

We Rethink the Problems:
Some Problems on Prefix *Re* and Its Semantic Analysis
 Keiko Kifuku, Yurika Kambe, and Toshihiro Tamura

This research deals with *re*-prefixation, which is exemplified in the followings:

- (1) a. John painted the wall.
 b. John repainted the wall.

Horn (1980) analyzes the possibility of *re*-prefixation based on the classification of verbs, mentioning that only change-of-state verbs allow *re*-prefixation. The following examples, on the contrary, indicate that prefix *re* can be added to transitive verbs that carry no change-of-state meaning:

- (2) a. Bob retold a story.
 b. John reread the poem.

As shown in (2), the verbs *tell* and *read* to which prefix *re* is added do not express change-of-state of the objects, i.e. *a story* and *the poem*, respectively, but they allow *re*-prefixation.

The analysis by Nakau (1994) offers a key to the understanding of the productivity of *re*-prefixation. He argues that events can be divided into [ACTION], [PROCESS], and [STATE]: An event described by the verb *run* represents an event of [ACTION], while the verbal phrase *paint a picture* expresses an event of [ACTION], [PROCESS], and [STATE]. Based on the analysis, we postulate a condition on *re*-prefixation as follows: Prefix *re* attaches to verbs denoting events which are repeatable and contain [ACTION], [PROCESS] and [STATE] (cf. Dowty (1979), Wechsler (1989)).

With this in mind, we can explain why the sentences in (1b) and (2) are acceptable. The event *painting the wall* described in (1a) is repeatable and includes an action of using brushes and paints, the process of developing the paint on the canvas and the state of finishing the paint. Likewise, each event of *telling a story* and *reading the poem* includes [ACTION], [PROCESS], and [STATE]. As a consequence, prefix *re* is allowed in (2).

Further, we can explain the following pair of examples:

- (3) a. Mary loves him./*Mary reloves him.
 b. I ran./*I reran.

The verb *love* in (3a) expresses an event of [STATE] and the verb *run* in (3b) an event of [ACTION]. Because the events in (3) do not satisfy the condition on *re*-prefixation, sentences like *Mary reloves him* and *I reran* are not acceptable.

The condition on *re*-prefixation mentioned above also explains a problem of prefixed verbs which do not inherit their argument structures from the base verbs. The problem is pointed out by Carlson and Roeper (1980) (henceforth, C&R (1980)) and Randall (1985). Consider the following:

- (4) a.* The arrow *re*-pierced through the board.
 (cf. The arrow pierced through the board.)
 b.* John *re*tried to win the race.
 (cf. John tried to win the race.)

The examples in (4) indicate that verbs with the prefix are not compatible with a prepositional phrase or a *to*-infinitive. With respect of the examples in (4), C&R do not show why the prefixes cannot co-occur with prepositional phrases or *to*-infinitives. In addition, we can easily find sentences which C&R's analysis can hardly deal with:

- (5) a. The arrow *re*lit the candle with a blowtorch.
(C&R (1980:146))
 b. Mary *re*decided to marry John.

In (5), the prefix *re* appears in sentences with the prepositional phrase and the *to*-infinitives and they are perfectly acceptable.

We can explain the contrast between (4) and (5) as follows: The events described in (4) (i.e. *piercing through the board* and *trying to win the race*) do not represent [ACTION], [PROCESS], and [STATE] and thus *re*-prefixation is not allowed. On the contrary, the events represented in (5) (i.e. *lit the candle with a blowtorch* and *deciding to marry John*) contain [ACTION], [PROCESS] and [STATE]. That is, the events in (4) do not satisfy the condition on *re*-prefixation, while the events in (5) do. Therefore, the *re*-prefixation is allowed in (5).

From the discussion above, we can conclude that prefix *re* attaches only to events which are repeatable and contain [ACTION], [PROCESS], and [STATE].