Organization for Fundamental Education

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Adjunct Lecturer at Osaka University, University of Toyama, and Konan University,
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Main research themes and their characteristics

「A Semantic Study of Construction Alternations in English」

Much has been discussed on construction alternations, mainly concerning the dative alternation and the locative alternation, within the framework of linguistic theories such as generative grammar, lexical semantics and cognitive grammar. This study deals with the locative alternation involving verbs of removing as in (1)-(3).

(1) a. Henry cleared dishes from the table.
b. Henry cleared the table of dishes.
(2) a. The thief stole the painting from the museum.
b. *The thief stole the museum of the painting.
(3) a. *The doctor cured pneumonia from Pat.
b. The doctor cured Pat of pneumonia.

The aim of this study is to clarify the fundamental distinction between the *from*-construction and the *of*-construction in (1) in terms of semantics and to investigate the exceptional cases in which non-alternating verbs such as *cure* are used in the *from*-construction.

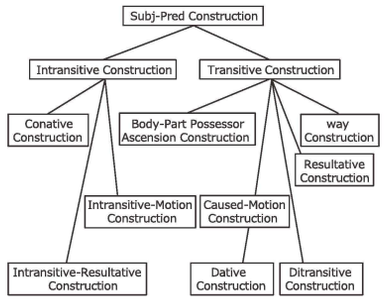

Fig.1 Taxonomy of Argument Structure Constructions

「A Historical Linguistic Study of Constructionalization」

As shown in (4a), the verb *rob* takes the victim as the direct object and the goods is represented as the object of the preposition *of*.

(4) a. Jesse robbed the rich of all their money.
b. *Jesse robbed a million dollars from the rich.

In (4a) there is a gap between the form and the meaning, and it is also difficult to give an reasonable explanation for the emergence of the preposition *of* between the two NPs from the viewpoint of Present-day English grammar.

In Old English, the verbs of possessional deprivation appeared in the two types of the ditransitive construction. The two objects in one construction were the accusative and the genitive; those in the other construction were the accusative and the dative. The former developed into the *of*-construction and the latter into the *from*-construction in the Middle English period. These syntactic changes can be shown as below.

(5) NP1 V NP2(ACC) NP3(GEN) → NP1 V NP2 of NP3
(6) NP1 V NP2(DAT) NP3(ACC) → NP1 V NP3 from NP2

The verb *rob* selected the 'NP1 V NP2 of NP3' structure, which was derived from the syntactic structure of the Old English verbs of deprivation, when the verb was borrowed from French to English in the Middle English period.

As discussed above, it is essential to study constructionalization from a historical linguistic point of view.

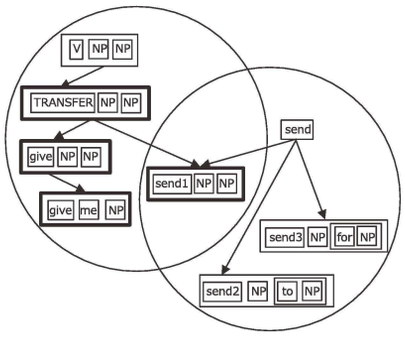

Fig.2 Network of the Ditransitive Construction (Langacker 2000:34)

Major academic publications

Nyugaku, N. (1999) "Lexical Semantics and the Old English Passive Constructions", *Konan English Literature,* vol. 14, pp. 65-78.

Moriyama, T. and N. Nyugaku et al. (2010) *Concepts of English Prepositions -From the Multidisciplinary Viewpoints of Cognitive Linguistics, Pedagogy, Sociology, Psychology and Language Culture-*, V-2 Solution.

Nyugaku, N. (2019) "A Diachronic Study of the Complementation of the Verb *rob*", *Memoirs of Fukui University of Technology,* vol. 49, pp. 208-215.