

Capturing Object Sharing in Ditransitives

Youngmi Jeong
University of Maryland

Recent work at the syntax-semantic interface (Pylkkänen 2002, and works influenced by her) has, by combining insights from previous analyses, reached the conclusion that multiple object constructions (applicatives, ditransitives) split into ‘high’ and ‘low’ constructions (see Jeong 2006 for extensive discussion). High Applicatives (HA) express relations between an individual (AO; applied object) and an event (1), and Low Applicatives (LA), relations between two individuals, IO and DO, indirect and direct object, respectively, (2).

(1) $[_{VP} v^o [_{HA_{appIP}} IO [_{H_{AppI}^o} [_{VP} V^o DO]]]]]$

(2) $[_{VP} v^o [_{VP} V^o [_{LA_{appIP}} IO [_{L_{AppI}^o} DO]]]]]$

In this paper I will not cast doubt on the high/low distinction, but instead show that it is incomplete. In particular, I will argue that it fails to capture a key aspect of the semantics of low applicatives. (High applicatives will remain untouched.) After characterizing this key aspect, I will propose a way to capture it. My proposal will relate low applicatives to serial verb and resultative constructions in terms of object sharing. If correct, it will provide an additional argument for the claim that movement into theta-position is licit.

1. Introducing Object-sharing

Many ditransitive events include a transitive action with an intended result, which itself is stative: something is located at some place or object, or something is in possession of some person. These two predicates can characterize the result of an action performed on *z*. The combination of a transitive action with a two-place stative result is usually linked by means of a shared argument. For example, if I sent a letter, and you received the letter, ‘the letter’ is the shared argument.

My main concern in this paper will be change-of-possession verbs like *give*, *send*, *buy*, etc. (I focus on these low applicative-enriched verbs, as I have nothing to add to Pylkkänen’s discussion of high applicatives.) The third argument of these verbs is typically a recipient, a human or animate being who comes into possession of an object.

If we now turn back to representations like (2), it is obvious that such a structure is incomplete. In Pylkkänen’s representation, a key factor of the meaning of low applicatives is missing. The structure in (2) correctly captures the resultative part of the meaning of LA: the fact that if ‘John sent Mary a book’, *Mary got the book*. Note that (2) is very close to a small clause/possessive DP structure (cf. Harley 2002). But (2) fails to express what Pietroski (2003) calls the ‘transfer’ part of the meaning of LA, that is, the fact that if ‘John sent Mary a book’, *John sent the book* (with the intention of getting the book to Mary). Since the intended meaning is ‘Mary got a book as a result of John’s having sent it’, the fact that ‘John sent a book’ needs to be represented; otherwise, one can never be sure about the source of ‘the book’, that is, one could imagine a scenario such that John sent a gift card from Barnes and Noble’s to Mary and she bought a book with the gift card that she had been received from John. This situation cannot be described as ‘*John sent Mary a book.*’ This is not what the low applicatives mean.

In light of this fact, Pietroski makes a good case that for the transfer aspect of meaning of low applicatives, DO is clearly an argument of the verb. This is readily captured by means of a standard representation for ditransitives like (3).

(3) $[_{VP} \text{Ext. Arg. } v^o [_{VP} DO [V^o IO]]]$

- (12) John hammered the metal flat

The understood thematic relations of subject and object to the event of the main predicate *hammered* is that *John* is the agent of hammering and *the metal* is its patient; and as a result of *John's hammering the metal*, *the metal* went through a change of state and became flat. Simply put, (12) can be paraphrased as (13).

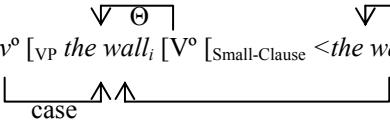
- (13) John hammered the metal and it (the metal) became flat (as a result of John hammering it)

By now such object-sharing paraphrases should be familiar. What we see in (13) is a dual thematic role for the object and an event-unification that are strongly reminiscent of serial verb and low applicative constructions. It is therefore natural to try to extend to resultatives the theta-driven movement analysis I have pushed for these constructions. In a nutshell, I will argue that the shared element will move from within its thematic position in the small clause to another thematic position inside the main VP-domain.

Consider typical transitive verbs like *paint* that participate in resultative constructions.

- (14) a. John painted the wall blue
-
- b. John painted the wall and it (the wall) became blue

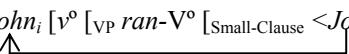
In (14), *the wall* is involved in two thematic relations: *the wall* is *what John painted* and also *what became blue*. It starts out as a specifier of small clause, receiving or checking its theta-feature with the adjective, and then moves from there to Spec VP, where *the wall* receives its second theta role from V. By receiving two theta-roles, the object connects the two events, and thereby it brings them together into one big-event.

- (15)
$$[{}_{vP} \text{John} [{}_{V^0} [{}_{VP} \text{the wall}_i [{}_{V^0} [{}_{\text{Small-Clause}} \langle \text{the wall} \rangle_i \text{blue}]]]]]$$


When it comes to resultatives involving intransitive, specifically unergative verbs like *run*, several cases must be considered, as shown in (16).

- (16) a. John ran himself tired
-
- b. John ran his Nikes threadbare

Let me focus on the so-called ‘fake reflexive’ cases (16a) first. If I am correct, movement must be involved to provide the necessary glue among subevents. And movement can be implicated if we follow Hornstein (2001) in taking reflexives to be modified copies left by movement. Specifically, in this context, a copy of *John*, which moves from Spec SC to Spec vP.

- (17)
$$[{}_{vP} \text{John}_i [{}_{V^0} [{}_{VP} \text{ran-V}^0 [{}_{\text{Small-Clause}} \langle \text{John} \rangle_i \text{-self tired}]]]]]$$


In (17), *John* starts out as a specifier of the resultative small clause, where it receives a theta-role from *tired*. I assume that *John* also receives inherent case in this position, a point I come back to momentarily. V is introduced, but the verb *run* doesn't have additional theta-role to assign, so no movement of *John* occurs. But *v* needs to assign agent theta-role, and the only candidate here is *John*, so *John* moves to Spec of vP. This is the key difference between unergatives and transitives in resultative constructions. In the former, movement targets SpecvP; in the latter, SpecVP. The difference derives from the different thematic requirements imposed by the two types of verb.

Back to the structure (17), I assume that *himself* must be pronounced (**John ran tired*), but for a reason different from Hornstein (2001). According to Hornstein, reflexives found in situations like *John likes himself* are pronounced to avoid the creation of a chain that would bear multiple cases. At first sight, Hornstein's claim appears to cover the relevant data discussed here. Like Hornstein, I assume that each pronounced copy must be case-licensed, hence SpecSC is a case position, specifically

The key difference appears to be that unaccusatives like *arrive* can never be used in a transitive context (in English, for reasons that are not completely clear) (24), whereas *steam* or *boil* can, as in (23).

- (23) a. John steamed the clothes dry
b. I boiled the kettle dry

- (24) *John arrived Mary tired

I take this to mean that *steam* and *boil* can license SpecVP in addition to a complement, whereas verbs like *arrive* cannot. Accordingly, *steam* and *boil* allow for the following derivations depending on in which context they will appear.

- (25) a. The clothes steamed dry
b. $[_{TP} \text{The clothes}_i [_{VP} <\text{the clothes}> \text{steamed-V}^o [_{\text{Small-Clause}} <\text{the clothes}>_i \text{dry}]]]]$
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4. Conclusion

In this paper, I have argued that the recent treatment of ditransitives of the English kind as LAs offered by Pykkänen (2002) is incomplete semantically-speaking, as it only captures half of the thematic properties of the construction. To remedy this problem I have argued that ditransitives involve object-sharing, captured via theta-driven movement, a derivational process that they share with serial verbs and resultative constructions. I have argued that object-sharing viewed as movement may be the source of macro-event formation, the glue that connects subevents together. If correct, the present paper offers yet another argument for movement into theta-position.

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