

Some Notes on Prepositional Resultatives*

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1. On the Category Distinction of Resultatives

Resultative constructions have attracted many linguists these days. Yet some of the problems they give rise to do not seem to have been given proper treatments. In this paper I will examine examples with prepositional resultatives like *to death* or *into/out of NP*, which will reveal the diversity that the prepositional resultatives have, and the difficulties that they give rise to with some of the proposals made in the literature. What I will consider have much to do with the difference of two kinds of resultative phrases, namely, adjectival and prepositional resultatives. Thus before proceeding, I briefly discuss this issue.

To the best of my knowledge, a clear distinction has not been drawn between these two types of resultatives, and prepositional resultatives have been regarded as being treatable by analogy with adjectival resultatives. For example, Simpson (1983:153) claims that adjectives are the category most commonly used as resultatives, while nominals are the least common, assuming "that this has to do with semantic interpretation of categories: adjectives and prepositional phrases are readily interpretable as denoting STATES, but only a few nominals, such as *a pale shade of pink*, *the right length*, (which seem semantically close to adjectives) allow state readings." In other words, while drawing a distinction between adjectives and nominals, she treats adjectival and prepositional resultatives on a par without discussion. Levin and Rappaport Hovav (1995:34) simply states that "[a] resultative phrase is an XP that denotes the state achieved by the referent of the NP it is predicated of as a result of the action denoted by the verb in the resultative construction."

Of course, this state of affairs is not without reason. For one thing, resultative constructions have been regarded as being highly idiosyncratic phenomena, and as being "like idioms in that they require a result phrase that can be satisfied only by either one unique lexical item" or "a small set of lexical items with a highly idiosyncratic meaning" (Carrier and Randall 1992:184). In the same vein, Goldberg (1995:192) claims that resultatives "are often part of collocations with particular verbs", pointing out that *eat* and *cry* are most colloquial with *sick* and *to sleep*, respectively:

- (1) a. He ate himself sick.
- b. ? He ate himself ill/nauseous/full.
- (2) a. She cried herself to sleep.

- b. ? She cried herself asleep.
- c. ??She cried herself calm/wet.

It should be recalled that resultative constructions are sometimes called constructional idioms. This term would be justified in face of the idiosyncrasies which each instance of this construction might have. When one speaks of a given phenomenon as an idiom, the phenomenon is treated as what is hard, if not impossible, to give a further analysis or generalization.

It seems however that too much emphasis has been put on the idiosyncrasy that resultative constructions have, which has made us overlook some important properties, or end up with a poorer understanding of the resultative construction. One of such issues is the contrast between adjectival and prepositional resultatives. As pointed out above, this issue has not been discussed in detail, but examples are found in the relevant literature which suggest that the latter have a wider distribution than the former. For example, Verspoor (1997:119) gives the following pairs of examples which would support this idea, while claiming that variations in the following pairs of example "are straightforward substitutions, where the resultative phrases have the same semantics but different syntactic form":¹

- (3) a. He laughed himself to death.
- b. * He laughed himself dead.
- (4) a. He laughed himself to sleep.
- b. * He laughed himself sleepy/asleep.
- (5) a. He laughed himself out of a job.
- b. * He laughed himself jobless/unemployed.
- (6) a. He danced himself to fame.
- b. * He danced himself famous.

Baker (1997:130) also notes the following contrast:

- (7) a. The loud noise frightened John to death.
- b. * The loud noise frightened John dead.

Verspoor (1997:120) concludes that prepositional and adjectival resultative phrases "seem to behave differently in resultative construction, such that semantically equivalent resultative phrases in one syntactic form are felicitous in one sentence and infelicitous in others", and thus "reference to the syntactic form of the resultative construction is also critical to the modeling of the resultative construction".

It seems that whether each variation conveys the same result state is not so straightforward as Verspoor claims. In this respect, recall the statement made by Simpson which I cite above. She treats adjectival and prepositional resultatives on a par, and assumes that both of them are readily interpretable as denoting a state. It is

not so obvious however that PPs are interpretable as denoting a state. Most of the prepositional resultatives given in the literature contain prepositions like *to*, *into*, *on to*, *off*, *out of*, and so on, which do not in themselves denote a state so much as a change of state or of location. It is the NP complement of P that denotes the state that result from the action named by the main predicate. It is natural then that NPs by themselves do not appear as resultatives. Or rather, they appear in the resultative construction with the help of P that denotes the idea of a change of state or of location. In other words, the prepositional resultative consists of P and NP, the latter of which designates a resultant state, with the former denoting a transition to such a state. In this respect, prepositional resultatives would less deserve to be called "constructions" in the sense of Goldberg (1995:4) than adjectival resultatives.

By contrast, adjectives may denote a resultant state, but do not express a transition to a resultant state by themselves. If so, then the question to be addressed is why APs can appear as resultatives, and I believe that the answer to this question also sheds light on the difference of adjectival and prepositional resultatives. It has often been pointed out in the literature that the meaning that resultatives designate is involved in the main predicate, and resultative phrases are just a manifestation of this meaning. For example, Green (1972:91) points out that the grammatical variant in (8a) has virtually the same meaning as its counterpart in (8b), yet it does not have such a redundancy that the unacceptable sentence in (8c) does:

- (8) a. They killed him dead/*quiet/*famous.
 b. They killed him.
 c. * They killed John by killing him

She claims that *kill* in (8a), as well as the one in (8b), means 'cause to become dead', and thus one of the 'dead's (either the overt one, or the one involved in *kill*) must be a copy of the other. I do not examine her specific proposal in detail here, but what draws my attention is the idea that the main predicate and the resultative phrase are of the same origin. This idea in turn suggests that the main predicate and the resultative phrase make up a complex predicate at a certain level of linguistic representation. The verb *kill* is a complex predicate in this sense, since it can involve the resultative phrase *dead*, though the resultative need not appear on the surface. The same applies to what Washio (1997:7) calls strong resultatives, by which he means resultatives "in which the meaning of the verb and the meaning of the adjective are completely independent of each other" (as in *The horses dragged the logs smooth* or *The joggers ran the pavement thin*). I assume that so long as a given verb-adjective combination is used as a resultative expression, however independent the verb and the adjective are of each other when given in isolation, they have to make up

a complex predicate.² Since one's presence does not imply the other's in this case, the verb and the adjective are associated with each other with the help of pragmatic knowledge or by virtue of them being a conventionalized form. As opposed to strong resultatives, weak resultatives like *Mary dyed the dress pink* have the adjective which "is further specifying (or even modifying) the notion 'color' that is already contained in the verb" (Washio 1997:10), and thus the presence of the adjective is licensed by the verb. Notice also that the resultative expression in (8a), as well as the one *Will it bleach the undies white?*,³ deserves to be referred to as the "weakest" resultative, since the adjective *dead* does not further specify part of the meaning that the verb *kill* conveys so much as just appears as its manifestation. In any case, it can be concluded that the presence of adjectival resultatives depends on whether a given adjective can be part of a verb-adjective complex, and this is the reason why resultatives have been regarded as constructional idioms.⁴

Now returning to prepositional resultatives, it is their P head that makes prepositional resultative constructions qualified as such. Since prepositional resultatives denote a change of state without recourse to main verbs unlike adjectival resultatives, it is not surprising that they can occur with a wider range of verbs and show more diverse properties than adjectival resultatives. In the next section I will show this fact by examining the examples with the prepositional resultative *to death*.

2. Some Properties of Resultatives Constructions with *to Death*

Let us observe some of the examples I have come across in my inquiry. In the first place, the following examples show that various kinds of verbs occur with the resultative *to death*:

- (9) a. She ruled out a cheap illegal abortion because a girlfriend bled to death after getting one. (*Time*, May 4, 1992)
- b. From mid-September the security situation worsened, with a number of students burning themselves to death in protest. (BNC)
- c. I reckon squitters was queen [of the battlefield]. More of the poor bastards crapped themselves to death than killed each other. (OED: A. Price *War Game*, 1976)
- d. In April 1989, hundreds of Liverpool fans were crushed to death on the terraces of Sheffield's Hillsborough Stadium before the FA Cup semi-final between Liverpool and Nottingham Forest. (BNC)
- e. A pheasant, caught in a stream of air, had dashed itself to death. (BNC)
- f. ... the three men authorities believe dragged her brother to death

- behind a pickup truck simply because he was black.
- g. Since Phil Lynott drank and drugged himself to death in 1986 at the age of 35, this is as close as we're gonna get.
- h. Otherwise, some people would indeed quite literally eat themselves to death--in fact there have been a few cases of disturbed people doing just that in recent years. (BNC)
- i. "If I must be devoured, let me be devoured by the jaws of a lion, and not gnawed to death by rats and vermin," declared the audacious pamphleteer.
- j. A resident of the rainforests of the Indonesian islands of Sulawesi, Buru Taliabu and Mangole, the babirusa may be the only animal in the world that given time, can gore itself to death. (BNC)
- k. Oh, I may as well say now that I didn't kill Gerard, ... I could hardly hope to persuade him of the virtues of the literary novel by gassing him to death. (P. D. James, *The Original Sin*)
- l. In 1913 one dedicated suffragist publicized her cause by deliberately hurling herself to death under the hooves of horses racing in the derby at Epsom Downs. (*Encarta* 97)
- m. When the history of our times comes to be written, They Organized Themselves to Death will be the only possible epitaph. (BNC)
- n. The young greater honeyguide, which parasitises red-throated bee-eaters, has a hooked tip to its bill with which it pecks its nest mates to death. (BNC)
- o. There are fans inside, ice water, open windows. Outside, we have a hammock, that loft in the barn, the cellar ... It's not that you'll fry to death here.
- p. The baby honeyguide is equipped with a sharp, hooked beak. As soon as he hatches out, while he is still blind, naked, and otherwise helpless, he scythes and slashes his foster brothers and sisters to death: dead brothers do not compete for food! (R. Dawkins, *The Selfish Gene*)
- q. She has maintained her innocence throughout; prosecutors accused her of shaking 8-month-old Matthew Eappen to death.
- r. If your Highness keep your purport, you will shock him even to death, or baser courses, children of despair.
- s. A gasworks foreman ... said that at present the gas included 13 per cent of carbon monoxide ... "One per cent is sufficient to kill. It

sleeps you to death." (OED: *Daily Mail*, 1923)

- t. You are smoking yourself to death.
- u. The jury are not pondering the relationship of morality to psychology: they are trying to visualise a person who ... is capable of spontaneously stabbing to death someone who has sufficiently angered him.
- v. He labored ceaselessly to help impoverished Iwate peasants learn new farming techniques, virtually working himself to death. He died of tuberculosis at the age of 37. (*Encarta* 97)

As pointed out in section 1, the adjectival resultative *dead* seems to be unable to take the place of these instances of the resultative *to death*. Indeed, there are few instances of the resultative *dead* that occur with any verbs other than *kill* or *shoot*.⁵

Notice that the examples in (9a) and (9o) have to do with unaccusativity, which is discussed in detail in Levin and Rappaport Hovav (1995), Wechsler (1996), Verspoor (1997), among others. Interestingly, there are other examples that show this property, which have a counterpart with an unergative plus a fake object. Consider:

- (10) a. Well before the ship reached home, the cartridge would be full as well, and the astronauts would quickly choke to death on their own gases. (J. Lovell and J. Kluger, *Apollo* 13)
- b. Left alone, the place would rapidly choke itself to death, it seemed. (BNC)
- (11) a. He therefore may have lain down ... fallen asleep and frozen to death. (*Time*, Oct. 26, 1992)
- b. Rescue teams foiled a bizarre suicide bid when they stumbled across a man trying to freeze himself to death. (BNC)
- (12) a. It would have been ironic if the statue had completely blocked the entrance and he'd had to stay inside until he starved to death.
- b. No dog is so obstinate as to starve itself to death. (BNC)

The fact that the same resultative *to death* is found with both the unaccusative and the unergative counterpart would give rise to difficulties with the explanation given by Levin and Rappaport Hovav (1995). They (1995:186-7) claim that resultative expressions like *She danced free of her captors*, which show the unaccusative resultative pattern, denote the result of a change in location, while their unergative plus fake object counterparts, as in *He danced his feet sore*, denote the result of a change of state. They conclude that these verbs (which they call agentive verbs of directed motion) enter into different resultative patterns depending on whether they

describe directed or non-directed motion. Apparently, their explanation is not carried over to the above pairs of examples; it is impossible to say that the resultative *to death* in these (a) sentences denote change of location, and those in the (b) sentences do not.

Alternatively, Wechsler (1996) proposes that the resultative construction with an unaccusative or transitive verb is what he calls control resultative and the one with a fake object is what he calls raising resultatives. In short, while control resultatives are tied to the canonical result of the verb-denoted action, raising resultatives need not bear any such connection to the verb. Consider the following examples, given in Wechsler (1996:6):

- (13) a. * The dog barked hoarse.
 b. The dog barked itself hoarse.

He claims that the control resultative in (13a) is unacceptable because hoarseness is not a canonical result of barking; indeed there is probably no canonical result of barking. The raising resultative in (13b) is acceptable because no such semantic selection is imposed on raising resultatives. Notice that Wechsler (1996) does not claim that raising resultatives are incompatible with the resultative that expresses the canonical result of the action named by the verb. Thus, even if the resultative *to death* is taken as the canonical result of the action of, say, starving, and the expression *starve to death* counts as a control resultative, nothing prevents the same expression from being used as a raising resultative.

Let us return to the main discussion. Besides these examples in (9), there are examples in "figurative" use. What may be taken to be in figurative use however divide themselves into two subclasses. One includes those in which *death* does not literally denote the end of life or the state of being dead, but applies to various kinds of inanimate thing:

- (14) a. I begin to believe that the House will clap itself to death one day (BNC)
 b. Rather than edit the interview to death, I decided to run it "actual size," with topics coming and going as they actually did during the conversation.
 c. Late 1992, and a kid named Kurious dropped a single called "Walk Like A Duck". ... I quickly went out and bought the single and played it to death (I put this jam on mad types.)
 d. "Mothership Connection," a song that has been sampled to death in recent years, gets a new coat of vocal paint from P-Funk.
 e. If we come back next year, the whole of Tokyo will be scratching

itself to death. (BNC)

- f. When it rains in California, it's got all the rest of the country skinned to death. (OED: 'Yeslah' *Tenderfoot S. Calif.* 1908)
- g. This is one of those creamy frostings that seems to disappear on its way to the cake, simply because it's so darn hard to keep from tasting it to death. (BNC)

The examples in (9) and (14) are similar, however, in that the word *death* in any way expresses a cessation of the function that creatures or inanimate things originally have. In other words, the resultative *to death* is representing in these examples the idea that whether literally or figuratively, the entity predicated by *to death* has undergone the change of state described.

The other kind of figurative use, by contrast, allows the phrase *to death* that does not express the idea of the entity in question having been dead so much as the idea that the action or event described by the main predicate is done to excess, to such an extent that it might have brought into such a resultant state. Here are some examples:

- (15) a. In *Modern Masterpiece* there is the idea of people being taken over by a force greater than themselves and dancing themselves to death, and that seems to tie in a bit with what is going on. (BNC)
- b. A delegation of Hurricane Hugo veterans from Charleston has already warned Dade County officials that the worst part is yet to come. "They document you to death. You have to document every nail on every roof," says Councilwoman Lombard sourly. "We had 600 miles of ditch to be cleaned. To document it, we had to walk it. Dade's got 200 miles of canals. Rest assured that FEMA will make them swim it to document it." (*Time*, Sep. 14, 1992)
- c. A casual observer of flight testing might wonder why the participants are not hardened to death, but it is not so.
- d. He lost himself in the night and waited until his heart stopped kicking itself to death. (BNC)
- e. He [sc. my cat] will go out and catch a mouse. And he will play with it to death. It really quite sadistic. Then he finally kills it ... (P. Cornwell *From Potter's Field*)
- f. She sneered and bullied and slobbered; she nagged my father to death, and when she wasn't nagging she was muttering. (BNC)
- g. Faced with the prospect of watching a fat geordie sweating himself

to death on a sofa or driving down the A1 to Elland Road I chose the latter and watched the Swindon game. (BNC)

One might wonder whether expressions in this kind of figurative use indeed are instances of resultative construction, since the phrase *to death* does not express an actual change of state. It should be noted however that some (though not all) of them contain a fake reflexive, a feature which is marked in resultative constructions. Moreover, as Goldberg (1995:184-5) points out, expressions with fake objects are often used as hyperbole to express the idea that the action performed was done to excess, as shown in (16):

(16) The joggers ran the pavement thin.

She further remarks that "[t]his statement would not be used to describe an actual change in the thickness of the pavement, let alone to convey the idea that the pavement bore some kind of particular property which caused it to become thin from people running on it." Thus, it would be concluded with little difficulty that the examples in (15) count as resultative constructions.

It should also be noted that expressions like *bore to death* or *frighten to death*, which have a psychological predicate as the main verb, often express an excessiveness, like those in (15), rather than an actual state of being dead. In fact, *the Oxford English Dictionary* (s.v. dead, n. II 12 b) refers to the resultative *to death* in this usage as the following:⁶

intensifying verbs of feeling, as *hate*, *resent*, or adjs., as *sick*, *wearied*: to the last extremity, to the uttermost, to the point of physical or nervous exhaustion, beyond endurance.

Interestingly, even with verbs of this kind, the resultative *to death* can express the idea of being dead, as the following examples show:

- (17) a. Poisoned by pollution, hunted for meat, drowned in fishing nets or simply bored to death in captivity, the toll is growing by the day. (BNC)
- b. It is more difficult to show that people can be frightened to death but analysis of survivors of the Athenian earthquake disaster in 1986 showed an increased subsequent incidence of heart disease. (CobuildDirect)
- c. "I think that if he touched the electric fence when it was on, he'd be frightened to death and we'd never get near him again," says Penny Stevens, his groom for the last five years. (BNC)

Particularly noteworthy are the following examples, which have an adverbial expression that implies that the resultant state described by the NP has not been

achieved or done halfway through:

- (18) a. Josephine bored me half to death talking about her. Now it's you. I never heard so much about so little.
- b. I'm frightened almost to death about it, but the midwife says she'll be all right, and that nothing will happen for hours yet, so I took the chance to slip out, but I daren't stay long. (BNC)

It seems that these examples do not make sense unless *to death* in itself expresses an actual change of state into being dead.

In the same vein, the following examples have the same kind of adverbial expressions:

- (19) a. Lenard Clark, 13, was nearly beaten to death 13 months ago in a mostly white Chicago neighborhood, the apparent victim of a brutal racial attack.
- b. Racism used to take a more blatant form: the hangings, the beating of blacks half to death on the streets.
- c. Women should worry. All they have to do is starve themselves half to death and they get thin. (WordBank)
- d. Tonny suspected that his parents had believed he'd eventually be overwhelmed with guilt as he watched his father and his brothers working themselves half to death to keep all the principal management positions in the immediate family. (D. Koontz *Ticktock*)

The examples in (18) and (19) show that what Goldberg (1995:195-197) generalizes as the end-of-scale constraint cannot be carried over to the prepositional resultative *to death*. By this she means that "the patient argument has 'gone over the edge,' beyond the point where normal functioning is possible." She argues that even gradable adjectives like *sick*, which are not interpreted as delimiting a clear boundary, do not receive a nongradable interpretation when they occur in the resultative construction, as is shown by the example *?She ate herself a little sick*. Compare also the examples in (19) with the example *John smote him dead/*half-dead*, given in Carrier and Randall (1992:184). It seems that the end-of-scale constraint, if at all, is restricted to adjectival resultatives, since they do not designate a transition to the resultant state expressed, which adverbial expressions of this kind would modify. By contrast, since prepositional resultative *to death* has the preposition that expresses a transition to the resultant state, they can have these adverbial expressions representing that such a transition has not been achieved or has done halfway through.

Finally, I refer to the examples in (15e) and (19b) as possible counterexamples

to the restriction which states that "resultative phrases cannot be predicated of VP-internal NPs that are not direct objects, such as obliques" (Levin and Rappaport Hovav 1995:41). The former includes the phrasal verb *play with*, and the latter is an instance of nominalization. It is not certain at all however whether phrasal verbs can occur only with prepositional resultatives or not, and thus I do not go into this issue, leaving it for further research. Here I briefly comment on the latter case. Compare (19b) with the example **the shooting of the man dead*, which is given in Goldberg (1995:183). Though Jackendoff (1990:237) cites the example with PP, as in *The slicing of cheese into thin wedges is the current rage*, he attributes its grammaticality to the expression *slice ... into wedges* being what he calls a lexical resultative but not an adjunct one. Since the expression *beat ... to death* should be included in adjunct resultatives (which he claims occur with APs and PPs), it can be concluded that the example in (19b) shows another difference between prepositional and adjectival resultatives.

3. Prepositional Resultatives with *into/out of NP*

This section will examine examples with the resultative phrase which has as its head the preposition *into* or *out of*, the latter being converse of the former in a sense. I restrict the scope of discussion to these prepositions, since other prepositions that occur in this construction mainly express a change of location. By restricting in this way, I avoid committing myself in the issue as to whether those which express a change of location are indeed resultative constructions or constructions of another kind, which Goldberg calls caused-motion constructions.⁷ Notice however that some of the examples given below are hard to tell whether they have an resultative phrase that expresses a change of location, a change of state, or a change of state by metaphorically using an expression of a change of location.⁸

Now, let us consider the following examples:

- (20) a. You cant get away from the scar on your left wrist if you alibied yourself into hell. (OED: P. Armstrong *Alias Jimmy Valentine*, 1909)
- b. No, no more than the real Feargal McMahon is the oaf sitting across me arguing himself into a corner. (BNC)
- c. This profound question of a self-creating Universe which somehow bootstraps itself into existence using quantum indeterminism as the straps. (OED: *New Scientist*, June 23, 1983)
- d. But I do not know just what I thought, for those eighteen days on the Great Colorado in midsummer, had burned themselves into my

- memory, and I made an inward vow that nothing would ever force me into such a situation again.
- e. "I declare, Mrs. Rand, I cried myself into a snit." "A snit?" "I do deplore it, but when I'm in a snit I'm prone to bull the object of my wrath plumb in the tummy." (OED: C. Boothe *Kiss Boys Good-bye*, 1939)
- f. Reports circulated that Noriega had taken to the bottle and occasionally drank himself into a stupor.
- g. Drugging myself into sleep with an overload of seconal. (OED: N. Mailer *Advs. for Myself*, 1959)
- h. These three carry on the irresponsible practical jokes and illicit enterprises of their seniors, borrowing boats while in harbour and exploring themselves into danger, invariably rescued by improbably patient sailors. (BNC)
- i. Some of the hard-edge and stain painters are making matters worse by panicking themselves into the optical movement. (OED: *New Statesman*, Apr. 30, 1965)
- j. We made music, played ourselves into the groove. (OED: R. Manheim tr. *Grass's Tin Drum*, 1962)
- k. Another general was soon to press-conference himself into the Presidency. (OED: *Manch. Guardian Weekly*, Apr. 2, 1953)
- l. Ratiocinating myself into honesty about my posturings. (OED: C. P. Snow *Search*, 1934)
- m. He hath not the gift to woo in other places; for these fellows of infinite tongue, that can rhyme themselves into ladies' favours, they do always reason themselves out again. (CobuildDirect)
- n. Dervishes shouting themselves into ecstasy at their zikr. (OED: *Blackw. Mag.*, Aug., 1923)
- o. Suppose I should compose prayers for my father's congregation, think how bewildered the good people in our pews would become if they should find, writ out for their repeating, the calls of birds and the voices of winds, which I know would sing themselves into any prayer of my making.
- p. I'm not ungregarious but I'm quite incapable of the party spirit in a roomful of people busy smoking themselves into lung cancer. (OED: S. Jepson Let. to Dead Girl, 1971)
- q. That year, the country will have spent itself into a bankruptcy from

which there will be no return. (*Time*, Dec. 28, 1992)

- r. ... with today's equipment far more tropical depressions are tracked, whether they turn into tropical storms, whirl themselves into hurricanes or merely dissipate. (CobuildDirect)

In these examples, a resultant state is denoted by the NP complement of the preposition *into*, with which the resultative phrase expresses the idea of transition to such a state. Conversely, *out of* designates the idea of transition from the state or event described by its NP complement. Thus, resultative constructions with *out of* designates a resultant state in which the state or event in question does not hold any longer, as shown in the following examples:

- (21) a. You can choose to count yourself out of hypnosis, using whatever combination of numbers you prefer. (CobuildDirect)
- b. The Automat? ... The food's quite good. You go and help yourself out of slot-machines, you know. (OED: Wodehouse *Jill the Reckless*, 1921)
- c. Lightning Mandate, who won a division of the recent Malibu, was right behind him, and these two probably quickstepped themselves out of the money. (OED: *New Yorker*, Feb. 17, 1975)
- d. Arafat also warned that any Palestinian group that rejected the idea ... must read itself out of the P.L.O. (OED: *Time*, Dec. 27, 1976)
- e. A mortgagee is allowed to reimburse himself out of the mortgaged property for all costs, charges and expenses reasonably and properly incurred in enforcing or preserving his security. (BNC)
- f. You've got to shake yourself out of this dream. (BNC)
- g. ... he slapped himself out of a long daze. (CobuildDirect)
- h. I ask your pardon,' said Harry, stirring himself out of his lethargy of despair. (BNC)
- i. ... we're taxing ourselves out of competition with the rest of the country and even the rest of Southern California. (CobuildDirect)
- j. Otherwise marginalized groups run the risk of theorizing themselves out of existence. (BNC)
- k. The ... delimitation of the areas which may vote themselves out of Home Rule. (OED: *Times* (weekly ed.) Mar. 13, 1914)

Note in passing that it is not difficult to find that the same verb can be used both with *into* and *out of*, as shown by the following pairs of examples:⁹

- (22) a. He has Couéd himself into a yearly fit of depression and lassitude. (OED: *Daily Express*, July 27, 1928)

- b. We seemed to be at a dead end, and you can't Coué yourself out of an impasse like that. (OED: C. Bush *Case of Careless Thief*, 1959)
- (23) a. There'd been none of the shrewdies who dug themselves into good hospital jobs. (OED: D. M. Davin *Sullen Bell*, 1956)
- b. No, it's the fact that Boro', relegation rivals with my beloved Palace, have suddenly worked out how to defend and are looking increasingly capable of digging themselves out of trouble. (Cobuild Direct)
- (24) a. Critics of the government have argued that, ..., at the lowest end of the income scale there is greater emphasis on the need for workers 'to price themselves into employment' by accepting less than the 'going rate' of pay increases. (BNC)
- b. Swiss exports may be pricing themselves out of world markets. (OED: *Guardian*, Sept. 6, 1971)
- (25) a. We are in danger of talking ourselves into a deeper decline in which only the bad news is given attention. (BNC)
- b. I had talked myself out of the let-down feeling and was determined to make the most of the trip. (OED: M. Mackintosh *King and Two Queens*, 1973)
- (26) a. He was working himself into a killer mood. (CobuildDirect)
- b. I became used to having a room all to myself, except at night. I had become used to being a loner way too easily to ever work myself out of it.
- (27) a. Cheerio Farson accordingly goes easy on the theory and, as a result, has written himself into art history. (CobuildDirect)
- b. He sat down to write himself out of insolvency with a series of new novels starting with A Fair Maid of Perth. (BNC)

This is a natural consequence considering that *into* and *out of* express the situation converse to each other. Of course, it is not the case that any given verb can have both *into* and *out of*, since it would not be expected to find an appropriate situation for either case.

One of the important properties that prepositional resultatives have is that in place of NP they can have a gerund, a form of verb which behaves like a noun in that it can appear as subject, and object of verbs or prepositions. Observe the following examples:

- (28) a. When our missing robot failed of location anywhere ... we brainstormed ourselves into counting the robots left. (OED: I. Asimov in

E. Crispin *Best SF II*, 1947)

- b. Their two big hits, "I Fought The Law" and "Love's Made A Fool Of You" have confused more than a few shoppers into looking in the Buddy Holly section.
- c. After a lifetime of repressing these desires, is it any wonder poor kids grow up resentful, feeling deprived, ready to explode into looting, even though their basic needs are met?
- d. The President said "that we should not get roped into accepting any European sphere of influence. We do not want to be compelled, for instance, to maintain United States troops in Yugoslavia."
- e. "... Plus, they had four incredibly creative people in one band, all listening to different stuff and all, in a way, competing with each other to get their song on the next record." ... "Especially John and Paul. They scared each other into writing."
- f. But the action was swiftly denounced by the radical Popular Front movement of Azerbaijan, which has supported the two-month blockade aimed at starving Armenia into capitulating on the issue. (BNC)
- g. If my brain had been functioning, I'd have still talked myself into making love to Shona on the grounds that the worst I could expect was betrayal. (CobuildDirect)

The fact that gerunds can occur in prepositional resultatives does not seem to have been given a fair deal. By contrast, present and past participles, other forms which are derived from verbs, have drawn much attention in the literature (e.g. Green 1972, Carrier and Randall 1992, Goldberg 1995, among others), in which it has been often argued that participles as opposed to adjectives, are hard to act as a resultative, though otherwise they have similar behavior.

It should be noted that this argument is based on a hidden assumption, namely, that it is typical of the resultative construction to have an adjectival resultative. However, even adjectives are not free to occur in resultative constructions, as discussed in section 1, let alone participles, which are derived from verbs. This is because verbs are incapable of expressing the idea of transition of the action or event denoted by the verb itself. To make this point clearer, consider the verb *kill* and its well-known paraphrase CAUSE TO BECOME NOT ALIVE. The verb denotes the change of state of the entity affected by the verb (patient), whose state changes from ALIVE to NOT ALIVE. Yet the verb does not denote transition of the action designated by the verb from NOT CAUSE to CAUSE. It is various kinds of

expression including auxiliaries and inchoative or causative verbs preceding the verb that express such a transition of the action. Thus it is natural that verbs cannot appear in resultative constructions in the form of participle, which cannot have help from prepositions.

Moreover, gerunds, even in resultative construction, can take various forms including negative or passive, as shown in the following examples:

- (29) a. ..., was it really credible that any President of the United States could be blackmailed into not firing our missiles after such a hypothetical attack in the hope of "saving" the population in the cities of the east?
- b. Recently, though, he has started to explore it in greater detail, playing a violent man who tries to punch the world into agreement (Kiss of Death) or, here, a gentle man who drinks himself into not caring. (CobuildDirect)
- c. Now the New York Metropolitan Transportation Authority is attempting to intimidate subway riders into not giving to beggars.
- (30) a. According to the report, Alan stroked Sabre, put him to sleep, then talked him into being relaxed. (CobuildDirect)
- b. A sails consultant was terrified into being raped by a fireman after he threatened her with his rottweiler, ... (CobuildDirect)

These examples would make explicit the productivity that prepositional resultatives have. Particularly noteworthy is the passive form of gerunds in (30), which corresponds to past participles.

4. Loose End

What I have intended in this paper is to show that prepositional resultatives have not been given a fair treatment which they deserve. As I have pointed out in section 1, prepositional and adjectival resultatives have been treated on a par, which makes us not only overlook the properties that prepositional resultatives have, but also miss a deeper understanding of resultative constructions including adjectival resultatives. In other words, comparison with prepositional resultatives would also bring to light properties of adjectival resultatives. In section 2, I have examined examples with the resultative *to death*, which show the diversity that the prepositional resultatives have, and the difficulties that they give rise to with some of the proposals made in the literature. They are concerned with unaccusativity, the end-of-scale constraint and the restriction against obliques. In section 3, I have observed examples with *into/out of NP*. I have also claimed that prepositional resultatives differ from adjectival resultatives in that the former can have a verb in the form of

gerund, which makes them more productive than the latter. What I have done brings us more problems than solutions with resultative constructions. Yet I believe that this paper makes the first step to a deeper understanding of the resultative construction.

NOTES

* I appreciate Hiromitsu Akashi, Roger Martin, Keiko Sugiyama, and Masanobu Ueda for their invaluable suggestions to earlier versions of this paper. I much owe to the following corpora on the W.W.W. and CD-ROMs, from which I cite part of the examples in this paper:

Corpora on the W.W.W.:

BNC: The British National Corpus [<http://info.ox.ac.uk/bnc/>]

CobuildDirect: CobuildDirect Corpus [<http://titania.cobuild.collins.co.uk/>]

CD-ROMs:

Encarta 97: Microsoft Encarta 97 Encyclopedia, Microsoft, Redmond, 1996.

OED: *The Oxford English Dictionary*, second edition on Compact Disc, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1992.

Time: Time Magazine Multimedia Almanac, Softkey Multimedia, Cambridge, MA, 1995.

WordBank: *WordBank* included in *COBUILD on CD-ROM*, Harper and Collins, Worthing, 1994.

The rest of the examples are collected for my project in progress for building a corpus of the current English. All remaining errors and inadequacies are of course my own.

¹ Verspoor (1997:119) also gives the following examples:

- (i) a. * He danced his feet to soreness.
- b. He danced his feet sore.

At first glance, their contrast seems to go against the statement in the main text that "examples are found in the relevant literature which suggest that the latter have a wider distribution than the former." It should be asked however whether the expression (*to*) *soreness* can actually be qualified as a resultative phrase.

² I tentatively assume, modifying the proposal made in Ichinohe et al. (1996), that the underlying structure of adjectival resultatives is like the following:

- (i) [_{VP} SUBJ [_{V'} [_V e] [_{VP} OBJ [_{V'} [_V V-A]]]]]

The V-A complex is generated in the lower V head position, and its V part is to move to the higher V head position in the course of derivation.

³ Bolinger (1971:74) points out that the verb-adjective combination *bleach ...*

white passes what he calls the definite noun phrase test, while the combination *paint ... white* does not, as show in (i):

- (i) a. Will it bleach white the undies?
- b. * Will it paint white the fence?

In view of the difference, he makes the following claim:

Bleach and *white* are synonymous, or represent some kind of cause-effect relationship in which the effect is more or less intrinsic to the cause: to bleach something is to make it white. To paint something, however, does not in any way imply white-ness.

⁴ Goldberg (1995:195) points out that the type of adjective that can occur as a resultative is fairly limited, observing that while "adjectives 'asleep/awake,' 'open/shut,' 'flat/straight/smooth,' 'free,' 'full/empty,' 'dead/alive,' 'sick,' 'hoarse,' 'sober,' and 'crazy' occur fairly regularly, others occur rarely if at all." In addition, I refer to resultative constructions involving *silly*, which also show such productivity:

- (i) a. A Freeloader is one who has discovered that you can drink yourself silly for absolutely no expense if you attend all the receptions. (OED: *Melody Maker*, Dec. 23, 1967)
- b. But I ate myself silly on them last night and made myself feel sick so I'll never eat them again now. (BNC)
- c. He could see them all sitting there, earphones on their heads, giggling themselves silly at his expense. (BNC)
- d. The thought of what we were doing, naked in the backyard, masturbating ourselves silly, ...
- e. For whatever reason, we attracted a certain group of punk rockers to most of our shows who mashed themselves silly during our sets.
- f. Sure, it's always fun to immerse yourself in the culture -- throw on some fresh gear, go to the show and jump and dance yourself silly, or maybe grab the mic and freestyle for a while -- ...
- g. Trains to the right of me, battle-training to the left of me, bloody vultures overhead shitting themselves silly. (BNC)
- h. He was still there, sitting in the dusk at the foot of the stairs, smoking himself silly and concocting heart-chilling fantasies, when he heard a car come up the road. (BNC)
- i. We spent ourselves silly by maintaining the terrible cost of armaments against them. (CobuildDirect)
- j. "Very well," she said to herself -- for no one else was listening; they were all too busy shouting themselves silly to pay any attention to

her -- "I will do something." (BNC)

- k. All we've got to do is go back to London and get Joe to set up a workshop there and work himself silly. (BNC)

Her observation seems to have a further consequence: it suggests that what determine semantic (as well as other) properties of resultative constructions lie on the side of the resultative phrase, but not on the main verb's side. In adjectival resultatives, the real question to be addressed should be what adjective requires what verb that is suitable for expressing the transition to the resultant state that the adjective denotes, but not what verb takes what adjective that expresses the resultant state that the verb induces. This idea would also be confirmed by the fact that resultative constructions like *John hammered the metal flat* are often paraphrased as expressions like *John caused the metal become flat by hammering it*, which contain the resultative and the main predicate of the original constructions as part of the main predicate and part of the adjunct, respectively. (Cf. also Jackendoff 1990:228) In short, it is the resultative phrase that puts selectional restrictions on the main predicate, but not vice versa.

⁵ Indeed, no other verb seems to be so free to occur both with *dead* and *to death* as the verb *shoot*, as the following examples, which are given in Green (1970, 271), suggest:

- (i) a. Jesse shot him dead.
 b. * Jesse stabbed him dead.
 c. * Jesse hanged him dead.

She further states that "[t]he restrictions are severe, and are probably as much cultural as they are semantic". Considering the idiosyncrasy and conventionality involved in resultative constructions, however, it is natural that they are subject to variation, and judgement varies among native speakers, which would justify the following example:

- (ii) A patient who twice discharged himself from a psychiatric hospital at the weekend, against medical advice, stabbed his mother dead in front of his two sisters and then committed suicide. (Cobuild Direct)

⁶ The definition from *the Oxford English Dictionary* refers to the predicates which have the resultative phrase *to death* predicated of the subject of the sentence. With this respect, Wechsler (1996:4) notes that in examples like *I hate mice to pieces* or *Babis loves her to death*, the subject is the affected "experiencer" in parallel with the affected theme that is in the object position.

The same seems to be true of the following examples, which have the adjective *sick* that is synonymous with the past participle *bored*:

- (i) a. He killed himself because he was literally sick to death of fighting some of the largest manufacturers of FM radios for the royalties they owed him. (BNC)
- b. And I told her once, I said I'm sick to death of hearing you say that every time I come! (BNC)

⁷ It has been often pointed out that the *way* construction, which expresses a change of location, has also much to do with the resultative construction (Jackendoff 1990, Marantz 1992, Levin and Rappaport Hovav 1995, among others). The following pairs of examples also show their parallelism:

- (i) a. They annexed Tibet, but they had argued themselves into the belief that this was ancient Chinese territory, China irredenta. (OED: *Punch*, Feb. 1, 1967)
- b. In the previous article, "Babe Ruth Homered His Way into the Hearts of America," Ray Jackendoff argues his way to a conclusion from a set of initial assumptions ... (Marantz 1992:179)
- (ii) a. Camberwell has received this new form of worship with mingled feelings of tolerance, indifference and hostility, but the Pentecostal Dancers ... have maintained their steadfast resolution of dancing themselves into the hearts of their audiences---with but little success so far. (OED: *Daily Graphic*, Dec. 8, 1904)
- b. The Spotlight! Ballerina Muffy will dance her way right into your heart. (CobuildDirect)
- (iii) a. The man with vast powers is sure to find men like Hopkins worming themselves into their confidence if they are willing to use that kind of man.
- b. Across town, a 18 year old girl was trying to worm her way out of her obligatory duty to turn up at tonight's splash.

⁸ Goldberg (1995) claims that resultative and caused-motion constructions should be analyzed as two related but distinct constructions on the basis of her observation that resultatives are subject to several specific constraints that do not hold for caused-motion constructions. Among them is the restriction that "resultatives can only apply to arguments which can be categorized as patient arguments", which she claims alone serves to distinguish resultatives from caused motion constructions. (Goldberg 1995:87) She (1995:88) further claims that resultatives are subject to what she generalizes as the end-of-scale constraint, while directionals need not, as the following examples show:

- (i) a. He threw it toward the door.

b. He put it near the table.

As I have argued in section 2, however, the end-of-scale constraint seems not to be a constraint on resultatives, but on a proper subset of resultatives, which includes adjectival resultatives. As for the former restriction concerning patient arguments, Verspoor (1997:143) argues that the restriction "seems to be an instance of the pragmatic constraint of coherence of the causal relation rather than being an independent constraint." Thus, it seems that the idea that the two constructions should be distinguished is not so tenable as Goldberg claims.

⁹ The verb *Coué*, which comes from the name of a French psychologist, means "to produce or bring into a certain state by a system of psychotherapy by autosuggestion, usually of an optimistic nature." Cf. *the Oxford English Dictionary*, s.v. *Couéism*.

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