

North East Linguistics Society

Volume 25 *Proceedings of the North East Linguistic Society 25 -- Volume One: Papers from the Main Sessions*

Article 31

1995

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Recommended Citation

Snyder, William (1995) "A Neo-Davidsonian Approach to Resultatives, Particles, and Datives," *North East Linguistics Society*. Vol. 25 , Article 31.

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A Neo-Davidsonian Approach to Resultatives, Particles, and Datives*

William Snyder

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1. Three issues for a theory of resultatives and related constructions.

The research presented here is driven by three main considerations that distinguish it from previous work on resultatives and related constructions. These considerations come from the domains of child language acquisition, comparative syntax, and compositional semantics.

1.1 Child language acquisition

Earlier research, reported in Snyder & Stromswold (in press), examined longitudinal samples of the spontaneous speech of twelve children during the years when they were acquiring English. The two principal findings were the following. First, in the speech of each child, a family of syntactic constructions that are normally analyzed as either complex-predicate or small-clause constructions all appeared (i.e. came into productive use) at approximately the same age. This family of constructions includes double object datives, prepositional datives with *to*, and “resultative” verb-particle constructions such as *take the shoe off*. Thus, some children acquired these constructions as early as one year, ten months of age, while other children acquired them as late as three years, six months of age,

* The author was supported by an NSF Graduate Fellowship in Linguistics, an NSF Research & Training Grant to MIT, and the McDonnell-Pew Center for Cognitive Neuroscience at MIT. Particular thanks to N. Chomsky, M. den Dikken, J. Guéron, R. Kayne, T. Kroch, A. Marantz, D. Pesetsky, P. Pica, T. Roeper, K. Safir, M. Starke, K. Stromswold, P. Svenonius, K. Wexler, and the audiences at NELS 25 and ConSole 3 for their many helpful comments and suggestions. All errors remain my own.

but in every case the productive use of any one of the constructions was followed soon after by production of the remaining constructions.

Second, the acquisition of dative constructions consistently exhibited a certain structure. Double object datives came into use either before, or at exactly the same age as, prepositional datives. None of the twelve children, however, began using prepositional datives earlier than double object datives.

These acquisitional findings pose a challenge to syntactic theory. The likeliest explanation for the acquisition facts is that children are acquiring what might be thought of as a “parametric” property of English, which adds an entire family of surface constructions to the child’s grammar simultaneously. The question for syntactic theory, then, is what exactly the children are learning, or in other terms, what the nature is of the parameter that the children are “setting.” A second question concerns the explanation for the ordering effect observed in children’s acquisition of dative constructions. Snyder & Stromswold have argued on empirical grounds that the likeliest explanation for this effect is that the language-particular knowledge required for a child’s grammar to allow double object datives is a proper subset of the language-particular knowledge required for prepositional datives. The challenge for syntactic theory, again, is to explain the nature of the syntactic knowledge that the children are apparently acquiring.

1.2 Comparative syntax

A second, closely related consideration comes from comparative syntax. Kayne (1984) observed that double object dative constructions and verb-particle constructions (of the English type) pattern together, in the sense that languages generally either have both or have neither. More recent work by Larson (1988), Hoekstra (1988), and Hale & Keyser (1993), among others, suggests that resultatives of the type in (1a) form part of the same syntactic family as verb-particle and double object constructions.

- (1) a. John painted the house (red).
 b. Jean a peint la maison (*rouge). (The * in (1b,c) is for the resultative
 c. Juan pintó la casa (*roja). reading only.)

This interpretation is supported by the observation that Romance languages, for example, which lack verb-particle and double object constructions, also lack resultatives of the English type. Thus, the literal equivalent of (1a) is disallowed in French and Spanish (1b,c), as described by Green (1973) and as elaborated in work of Talmy (1985), Carter (1984), and Levin & Rapoport (1988). Here again, the challenge for syntactic theory is to specify the precise nature of the syntactic difference between English and Romance that yields the observed variation.¹

1.3 Compositional semantics

A final consideration comes from compositional semantics. Although recent syntactic accounts provide several possible solutions to the problem of allowing ‘the house’ in (2a) to denote both the direct object of *paint* and the subject of *red*, these analyses have very little to say about what distinguishes (2a) from (2b) or (2c).

¹English *to*-datives, unlike double object datives, particles, and resultatives, do have apparent counterparts in the Romance languages, but a finer-grained examination of the Romance constructions strongly suggests that their syntactic structures are different than in English. (For example, see Pica & Snyder, in press, on quantificational scope differences between English *to*-datives and their French counterparts.)

- (2) a. John painted the house red.
 b. John painted the red house.
 c. John painted the house that was red.

The question, in other words, is how the “resultative” meaning of a resultative construction arises in the compositional semantics, given that the overt lexical items in the resultative construction receive a non-resultative interpretation in (2b,c).

2. Basic proposal

The approach that I will describe here has two crucial features. First, I will propose that certain building blocks of what is normally treated as lexical semantics are in fact realized as independent morphemes in the syntax. Second, I will propose that the “cement” that holds these building blocks together is the morphemes’ shared dependence on a single Davidsonian event argument (or more properly, ‘eventuality’ argument, in the sense of Bach 1986). The idea is that by treating thematic relations as mediated by an event variable, more or less in the manner of Parsons (1990), Schein (1993), Higginbotham (1986), and Dowty (1989), we can extend the argument structure of a predicate within the syntax, simply by introducing additional restrictions on the predicate’s event variable.

To make this approach possible, I will need to assume a somewhat distinctive view of lexical selection, in which a verb need not be directly related (within the syntax) to all of its lexically specified arguments. Here the idea is that when a verb selects, say, an agent and a theme, but another morpheme sharing the verb’s event variable also selects a theme, then the theme is syntactically expressed as the argument of only one of the two predicates. My approach makes a number of specific predictions about the relationship between argument structure and aspect, as I will discuss presently, and also has implications for morphosyntax, to which I shall allude at the end of the paper.

The main proposal in my approach to the three issues that I began with, is that English differs from Romance (as well as from Semitic and Japanese, for example) in permitting the phonologically null aspectual morpheme characterized in (3). I will term this the ‘null telic morpheme’ (\emptyset_{telic}), because its function is to take an event and a predicate of events, and to require that the predicate be true of what I will term the ‘natural endpoint’ of the event. (On the notion ‘natural endpoint of an event’, see Smith 1991.)

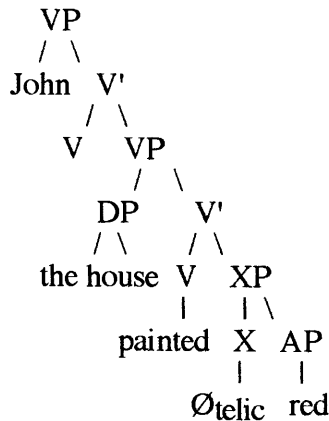
- (3) $\parallel \emptyset_{\text{telic}} \parallel (P)(e) = \text{True}$, for any event e and any predicate of events P , iff for that event e' which is a subevent of e and which is the ‘natural endpoint’ of e , $P(e') = \text{True}$.

The presence of this morpheme in the English resultative construction provides a compositional account of the construction’s resultative semantics, as will be demonstrated presently. Furthermore, to the extent that English verb-particle and dative constructions can be argued to depend on the presence of the null telic morpheme, the parametric property of English motivated by acquisitional and comparative considerations in Sections 1.1 and 1.2 can be reduced to whatever language-particular property makes the null telic morpheme available in English (but not certain other languages).

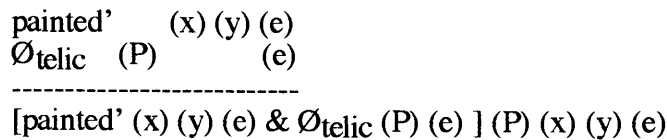
Thus, in (2a), which has the (partial) structure given in (4), the \emptyset_{telic} morpheme makes reference to the natural endpoint of an event in which John paints the house, and requires that specifically at the endpoint of this event, the house be red. (For simplicity I omit the inflectional system in (4), and depict all constituents in their base-generated positions. I assume that the main verb raises to head the top VP-shell prior to PF spell-out.) The interpretation of (4) then proceeds as illustrated in (5). (In (5b) and in subsequent

statements of truth-conditions I will use a two-place function such as Agent (e, John') to serve as a "declaration" that John is the Agent of event e in an assignment of (event, role) pairs to individuals; I will use a one-place function such as Agent (e) to denote whatever individual has been declared as the Agent of event e.)

(4)



(5) a. Theta identification of event arguments:



b. Resulting truth conditions of (4):

For some (past) event e: painting' (e) & Agent (e, John') & Theme (e, the house') & [For a unique subevent e' of e: Endpoint (e, e') & red' (Theme(e'), e')].

Crucially, I take the Davidsonian event arguments (e) of *painted* and of \emptyset_{telic} to be equated by a process of theta-identification (more or less in the sense of Higginbotham 1985), in which (type-matched) open argument positions of two predicates are combined intersectively (5a). I further propose that the external argument of *red* is a Theme, and is equated with the Theme argument of *painted*, because thematic roles are transitive across the mereological relation: For any e an event, e' a mereological subevent of e, and R a thematic role, $R(e') = R(e)$. Hence, (5b) effectively requires that the house be red at the endpoint of e, because the house is the Theme of e and also of e'. (Notice that as discussed above, *the house* is expressed in the syntax only once, even though it serves as the semantic argument of both *painted* and *red*.)

3. Aspect and Resultatives in English

My proposal, then, is that what the child learns, when he or she learns that English allows resultatives and related constructions, is, to a first approximation, the fact that the language-particular syntactic properties of English are compatible with use of the null morpheme in (3), while the language-particular syntactic properties of Romance, for example, are incompatible with the use of this null morpheme. Below I will suggest a more precise account of why the \emptyset_{telic} morpheme should be available in English but not in Romance, but for the moment I will focus on exactly how the proposed morpheme functions in English resultative, dative, and verb-particle constructions.

To begin, let me state some of the assumptions I will be making about linguistic aspect. Following Declerck (1992), I will take aspect to be a property of situations (or eventualities) *as they are described by linguistic expressions*. Following Vendler (1967) and Parsons (1990), I will take an ‘accomplishment’-type event to comprise a ‘development’ subpart (process) and a ‘culmination’ subevent. Furthermore, I will take a subevent *e'* to qualify as the culmination of an event *e*, if *e'* is the ‘natural endpoint’ of *e* and at *e'* there is a change of state in the Theme/Patient argument of *e*. (I will take this as a sufficient condition, but not a necessary condition, for an event to qualify as an accomplishment.)

Taken together, these assumptions imply that the aspect of the situation described by a sentence depends in important ways on the syntax of the sentence, rather than simply on the non-linguistic pragmatics of the situation alluded to by the sentence. In particular, if the lexical semantics of a verb makes reference to a process, as opposed to an accomplishment, then one cannot convert the verb phrase into an accomplishment simply by adding an adverbial phrase that is pragmatically associated with an accomplishment-type event. The aspectual class of the verb phrase can, however, be changed from a process to an accomplishment if a morpheme contained in the verb phrase explicitly makes reference to a ‘natural endpoint’ in the event denoted by the verb, and specifies that some change of state occurs in the Theme or Patient argument at this endpoint. Hence, if a language permits the \emptyset_{telic} morpheme characterized in (3) to be projected in the syntax, then it will sometimes be possible to convert a process into an accomplishment through the addition of the \emptyset_{telic} morpheme and a predicative complement to this morpheme.

Several strong predictions now follow. One prediction, at first glance too strong, is that “true” resultatives should be impossible with a simple process predicate. Processes, by definition, lack a natural endpoint. Resultatives depend on the \emptyset_{telic} morpheme, and the \emptyset_{telic} morpheme depends for its interpretation on the presence of a natural endpoint in the verb’s event-argument. (The denotation in (3) *presupposes* the existence of a natural endpoint, so that in the absence of an endpoint the \emptyset_{telic} morpheme makes a sentence uninterpretable.)

Some apparent counterexamples to this prediction are given in (6-8a).

- (6) a. Mary laughed John out the door.
b. Mary laughed for five minutes/*in five minutes.
- (7) a. Fred pushed the door open.
b. Fred pushed (the door) for five seconds/*in five seconds.
- (8) a. Tom drank the bar dry.
b. Tom drank for six hours/*in six hours.

Notice that *laugh*, *push*, and *drink* pattern with processes, rather than accomplishments, on the standard duration-phrase test (6-8b).

My proposal is that the apparent counterexamples in (6-8a) all contain an implicit path predicate (cf. Jackendoff 1987), which has the effect of introducing a natural endpoint into the event argument of the process verb. Notice, first, that examples (6a,8a) require the complex prepositions *into* and *onto*, rather than the simple prepositions *in* and *on*, in the (apparent) resultatives of location given in (9).

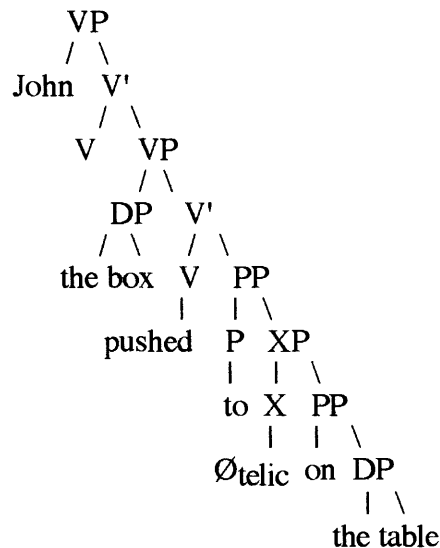
- (9) a. Mary laughed John into/*in the street.
b. Tom drank Bill into/*in the poorhouse.

More generally, as discussed by Pinker (1989) and Pesetsky (1994), accomplishment verbs permit resultatives of location with simple locative prepositions, as in (10a), but apparent resultatives of location with process verbs require the more complex location-plus-path prepositions, as in (10b), whenever the locative preposition has a phonologically distinct path variant.

- (10) a. John threw/tossed/dropped the box onto/on the table.
 b. John pushed/dragged the box onto/*on the table. [* for result reading]

Hence, I propose that the apparent counterexamples in (6-8a) are not true counterexamples, but rather are cases in which a morpheme other than the verb (namely a null or overt path morpheme) introduces a secondary restriction on the process verb's event(uality) argument, and specifies that the event has a natural endpoint (at which the Theme argument reaches an endpoint of the path). This idea is spelt out more concretely in (11), for the locative examples as in (10b). The partial structure in (11a) represents the verb phrase prior to verb raising and prior to application of the morphological spell-out rule in (11b). (This rule could perhaps be implemented through a requirement that *on* combine with \emptyset_{telic} and *to* through overt syntactic incorporation.) The denotation assumed for the path predicate *to* is given in (11c), in terms of Talmy's (1985) Figure/Ground (or equivalently, Theme/Ground) distinction. The resulting truth conditions for (10b) are given in (11d).

- (11) a.



- (b) $to + \emptyset_{telic} + on \rightarrow onto$
 (c) $\parallel to \parallel (e) = \text{True iff Figure/Theme}(e) \text{ moves along a path terminating at Ground}(e) \text{ in } e.$
 (d) For some (past) event e : pushing'(e) & Agent(e,John') & Theme(e, the box')
 & to'(Theme(e),Ground(e),e) & [For a unique subevent e' of e]:
 Endpoint(e,e') & Ground(e',table') & on'(Theme(e'),Ground(e'),e').

Exactly the same approach can now be applied to the examples in (6-8a), with the exception that incorporation of the locative preposition into the abstract path predicate has no phonological consequences in these cases. For example, (6a) is assigned the structure in (12a) and the truth conditions in (12b).

a secondary path predicate alone, even if it includes in its meaning a natural endpoint, should be insufficient to convert a process VP into an accomplishment VP. Without the \emptyset_{telic} morpheme, it should be impossible to specify a change of state in the Theme at the event's natural endpoint, and without overt specification of such a change in state, the sentence will fail to express the "culmination" subpart of an accomplishment event. On the view of linguistic aspect sketched in Section 3, we then predict that addition of secondary path predicates to a process VP in French or Spanish will never convert the VP into an accomplishment. (The qualification 'secondary' is used here to exclude possible cases in which a process verb might alternate with a homophonous accomplishment verb that takes a directional or locational argument.)

Both of these predictions have been argued in the syntax literature to be true. Notably, Aske (1989) has performed a fine-grained comparison of English and Spanish, and has demonstrated both that secondary telic predication is absent from Spanish, and that the aspectual consequences predicted for Spanish are in fact borne out. Thus, in Spanish and French, specifically secondary telic predication is absent. Primary telic predication is possible in Spanish (14a) (as well as in French, (14b)) because telicity is expressed directly by the lexical verb, without any need for a null telic morpheme.

- (14) a. Juan metió/puso el libro en la mesa.
 'John placed/put the book on the table.'
 b. Jean a mis/posé le livre sur la table.
 'John placed/put the book on the table.'
 c. Juan comió la carne cruda.
 'John ate the meat raw.'

Atelic secondary predication is also possible, as illustrated for Spanish in (14c), because atelic secondary predication in no way depends on a null telic morpheme.

Furthermore, the *full range* of English secondary telicity phenomena is absent from Romance languages, as illustrated for French by Levin & Rapoport's (1988) examples, given in (15) and (16). The French examples in (16) are, according to Levin & Rapoport, the closest equivalents available for the corresponding English sentences in (15), and they systematically lack the resultative character of the English examples.

- (15) a. She filed the serial number off.
 b. Stephanie burned a hole in her coat with a cigarette.
 c. She wiped the dishes dry.
 d. He laughed himself sick.
 e. She smiled her thanks to him.
- (16) a. Elle a enlevé à la lime le numéro de serie.
 'She removed with a file the serial number.'
 b. Stephanie a fait un trou à son manteau avec une cigarette.
 'Stephanie made a hole in her coat with a cigarette.'
 c. Elle a soigneusement essuyé la vaisselle.
 'She carefully wiped the dishes.'
 d. Il a rit comme une baleine.
 'He laughed like a whale.'
 e. Elle l'a remercié d'un sourire.
 'She thanked him with a smile.'

Finally, as Aske observes, Spanish durational phrases with *en* 'in' are incompatible with process+path combinations, in direct contrast to English. Like English

in, Spanish *en* provides a test for accomplishments, as illustrated in (17a,b) (cf. Vendler 1967).

- (17) a. Juan construyó una casa en dos años.
 ‘John built a house in two years.’
 b. *Juan caminó en veinte minutos.
 ‘John walked in twenty minutes.’

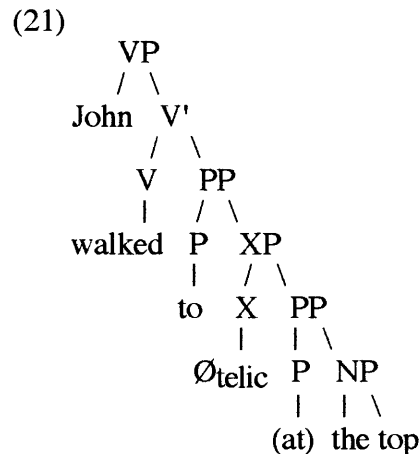
Yet, precisely as predicted, even where English path predicates can convert a process into an accomplishment (18), the corresponding sentences in Spanish are ungrammatical (19). (Examples are drawn from Aske 1989.)

- (18) a. John walked to the top of the hill in twenty minutes.
 b. John walked through the tunnel in ten minutes.
- (19) a. Juan caminó hasta la cima (?* en veinte minutos).
 ‘John walked up-to the hilltop (in twenty minutes).’
 b. Juan caminó por el tunel/a traves del tunel (?* en diez minutos).
 ‘John walked through/the length of the tunnel (in ten minutes).’

As expected, this effect disappears in Spanish (or French) when the verb of motion describes an accomplishment of its own accord (20), with either an overt or an understood locational argument.

- (20) a. Juan subió (a/hasta la cima) en dos horas.
 ‘John “ascended” (to/up-to the hilltop) in two hours.’

I assume that in English a null locational morpheme, comparable in meaning to *at*, is available, as illustrated, in (21).

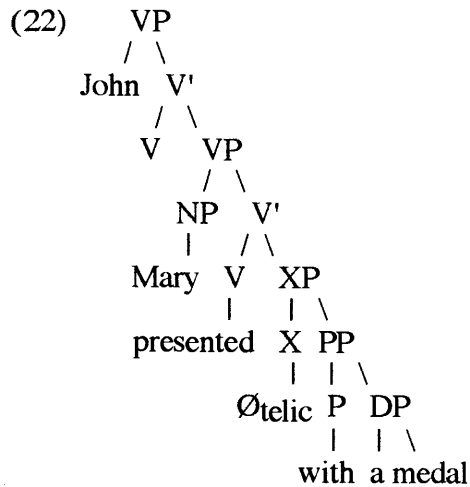


Notice that in the English examples in (18), a process is converted to an accomplishment by adding a path predicate, and then predicating a change of state of the Theme at the natural endpoint of the path. The latter predication depends crucially on the availability of \emptyset_{telic} .

5. Relationship between resultatives and datives

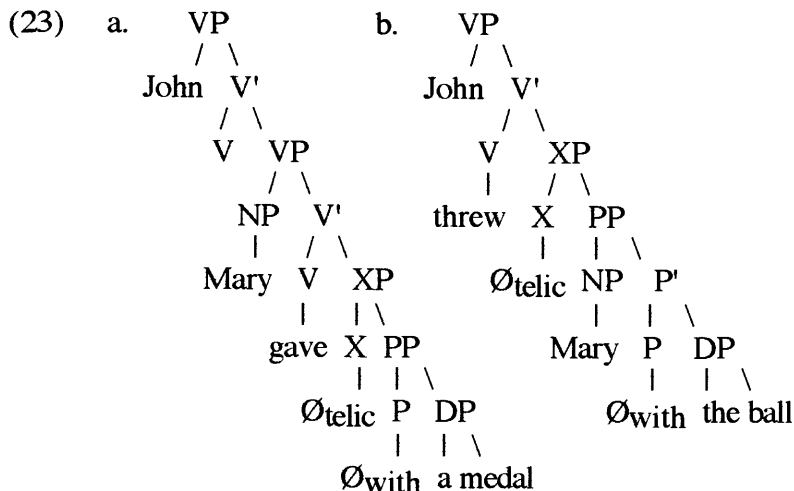
My analysis of simple resultatives and (resultative) verb-particle constructions has now been outlined. In this section I briefly sketch a compatible approach to English dative

constructions. The model for the analysis is a treatment of the English *present-with* construction, closely following the approach developed above, as illustrated in (22).



While Den Dikken (1992) has provided arguments against treating the double object dative as an exact counterpart of the *present-with* construction, for present purposes I will focus on the striking parallels, and suggest that an analysis of double object datives that closely parallels (22) can at least account for some of the issues raised in Section 1. Because of space-limitations, the sketch will be extremely brief.

I propose not one but two possible structures for English double object constructions, and suggest that both structures may in fact be attested. For a double object construction with a verb such as *give*, which is “fundamentally” ditransitive, I suggest the structure in (23a), directly parallel to (22).



For a double object construction with a verb such as *throw*, however, which is monotransitive in its more basic sense, I suggest the analysis in (23b). In (23a) the verb *give* takes Agent, Goal, and Theme arguments, while in (23b) the verb *throw* takes only Agent and Theme arguments. In both cases, a null possessive morpheme, corresponding roughly to *with* in (22), takes Goal and Theme arguments. Thus, in (23b), the Goal is necessarily projected as the subject of a small-clause headed by the possessive morpheme, whereas in (23a) the Goal is at least potentially projected as an internal argument of the verb *give*. Thus, (23b) is a version of the small-clause analysis of double object constructions

- (26) a. *Present-with* Constructions:
 John presented Mary [PP G_{with} [PP with the book]]
 b. Double Object Datives: John gave Mary [pp G the book]
 c. Prepositional Datives: John gave the book [pp to Mary]
 d. Particles: Sue sent out [pp G the message]

The distribution of Pesetsky's null morpheme G is highly similar to that of the \emptyset telic morpheme in the present analysis (although because of space limitations, I have focused on verb-NP-particle constructions, and set aside verb-particle-NP constructions as in (26d)). The major differences are first, that I posit a null morpheme in (26c) that adjoins to the preposition rather than the main verb (and is thus invisible to Pesetsky's tests), and second, that I treat the null morpheme as aspectual, whereas Pesetsky's null morpheme is motivated on case-theoretic grounds. A problem for the case-theoretic approach is evident in (26a), where a null morpheme is indicated by morphosyntactic tests (cf. 25a,b), but the NPs in the sentence all appear to have suitable (overt) case-assigners.

Finally, the analysis sketched in (23,24) can perhaps shed light on another paradigm discussed by Pinker (1989) and Pesetsky (1994). As illustrated in (27), verbs of unaccompanied ballistic motion (such as *throw*) are possible in the double object dative and the prepositional dative, whereas verbs of accompanied motion (such as *pull*) are possible in the prepositional dative but are quite marginal in the double object dative. If we make the assumption (at this point, unfortunately, a pure stipulation) that null path predicates are (relatively) incompatible with the null possessive morpheme in (23a,b), then we expect the contrast in (27a,b), because verbs of unaccompanied motion belong to the aspectual class of accomplishments, and therefore have a natural endpoint, whereas verbs of accompanied motion belong to the aspectual class of processes, and lack a natural endpoint.

- (27) a. John threw Mary the ball.
 b. ??John pulled Mary the ball.
 c. John threw the ball to Mary.
 d. John pulled the ball to Mary.

The absence of the contrast with prepositional datives would follow from the fact that the path predicate, which supplies a natural endpoint even if the main verb has none, is overt and moreover occurs in the absence of a null possessive morpheme; hence, the apparent morphological conflict of (27a,b) is not expected in (27c,d).

6. Parametric issues

The main acquisitional and comparative issue raised in Section 1 was the nature of the language-particular knowledge that underlies the availability, in adult English, of a family of related syntactic constructions that includes resultatives, particles, and double object datives. The key proposal thus far has been that this language-particular knowledge relates in some way to the availability in English of a null aspectual (telic) morpheme, which, I have suggested, is needed to provide the distinctive "resultative" semantics of English resultatives, datives, and (most) verb-particle constructions, at least if one adopts a standard, compositional approach to semantic interpretation. The question now is why English allows the null telic morpheme when French, for example, does not.

One possible answer would be that languages such as French simply have a lexical gap, and happen to lack the null telic morpheme. This answer seems unlikely to be correct. First, as suggested by Alec Marantz (personal communication), if English possesses a null telic morpheme, and children acquire it relatively early, then surely it must be made available, at least as a possible lexical item, by Universal Grammar. Moreover, languages

such as French have many constructions (e.g. instances of primary telic predication) that could easily be misanalysed by the learner, at least initially, as involving a null telic morpheme. Hence, if nothing specifically blocked the use of a null telic morpheme in French, we should expect the morpheme to be introduced into the language within one or two generations.

A second reason to doubt the lexical gap hypothesis is that, as pointed out to me by Tony Kroch, Ken Safir, and Peter Svenonius (personal communication), there do exist instances of non-resultative verb-particle constructions in English (28), yet the Romance languages no more allow non-resultative verb-particle constructions than resultative ones.

- (28) a. The dam kept the water out / kept out the water.
 b. John wiped the table off / wiped off the table.
 c. Mary finished the job up / finished up the job.

(28a) is stative. In (28b) the logical subject of *off* is at best left unexpressed, in contrast to a normal resultative construction. The particle *up* in (28c) emphasizes completive aspect, but is in no obvious sense resultative. Hence, the syntactic property that distinguishes English from French (along the lines discussed) is probably more general than the simple presence or absence of a null telic morpheme in the active lexicon.

Another possible answer is that languages of the English type allow complex predicate formation, while languages of the French type do not. More precisely, we might hypothesize that languages of the French type systematically block words that are syntactically and phonologically independent in the overt syntax, from being semantically interpreted as forming a single complex word. Our claim would be that resultatives, datives, and verb-particle constructions of the English types all require theta-identification of the argument positions of syntactically independent words or morphemes. Hence, use of the null telic morpheme would be only one instance of complex-predicate formation, and certain constructions (as in 28) that involve complex predicate formation but are not semantically resultative, would be correctly predicted to be absent in Romance. Moreover, this sort of “true” parametric difference between languages would plausibly be more robust than a lexical gap for a null morpheme. Yet, it remains to be seen whether there are truly no complex predicate constructions in Romance or other language-families that lack the resultative family of constructions.

Still another answer, which I currently find the most promising, identifies the language-particular knowledge in question with a parametric property of English derivational morphology. The intuition, again, is that English differs from languages such as French with respect to the availability of complex predicate formation, but the reason in this case would be morphological. In general, English (like other Germanic languages) freely permits independent, word-level (X^0) lexical items to be “optionally affixal,” and thus to participate in forming more complex words; whereas in French (like other Romance languages) the distribution of the [+Affixal] feature is lexically conditioned, and occurs primarily with sub-lexical (X^{-1}) morphemes. Thus, we observe complex words such as ‘teacup’ in English, corresponding to full phrases such as ‘tasse à thé’ in French. On the assumption that complex-predicate formation (or theta-identification) is possible only between elements that constitute a single word at the point of semantic interpretation (LF), and on the additional assumption that superficially independent words can combine covertly only if they are marked as affixal, the observed syntactic difference between English and French follows.

The cross-linguistic and acquisitional predictions of this “morphological” approach are currently being evaluated in Snyder (in preparation). If the morphological approach is

supported, it will suggest a revision to the functional parameterization hypothesis of Chomsky (1991), in which parametric variation is tied to the morphosyntactic properties of functional heads. The observed parametric property of English would be tied to the lexicon, in the sense of being a parametric property of word-formation, but it would not be specific to any single lexical item. The implication, to paraphrase Jespersen, would be that there is hope for a "universal syntax," but there is no such hope for a "universal morphology." Thus, broader parameters of morphology, as well as the lexical entries of closed-class items, might be a legitimate locus of language-particular knowledge in a highly constrained model of syntax. Such a conclusion would then support the hypothesis that the child's acquisition of syntax largely reduces to the acquisition of the lexicon, broadly construed.

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