ARGUMENT STRUCTURE AND EVENT STRUCTURE
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Germanic languages exhibit a phenomenon called 'lexical subordination' or '(result) conflation', in which an activity verb and a state/position change predication combine to yield a VP with a single verb stem. I present a theory of the syntax-semantics mapping in conflation structures, treating some difficult and little-known data. Adapting ideas of e.g. Wunderlich (1997) and Rappoport Hovav/Levin (2001), I distinguish two types of relationships between the activity and the state/position change event:

- The change event is causally related to the subevent expressed by the verb root (as in the transitive structures in (1))
- The change event 'fuses' with the latter subevent to express a single spatio-temporally coherent event, without necessary causal relationships between the subevents (cf. the un accusative structures in (2), where &contemp stands for 'is contemporaneous with').

My account of how these project into the syntax involves a shell structure of the type in (3). INIT is a light verb which relates an initiator (e.g. causer, agent) to an event in its complement. CHANGE relates a theme-type entity to a property/place/path in its complement. An un accusative VP is a bare CHANGEP. CHANGEP matches the lower shell assumed in the complex predicate analyses of e.g. Winkler (1994), Haider (1997), Zeller (1999), but the specifier-complement relationship resembles that found in small clause theories (den Dikken 1995, Hoekstra 1988, Svenonius 1994). The theory thus bridges the gap between two prominent theories of resultative and particle constructions.

Converting the conceptual structures into syntax is simple. Given the semantic characterisation of the light verbs, DO events (activities) must map onto an INITP and GO/BECOME (position/state change) events map onto a CHANGEP. In conflation structures, the mechanism in (4) maps a verb root onto the appropriate light verb. The system accounts naturally for the contrast in (5). (4) allows conflation of dance with CHANGE in (5a), since the dancing and movement are the same event, but this is impossible in (5b) because the dancing and entry into the trance aren't the same event. But dance can conflate with INIT in (5b) because the dancing is the same as the initiation of the state change event. The reflexive is needed in (5b) but not (5a) because (4) forces the projection of an INITP only in (5a). I argue that the theory captures this contrast between event structure and argument structure more directly and naturally than the ad hoc and conceptually problematic ‘Argument-per-Subevent Condition’ of Rappaport Hovav & Levin (2001), and the non-independently motivated un accusative variants of the verbs in (5a) and (6b,c) required in approaches using the Direct Object Restriction (e.g. Levin & Rappaport Hovav 1995). (4) is of course a stipulation, but the possibility of conflation must rest on some stipulation in a given language, since it is parameterised. The assumption in (4) that conflation has something to do with morphology is also supported by the finding of Snyder (2001) that conflation is possible in the languages that have productive morphological compounding.

In my theory, the 'lexical verb' cannot contribute arguments. This is -contra common opinion- empirically correct given cases like (6), where the argument structures of obligatorily transitive verbs and of single-argument verbs are not preserved in conflation structures. (See McIntyre 2002 for many more such cases, and more details on the theory.)

The theory also captures two lesser-known phenomena which are mysterious in many other accounts. The first is the cases in (7) where a particle or directional PP disallows the linking of the verb's normal direct objects. Sometimes, the particles lend a durative or ingressive interpretation to the VP, cf. (a,b), but the intransitivity is not due to Aktionsart, witness (c,d) and the fact that the particles block objects which aren’t incremental themes (play the guitar on an hour but *play the guitar on around along).

As seen in the glosses in (7), I assume that the structures involve conflation of the situation named by the verb and a predication expressing a (possibly metaphorical) path or direction of the former situation; this connects the senses of the particles in (7a,b) with their spatial senses; similar remarks apply to along, around, cf. McIntyre 2002. (8) is the formal treatment. The theme of the motion event is an event constituent coindexed with the event named by the verb. The intransitivity of the structures is natural in the context of the conclusion above that verbs do not contribute their arguments in conflation structures. The explanation of this descriptive point is as follows. The BECOME and GO conjuncts must each be mapped onto a CHANGEP. They cannot be mapped onto the same CHANGEP, since the relational nature of CHANGE would force on to predicate over cakes, which is not the intended meaning. Recursion of CHANGEP’s is impossible, given that the complement of CHANGE must be a state or path, not an event. Thus, if the GO predicate licensing on appears in the syntax, the BECOME predication (and hence the object) cannot be realised syntactically. Most argument structure theories, e.g. thematic hierarchics or linking rules, cannot capture these data in a principled way.

The second phenomenon I discuss is seen in (9) and (10). The conceptual reference object (=landmark, locatum, ground) of the prepositional relation expressed by the particle is realised syntactically at the expense of the theme (=trajector, located object, figure). We sometimes find that the direct arguments (=direct objects or un accusative subjects) flout the verb’s normal argument selection (e.g. (9a,c,d), (10)). This is expected given the conclusion above that conflation does not allow inheritance of the verb’s internal arguments. My analysis is exemplified in (11). The Ø symbol in (11b) indicates the suppression of the argument. I interpret this semiproductive passive-like phenomenon as the licensing of the non-realisation of the theme in the lexical entries of certain particles. The reference object moves to the specifier of CHANGEP to receive Case, a standard instance of A-movement. The direct arguments have a ‘holistic’ interpretation; e.g. (11a) suggests that the whole of the bucket is affected, i.e. that it becomes empty. This follows from the assumption that CHANGE imposes a predication relationship on its arguments. The CHANGEP in (11b) has the interpretation ‘the bucket comes to have the property of having something emptied out of itself’. Since predicates generally apply to the whole of their arguments (e.g. paint the wall green suggests that the whole wall becomes green), it follows that the entire bucket has something emptied out of itself.
a. The people voted the government out [Event DO (PEOPLE, VOTE)] & cause [Event GO (GOVERNMENT, OUT)]
b. I ate myself sick; I drank the cellar empty; I pushed the car into the garage; I threw the ball in

a. A bee buzzed out: [Event DO (BEE, BUZZ)] & Contemp [Event GO (BEE, OUT)]
b. Someone rustled/ran/sauntered into the room; the box broke open; the house burnt down

M (ORPHOLOGICAL) - CONFLATION: Affix a root R to INIT or to CHANGE if R names an event which is identical to the initiation or change expressed by those heads.

a. Mary danced into the house: [Event DO (MARY, DANCE)] & Contemp [Event GO (MARY, INTO HOUSE)]
b. Mary danced herself into a trance: [Event DO (MARY, DANCE)] & Cause [Event GO (MARY, INTO TRANCE)]

a. they fought (*their enemies) on (*they fought their enemies and the fighting went on, i.e. continued*)
b. sie sang (*ein Lied) los
she sang (a song) off
she started singing’ (*she sang and the singing started off*; cf. losgehen ‘start off’, literally: ‘go off’)
c. she rang (*the secretary) through (*she rang the secretary) and the ringing (=the call) went through’
d. she saw (*a man) into the window (*she saw a man and the seeing extended into the window*)

Fred ate (*cakes) on. (*Fred ate cakes, and this eating went on*)
a. [DO (FRED, EAT) & Cause Contemp Become (not (exist (CAKES)))] & Contemp GO ([Event], on*)
b. ON* denotes a path which is extended and uninterrupted. (Examples with entities as themes are push the cart on, we moved them on.)

a. den Eimer ausschütten (*pour the bucket out*; cf. das Wasser ausschütten ‘pour out the water’)
b. den Tisch abwischen (*wipe the table off/down*; cf. den Staub abwischen ‘wipe off the dust’)
c. den Tee aufgießen (*pour hot water on the tea*; cf. das Wasser auf den Tee aufgießen ‘pour the water on the tea’)
d. das Leder einspühen (*spray something into the leather*)

a. Die Tasse schwappete über ‘the cup overflowed’ (lit. ‘splashed over’) (*die Tasse schwappete)
b. die Wanne fließt schlecht ab ‘the bath flows badly away’, ‘the bath drains badly’
c. das Faß ist ausgelaufen ‘the barrel is out-run’, ‘the barrel became empty’

a. Mary poured out the bucket DO (MARY, POUR) & Cause GO ([VARS, Ø], FROM IN BUCKET)
b. [InitP Mary [Init [InitPour+INIT] [ChangeP [NP the bucket], [Change [CHANGE [PP out t]]]]]}

References