Locatives in Event Structure: Goal-Source Asymmetry

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We focus on the syntactic and semantic asymmetry between Goal (e.g., into the store) and Source locatives (e.g., from the store). Based on their syntactic and semantic asymmetry, we argue that they have distinct underlying base positions in extended VP-structure and further that they have different semantic scope/contribution in event structure.

First, we show that Goal PPs (PP_G) are generated under the lower VP2 as shown in (1), and they semantically compose a core event (result state: E2). Thus, the sentence (2) denotes an event structure of (3).

(1) \([v_{p1}D1\ [v_{v1}V1 \ [v_{v2}V2 \ (DP2) PP_G]]]]\)
(2) John swam to the boat.
(3) Event structure: \([E_0\ [E_1-p [\text{john swim}]] & [E_2-s \text{john BE-AT the-boat}]\]

Then we also argue that Source PPs (PP_S) are generated under the higher VP1 as shown in (4). The sentence (5) denotes a complex event of (6), where the source PP modifies the process sub-event (E1). The source phrases do not contribute to the composition of core event.

(4) \([v_{p1}PP_S \ [v_{v1}V1 \ [v_{v2}V2 \ (DP2) V2 (PP)]]]]\)
(5) John swam to the boat from the beach.
(6) Event structure: \([E_0\ [E_1-p [MOD \ [\text{from-the-beach} \ [E_1 \text{john swim}]] & [E_2-s \text{john BE-AT the-boat}]\]]\]

We illustrate various syntactic and semantic asymmetries including the following, which all support the above proposal.

Goal-Source Asymmetry in Syntax

Extending Koopman (1997) and Kracht (2002), we further argue for the structural asymmetry between Goal and Source.

Preposition incorporation: Goal-directional pre/postpositions can be incorporated into verb more easily than Source or non-directional ones do (Baker, 1990; Koopman 1997; Munro, 2000).

Prepositional Passive: Couper-Kuhlen (1979) shows that Goal is a typical subject of prepositional passive. If the boat is jumped into/*from it may capsize.

Movement and Ordering: Source PPs can be dislocated/topicalized more easily than Goal PPs can.

Locative Alternation: Locative alternation in many languages involves Goal-type PPs rather than Source or non-directional ones. (Hale & Keyser, 2002)

Goal and Source in Event Structure

Lexical Complex Event Structure: We identify the distinctive semantic contributions of Source and Goal in terms of semantic scope in event structure. (Jackendoff, 1990; Pustejovsky, 1991, 1995)

Event Structures for VPs and Locative PPs: We show that Goal PPs constitute a core event (i.e., result state) whereas source PPs do not. Thus, the goal PP in John sent the book to New York again introduces a result state, so again can give a restitutive reading as well as a repetitive reading. In John sent the book from New York again, however, again does not allow restitutive (narrow scope) reading, since the source PP does not form a core event.

Aspctual Division: We claim that, unlike Goal PPs, Source PPs scope over the situation aspect, so do not shift the aspectual character of the core event. Thus, He ran from the library (or ten minutes/*in ten minutes). Goal PPs, however, composing the core event, play a crucial role in aspectual composition.

We show that our proposal is ready to handle other types of locatives such as symmetric path-type (e.g., through the tunnel and over the bridge) and non-locative uses of directional PPs (e.g., He smashed the glass to pieces: Harry died from AIDS complications).

References