2002), for instance, stipulates the form and meaning of BPOCs as follows:

- (33) a. [VP V NP PRT]: V pro_e's head/butt off, V pro_e's heart out¹⁴
b. 'V excessively'

(Jackendoff (2002:173))

PRT stands for particles, and pro serves as pronouns. However, their claim is not necessarily right. If contextual factors are involved, BPOCs can actually be interpreted literally, as we have observed in the previous chapters. Given this, they must be divided in terms of their interpretations, as is the case with LFORCs and FFORCs. Hereafter, I call BPOCs which are interpreted literally *literal BPOCs (LBPOCs)*, and BPOCs which are interpreted figuratively *figurative BPOCs (FBPOCs)*, for simplicity. The following subsections offer examples of LBPOCs and FBPOCs, and consider their aspect. Furthermore, I offer a conceptual metaphor which relates LBPOCs to FBPOCs.

5.5.2. *LBPOCs and FBPOCs and Their Syntactic/Semantic Behaviors*

As with FORCs, contexts affect the construal of BPOCs. The

¹⁴ The superscript e stands for element.

differences are obviously reflected in their aspectual behaviors.

To begin with, let us observe the examples of LBPOCs:

- (34) a. The android worked/danced/laughed its head off, and it fell to the ground. (= (1a))
- b. The robot talked its butt/ass off, and the people around it were very surprised.
- c. The robot pitched its arm off, and finally it broke down.
- d. The android danced its feet off, and finally it broke down.

Although BPOCs free of context are almost always interpreted figuratively (i.e. FBPOCs), given such a science fiction-like context, as in (34), BPOCs do have the literal interpretation (LBPOCs).¹⁵ The sentence in (34a), for example, represents the dire situation in which the head of the android literally came off as a result of working/dancing/laughing too much. The same explanation holds true of (34b), (34c), and (34d).

The possibility of the literal interpretation of BPOCs is further attested by their aspectual behaviors. For example, the event described by FBPOCs is considered activity, because the described event does not specify

¹⁵ There are more examples of BPOCs which are construed literally:

- (i) a. The android was half-broken, but the engineer recklessly kept using it for making sports clothes. As a result, the machine finally sewed its fingers off, and they dropped under the sewing machine.
- b. John, who is actually an alien, is really bad at studying. When the final exam was coming, he finally studied his head off, and his friends passed out upon seeing it on the floor.

the endpoint. This is attested by the addition of *for*-phrases (cf. Wechsler (1997), Espinal and Mateu (2010) etc.). Observe the following:

- (35) a. John laughed his butt off {all day long/*in ten minutes}.
b. John worked his guts out {all day long/*in ten minutes}.

(Espinal and Mateu (2010:1402))

As Vendler (1957) and Dowty (1979) argue, the aspect of sentences which have no natural endpoint is considered to be activity rather than accomplishment. Hence, one might consider that BPOCs themselves always describe an event of activity. However, it is not necessarily true, if we consider contextual factors. Taking context into consideration, we can find examples whose aspect is not activity but accomplishment. This is proved by the addition of *in*-phrases. Consider the following examples:¹⁶

- (36) a. The android worked/danced/laughed its head off in an hour, and it fell to the ground.
b. The robot talked its butt/ass off in an hour, and the people around it were very surprised.
c. The robot pitched its arm off in an hour, and finally it broke down.

¹⁶ According to my informant, the instances in (36) are not perfectly grammatical, but actually acceptable.

- d. The android danced its feet off in an hour, and finally it broke down.

The sentence in (36a), for instance, co-occurs with *in an hour*, which specifies the end of scale. This implies that BPOCs may express the situation in which body part entities in object position actually come off. From this, we have to acknowledge the existence of LBPOCs as well as FBPOCs. The same is true of (36b), (36c), and (36d).

Whether BPOCs describe an atelic or telic event is further attested by the repetition of verbs. As Kageyama and Yumoto (1997) and Morito (2011) point out, the repetition of unergative verbs highlights their action:

- (37) She cried and cried her heart out until her eyes turned red.

(Morito (2011:161))

In (37), an example of FBPOCs, the unergative verb *cry* can be repeated, because the sentence itself describes an atelic event. That is, what the sentence in (37) really denotes is the figuration of crying activity, not an actual result state of her heart coming out. This is the typical aspectual behavior of FBPOCs.

However, contextual supports may change the aspect of BPOCs. Observe the following instances:

- (38) a. * The robot pitched and pitched its arm off, and finally it broke down.
- b. * The android danced and danced its feet off, and finally it broke down.

The sentence in (38a) describes that the arm of the robot actually detached as a result of pitching (implied by the clause *finally it broke down*). Since the repetition of verbs focuses on the activity of action, the verb *pitch* cannot be repeated in this case. The same explanation holds true of (38b).

The aspectual difference between LBPOCs and FBPOCs is also reflected in the possibility of co-occurrence with the adverb *completely*. Usually, BPOCs are incompatible with this adverb:

- (39)* He laughed his butt off *completely*.

(Espinal and Mateu (2010:1403))

The sentence in (39) does not describe the detachment of his butt, but the figuration of laughing. In this case, the adverb *completely*, which is intended to specify the result state of detachment, cannot co-occur with this sentence.

The contextual support, however, may ameliorate its acceptability. Observe the following examples of LBPOCs:

- (40) a. The android worked/danced/laughed its head off *completely*,
and it fell to the ground.
- b. The robot talked its butt/ass off *completely*, and the people
around it were very surprised.

The sentence in (40a), for example, explicitly shows that the head of the android actually came off as a result of working/dancing/laughing. In other words, the aspect of this sentence can be thought of as accomplishment. Therefore, sentence (40a) goes with the time adverbial *completely*. The same holds for the case in (40b).

So far, I have looked at the aspectual behaviors of LBPOCs and FBPOCs. The aspectual characteristics are quite contrastive between LBPOCs and FBPOCs. These contrasts lead us to the following conclusion: LBPOCs are constructionally different from FBPOCs. Given the conclusion, one question arises: what connects LBPOCs and FBPOCs? The following discussion examines the conceptual metaphor which connects LBPOCs and FBPOCs.

5.5.3. *A Conceptual Metaphor between LBPOCs and FBPOCs*

To begin with, let us consider the metaphor offered in the previous section. Remember that FFORCs inherit constructional characteristics of LFORCs, via the following conceptual metaphor:

(41) “(AN EXTREME) INTENSITY IS (AN EXCESSIVE) CHANGE OF STATE” (= (29))

Turning to BPOCs, it might appear quite parallel with the case of FORCs. That is, the difference between LBPOCs and FBPOCs is their interpretations. In light of the construal parallelism between FORCs and BPOCs, it might seem that conceptual metaphor (41) is involved in the relation between LBPOCs and FBPOCs.

However, the metaphor in (41) itself cannot be applied to BPOCs. This type of construction denotes change of location rather than change of state. That is, the metaphor bearing on BPOCs should be involved with change of location, as in (42):

(42) “(AN EXTREME) INTENSITY IS (AN EXCESSIVE) CHANGE OF LOCATION” (Espinal and Mateu (2010:1406))

This metaphor explains the interpretational difference between LBOPCs and FBPOCs. Let us consider the following examples along with the metaphor in (42):

- (43) a. The android worked/danced/laughed its head off, and it fell to the ground. (= (34a))
- b. Susan worked/swam/danced her head off last night.

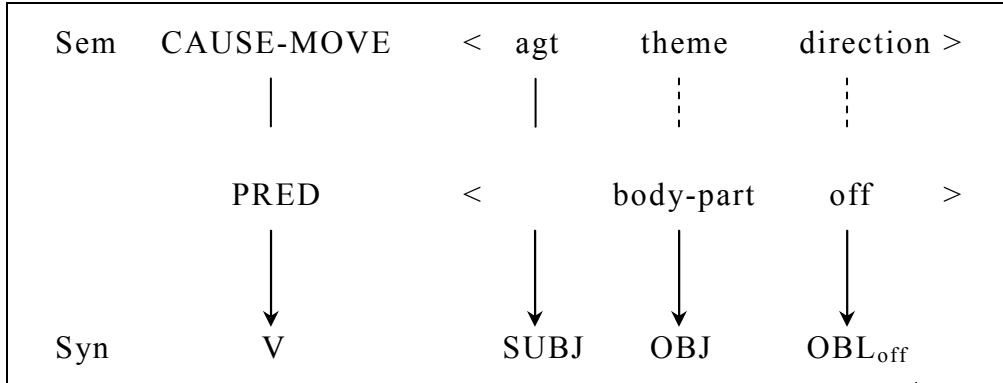
The abnormal detachment of body part (i.e. AN EXCESSIVE CHANGE OF LOCATION) changes into an exaggeration of events (i.e. AN EXTREME INTENSITY). In (43b), for example, the extraordinary situation in which Susan's head came off evokes the metaphor in (42), and the construal of LBPOCs turn into the excessiveness of "Susan worked/swam/danced very hard" (i.e. FBPOCs).

5.5.4. *Summary*

To wrap up the discussion so far, the inheritance relation between LBPOCs and FBPOCs is illustrated as follows:

(44) The Inheritance Relation between LBPOCs and FBPOCs:

Literal Body Part *Off* Construction

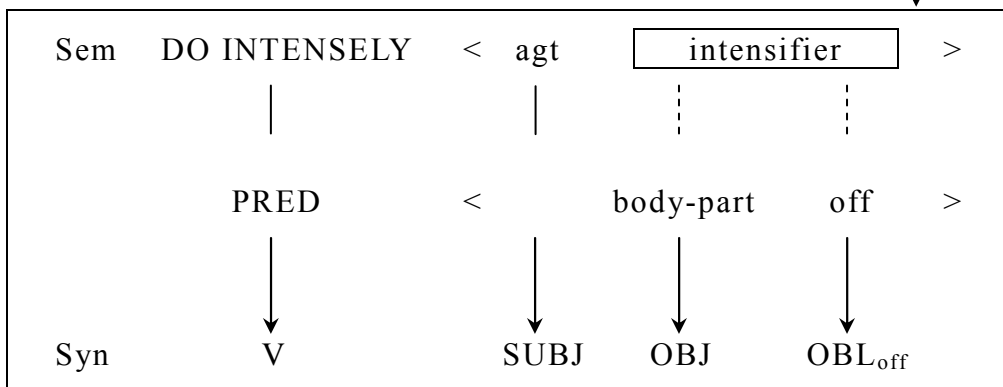


e.g. LBPOC: *Susan worked her head off last night.*

FBPOC: *Susan worked her head off last night.*

I_M

Figurative Body Part *Off* Construction



As is the case with the inheritance relation between LFORCs and FFORCs, there is an explicit difference in their meaning. In LBPOCs, they are construed as follows: “one’s body part comes off as a result of actions denoted by verbs.” In contrast, FFORCs describe the intensity of actions expressed by verbs. This interpretational contrast is motivated by the

conceptual metaphor “(AN EXTREME) INTENSITY IS (AN EXCESSIVE) CHANGE OF LOCATION” shown in (42). Therefore, it may safely be concluded that FBPOCs are constructions which inherit from LBPOCs via metaphorical extension (I_M).¹⁷ What is more, as a result of the activation of the metaphor in (42), the sequence of arguments [theme direction] of FBPOCs comes to function as an intensifier. This is illustrated by the word *intensifier* enclosed by the square in the representation in (44). Needless to say, if the metaphor in (42) is not activated due to some contextual factors, then the construal of LBPOCs remains the literal interpretation.¹⁸

5.6. Inheritance Relation between Caused-Motion Constructions and Literal Body Part *Off* Constructions

5.6.1. Introduction

In the previous section, we have looked at the inheritance relation

¹⁷ One might think that they are associated by polysemy links (I_P), because the literal meaning can be considered the central meaning of BPOCs, and the figurative meaning can be thought of as a derived interpretation from LBPOCs as a marginal meaning. However, it is not the case. When we consider the frequency of their actual usage, FBPOCs are used far more than LBPOCs. It means that the literal meaning is not central for BPOCs. Therefore, it is inappropriate to associate them by polysemy links.

¹⁸ As Cappelle (2005) claims, there exist data where the possessive is not co-indexed with the subject:

- (i) a. He talked my head off.
- b. I will sue your ass off.

(Cappelle (2005:48, fn10))

In these cases, the objects refer to someone else. It must be considered in the framework of construction grammar, but I do not consider this issue any further here, since this is not the main issue in this study.

between LBPOCs and FBPOCs. One might wonder what the relation of BPOCs to other constructions is. The main focus of this section is thus to explore the relationship between BPOCs and other constructions.

Previous studies which investigate BPOCs have a certain thing in common: they observe the characteristics of BPOCs in comparison with RCs (Jackendoff (1997a, b), Sawada (2000), Espinal and Mateu (2010), Morito (2011) etc.). Let us look again at the examples of FORCs again:

(45) a. Dean laughed/danced himself crazy/silly/to death/to oblivion.

(Jackendoff (1997b:552))

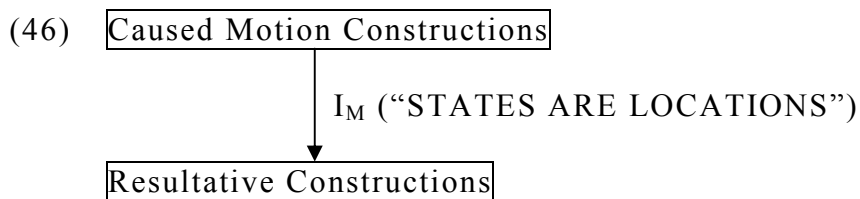
b. The joggers ran the pavement thin. (Goldberg (1995:184))

As observed in Chapter 2, FORCs have the following characteristics: (i) the verbs are unergative intransitives, (ii) the postverbal entities are unsubcategoryed by verbs, and (iii) what FORCs describe is the excessiveness of events (i.e. FFORCs) (cf. Goldberg (1995) and Jackendoff (1997b)). All the characteristics above hold true of BPOCs. Therefore, previous studies have considered BPOCs as a kind of RCs/FORCs.

A careful examination, however, reveals that BPOCs, in reality, inherit the constructional properties of CMCs rather than those of RCs/FORCs. In what follows, I adduce several pieces of evidence to motivate the relation between BPOCs and CMCs.

5.6.2. *CMCs to LBPOCs*

To clarify the constructional relationship between LBPOCs and CMCs, let us first begin with the comparison among relevant metaphors. In the first place, remember that RCs inherit from CMCs via the metaphor as follows (cf. Goldberg (1995)):



That RCs are heavily involved in CMCs suggests that, when we investigate the characteristics of LBPOCs, we must consider the characteristics of both RCs and CMCs.

Here, one might think about whether LBPOCs inherit from RCs or CMCs. To answer the question, let us get back to the essential difference between RCs and CMCs. The following metaphor straightforwardly indicates the constructional difference between RCs and CMCs:

(47) STATES ARE LOCATIONS (=(10))

It is the marked distinction of RCs that they describe the change of STATE. On the other hand, CMCs describe the change of LOCATION as their constructional meaning. The crucial difference between RCs and CMCs is

thus reduced to the abstract or physical change. Then, what about the case of BPOCs? Observe again the following metaphor, which motivates the relation between LBPOCs and FBPOCs:

(48) “(AN EXTREME) INTENSITY IS (AN EXCESSIVE) CHANGE OF LOCATION” (= (42))

This metaphor contains CHANGE OF LOCATION, which is also involved in CMCs. This implies that LBPOCs is constructionally close to CMCs rather than RCs/LFORCs.

Whether LBPOCs involve the change of location or not is further attested by the paraphrase *X actually moved*. This paraphrase can serve as a “litmus test” for checking whether they involve motion as their constructional meaning. Let us first apply this paraphrase to the examples of CMCs:

- (49) a. The audience laughed the poor guy off the stage.
^{OK}The poor guy actually moved off the stage.
- b. Frank sneezed the tissue off the table.
^{OK}The tissue actually moved off the table.
- c. Sam helped John into the car.
^{OK}John actually moved into the car.
- d. Joe kicked the dog into the bathroom.

^{OK}The dog actually moved into the bathroom.

It is obvious and uncontroversial that CMCs do entail motion. In (49a), for example, whether the poor guy moved off the stage or not is shown by the acceptability of its entailment (illustrated by ^{OK}). The same is true of (49b), (49c), and (49d). The compatibility of CMCs with the diagnostic is a reflection of the fact that the central meaning of CMCs is the motion of object elements caused by actions denoted by verbs.

Next, let us look at the result of the entailment test for LBPOCs. Observe the following examples:¹⁹

(50) a. The android worked/danced/laughed its head off, and it fell to the ground.

^{OK}The head of android actually moved off.

b. The robot talked its butt/ass off, and the people around it were very surprised.

^{OK}The butt/ass of robot actually moved off.

c. The robot pitched its arm off, and finally it broke down.

^{OK}The arm of robot actually moved off.

d. The android danced its feet off, and finally it broke down.

^{OK}The feet of android actually moved off.

¹⁹ I asked my informant to judge these examples considering a fictional context for the purpose of being literally interpreted.

In the case of LBPOCs, too, all of these examples imply that the object elements actually moved. The sentence in (50a), for instance, entails the actual detachment of the android's head, as is obvious from the impeccability of the entailment. The same holds for the examples in (50b), (50c), and (50d). The test result reflects the fact that, as we have observed above, the representative constructional meaning of LBOPCs is the movement/detachment of object elements as a result of action denoted by verbs.

Finally, let us observe the cases of RCs/LFORCs:

- (51) a. He pounded/hammered the metal flat.
*The metal actually moved.
- b. I shot the bear dead.
*The bear actually moved.
- c. I broke the window to pieces.
*The window actually moved.
- d. He talked himself hoarse.
*He actually moved.

The examples of RCs/LFORCs, in contrast to those of CMCs and LBPOCs, do not presuppose the movement of object arguments.²⁰ Indeed, what

²⁰ In addition to RCs/LFORCs, RCs with unaccusative intransitive verbs

RCs/LFORCs describe is irrelevant to the motion, because their essential constructional meaning is the change of state. The sentence in (51a), for example, expresses the resultant state in which the metal becomes flat as a result of pounding/hammering, not the location of the metal changing. It is obvious from the unacceptability of the entailment **The metal actually moved*. The same holds true of (51b), (51c), and (51d).

The results of diagnostic in (49) to (51) strongly indicate that LBPOCs are constructions whose constructional characteristics directly inherit from CMCs, which express the change of location, and not from RCs/LFORCs, which describe the change of state. The following section considers the type of inheritance links.

5.6.3. *Inheritance Link from CMCs to LBPOCs*

To investigate the type of inheritance links between CMCs and LBPOCs, let us reconsider their examples:

- (52) a. Joe kicked the dog into the bathroom. (= (49d))
 b. The robot talked its butt/ass off, and the people around it were very surprised. (= (50b))

are also irrelevant to the motion:

- (i) The lake froze solid.
 *The lake actually moved.

RCs with unaccusative verbs do not express the change of location, but the change of state, as with RCs/LFORCs.

Both of the examples represent the movement/detachment of the object entities. However, there are two remarkable differences to be mentioned.

First, whereas entities of CMCs which can emerge in object position are not restricted, those of LBPOCs actually are. More precisely, possible objects of LBPOCs are limited to our body parts. In (52b), for instance, *the butt/ass* is, needless to say, one of the body parts of human.

Second, while every kind of entities can follow objects of CMCs as long as they are PPs, those of LBPOCs are restricted to the particle *off* or *out*. That is, the selection of XPs of LBPOCs is more restricted compared with the case of CMCs.

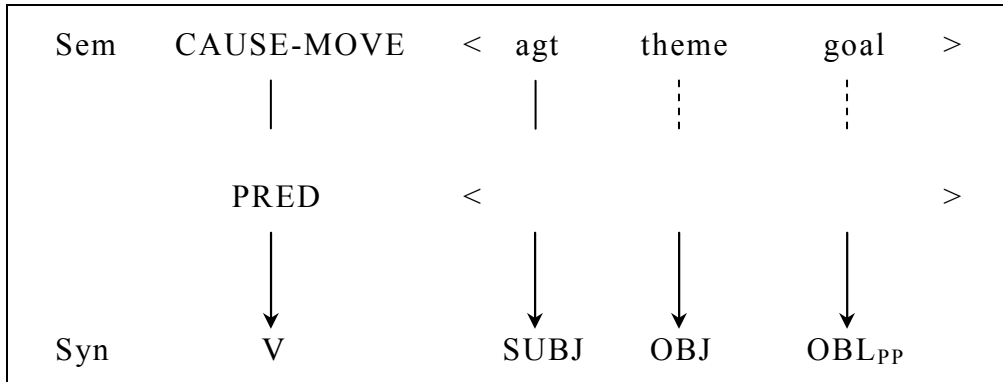
Given these differences, LBPOCs can be considered specific instances of CMCs. Hence, LBPOCs are ones which inherit from CMCs via instance links (I_1), as is the case with the inheritance relation between RCs and LFORCs. Conversely, CMCs are constructions which are proper subparts of LBPOCs. Therefore, CMCs enter into constructional relationship with CMCs via subpart links (I_8).

5.6.4. Summary

To summarize the discussion so far, the inheritance relation between CMCs and LBPOCs is represented as follows:

(53) The Inheritance Relation between CMCs and LBPOCs:

Caused-Motion Construction



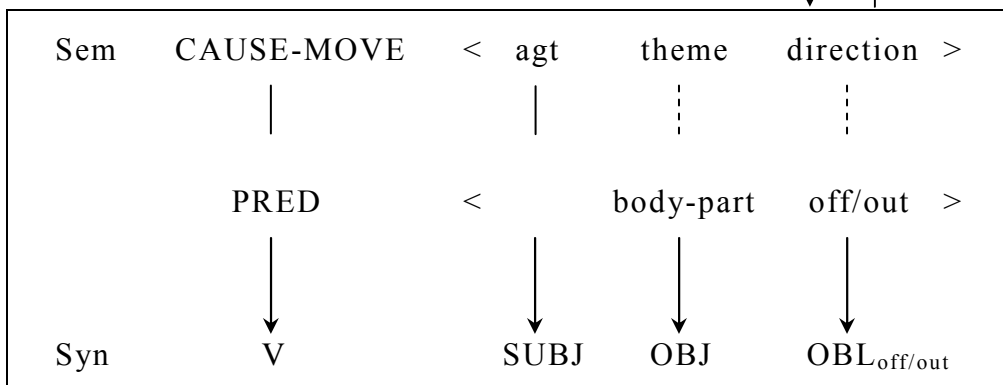
e.g. CMC: *Joe kicked the dog into the bathroom.*

LBPOC: *She danced her feet off.*

I_I

I_S

Literal Body Part *Off* Construction



Here, the goal argument in CMCs inherits to LBPOCs in the form of the directional argument. In CMCs, PPs following an object argument specify a terminal point of movement. On the other hand, the particles *off/out* of LBPOCs do not specify the end point, but simply indicate the movement/detachment of body parts. However, both PPs in CMCs and the

particles *off/out* in LBPOCs describe the movement of object entities. Given this, I would like to use direction argument in LBPOCs. The other arguments *agt* and *theme* inherit directly.

Furthermore, in the case of LBPOCs, the theme argument is assigned to body part words in object position, and the particles *off/out* are obligatorily selected as a directional argument. It means that LBPOCs are more fully specified versions of CMCs. Therefore, LBPOCs are instances of CMCs, linked by instance links (I_I), and the opposite relation is motivated by subpart links (I_S).

What is the most important suggestion in this section is that LBPOCs are constructions which directly inherit from CMCs, not from RCs/LFORCs. It can be revealed only by considering in the construction grammar approach. Indeed, previous studies have researched BPOCs in relation with RCs by the lexical-semantic approach or from the perspectives of semantics and syntax. However, if we do not posit the constructional meaning of LBPOCs, CMCs, and RCs/LFORCs, we would fail to find the relation between CMCs and LBPOCs.

Finally, it should be noted that we must make a clear distinction between the existence of constructions and their frequency of use in our conversation. It is true that LBPOCs are much less frequently used in actual discourse, and, in almost every case, BPOCs are considered to express the excessiveness of events (i.e. FBPOCs are selected.). However, it is a matter of language use, and the constructional superiority is totally

irrelevant.²¹

5.7. Inheritance Relation between Literal V *the Hell Out of* Constructions and Figurative V *the Hell Out of* Constructions

5.7.1. Introduction

This section explores the interpretational characteristics of VHOCs. As with FORCs and BPOCs, it should be needed to subcategorize VHOCs into LVHOCs and FVHOCs, because there is a remarkable difference in their meanings. Let us reconsider the difference of construal between two types of examples below:

- (54) a. They beat the hell/fuck/shit/bejesus out of him.
b. The police kicked the hell/fuck/shit/bejesus out of them.

(Hoeksema and Napoli (2008: 359))

- (55) a. Yes, Loubitza will beat the devil out of her when she gets her home – her and her broken jar!
b. When ‘Charlie’s Angels’ beat the Beelzebub out of Adam Sandler’s ‘Little Nicky’...

²¹ In the first place, there is no superiority among constructions in construction grammar. Here is the quotation from Goldberg’s (1995):

- (i) “On a constructional approach, we need not assume an asymmetrical relationship between two constructions that are found to be related. We can describe instances of partial overlap of syntax, semantics, or pragmatics as such, without necessarily assuming that one of the constructions involved is basic, the other derived.”

(Goldberg (1995:107))

(Hoeksema and Napoli (2008: 371))

On most occasions, the postverbal phrases *the hell/fuck/shit/bejesus* serve as a kind of intensifier, and the whole meaning of sentences is roughly formulated as “V intensely.” In (54a), for example, the postverbal NPs *the hell/fuck/shit/bejesus* are not the real objects of the verb *beat*, but function as intensive words. The real affected element by beating is the pronoun *him* following *out of*. The sentence in (54a), therefore, can be construed as follows: “They beat him excessively.” On the other hand, we can find VHOCs which express an emission of object entities (e.g. *satan/devil* etc.) out of someone, though the number of literally-construed VHOCs is strictly limited. In (55a), for instance, it expresses that the object entity *the devil* (i.e. a fictitious character) was emitted out of her body by beating.

Furthermore, the type of elements occurring in the object positions of LVHOCs and FVHOCs are different. Observe again the following:

- (56) a. * beat the hell out of him (Literal Interpretation) (= (3a))
b. ^{OK}beat the hell out of him (Excessive Interpretation) (= (3b))
- (57) a. ^{OK}beat the devil/satan out of him (Literal Interpretation) (= (4a))
b. ^{OK}beat the devil/satan out of him (Excessive Interpretation)
(= (4b))

LVHOCs allow only material objects, though imaginary characters in the

real world (e.g. *the devil/satan*), to occur in object position. In contrast, FVHOCs allow *the hell/shit/fuck/bejesus* as well as *the devil/satan* to occur in object position.

From the observation above, we have to acknowledge the existence of LVHOCs and FVHOCs as the sub-constructions of VHOCs, as is the case with RCs and BPOCs. The next section looks into the argument property of object elements which occur in those constructions, referring to a traditional diagnostic of patienthood.

5.7.2. *Argument Property of the Object in LVHOCs and FVHOCs*

As is obvious from the observation in the previous section, the status of object element in LVHOCs and FVHOCs is saliently different. This brings us to the consideration of the kind of the thematic role of object entity. To be more specific, what I mainly consider in this section is whether the object element is affected by the action expressed by verbs or not. To clarify this, I introduce passivization, which has long been the traditional and well-known diagnostic of affectedness in the theory of grammar (Bolinger (1975), Shibatani (1985), Rice (1987), Takami (1992, 1997) etc.).

As Bolinger (1975) and many scholars have suggested, a subject in passives must be thought of as being affected by an action denoted by a verb. Consider the examples below:

- (58) a. John was hit by Mike.
 b. * John is resembled by Mike.
- (59) a. The window was broken by Mary.
 b. * The drama was enjoyed by Mary.
- (60) a. I was approached by the stranger.
 b. * I was approached by the train.
- (61) a. The page was turned by George.
 b. * The corner was turned by George.

(Bolinger (1975:68,72))

In (58a), for example, *John* is obviously affected by the action of hitting, and he may get injured or get angry to Mike. On the other hand, in (58b), even if Mike looks like John, Mike does not intend to look like John, and of course, John is not affected by resembling Mike. The same is true of (59), (60), and (61).

We can apply passivization to the object element of VHOCs. I predict that the object of LVHOCs can be passivized, because what is removed from someone's body is one which is physically affected by beating in the context of exorcism (e.g. satan/devil). In contrast, I do not expect that the object of FVHOCs can be passivized, since the postverbal NPs *the hell/fuck/shit/bejesus* merely function as intensifiers. Look at the passivized LVHOCs in (62a) and FVHOCs in (62b):

- (62) a. The devil/satan was beaten, and it literally came out of Mary.
b. * The hell/fuck/shit/bejesus was beaten, and it literally came out of him.

The results are exactly the same as what I expected. The real affected entity of beating in (62a) is *the devil/satan*. Thus, the sentence in (62a) is acceptable without a hitch. In (62b), on the other hand, the affected entity of the beating action is not *the hell/fuck/shit/bejesus*, but the pronominal *him*, placed at the end of the sentence.

I have considered the affectedness of objects in LVHOCs and FVHOCs so far. The following discussion investigates the constructional relation between these two constructions.

5.7.3. *Inheritance Link from LVHOCs to FVHOCs*

Roughly speaking, it is possible to say that VHOCs is parallel with BPOCs and FORCs, because all of them have both literal and figurative meanings in common. From the parallelism, we can predict that a metaphor which is analogous to the metaphors for FORCs and BPOCs gets involved in the inheritance between LVHOCs and FVHOCs.

To illustrate the inheritance of VHOCs, let us reconsider the relevant metaphors to FORCs and BPOCs:

- (63) a. “(AN EXTREME) INTENSITY IS (AN EXCESSIVE)

CHANGE OF STATE” (= (41))

- b. “(AN EXTREME) INTENSITY IS (AN EXCESSIVE)
CHANGE OF LOCATION” (= (48))

The crucial difference is whether FORCs and BPOCs involve change of state or location. It becomes clear when we consider their literal constructions. While LFORCs describe the change in the state of the object entity, LBPOCs express the unusual detachment of one’s body part.

Shifting our focus on VHOCs, they do not express the change of state, but the change of location. Consider again the following example of LVHOCs:

- (64) Yes, Loubitza will beat the devil out of her when she gets her home
– her and her broken jar! (= (55a))

In this case, the pronominal *her* is a kind of source of the devil’s emission. That is, this sentence describes a supernatural *movement* of demon in the performance of exorcism. Therefore, it is reasonable to think that the inheritance between LVHOCs and FVHOCs is involved in the metaphor in (63b), which is involved in the change of location.

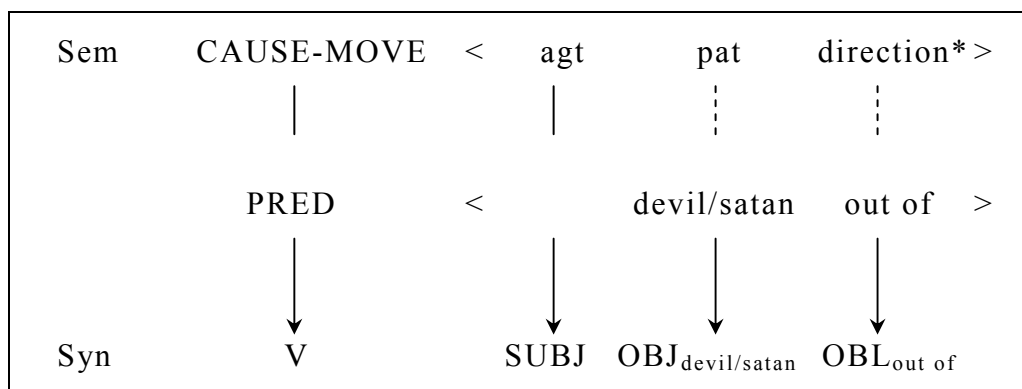
5.7.4. Summary

I have observed the argument property of objects in LVHOCs and

FVHOCs, and investigated the kind of inheritance links between them. To summarize the discussion so far, the inheritance relation between LVHOCs and FVHOCs is represented as follows:

(65) The Inheritance Relation between LVHOCs and FVHOCs:

Literal V *the Hell Out of* Construction



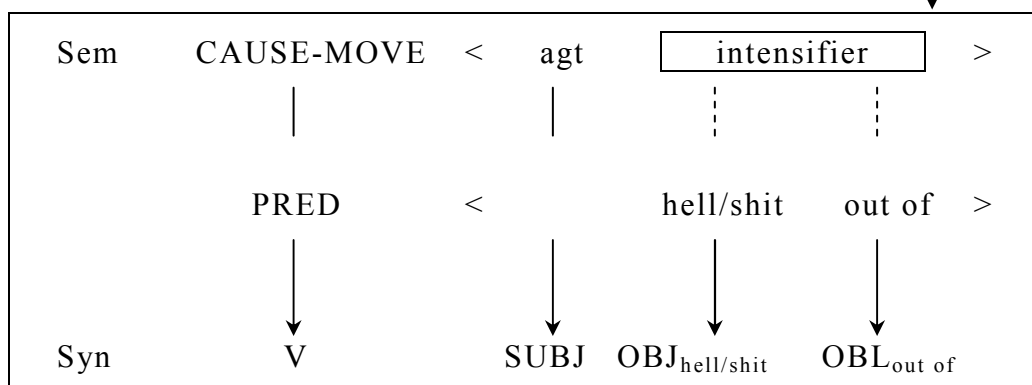
*direction argument must be followed by nominals

e.g. LVHOC: *Loubitza will beat the devil out of her.*

FVHOC: *They beat the hell/fuck/shit/bejesus out of him.*

I_M

Figurative V *the Hell Out of* Construction



*direction argument must be followed by nominals

A crucial difference between them is their construal, as in the cases of LFORCs-FFORCs and LBPOCs-FBPOCs inheritances. The postverbal sequence of arguments [pat direction] of FVHOCs loses its semantic role as an argument, and changes into an intensifier. This is illustrated by the word *intensifier* enclosed by the square.

Another difference is the selectional restriction of postverbal NPs. While LVHOCs choose entities relevant to exorcism as their object (e.g. *devil* and *satan* etc.), the object elements of FVHOCs are usually categorized as interjection (e.g. *hell*, *fuck*, *shit*, *bejesus* etc.).

In both cases, the direction argument *out of* must be followed by (pro)nominals. However, they are different in type. In the case of LVHOCs, (pro)nominals can be thought of as a source of emission of moving entities. In the case of FVHOCs, on the other hand, selected (pro)nominals function as affected entities of the action denoted by verbs.

Finally, the construal contrast is motivated by the conceptual metaphor, “(AN EXTREME) INTENSITY IS (AN EXCESSIVE) CHANGE OF LOCATION,” as shown in (63b). I conclude that FVHOCs are constructions which inherit from LBPOCs through metaphorical extension (I_M). Needless to say, whether the metaphor is applied or not depends on the context where VHOCs occur.

5.8. Inheritance Relation among Caused-Motion Constructions, Resultative Constructions, and Literal *V the Hell Out of* Constructions

In this section, I would like to sketch the relationship between LVHOCs and other constructions. As we will observe in the following discussion, LVHOCs bear constructional characteristics of several constructions. This can be illustrated by Goldberg's (1995) terminology, *multiple inheritance*.²² In what follows, I investigate the similarities of LVHOCs with other constructions.

5.8.1. Similarity to CMCs

One of the characteristics of LVHOCs is that they describe changes of location. Look at the examples again below:

- (66) a. To beat the devil out of them... (BNC K60)
b. When 'Charlie's Angels' beat the Beelzebub out of Adam Sandler's 'Little Nicky'... (= (55b))

The instance in (66a) illustrates some kind of religious ritual to get rid of devil. In this case, *the devil* functions as an affected entity of the action denoted by *beat*, and *them* contributes as a source argument. The same

²² As for the detailed discussion on multiple inheritance, see Goldberg (1995:97-98).

explanation holds for (66b).

In relation to the change of location, CMCs also express the locative change. See the following examples:

- (67) a. They laughed the poor guy out of the room. (Goldberg (1995:152))
b. Frank sneezed the tissue off the table. (= (49b))

The constructional meaning of (67a), for instance, can be expressed as “the poor guy went out of the room as a result of being laughed.” The constructional meaning of CMCs is thus schematized as “X CAUSES Y to MOVE (to/from) Z.”²³

The fact that both CMCs and LVHOCs denote the change of location explicitly indicates that they are constructionally related. However, LVHOCs inherit not only the characteristics of CMCs, but also those of RCs. In the next subsection, I focus on the constructional similarities between LVHOCs and RCs.

5.8.2. *Similarity to RCs*

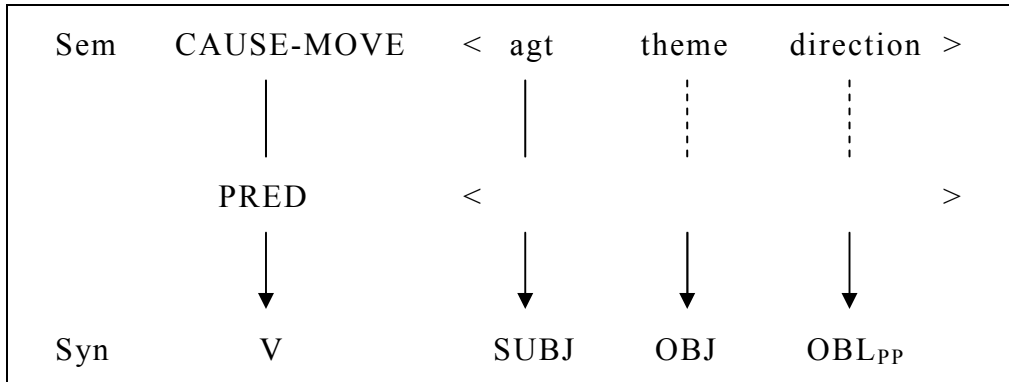
In the previous section, I have observed the affinity between LVHOCs and CMCs. It should be noted, however, that the object elements of

²³ In addition, the fact that the metaphor “(AN EXTREME) INTENSITY IS (AN EXCESSIVE) CHANGE OF LOCATION” associates LVHOCs with FVHOCs can be further evidence for the claim that LVHOCs express the change of location.

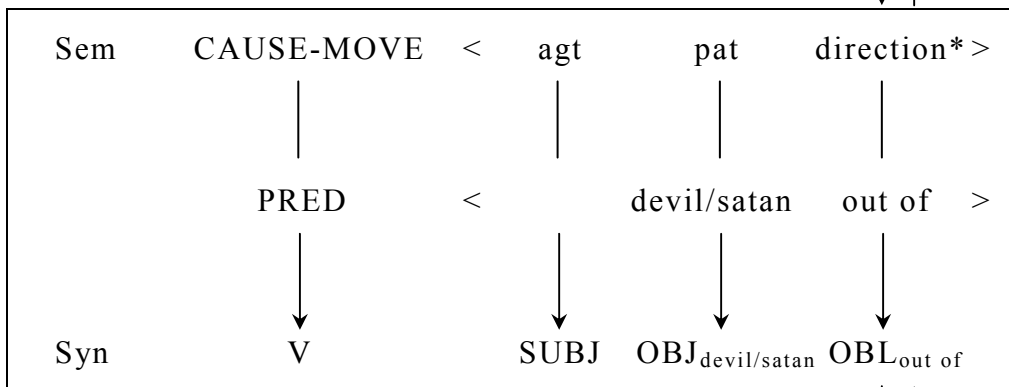
and other constructions. The observation revealed that LVHOCs have characteristics of both CMCs and RCs. To be more specific, LVHOCs inherit the constructional meaning “X CAUSES Y to MOVE (to/from) Z” from CMCs and the patienthood of object arguments from RCs. This is summarized as the following figure:

(69) The Inheritance Relation of LVHOCs from CMCs and RCs:

Caused-Motion Construction

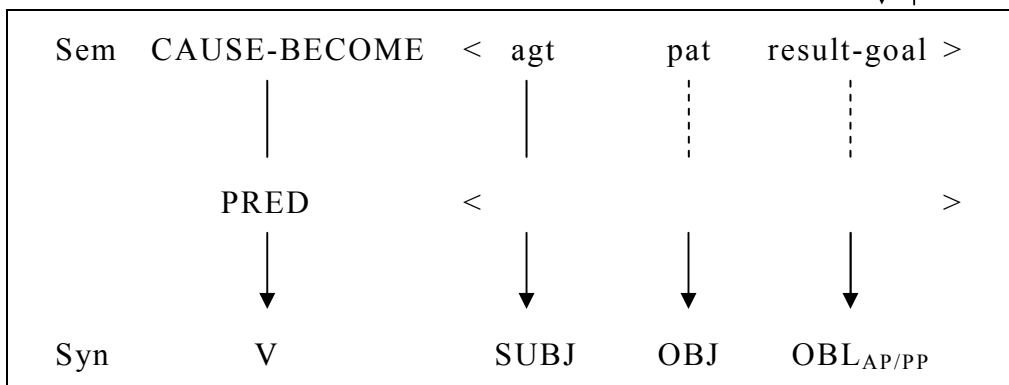


Literal V *the Hell Out of* Construction



*direction argument must be followed by nominals

Resultative Construction



e.g. CMC: *They laughed the poor guy out of the room.*

RC: *John pushed the door open.*

LVHOC: *Loubitza will beat the devil out of her.*

First of all, it must be noted that the direction argument of CMCs in (69) was notated as goal in the previous sections, as Goldberg (1995) illustrates. As she notes, however, OBL elements cover whole directional expressions such as *to/into/toward/from* etc. In other words, directional arguments include source and goal. Therefore, I adopt direction arguments in this representation to cover source and goal, for simplicity.

LVHOCs have bilateral characters. One aspect of LVHOCs is that they share the constructional meaning “X CAUSES Y to MOVE (to/from) Z” with CMCs. The object elements in LVHOCs, in which demonic elements are usually selected, can be regarded as moving entities instigated by the action expressed by verbs. This is represented by *CAUSE-MOVE* in LVHOCs and CMCs.

As to the type of inheritance links, it can be considered that LVHOCs are the instance of CMCs. It is because the possible object elements are restricted to the ones which denote demon, whereas those of CMCs are not. Furthermore, the direction argument in LVHOCs must be *out of*. That is, LVHOCs are the more fully specified versions of CMCs. Therefore, LVHOCs are instances of CMCs, linked by instance links (I_1), and the opposite relation is motivated by subpart links (I_S).

The other aspect of LVHOCs is that it is the object argument that can be thought of as a beaten entity, as is the case with RCs. This is attested

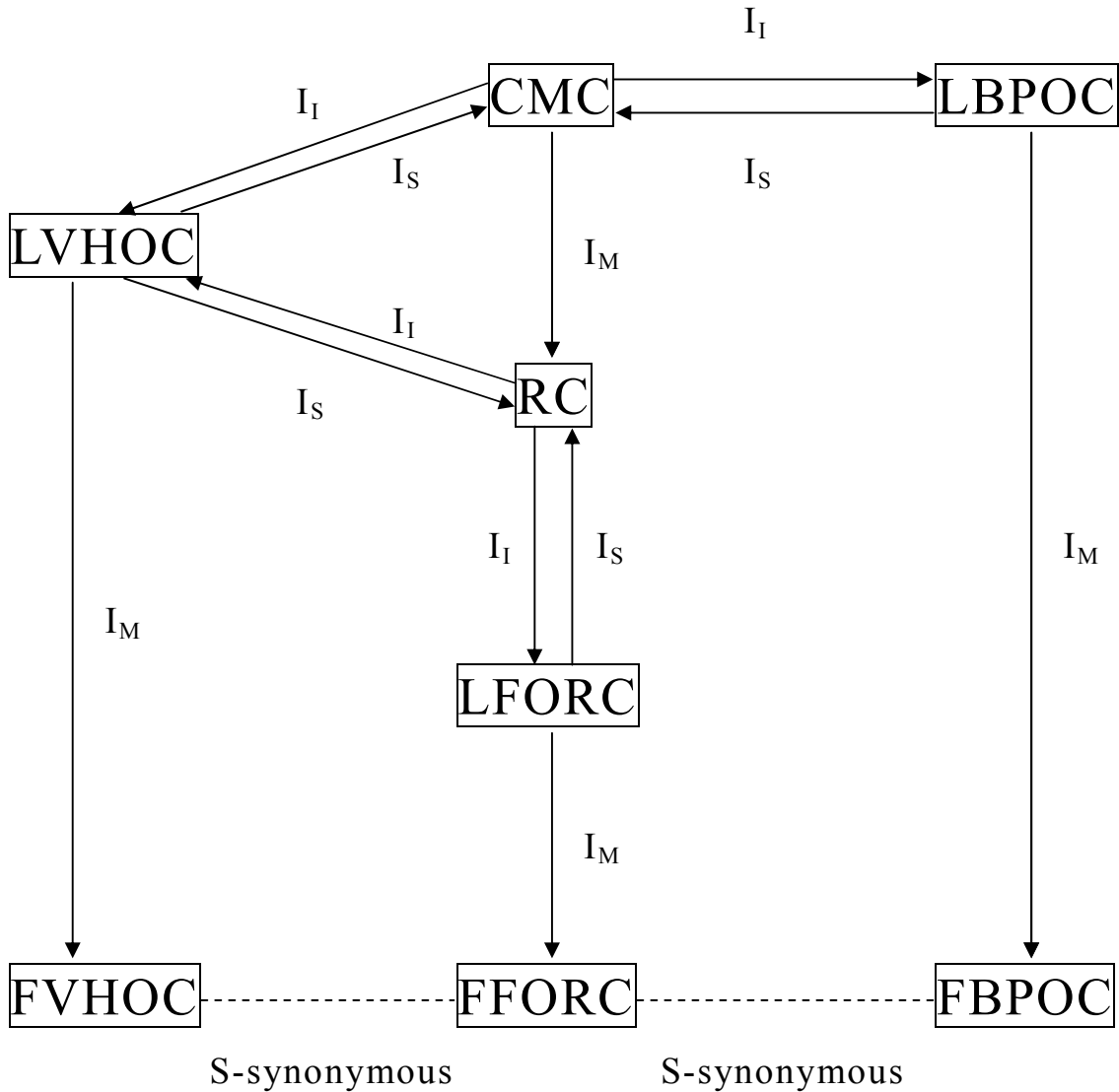
by the possibility of passivization, which indicates the patienthood of object elements, as shown in (68). In this regard, LVHOCs inherit from RCs. What is more, as is the case with LVHOCs-CMCs inheritance, while the selectional restriction on the object entity of LVHOCs is in effect, the type of objects in RCs is not restricted. Thus, LVHOCs and RCs are linked by instance links (I_I) and subpart links (I_S).

5.9. Concluding Remarks

In this chapter, I have observed the characteristics of so-called constructional idioms such as FORCs, BPOCs, and VHOCs from the viewpoint of construction grammar. Roughly speaking, we can treat these constructions in the same way superficially, because the syntactic form and semantics are seemingly almost parallel. The construction grammar approach, however, revealed that there are crucial constructional differences among them.

Furthermore, the constructional investigation can give an account of the relationship among the constructions in question, which no previous studies have illustrated. The whole relation among the constructions can be represented as follows:

(70) The Inheritance Relation among CMCs, RCs, FORCs, BPOCs, and VHOCs



What is important to note is that FORCs, BPOCs, and VHOCs have the literal and figurative interpretations, respectively. Especially for the literal interpretation of BPOCs and VHOCs, previous studies have paid no attention. The disregard, as a result, gets in the way of the exploration of the relationship among them.

What is remarkable on the parallelism of their interpretation is that, the connecting metaphor in (71a), which relates LFORCs to FFORCs, and that in (71b) inheriting LBPOCs to FBPOCs and LVHOCs to FVHOCs are similar:

- (71) a. “(AN EXTREME) INTENSITY IS (AN EXCESSIVE)
CHANGE OF STATE”
- b. “(AN EXTREME) INTENSITY IS (AN EXCESSIVE)
CHANGE OF LOCATION”

(=(63))

As well as the affinity of the metaphors, the isomorphism of their syntactic form and the parallelism of their construal account for the interpretational similarity among FFORCs, FBPOCs, and FVHOCs, which is represented by S(emantically)-synonymous in (70).

The exploration reveals not only the parallelism of interpretation, but also their detailed relationship. Introducing the construction grammar approach reveals that BPOCs undergo direct inheritance from CMCs, not from RCs, for example. The relation between BPOCs and CMCs has not been mentioned in traditional works on idiomatic constructions. This investigation thus advocates a new direction in the study on constructional idioms.

Chapter 6

Idiomaticity of Fake Object Resultative Constructions, Body Part *Off* Constructions, and V *the Hell Out of* Constructions

6.1. Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to inspect the idiomaticity of Fake Object Resultative Constructions (FORCs), Body Part *Off* Constructions (BPOCs), and V *the Hell Out of* Constructions (VHOCs).

Chapter 5 illustrated the constructional characteristics and their relationships among these constructions introducing construction grammar. However, the preferred interpretation of each construction is based on actual language use. Consider the following pair:

- (1) a. cry one's eyes red
- b. beat the hell out of someone

The example of FORCs in (1a) is, in most cases, interpreted literally. On the other hand, in an actual conversation, *beat the hell out of someone* (a typical example of VHOCs) is considered to be an idiomatic expression whose interpretation is “beat someone excessively.” In other words, the issue of the existence of constructions such as those mentioned above and whether they are used in actual usage or not should be treated in a different way.

The preference of interpretation is closely related to how constructions are conventionalized. For example, the meaning of such an expression as *cry one's eyes red* can be easily decoded. That is, the meaning of a construction as a whole can be identified by the combination of the meanings of its constituents. In contrast, non-literal expressions like VHOCs can be regarded as highly conventionalized constructions, because the literal meanings of their constituents (i.e. *the, hell, out, of*, in VHOCs) do not contribute to the whole meaning of the constructions (i.e. “V excessively”). In this thesis, I shall call the degree of conventionalization “idiomaticity.”¹

In the following discussion, I explore and compare the idiomaticity of FORCs, BPOCs, and VHOCs, based on traditional diagnostics of idiomaticity. Since the organization of this chapter is more complex compared with the previous chapters, let me outline this chapter first.

In section 6.2, I characterize phrasal idioms, and consider a main issue concerning them, which has long been discussed in the study of phrasal idioms. In section 6.3, I explore the diagnostics of idiomaticity, proposed by Nunberg et al. (1994). Section 6.4 tries to apply the traditional method observed in section 6.3 to the constructions under consideration in order to measure their idiomaticity. Section 6.5 is

¹ Chapter 5 subcategorized FORCs into LFORCs and FFORCs, BPOCs into LBPOCs and FBPOCs, and VHOCs into LVHOCs and FVHOCs. The purpose of this chapter is to investigate the idiomaticity of these expressions. So, I shall limit my discussion to the excessive interpretation of these “figurative” expressions. Hereafter, for brevity, I shall use the term FORCs referring to FFORCs, BPOCs to FBPOCs, and VHOCs to FVHOCs, respectively.

dedicated to concluding remarks.

6.2. Phrasal Idioms

6.2.1. The Definition of Phrasal Idioms

In this section, I introduce how phrasal idioms are defined in linguistics. Not a few previous studies have contributed to the development of the study on phrasal idioms. In fact, the relevant studies have already started in the 1960's, and the phrasal idioms have been analyzed from various perspectives up to the present date (Katz and Postal (1963), Weinreich (1969), Mitchell (1971), Makkai (1972, 1975), Bolinger (1971, 1977), Nunberg (1978), Langacker (1987), Napoli (1988), Gibbs (1990), van der Linden (1993), Nunberg et al. (1994), etc.).

Various researchers have defined the phrasal idioms in their own way, as is obvious from the quotations below:

- (2) a. 'The essential feature of an idiom is that its full meaning ... is not a compositional function of the meanings of the idiom's elementary parts.' (Katz and Postal (1963:275))
- b. 'I shall regard an idiom as a constituent or a series of constituents for which the semantic interpretation is not a compositional function of the formatives of which it is composed.' (Fraser (1970:22))
- c. 'Idioms ... do not get their meanings from the meanings of

their syntactic parts’ (Katz (1973:358))

d. ‘These are idiomatic in the sense that their meaning is non-compositional.’ (Chomsky (1980:149))

e. ‘Our definition of idioms, or frozen expressions, is rather broad. Ideally, an expression is frozen if the meaning is not predictable from the composition, that is to say, for example, if the verb and fixed complement(s) do not contribute to the meaning of the sentence (e.g., *to kick the bucket*, *to take the bull by the horns*).’

(Machonis (1985:306))

f. ‘The traditional definition of an idiom states that its meaning is not a function of the meanings of its parts and the way these are syntactically combined; that is, an idiom is a non-compositional expression’ (van der Linden (1992:223))

(all cited from Nunberg et al. (1994:498))

As is obvious from the definitions above, many of previous studies share the idea that the phrasal idioms can be identified, depending on whether or not the meaning of sentences can be predicted from the lexical meanings of constituents.^{2, 3}

² Quirk et al. (1985) also offer a classification model of idioms. They classify phrasal idioms in terms of the degree of idiomaticity, as follows:

- (i) a. Free nonidiomatic constructions
- b. Semi-idiomatic constructions

In this section, I have briefly looked at the definition of phrasal idioms suggested by several researchers. To recapitulate, each linguist defines phrasal idioms as the ones whose meanings cannot be predicted from the meanings of their constituents. In what follows, I sketch out a main issue of the study on phrasal idioms.

6.2.2. *An Issue on Phrasal Idioms*

In this section, I outline the issue which has long been discussed in the literature on phrasal idioms. What is controversial about phrasal idioms is whether they can be treated compositionally or non-compositionally. In the following sections, I briefly introduce the notion of compositionality and non-compositionality, referring relevant previous studies.

c. Highly idiomatic constructions

(Quirk et al. (1985:1162-1163))

Free non-idiomatic constructions are the ones in which the individual meanings of constituent elements are transparent from the constancy in eligible substitution (e.g. *bring in/out, take in/out, run down/up, walk down/up*). In contrast, the substitution of verbs and particles in semi-idiomatic constructions is constrained (e.g. *find out, cut up, slacken off*). In other words, the combination of verbs and particles is more restricted than that of free non-idiomatic constructions. In highly idiomatic constructions, there is no possibility to substitute their constituent words (e.g. *bring up* ‘rear,’ *come by* ‘acquire,’ *turn up* ‘make an appearance’). For more details, see Quirk et al. (1985:1162-1163).

³ As another perspective, Gréciano (1986) investigates phrasal idioms from the viewpoints of polilexicality, fixation, and figuration as the specific characteristics of phrasal idioms. The polilexicality means that a phrase is organized by at least more than one constituent. The fixation expresses that the syntactic form of a phrase is fixed. The figuration expresses that a phrase is constituted by metaphor. See also Geeraerts (1995) for more details.

6.2.2.1. *Compositional Approaches*

In general terms, we refer to the way we predict the whole meaning of sentences from the meanings of their constituents as a compositional approach. For instance, the meaning of a verbal idiom such as ‘throw away (i.e. to dump garbage)’ can be predictable from the respective meanings of ‘throw’ and ‘away.’

Various researchers take this approach. Let us refer to Nunberg (1978), who first introduced the compositionality of idioms. The basic premise of his discussion is that the meaning of idioms can be decomposed. In more detail, idioms can be sub-classified into two types. One type is normally decomposable idioms. They have a direct relation to the figurative meaning. Consider the following example of normally decomposable idioms:

- (3) pop the question ‘making the marriage proposal’

In this verbal idiom, the postverbal NP *the question* refers to a proposal of marriage with no metaphorical element involved. That is, normally decomposable idioms have corresponding verbs and nouns. In this case, the verb *pop* corresponds to the verb *make*, and *the question* corresponds to *the marriage proposal*.

The other type refers to abnormally decomposable idioms. They bear a metaphorical relation to the figurative meaning. Observe the

following instance:

- (4) meet your maker ‘to die’

The word *maker* implies God. In this case, the metaphorical inference between *maker* and *God* is involved. In contrast to normally decomposable idioms, abnormally decomposable idioms do not have corresponding verbs and nouns. In the case of (4), the verb *meet* does not have its corresponding verb. The noun phrase *your maker* also does not have its corresponding NP.

This section has briefly observed the compositionality of idioms, focusing on the proposal by Nunberg (1978). Putting aside the difference between normally decomposable idioms and abnormally decomposable idioms, we can say that the compositional approach can be defined as follows: the construal should be reflected by the lexical meanings of constituents (see also Gibbs et al. (1989), Cacciari and Glucksberg (1991), Nunberg et al. (1994), Geeraerts (1995) and Titone and Connine (1999) for the compositional approach).

6.2.2.2. *Non-Compositional Approaches*

The other approach is a non-compositional approach (Fraser (1970), Chomsky (1980), Gibbs (1980), van del Linden (1992) etc.). Especially in the literature of generative grammar, idiomaticity has been illustrated in

terms of non-compositionality. In this approach, it is considered that idioms are one single word, and stored in the lexicon as a whole. Let us consider the following idiomatic expression:

(5) have a loose tongue ‘to jaw’

The expression in (5) can be considered to behave as one word syntactically. That is to say, we can treat it the same way as the intransitive verb *jaw*. Furthermore, the overall meaning of the idiom in (5) cannot be changed.

To briefly summarize the non-compositional approach, phrasal idioms cannot be processed through any syntactic operation (i.e. they are frozen), and these kinds of idioms are listed in the lexical entry as one word. In the next section, I introduce a method of measurement of idiomaticity.

6.3. Idiomaticity

In this section, I look at a previous study dealing with how to measure the degree of idiomaticity. In section 6.2.2, I have sketched out the characteristic differences between compositional and non-compositional approaches to idioms, which are the most controversial issue in the study of phrasal idioms. Especially for the compositional approach, the important point to notice is how we measure the idiomaticity of idiomatic expressions.

As one of the most famous issues related to the measurements of idiomaticity, the correlative relation between the syntactic frozenness and

the semantic transparency is suggestive. Indeed, it has widely been argued that, although the fixedness of the form (i.e. syntactic characteristics) and their meaning as a whole (i.e. semantic characteristics) are different aspects, there is a correlation between them in terms of idiomaticity (Fraser (1970), Dixon (1982), Asuka (1982), Nunberg et al. (1994), Arizono (2007) etc.). In the simplest terms, the more flexible to syntactic transformations, the more transparent semantically, and the opposite is equally true. I get into line with this approach.⁴

Several previous studies have offered various syntactic transformations as measurements of idiomaticity. In this study, I adopt the syntactic operations, which are proposed by Nunberg et al. (1994). In 6.3.1, I look at the discussion on the classification of phrasal idioms, which is based on their semantic transparency (i.e. idiomatically combining expressions vs. idiomatic phrases). Section 6.3.2 introduces five syntactic transformations for the measurement of idiomaticity.

⁴ The reason I take the compositional approach is that in the case of constructional idioms such as BPOCs, they even have their literal counterpart:

- (i) a. The android worked/dance/laughed its head off, and it fell to the ground.
- b. The robot talked its butt/ass off, and the people around it were very surprised.

The construal of these examples is predictable from the meaning of the words involved. Take (ia) for example. From the point of view of the word order [NP V NP *off*] and the semantics of each constituent, the sentential meaning of (ia) can easily be construed as ‘the head of android actually came off as a result of working/dancing/laughing.’ The same is true of (ib).

6.3.1. *Idiomatically Combining Expressions vs. Idiomatic Phrases*
(Nunberg et al. (1994))

Given the semantic transparency (or opacity), Nunberg et al. (1994) classify phrasal idioms into two types: idiomatically combining expressions (ICEs, or idiomatic combination, for short) and idiomatic phrases (IPs).

First, we will consider ICEs. ICEs are idioms whose constituents convey identifiable parts of their idiomatic meanings (Nunberg et al. (1994:496)). In other words, verbs in ICEs have their corresponding verbs, and nouns in ICEs also have their corresponding nouns. This type of idiom is compatible with normally decomposable idioms, which are introduced by Nunberg (1978). Consider the following idioms of ICEs:

- (6) a. pull strings ‘exploit connections’
- b. spill the beans ‘divulge information’

(Nunberg et al. (1994:496))

In (6a), the verb *pull* corresponds to *exploit*. In the same fashion, the noun *strings* corresponds to *connections*. More specifically, when the word *strings* functions as the object of the verb *pull*, the noun *strings* refers to personal connections. In the same fashion, when the verb *pull* is used with the noun *strings*, it refers to exploitation or exertion. The same explanation holds for (6b). *Spill* has its corresponding verb *divulge*, and the noun phrase *the beans* corresponds to *information*. Idioms whose

constituents have their corresponding verbs or nouns are called ICEs.

Next, let me introduce IPs. According to Nunberg et al. (1994), the idiomatic interpretations of IPs cannot be reduced to their corresponding constituent words. In other words, constituents of IPs do not have their corresponding verbs or nouns. This type of idiom is compatible with abnormally decomposable idioms, introduced by Nunberg (1978). Observe the following examples of IPs:

- (7) a. kick the bucket ‘die’
 b. *saw logs* ‘snore’
 c. *shoot the breeze* ‘prate’

(Nunberg et al. (1994:497))

In (7a), the verb *kick* does not have its corresponding verb. In other words, the phrasal meaning of *die* cannot be attributed to the lexical meaning of the verb *kick*. Furthermore, the postverbal NP *the bucket* does not bear its counterpart. The same goes for (7b) and (7c). Idioms whose constituents do not have their corresponding verbs or nouns are called IPs.

6.3.2. *Five Syntactic Diagnostics for Idiomaticity*

In the former section, we have looked at the characteristics of and difference between ICEs and IPs. To distinguish between ICEs and IPs, Nunberg et al. (1994) offer five syntactic operations: modification,

quantification, topicalization, ellipsis, and anaphora. If an idiomatic expression is compatible with these five transformations, it can be treated as ICEs. On the other hand, if an idiomatic expression is incompatible with them, it can be regarded as IPs. In what follows, I observe the examples of ICEs through these five syntactic transformations.

First, let us consider the case of modification. This syntactic operation is to add elements (e.g. adjectives or relative clauses) to the syntax of idioms. Look at the examples of ICEs which undergo modification:

- (8) a. leave no legal stone unturned
(leave no stone unturned ‘to research carefully’)
- b. beat our terrifying swords into plowshares
(beat one’s swords into plowshares ‘to compromise’)
- c. kick the filthy habit
(kick the habit ‘to give up one’s habit’)

(Nunberg et al. (1994:500))

It should be noted here that the scope of modification must be partial (see also Ernst (1981), McClure (2011)). In this regard, the following quotation from Nunberg et al. (1994:500) is suggestive: “in order to modify part of the meaning of an idiom by modifying a part of the idiom, it is necessary that the part of the idiom have a meaning which is part of the

meaning of the idiom.” For example, the actual meaning of (8a) is not “legally leave no stone unturned (holistic modification),” but “all legal methods are used (partial modification).” In the former interpretation, the adjective *legal* modifies the verb *leave*, functioning as if it were an adverb. In the latter interpretation, *stone* denotes *methods*, and *legal* is considered an adjective. The phrasal idiom in (8a) suggests that even if the idiom is modified by the adjective *legal*, the original meaning ‘to research carefully’ is still preserved. The same holds for (8b) and (8c).

Second, let us consider the case of quantification. This syntactic operation is to modify nouns by adjectives. As in the case of modification, the operation of quantification partially affects the meaning of idioms. So, the essence of idiomatic meaning remains unchanged, even if an idiomatic expression is quantified. Let us consider the examples of ICEs which undergo quantification:

- (9) a. touch a couple of nerves
 (*touch a nerve* ‘to irritate someone’)
- b. That’s the third gift horse she’s looked in the mouth this year.
 (*look a gift horse in the mouth* ‘to cavil at a gift’)
- c. We could ... pull yet more strings ... ‘
- (Nunberg et al. (1994:501))

The quantified idiomatic expression in (9a), for instance, still preserves the

meaning of irritating. In other words, the possibility of quantification over *nerves* implies that the lexical meaning of its part can be identified with the expression as a whole. The same explanation can be applied to (9b) and (9c).

The third syntactic transformation which Nunberg et al. offer is topicalization. This syntactic operation is to have an element appear at the front of a sentence and emphasize it. Observe the following idiomatic expressions which undergo topicalization:

- (10) a. Those strings, he wouldn't pull for you.
b. His closets, you might find skeletons in.
(find skeleton in the closet 'to reveal an undisclosed fact')
c. Those windmills, not even he would tilt at.
(tilt at windmills 'to do a reckless thing')
d. That hard a bargain, only a fool would drive.
(drive a hard bargain 'to ask for a discount importunately')

(Nunberg et al. (1994:501))

The parts of idioms cannot be emphasized unless each part has its idiomatic use. In (10a), for example, even if the NP *those strings*, which has its literal counterpart *connections*, is topicalized to the clause-initial position, the meaning of the idiom 'exploit connections' is still maintained. This idiomatic expression thus can be treated as an instance of ICEs. The same

explanation holds true of (10b), (10c), and (10d).

Fourth, I shall take a look at the case of VP ellipsis. This syntactic operation is to clip VPs in a conjunct. Let us consider the examples of ICEs which undergo VP ellipsis:

- (11) a. My goose is cooked, but yours isn't.
(*My goose is cooked* 'I am in trouble')
- b. We thought the bottom would fall out of the housing market,
but it didn't.
(*the bottom falls out of the market* 'to stop buying it')
- c. We had expected that excellent care would be taken of the
orphans, and it was.
(*take care of someone* 'to care someone')

(Nunberg et al. (1994:501))

As Nunberg et al. state, it is the widespread idea in semantics that “antecedents of the missing elements in such constructions must correspond to semantic units, (i.e. to pieces of an interpretation)” (Nunberg et al. (1994:501)). For instance, the actual meaning of *my goose is cooked* in (11a) is construed as “I am in trouble” or “all hope is gone.” The meaning of the second conjunct is recoverable by referring back to the verb in the first conjunct. The same explanation holds true of (11b) and (11c).

Finally, let us consider anaphora. Anaphora is an expression which

refers to what is mentioned earlier in a sentence using pronouns. Let us consider the example of ICEs which undergo the operation of anaphora:

- (12) a. Close tabs were kept on Jane Fonda, but none were kept on Vanessa Redgrave.

(keep tabs on ‘to oversee someone’)

- b. Pat tried to break the ice, but it was Chris who succeeded in breaking it.

(break the ice ‘to begin a conversation’)

- c. We worried that Pat might spill the beans, but it was Chris who finally spilled them.

- d. Once someone lets the cat out of the bag, it’s out of the bag for good.

(let the cat out of the bag ‘to leak a secret accidentally’)

- e. I had a bone to pick with them, but they were so nice that I forgot about it.

(have a bone to pick with someone ‘to complain about someone’)

(Nunberg et al. (1994:502))

The former conjuncts of idiomatic expressions above can be antecedents for pronouns. This presupposes that the constituents of these idioms bear their own interpretation. In (12a), for example, the pronoun *none* in the

second conjunct can refer back to the subject *tabs* in the first conjunct. Therefore, the meaning ‘to oversee or monitor someone’ is still preserved, even if the subject of the second conjunct undergoes pronominalization. The same explanation holds true of the cases in (12b) to (12e).

In this section, we have observed the syntactic operations used for the diagnostics of idiomaticity, which are proposed by Nunberg et al. (1994). Whether idiomatic phrases allow the transformational operations or not can be a diagnostic of the extent to which expressions are established as idioms and the opposite is also true. The next section is dedicated to the application of the diagnostics to the idiomatic constructions under consideration in this study.

6.4. Application of the Diagnostics to FORCs, BPOCs, and VHOCs

This section investigates the syntactic frozenness and semantic transparency of FORCs, BPOCs, and VHOCs, applying the diagnostics discussed in the previous section to the three constructions, and illustrates the difference of the extent to which they are conventionalized as idiomatic expressions. Espinal and Mateu (2010) set a precedent for the application of the syntactic diagnostics to BPOCs. However, there are several points to be criticized in their observations. In 6.4.1, I observe Espinal and Mateu’s (2010) discussion on whether BPOCs are categorized as ICEs or IPs. Then, I point out their methodological drawbacks. In section 6.4.2, I explore the possibilities of the application of the diagnostics to the

idiomatic constructions in question.

6.4.1. *Espinal and Mateu (2010)*

6.4.1.1. *Application of Five Syntactic Diagnostics to BPOCs*

Before beginning to investigate the syntactic frozenness and semantic transparency of FORCs, BPOCs, and VHOCs, let us sketch out the discussion proposed by Espinal and Mateu (2010). They investigate the idiomaticity of BPOCs, based on the syntactic transformations (i.e. modification, quantification, topicalization, VP ellipsis, and anaphora) suggested by Nunberg et al. (1994). The results of their exploration are as follows:

- (13) * Bill ate his own/inner heart out.
- (14) * We were laughing our two heads off.
- (15) * HIS HEART, Bill ate out.

(Espinal and Mateu (2010:1402))

According to their research, BPOCs do not permit modification as in (13), quantification as in (14), and topicalization as in (15). Judging from the results of their survey, it follows that BPOCs bear the characteristics of IPs. However, it is not as simple as it appears. Consider the following examples:

- (16) a. Bill ate his heart out over Sally, and Harry ate HIS out over Jessica.
- b. Bill cried his eyes out on Wednesday, and Harry cried HIS out on Sunday.
- (17) a. Bill ate his heart out over Sally on Wednesday, then he ate it out over Jessica on Thursday.
- b. Bill cried his eyes out on Wednesday, and he cried them out again on Sunday.

(Espinal and Mateu (2010:1401))

As is obvious above, BPOCs do allow VP ellipsis in (16) and anaphora in (17). From the results of transformations in (16) and (17), it is also the case that BPOCs have the characteristics of ICEs, as contrasted to (13), (14), and (15). The results from (13) to (17) lead Espinal and Mateu to conclude that there are no uncontroversial distinctions between ICEs and IPs, because the syntactic behaviors of BPOCs lack coherence.

6.4.1.2. Problems

However, their research has two drawbacks. The first drawback is that they presuppose that the notion of ICEs vs. IPs is complementary. That is, they regard ICEs and IPs as completely bipolar. However, the relation between ICEs and IPs does not necessarily form the complementary distribution. Although Nunberg et al. (1994) do not explicitly mention this

complementary matter in their study, it goes without saying that there exists the gradability of idiomaticity when we consider the difference of the semantic transparency of each idiom. Indeed, there are numerous studies that think of idiomaticity as a continuum. In the classification proposed by Dixon (1982), for example, he argues that there is a continuum among idioms: fully idiomatic and idiosyncratic combinations are located at one end, completely literal combinations at the other end, and three types of idioms in-between. The explanations of the five levels of the continuum are as follows:

- (18) a. Literal combinations where the meaning of a sentence can be fully inferred from the meanings of the words and their grammatical relations, and where no deletion is possible, e.g. *John walked on the grass.*
- b. Like (18a), but with the possibility of deletion of some part of the prepositional phrase, the deleted portion being generally understood from the context, sociocultural knowledge, etc.; e.g. *He ran down (the bank) to the railway line, She put the rubbish out (of the building).*
- c. Constructions which could scarcely be regarded as literal but which do involve an obvious metaphorical extension from a literal phrase, e.g. *John pulled a \$10,000 loan in* (cf. *The snail pulled its horns in*), or *The firm went under* (cf. *The drowning*

man went under (the surface of the water)).

- d. Non-literal constructions which cannot transparently be related to any literal combination, e.g. *They are going to have it out*, or *She couldn't put up with him*.
- e. Full idioms, involving more than just verb and preposition(s), e.g. *lay down the law*, *put on a good face*, *turn over a new leaf*, *kick over the traces*.

(Dixon (1982:9-10) with slight modifications)

It is obvious from the classification above that there are intermediate stages between fairly literally interpreted idioms and fully idiomatic expressions. Thus, it is natural that idioms show intermediate behavior between ICEs and IPs, as in (13) to (17).

Second, what is problematic in Espinal and Mateu (2010) is the wrong choice of the idiomatic expression 'eat one's heart out,' as in the examples in (13), (15), (16), and (17). This expression can be paraphrased as 'envy.' That is, 'eat one's heart out' does not express the excess of an action denoted by the verb *eat*. This suggests that the meaning of this expression is not attributed to the meanings of constituent words *eat*, *one's*, *heart*, and *out*.

Given this, in the following discussion, I use the examples of BPOCs 'work/dance one's head off' and 'talk one's butt/ass off,' both of which express the degree of the actions denoted by the verb, as well as FORCs and

VHOCs.

6.4.2. *The Syntactic Behaviors of FORCs, BPOCs, and VHOCs*

The focus of this section is to look at the syntactic frozenness and semantic transparency of FORCs, BPOCs, and VHOCs. As we have seen in the previous sections, modification, quantification, topicalization, VP ellipsis, and anaphora provide strong evidence that the constituents of idioms can be identified with the phrasal meanings as a whole.

In addition to these transformations, passivization is also said to be a strong diagnostic of idiomaticity.⁵ Passivization has also been considered a diagnostic to measure idiomaticity and is non-trivial measurement to investigate idiomaticity of phrasal idioms. In spite of the fact, Nunberg et al. (1994) do not apply this measurement to phrasal idioms. I include this measurement to the other five diagnostics. In what follows, I will show that, by applying these transformational operations to the idiomatic constructions under discussion, we will be able to compare their idiomaticity.

6.4.2.1. *The Syntactic Behaviors of FORCs*

This section investigates the syntactic and semantic behaviors of FORCs. Here, I shall deal with ‘run one’s Nikes threadbare,’ ‘drink the

⁵ I do not mention passivization as a diagnostic of affectedness, since I have already introduced it in the previous chapter. Here, I introduce this diagnostic as the measurement of idiomaticity.

pub dry,' or 'cry one's eyes red' as the typical examples of FORCs, and apply the syntactic operations to them.⁶

Let us first look at how passivization of FORCs is applied to these examples. Observe the following results:

- (19) a. ? The Nikes were run threadbare (by the joggers).
b. The pub was drunk dry (by Bill).

According to my informants, although the sentence in (19a) is somewhat less acceptable, it can be regarded as a grammatical sentence of English. In this case, even if the original sentence 'the joggers ran their Nikes threadbare' undergoes passivization, the constructional meaning 'the joggers ran very hard' is preserved. In the same fashion, the sentence in (19b) still bears the figurative meaning 'Bill drank too much,' even though the sentence undergoes passivization.

Second, I shall look at the examples in which modification is applied. Consider the following examples of FORCs which undergo modification:

- (20) a. The joggers ran the brand-new Nikes threadbare.
b. Bill drank the brand-new pub dry.

⁶ The judgments are all under the interpretation of excessive reading, since the purpose of this chapter is to convey the 'idiomaticity,' not the 'literal interpretation,' of the constructions in question.

As is obvious from the examples in (20), FORCs allow modification. In (20a), for instance, even if the adjectival modifier *brand-new* modifies the postverbal NP *Nikes*, the constructional meaning ‘the joggers ran as if Nike’s shoes became threadbare’ is still preserved. The sentence in (20b) retains the figurative meaning ‘Bill drank too much,’ even if the noun *pub* is modified by the adjective *brand-new*.

Third, let us consider how FORCs undergo quantification. Observe the following results:

- (21) a. The joggers ran fifty Nikes threadbare.
b. Bill drank three pubs dry.

As in the case of modification, the examples of FORCs allow quantification. In (21a), even though the adjectival quantifier *fifty* modifies the noun *Nikes*, the constructional meaning of this sentence ‘V excessively’ is intact. In the same fashion, the sentence in (21b) also permits quantification even with the quantifier *three*, and still bears its original meaning ‘Bill drank too much.’

Fourth, I would like to consider how topicalization works with FORCs. Let us take a look at the following results:

- (22) a. * Those Nikes, the joggers ran threadbare.
b. * This pub, Bill drank dry.

In contrast to the cases of modification and quantification, FORCs do not permit topicalization. In (22a), for example, when the postverbal NP *those Nikes* is dislocated to the topic position, the acceptability of this sentence markedly deteriorated, and the constructional meaning ‘V excessively’ becomes impaired. By the same token, the excessive meaning of the sentence in (22b) is not preserved, when the operation of topicalization is applied.

There is another type of topicalization on FORCs. As in the topicalization of postverbal NPs, shown in (22), there is a possibility for result phrases to be fronted to the topic position. Let us consider the following results of topicalization:

- (23) a. * Threadbare, the joggers ran those Nikes.
b. * Dry, Bill drank the pub.

The results of topicalization of the result phrases are the same as those of the topicalization of postverbal NPs. In (23a), once the resultative phrase *threadbare* is fronted to the topic position, the grammaticality of this sentence sharply becomes worse. In this case, needless to say, the figurative meaning of the sentence is not preserved. The sentence in (23b) is also unacceptable and its constructional meaning is not retained any

more.⁷

Fifth, I would like to consider the examples of FORCs which undergo ellipsis. It is predicted that elliptical elements in the latter conjunct can be restored by referring back to the first conjunct. Observe the following results:

- (24) a. * Bill cried his eyes red on Wednesday, and he cried HIS red again on Sunday.
- b. * Mary drank Tom's pub dry on Monday, and she drank HIS dry again on Friday.

In both cases, the possessive pronoun *HIS* is emphasized to indicate its missing object noun. In (24a), the noun *eyes* is omitted in the second conjunct, but it is hard to refer back to the first conjunct and reconstruct the original element *eyes*. Therefore, the meaning of the sentence 'Bill cried as if his eyes turned red' cannot be preserved in the second conjunct any more. By the same token, in (24b), the meaning 'to drink too much' is not retained in the second conjunct.

Here, I have to consider another case in which result phrases are omitted. Observe the following result:

⁷ According to my informants, the grammaticality of the topicalization of resultative phrases is still worse than that of postverbal NPs.

- (25) * Mary drank the pub dry on Tuesday, and she drank the pub again on Saturday.

As is obvious, even if the resultative phrase *dry* undergoes ellipsis, the result of ellipsis is the same as the case of postverbal NP ellipsis in (24). In short, FORCs do not allow the operation of ellipsis, whether the elliptical element is a postverbal NP or result phrase.

The sixth syntactic operation relevant here is anaphora. Consider the following results:

- (26) a.? Bill cried his eyes red on Wednesday, and he cried them red again on Sunday.
b.? Bill drank the pub dry on Tuesday, and he drank it dry again on Saturday.

The acceptability of FORCs in an anaphoric relation to NPs in the first conjunct is somehow better than that of FORCs which undergo ellipsis. In (26a), for example, the NP *his eyes* in the first conjunct is pronominalized to the pronoun *them* in the second conjunct. Here, the acceptance level is less than perfect, but the expression can marginally be accepted as an English grammatical sentence. The same holds of (26b). The existence of the pronoun *it* in the second conjunct ameliorates the acceptability of this sentence.

So far, we have observed the acceptability of FORCs, which undergo six syntactic operations. The results can be summarized as follows:

(27) The Results of Diagnostics for FORCs

| | pass. | mod. | qntf. | top.1 | top.2 | elps.1 | elps.2 | anph. |
|-------|-------|------|-------|-------|-------|--------|--------|-------|
| FORCs | OK | OK | OK | * | * | * | * | ? |

pass.: passivization

mod.: modification

qntf.: quantification

top. 1: topicalization of postverbal NPs

top. 2: topicalization of result phrases

elps. 1: ellipsis of postverbal NPs

elps. 2: ellipsis of result phrases

anph.: anaphora

It is revealed that FORCs allow passivization, modification, and quantification. In this regard, FORCs can be thought of as having the characteristics of ICEs, whose semantics are transparent. On the other hand, as for topicalization and ellipsis, FORCs behave like IPs, whose interpretation cannot be predicted from the meaning of constituents. As to anaphora, FORCs show an intermediate behavior between ICEs and IPs. In the following section, I would like to investigate the syntactic behaviors of BPOCs.

6.4.2.2. *The Syntactic Behaviors of BPOCs*

This section is dedicated to the exploration of the syntactic behaviors of BPOCs. In 6.4.1, we have observed the study proposed by Espinal and Mateu (2010) and their methodological drawbacks. In particular, they consider ‘eat one’s heart out’ as a typical instance of BPOCs, the meaning of whose constituents cannot be reduced to the constructional meaning ‘V excessively.’ In other words, this expression is transposable to the single verb ‘envy.’ In this regard, ‘eat one’s heart out’ cannot be regarded as a typical type of BPOCs which represent the excessiveness of actions denoted by verbs. With this in mind, I deal with ‘work/dance one’s head off’ or ‘talk one’s butt/ass off’ as the typical examples of BPOCs, which describe the furiousness of the actions. Then, I apply the syntactic operations to them.⁸

First, let us observe the passivization of BPOCs. Consider the following results:

- (28) a. * John’s head was worked off last night.
b. * John’s head was danced off at the party.
c. * Mary’s butt/ass was talked off last night.

It is obvious from the examples above that BPOCs do not allow

⁸ As in the case with the syntactic behaviors of FORCs, the results of judgment are all based on the figurative reading.

passivization. In (28a), for example, if the original sentence ‘John worked his head off last night’ undergoes passivization, the constructional meaning ‘John worked very hard as if his head came off’ is no longer preserved. In the same fashion, once the sentence ‘John danced his head off at the party’ undergoes passivization, its original figurative meaning is lost, as shown in (28b). The same holds of (28c). Therefore, passivization deteriorates the acceptability of BPOCs.

The second focus of our investigation is the modification of BPOCs. Let us consider the examples below:

- (29) a. ? John worked/danced his own head off.
b. ? Mary talked her own butt/ass off.

According to my informants, the sentences in (29) are somewhat less acceptable, and they can marginally be regarded as grammatical sentences. In (29a), for example, even though the postverbal NP *head* is modified by the adjective *own*, the excessive meaning of this sentence is still preserved. By the same token, the constructional meaning of (29b) ‘Mary talked as if her butt/ass came off’ is still preserved, even if the noun *butt/ass* is modified by the adjective *own*. In short, BPOCs are compatible with modification in a certain degree.

Third, I would like to consider quantification of BPOCs. Let us look at the results below:

- (30) a. * We worked/danced our two heads off.
b. ? We talked our two butts off.

The results of quantification of BPOCs are slightly different in each example. In (30a), the grammaticality evidently becomes worse when the postverbal NP *head* is quantified with the quantifier *two*. In contrast, the acceptability of the sentence in (30b) is relatively better than that of (30a). Even if the postverbal NP *butt* is modified by the quantifier *two*, the constructional meaning of this sentence is marginally preserved. However, putting aside the difference, it can be generally said that the operation of quantification deteriorates the grammaticality of BPOCs.

Fourth, let us look at how BPOCs undergo topicalization:

- (31) a. * His head, John worked off.
b. * Her butt, Mary talked off.

As is obvious, BPOCs cannot endure the syntactic operation of topicalization. In (31a), if the postverbal NP *his head* is moved to the topic position, the sentence becomes unacceptable, and its idiomatic meaning ‘work very hard’ is no longer preserved. The same explanation holds true of (31b). That is, ‘Her butt, Mary talked off’ does not mean anything.

As is the case with FORCs, the element which has the potential to undergo topicalization is not restricted to postverbal NPs. The particle *off* also has the potential to undergo that process. Consider the following results:

- (32) a. * Off, John worked his head.
b. * Off, Mary talked her butt.

The results to the particle's topicalization are exactly the same as that of postverbal NP's. The sentence in (32a) implies that the movement of the particle *off* to the topic position obviously impairs the grammaticality of the sentence 'John worked his head off,' and its construal 'John worked very hard' cannot be recovered any more. In the same fashion, if the particle *off* is topicalized to the sentence-initial position, the idiomatic meaning 'Mary talked as if her butt came off' is lost.

Fifth, let us consider how BPOCs undergo ellipsis. Look at the results below:

- (33) a. * John worked his head off on Monday, and he worked HIS off again on Friday.
b. * Tom talked his butt off on Tuesday, and he talked HIS off again on Thursday.

Ellipsis is also incompatible with BPOCs. In these cases, the emphasis of the possessive pronoun is an indication that there is a noun following a verb. In (33a), because the postverbal NP *head* is omitted in the second conjunct, the idiomatic meaning is no longer recovered, even if we refer back to the first conjunct. Hence, this sentence is ungrammatical. In (33b), the constructional meaning ‘Tom talked too much as if his butt came off’ cannot be preserved, once the postverbal NP *head* undergoes ellipsis in the second conjunct.

As is the case with topicalization, there is another type of ellipsis: the ellipsis of the particle *off*. Observe the following results:

- (34) a. * John worked his head off on Monday, and he worked his head again on Friday.
- b. * Tom talked his butt off on Tuesday, and he talked his butt again on Thursday.

The results of ellipsis of the particle *off* are exactly the same as those of ellipsis of NPs. Once the particle *off* undergoes ellipsis, it cannot be restored, even if it refers back to the first conjunct. In other words, in (34a) and (34b), the idiomatic meaning ‘John worked very hard’ and ‘Tom talked too much’ are no longer preserved when the particle *off* is omitted in the second conjunct.

The last syntactic operation to BPOCs is anaphora. Consider the

results below:

(35) a.? John worked his head off on Monday, and he worked it off again on Friday.

b.? Tom talked his butt off on Tuesday, and he talked it off again on Thursday.

The acceptability of these BPOCs, which have anaphoric relationship between their first and second conjuncts, is somewhat better than in the case of ellipsis, as in (33) and (34). This is a quite parallel behavior to the cases of FORCs, as shown in (24) to (26). In (35a), for instance, even if the postverbal NP *his head* is replaced by the pronoun *it*, the grammaticality of this sentence does not become extremely worse, though not fully acceptable. By the same token, the idiomatic meaning of (35b) ‘Tom talked volubly as if his butt came off’ still remains as it is.

So far, I have observed the syntactic behaviors of BPOCs. The following table illustrates the syntactic behaviors of BPOCs:

(36) The Results of Diagnostics for BPOCs

| | pass. | mod. | qntf. | top.1 | top.2 | elps.1 | elps.2 | anph. |
|-------|-------|------|-------|-------|-------|--------|--------|-------|
| BPOCs | * | ? | */? | * | * | * | * | ? |

pass.: passivization

mod.: modification

qntf.: quantification

top. 1: topicalization of body part NPs

top. 2: topicalization of the particle *off*

elps. 1: ellipsis of postverbal NPs

elps. 2: ellipsis of the particle *off*

anph.: anaphora

As is obvious from (36), there is no syntactic operation which gets perfectly along with BPOCs. BPOCs marginally allow modification and anaphora. On the other hand, they are incompatible with all the other syntactic operations. As for quantification, it seems that the acceptability depends on the cases, but it seems that there are no perfectly acceptable examples. Judging from the results, we can consider BPOCs as highly idiomatic expressions. In other words, it can be thought that BPOCs have the characteristics of IPs, whose meanings are not transparent at all. In what follows, I shall consider the syntactic behaviors of VHOCs.

6.4.2.3. *The Syntactic Behaviors of VHOCs*

In this section, I shall investigate the syntactic behaviors of VHOCs and their transparency of meaning. Here, I deal with ‘beat/kicked the hell/shit out of someone’ as the typical examples of VHOCs, and apply the syntactic operations to them.⁹

⁹ In this case, too, the results of transformation reflect the figurative

First, let us consider the acceptability of VHOCs to passivization.

Observe the following:

(37) a. ?* The hell was beaten/kicked out of John.

b. ?* The shit was beaten/kicked out of John.

According to my informants, VHOCs which undergo passivization are not fully unacceptable, but are almost ruled out.¹⁰ In the examples in (37), the original meaning of these sentences ‘John furiously beat/kicked someone’ is not retained any more, once they undergo passivization.¹¹

Second, I shall look at how modification works with VHOCs. Here, I introduce *outrageous* as a modifying adjective. Consider the following results:

(38) a. * I beat/kicked the outrageous hell out of him.

b. * I beat/kicked the outrageous shit out of him.

Under the excessive interpretation, the semantic roles of the postverbal

meaning of VHOCs, not the literal meaning.

¹⁰ Two of four informants judged the sentences in (37) as marginally acceptable. In contrast, the other two informants consider these expressions unacceptable. Taking the imperfectness of their grammaticality into consideration, it can be concluded that these sentences are generally judged as almost ungrammatical, though not fully.

¹¹ One of my informants gave me an interesting opinion. The acceptability of ‘the shit was beaten/kicked out of John’ in (37b) is better than that of ‘the hell was beaten/kicked out of John’ in (37a). In his opinion, it can be claimed that the latter expression is more conventionalized than the former.

elements *the hell* and *the shit* cannot be identified, and they come to function as intensifiers. Thus, it appears that postverbal NPs in VHOCs are not modified by any elements. In the sentences in (38), *the hell* and *the shit* cannot be modified by the adjective *outrageous*, because they do not bear any meaning, but function as intensifiers. Hence, they are ungrammatical.

Third, let us consider how quantification works with VHOCs. Observe the following:

- (39) a. * I beat/kicked two hells out of him.
b. * I beat/kicked two shits out of him.

As is the case with modification, VHOCs do not allow quantification. The NPs *the hell* and *the shit* cannot be modified by the quantifier *two*, as in (39). Putting it differently, the idiomatic meaning ‘V excessively’ is not preserved when VHOCs undergo quantification.

The fourth syntactic operation we are concerned with is topicalization of postverbal NPs. Let us consider the following results:

- (40) a. * The hell, I beat/kicked out of him.
b. * The shit, I beat/kicked out of him.

As is obvious from (40), it is impossible for the postverbal NPs *the hell* and

the shit to move to the topic position. In (40a), for instance, once the postverbal NP *the hell* is fronted to the topic position, the figurative meaning of the sentence is not preserved any more. As is the case with (40a), the sentence in (40b) is also unacceptable, and its constructional meaning ‘beat/kick someone furiously’ is not retained.

Topicalized elements are not limited to postverbal NPs. The prepositional phrase *of someone* can also undergo topicalization, as with resultative phrases in FORCs and the particle *off* in BPOCs. Let us consider the following example:

- (41) a. * Of him, I beat/kicked the hell out.
b. * Of him, I beat/kicked the shit out.

As is obvious from (41), even if we try to topicalize the prepositional phrases, the transformed sentences of VHOCs cannot be recognized as the grammatical sentences. On the contrary, one of my informants suggests that the grammaticality of this type of topicalization is even worse than that of the nominal topicalization, as in (40). These results in (40) and (41) lead us to conclude that every kind of topicalization markedly deteriorates the grammaticality of VHOCs.

Fifth, let us consider how ellipsis works with VHOCs. Observe the results in (42):

- (42) a. * I beat/kicked the hell out of him on Wednesday, and I
beat/kicked out of him again on Sunday.
- b. * I beat/kicked the shit out of him on Wednesday, and I
beat/kicked out of him again on Sunday.

Ellipsis is also incompatible with VHOCs. In (42a), the postverbal NP *the hell* is deleted in the second conjunct, but it cannot refer back to the first conjunct. Hence it is regarded as ungrammatical. By the same token, in (42b), the constructional meaning ‘I beat/kicked him furiously’ cannot be preserved, once the postverbal NP *the shit* undergoes ellipsis in the second conjunct.

The other type of elliptical constructions is the case where *out of someone* is deleted. Consider the following:

- (43) a. * I beat/kicked the hell out of him on Wednesday, and I
beat/kicked the hell again on Sunday.
- b. * I beat/kicked the shit out of him on Wednesday, and I
beat/kicked the shit again on Sunday.

It is evident that, even if *out of him* in (43) undergoes ellipsis, the result is the same as the case of postverbal NPs’ ellipsis, as in (42). In short, VHOCs do not allow the operation of ellipsis, regardless of whether the

elliptical element is a postverbal NP or *out of someone*.¹²

The last syntactic operation to VHOCs is anaphora. Observe the following results:

- (44) a. ?* I beat/kicked the hell out of him on Wednesday, and I
beat/kicked it out of him again on Sunday.
b. ?* I beat/kicked the shit out of him on Wednesday, and I
beat/kicked it out of him again on Sunday.

The acceptability of VHOCs, which have an anaphoric relationship between their first and second conjuncts, is somewhat better, compared with other syntactically transformed expressions such as modification, quantification,

¹² In relation to ellipsis, there is another type of elliptical expressions of VHOCs. The following type of ellipsis is the construction in which the postverbal nouns are omitted and their possessive pronouns are stranded:

- (i) a. * I beat/kicked his hell out of him on Wednesday, and I beat/kicked
HIS out of him again on Sunday.
b. * I beat/kicked his shit out of him on Wednesday, and I beat/kicked
HIS out of him again on Sunday.

In both cases, the possessive pronoun *HIS* in the second conjunct is emphasized with capital letters to indicate its missing nouns *hell* and *shit*. In (ia), the noun *hell* is omitted in the second conjunct, but it is hard to refer back to the first conjunct and reconstruct the original element in the second conjunct. Therefore, the meaning of the sentence ‘I beat/kicked him furiously’ cannot be preserved in the second conjunct any more. By the same token, in (ib), the meaning of ‘V too much’ is not retained in the second conjunct.

It is possible to think that the ungrammaticality of these sentences stems from the idiosyncrasy of the expression *his hell* in the first conjunct. Since the word *hell* indicates, according to LAAD, the place where bad people will be punished after death, or a situation, experience, or place is very bad, it is not an entity which is possessed by someone. Therefore, it is also possible to conclude that the reason why the sentences in (i) are not acceptable lies in the existence of *his*.

topicalization, and ellipsis. However, it is the case that these anaphoric expressions are almost ruled out and not regarded as grammatical expressions. In (44a), for instance, even if the postverbal NP *his head* is replaced by the demonstrative pronoun *it*, the grammaticality of this sentence does not ameliorate. By the same token, the idiomatic meaning of (44b) ‘I beat/kicked him furiously’ is not preserved any more.

This section has investigated the syntactic behaviors of VHOCs. The following table illustrates the results:

(45) The Results of Diagnostics for VHOCs

| | pass. | mod. | qntf. | top.1 | top.2 | elps.1 | elps.2 | anph. |
|-------|-------|------|-------|-------|-------|--------|--------|-------|
| VHOCs | ?* | * | * | * | * | * | * | ?* |

pass.: passivization

mod.: modification

qntf.: quantification

top. 1: topicalization of *the hell* or *the shit*

top. 2: topicalization of *out of someone*

elps. 1: ellipsis of *the hell* or *the shit*

elps. 2: ellipsis of *out of someone*

anph.: anaphora

As is obvious from the results, most of the syntactic operations are not compatible with VHOCs. In the case of passivization and anaphora, the

grammaticality slightly improves, but they are still judged as almost ungrammatical. In this regard, VHOCs can be thought of as having the characteristics of IPs, whose interpretation cannot be predicted from the meaning of their constituents. In other words, these constructions are highly conventionalized as idiomatic expressions. In the next section, I would like to compare the results of the syntactic operations to FORC, BPOCs, and VHOCs, and give concluding remarks.

6.5. Concluding Remarks

Before wrapping up Chapter 6, let us review the syntactic behaviors of FORC, BPOCs, and VHOCs, and their semantic transparency. In addition, I would like to argue the implication of the results.¹³ Let us look

¹³ Here, the syntactic behaviors of transitive RCs are out of scope, because they are only interpreted literally, and do not have the excessive interpretation. It would be quite remarkable, however, to observe how they behave syntactically, and their semantic transparency. Here, I shall deal with ‘paint the fence white’ as a typical instance of transitive RCs. Transitive RCs show results to the syntactic operations, as follows:

- (i)
 - a. The fence was painted white. (passivization)
 - b. He painted the tall fence white. (modification)
 - c. ? He painted three fences white. (quantification)
 - d. ? The fence, he painted white. (topicalization of postverbal NPs)
 - e. * White, he painted the fence. (topicalization of result phrases)
 - f. * He painted the fence white on Tuesday, and he painted white again on Friday. (ellipsis of postverbal NPs)
 - g. ? He painted the fence white on Tuesday, and he painted the fence again on Friday. (ellipsis of result phrases)
 - h. ? He painted the fence white on Tuesday, and he painted it white again on Friday. (anaphora)
- (ii) The Syntactic Behaviors of ‘paint the fence white’

| pass. | mod. | qntf. | top.1 | top.2 | elps.1 | elps.2 | anph. |
|-------|------|-------|-------|-------|--------|--------|-------|
| OK | OK | ? | ? | * | * | ? | ? |

pass.: passivization

mod.: modification

at the results in (46):

(46) The Results of Diagnostics for FORCs, BPOCs, and VHOCs

| | pass. | mod. | qntf. | top.1 | top.2 | elps.1 | elps.2 | anph. |
|-------|-------|------|-------|-------|-------|--------|--------|-------|
| FORCs | OK | OK | OK | * | * | * | * | ? |
| BPOCs | * | ? | */? | * | * | * | * | ? |
| VHOCs | ?* | * | * | * | * | * | * | ?* |

The table in (46) points out that all the constructions show the same results to topicalization of postverbal NPs (top.1), topicalization of XPs (top.2),

qntf.: quantification
top.1: topicalization of the postverbal NPs *the fence*
top.2: topicalization of the result phrase *white*
elps.1: ellipsis of the postverbal NPs *the fence*
elps.2: ellipsis of the result phrase *white*
anph.: anaphora

All the examples in (i) are judged under the literal reading. As shown above, the expression ‘paint the fence white’ allows passivization and modification, as in (ia) and (ib), respectively. On the other hand, it is marginally acceptable with quantification, topicalization of postverbal NPs, ellipsis of result phrases, and anaphora, as in (ic), (id), (ig), and (ih), respectively. Furthermore, this expression do not allow the topicalization of result phrases and the ellipsis of postverbal NPs, as in (ie) and (if), respectively.

It should be noted that, in the case of (if), the result reading cannot be retained. More specifically, the second conjunct ‘he painted the fence again on Friday’ in (ig) is construed as a normal transitive sentence, and does not semantically imply the result state of the fence being white. Hence, the grammaticality in (ig) ameliorates, compared with the case in which the postverbal NPs are omitted, as in (if).

From the observation above, it is possible to say that transitive RCs also have multiple aspects: they show the characteristics of ICEs, as the behaviors to passivization and modification, those of IPs, as with topicalization of result phrases and ellipsis of postverbal NPs, and the intermediate characteristics between ICEs and IPs, as in quantification, topicalization of postverbal NPs, ellipsis of result phrases, and anaphora. For more examples of transitive RC, FORCs, and other kind of RCs, which undergo the syntactic operations, see appendix.

ellipsis of postverbal NPs (elps.1), and ellipsis of XPs (elps.2). In this respect, FORCs, BPOCs, and VHOCs behave as IPs. In regard to anaphora, while FORCs and BPOCs are marginally acceptable, VHOCs are almost ruled out.

What show significant differences among them are passivization, modification, and quantification. In the case of FORCs, they are fully compatible with these three syntactic transformations. In the case of BPOCs, on the other hand, they are marginally compatible with modification, but not with passivization and quantification. When we focus on the results of passivization, modification, and quantification of FORCs and BPOCs, it can be said that the degree of idiomaticity of BPOCs is higher than that of FORCs. In other words, BPOCs have more IPs-like characteristics, compared with FORCs. As for VHOCs, they are not compatible with all the syntactic operations shown above. This explicitly suggests that VHOCs are highly idiomatic expressions, and they are completely opaque in their semantics. The degree of their idiomaticity can be summarized as follows:

$$(47) \text{ VHOCs} \cong \text{BPOCs} > \text{FORCs}$$

The degree of idiomaticity of VHOCs is approximately the same as that of BPOCs. Given the fact that there is no syntactic operation which is fully compatible with BPOCs and VHOCs, it would be safe to conclude that they

are highly idiomatic constructions. In contrast to the two constructions, FORCs show some ICEs-like behaviors in regard to passivization, modification, and quantification. From this, it can be concluded that FORCs are the constructions whose idiomaticity is relatively high, though not fully idiomatic.¹⁴

Finally, I briefly refer to a possible implication of the idiomatic hierarchy. This idiomatic difference among these constructions could be reduced to the contexts in which they are interpreted literally. As we have observed in the previous chapters, BPOCs and VHOCs can be construed literally under fiction-like or exorcism contexts. In contrast, FORCs do not particularly require any specific context when interpreted literally. Given the difference, it could be possible to consider that the contextual difference among these constructions is reflected to their idiomaticity. However, there are few data available. Therefore, I do not investigate this issue any further here and leave it to future research.

In this chapter, I have observed the degree of idiomaticity of FORCs, BPOCs, and VHOCs in terms of the relation between syntactic frozenness and semantic transparency. In the previous studies of phrasal idioms, the relation between syntax and semantic have widely been discussed. In the field of constructional grammar, however, few previous researches have applied the syntactic diagnostics to constructional idioms such as FORCs,

¹⁴ As shown in footnote 13, the syntactic frozenness of transitive RCs are almost the same as that of FORCs. In other words, the degree of the idiomaticity of transitive RCs and FORCs are roughly the same.

BPOCs, and VHOCs. This study showed that there is a hierarchy of idiomaticity in constructional idioms as well as in phrasal idioms.

Chapter 7

Conclusion

In this thesis, I have focused my discussion on revealing constructional relationship among Fake Object Resultative Constructions (FORCs), Body Part *Off* Constructions (BPOCs), and V *the Hell Out of* Constructions (VHOCs) and their idiomaticity. In this chapter, let me overview the discussion so far as concluding remarks.

Classical analyses on intensifying constructions have paid their attention to their formal and semantic aspects. By virtue of them, their characteristics have been described in small steps. However, few researchers have been interested in the comparison among the intensifying constructions in terms of their interpretation. That makes the relationship among them opaque.

It is uncontroversially the case that the constructions discussed in this study share the similar form and interpretation. This leads us to predict that they are constructionally related in some way. To clarify this, I introduced construction grammar. As a result, the construction grammar approach revealed the constructional relationship among the constructions precisely, in which none of the previous studies has been interested.

Furthermore, I investigated the status as idiomatic expressions of the intensifying constructions from the viewpoint of idiomaticity. The constructions discussed in this thesis are often called constructional idioms.

However, their idiomaticity has not been argued in previous studies. This analysis introduced traditional syntactic operations to measure idiomaticity and applied them to the constructional idioms. As a result of the investigation, it became clear that there is an idiomatic hierarchy among them (i.e. one construction is more idiomatic than the others), as with the hierarchy of phrasal idioms. To be more specific, VHOCs and BPOCs are more idiomatic expressions than FORCs, and the idiomaticity of VHOCs and BPOCs is almost the same.

Let me finally refer to the possibility of discourse analysis. As we have observed, each construction has both literal and excessive interpretations. It seems possible to think that the selection of interpretation is determined by the environment where the intensifying constructions occur. In fact, it appears that the interpretation is affected by its environment. For example, whether the expression “eat oneself sick,” which is an example of FORCs, is interpreted literally or excessively depends on the context in which it occurs:

- (1) Rome underwent the same process, by which its “illegal aliens”, called “slaves”, built the Roman Empire whilst Romans ate themselves sick, *went to vomitoriums* and back to the feasts. And, we all know what happened to the Roman Empire.

(http://economistsview.typepad.com/economistsview/2007/05/paul_krugman_di.html)

- (2) As soon as she could talk, Barbro told her mother about her distaste for brown beans. She said “I really ate myself sick on them the last time.” While in hiding for over two years Anne Frank had only brown beans to eat for many meals.

(Paul Von Ward, *The Soul Genome*)

One of my informants suggests that the expression *ate themselves sick* in (1) is interpreted literally in this context. That is further confirmed by the expression *went to vomitoriums*, since that expression implies the consequence of eating too much. On the other hand, the informant judged *ate myself sick* in (2) as a hyperbolic expression.

However, what is obvious so far is only that the discourse affects the interpretation of intensifying constructions in some way. To put it differently, the way the discourse affects their interpretation is still unclear.

In addition, what makes it difficult to explore the discourse analysis of intensifying constructions is the number of example of BPOCs and VHOCs. Especially, since literal BPOCs (LBPOCs) and literal VHOCs (LVHOCs) are quite rare, it is almost impossible to find out the discourse in which they occur. For these reasons, I do not attempt to investigate the discourse analysis of FORCs, BPOCs, and VHOCs in this thesis, and further empirical researches will be required.

In conclusion, I have argued the characteristics of intensifying constructions from the viewpoints of construction grammar and phraseology.

It is the first and new attempt to consider FORCs, BPOCs, and VHOCs in the framework of construction grammar and to introduce the notion of idiomaticity into construction grammar. This thesis advocated a new approach to peripheral constructions.

Appendix

The following examples show the acceptability of transitive and intransitive Resultative Constructions, Body Part *Off* Constructions, and V *the Hell Out of* Constructions to passivization, modification, quantification, topicalization, ellipsis, and anaphora.¹ We have already observed representative examples of these constructions and their syntactic behaviors in Chapter 6. The examples below include what I could not introduce in that chapter.²

| | |
|-------------------------|----------------------|
| No mark: acceptable | ?: barely acceptable |
| ?*: almost unacceptable | *: unacceptable |

| |
|---|
| The joggers ran the Nike threadbare. |
| The joggers ran the brand-new Nikes threadbare. |
| The joggers ran fifty Nikes threadbare. |
| ?*Those Nikes, the joggers ran threadbare. |
| *Threadbare, the joggers ran those Nikes. |

¹ Note that intransitive RCs are sub-categorized into RCs with unergative verbs and RCs with unaccusative verbs, as shown below:

- (i) a. Mary shouted herself hoarse. (unergative)
- b. The lake froze solid. (unaccusative)

In this thesis, we call a sentence such as (ia) Fake Object Resultative Constructions.

² Their acceptability is based on the judgment of five informants.

?The Nikes were run threadbare (by the joggers).

The joggers ran their Nikes into the ground.

Their/The Nikes were run into the ground (by the joggers).

?Their/The Nikes were run threadbare (by the joggers).

Bill drank the pub dry.

Bill drank the brand-new pub dry.

Bill drank three pubs dry.

?*This pub, Bill drank dry.

*Dry, Bill drank this/the pub.

*Mary drank Tom's pub dry on Monday, and she drank HIS dry again on Friday.

?Mary drank Tom's pub dry on Monday, and she did it again on Friday.

*Mary drank Tom's pub dry on Monday, and she drank dry again on Friday.

?*Mary drank the pub dry on Monday, and she drank dry again on Friday.

?Bill drank the pub dry on Tuesday, and he drank it dry again on Saturday.

?*Mary drank the pub dry on Monday, and she drank the pub again on Friday.

The pub was drunk dry (by Bill).

Bill cried his eyes red. (Excessive Interpretation)

*Bill cried his eyes red on Wednesday, and he cried HIS red again on Sunday.

?Bill cried his eyes red on Wednesday, and he cried them red again on Sunday.

| |
|---|
| *Bill cried his eyes red on Wednesday, and he cried red again on Sunday. |
| *Bill cried his eyes red on Wednesday, and he cried his eyes again on Sunday. |
| ?Bill's eyes were cried red. |
| *Bill cried his eyes out on Wednesday, and Harry cried out on Sunday. |

| |
|--|
| John worked/danced his head off. |
| ?*Susan worked/swam/danced my head off last night. |
| ?*Susan worked/swam/danced our heads off last night. |
| ?John worked/danced his own head off. |
| ?*We worked/danced our two heads off. |
| *His head, John worked off. |
| *Off, John worked his head. |
| ?*John worked his head off on Monday, and he worked HIS off again on Friday. |
| *John worked his head off on Monday, and he worked his head again on Friday. |
| ?John worked his head off on Monday, and he worked it off again on Friday. |
| *John worked his head off on Monday, and he worked off again on Friday. |
| ?John worked his head off on Monday, and he did it again on Friday. |
| *John's head was worked off last night. |
| *John's head was danced off at the party. |
| *John's head was worked/danced off last night. |

| |
|--|
| Mary talked her butt/ass off. |
| *Mary's butt/ass was talked off at the party. |
| ?Fred talked my/her/our head(s)/ass(es)/butt(s) off, but to no avail. |
| Susan talked my head off last night. |
| ?Mary talked her own butt/ass off. |
| ?We talked our two butts off. |
| *Her butt, Mary talked off. |
| *Off, Mary talked her butt. |
| *Tom talked his butt off on Tuesday, and he talked his butt again on Thursday. |
| ?*Tom talked his butt off on Tuesday, and he talked HIS off again on Thursday. |
| ?Tom talked his butt off on Tuesday, and he talked it off again on Thursday. |
| *Tom talked his butt off on Tuesday, and he talked off again on Thursday. |
| ?Tom talked his butt off on Tuesday, and he did it again on Thursday. |

| |
|---|
| I beat/kicked the hell/shit out of him. |
| ?*I beat/kicked the outrageous hell/shit out of him. |
| *I beat/kicked two hells/shits out of him. |
| *The hell/The shit, I beat/kicked out of him. |
| *Of him, I beat/kicked the hell/shit out. |
| *I beat/kicked his hell/shit out of him on Wednesday, and I beat/kicked HIS out of him again on Sunday. |
| ?*I beat/kicked the hell/shit out of him on Wednesday, and I beat/kicked it out of him again on |

| |
|--|
| Sunday. |
| ?*I beat/kicked the hell/shit out of him on Wednesday, and I beat/kicked out of him again on Sunday. |
| *I beat/kicked the hell out of him on Wednesday, and I beat/kicked the hell again on Sunday. |
| ?*I beat/kicked the shit out of him on Wednesday, and I beat/kicked the shit again on Sunday. |
| ?The hell/The shit was beaten/kicked out of John. |
| The hell/shit was beat/kicked out of him. (Excessive) |
| ?The devil/satan was beat out of him. (Literal) |

| |
|---|
| eat one's heart out |
| *Bill ate his heart out over Sally, and Harry ate out over Jessica. |
| *Bill's heart was eaten out over Sara. |
| *Bill's heart was eaten out over watching his friend scored touch-down. |

| |
|---|
| He worked himself to death. |
| ?*Himself, he worked to death. |
| ?*To death, he worked himself. |
| ?*He worked himself to death on Monday, and he worked to death again on Friday. |
| *He worked himself to death on Monday, and he worked himself again on Friday. |
| He was worked to death. |

| |
|---|
| He pounded/hammered the metal flat. |
| The metal was pounded/hammered flat. |
| He pounded/hammered the hard metal flat. |
| ?He pounded/hammered ten metals flat. |
| ?The metal, he pounded/hammered flat. |
| *Flat, he pounded/hammered the metal. |
| *He pounded/hammered the metal flat on Monday, and he pounded/hammered flat again on Saturday. |
| ?He pounded/hammered the metal flat on Monday, and he pounded/hammered the metal again on Saturday. |
| ?*He pounded/hammered the metal flat on Monday, and he pounded/hammered it flat again on Saturday. |

| |
|---|
| I shot the bear dead. |
| I shot the fierce bear dead. |
| I shot five bears dead. |
| ?The bear, I shot dead. |
| ?*Dead, I shot the bear. |
| *I shot the bear dead on Monday, and I shot the bear again on Saturday. |
| ?*I shot the bear dead on Monday, and I shot it dead again on Saturday. |
| *I shot the bear dead on Monday, and I shot dead again on Saturday. |
| The bear was shot dead. |

| |
|---|
| He painted the fence white. |
| He painted the tall fence white. |
| ?He painted three fences white. |
| ?The fence, he painted white. |
| The fence was painted white (by him). |
| *White, he painted the fence. |
| ?He painted the fence white on Tuesday, and he painted the fence again on Friday. |
| ?He painted the fence white on Tuesday, and he painted it white again on Friday. |
| *He painted the fence white on Tuesday, and he painted white again on Friday. |
| The fence was painted white. |

| |
|---|
| I broke the window to pieces. |
| I broke the narrow window to pieces. |
| I broke eight windows to pieces. |
| ?The window, I broke to pieces. |
| ?*To pieces, I broke the window. |
| ?I broke the window to pieces on Wednesday, and I broke the window again on Sunday. |
| ?I broke the window to pieces on Wednesday, and I broke it to pieces again on Sunday. |
| *I broke the window to pieces on Wednesday, and I broke to pieces again on Sunday. |
| The window was broken to pieces. |

| |
|--|
| She polished the mirror to a brilliant shine. |
| She polished the large mirror to a brilliant shine. |
| She polished four mirrors to a brilliant shine. |
| ?The mirror, she polished to a brilliant shine. |
| ?*To a brilliant shine, she polished the mirror. |
| ?She polished the mirror to a brilliant shine on Monday, and she polished the mirror again on Friday. |
| ?She polished the mirror to a brilliant shine on Monday, and she polished it to a brilliant shine again on Friday. |
| ?*She polished the mirror to a brilliant shine on Monday, and she polished to a brilliant shine again on Friday. |
| The mirror was polished to a brilliant shine. |

| |
|---|
| John kicked the boy to death. |
| John kicked the annoying boy to death. |
| ?John kicked five boys to death. |
| *The boy, John kicked to death. |
| ?*To death, John kicked the boy. |
| *John kicked the boy to death on Monday, and he kicked to death again on Friday. |
| ?*John kicked the boy to death on Monday, and he kicked the boy again on Friday. |
| ?*John kicked the boy to death on Monday, and he kicked him to death again on Friday. |
| The boy was kicked to death. |

| |
|---|
| I chopped the carrot into the dish. |
| I chopped the fresh carrot into the dish. |
| I chopped three carrots into the dish. |
| ?*The carrots, I chopped into the dish. |
| ?*Into the dish, I chopped the carrots. |
| *I chopped the carrot into the dish on Monday, and I chopped into the dish again on Friday. |
| ?*I chopped the carrot into the dish on Monday, and I chopped the carrot again on Friday. |
| ?*I chopped the carrot into the dish on Monday, and I chopped it into the dish again on Friday. |
| ?The carrots were chopped into the dish. |

| |
|--|
| She kissed the boy into calmness. |
| She kissed the restless boy into calmness. |
| She kissed four boys into calmness. |
| ?The boy, she kissed into calmness. |
| ?Into calmness, she kissed the boy. |
| *She kissed the boy into calmness on Wednesday, and she kissed into calmness again on Sunday. |
| ?*She kissed the boy into calmness on Wednesday, and she kissed him again on Sunday. |
| ?*She kissed the boy into calmness on Wednesday, and she kissed him into calmness again on Sunday. |
| ?The boy was kissed into calmness. |

| |
|---|
| They danced themselves tired. |
| ?They danced themselves to death. |
| ?*They danced themselves the state of tiredness. |
| *Themselves, they danced tired. |
| ?*Tired, they danced themselves. |
| ?*They danced themselves tired on Tuesday, and they danced tired again on Saturday. |
| *They danced themselves tired on Tuesday, and they danced themselves again on Saturday. |
| ?*They were danced tired. |

| |
|---|
| He talked himself hoarse. |
| ?*He talked hoarse. |
| He talked himself into the state of hoarseness. |
| He talked until he was hoarse. |
| *Himself, he talked hoarse. |
| *Hoarse, he talked himself. |
| ?*He talked himself hoarse on Monday, and he talked hoarse again on Friday. |
| *He talked himself hoarse on Monday, and he talked himself again on Friday. |
| ?*He was talked hoarse. |

| |
|-----------------------------------|
| He drank himself into a stupor. |
| *Himself, he drank into a stupor. |
| ?Into a stupor, he drank himself. |

?He drank himself into a stupor on Tuesday, and he drank into a stupor again on Saturday.

*He drank himself into a stupor on Tuesday, and he drank himself again on Saturday.

*He was drunk into a stupor.

The lake froze solid.

The lake was frozen solid.

The beautiful lake froze solid.

?Three lakes froze solid.

?*Solid, the lake froze.

?The lake froze solid in January, and the lake froze again in March.

The lake froze solid in January, and it froze solid again in March.

The glass broke into pieces.

The beautiful glass broke into pieces.

Two glasses broke into pieces.

?Into pieces, the glass broke.

?*The glass broke into pieces on Monday, and the glass broke again on Friday.

?The glass broke into pieces on Monday, and it broke into pieces again on Friday.

He pitched his arm off.

*His arm was pitched off.

?He pitched his throwing arm off.

| |
|---|
| ?He pitched his arms off. |
| *His arm, he pitched off. |
| *Off, he pitched his arm. |
| *He pitched his arm off three days ago, and he pitched off again last night. |
| ?He pitched his arm off three days ago, and he pitched it off again last night. |

| |
|--|
| She danced her feet off. |
| ?*Her feet were danced off. |
| She danced her beautiful feet off. |
| *Her feet, she danced off. |
| *Off, she danced her feet. |
| *She danced her feet off on Monday, and she danced off again on Saturday. |
| ?She danced her feet off on Monday, and she danced them off again on Saturday. |

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