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JOAN/SELLS, PETER (EDS.) (1997):
COMPLEX PREDICATES. STANFORD: CSLI.
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During the last 5–10 years or so ‘complex predicate’ has become something like an in-term in syntactic theory, witness the recent publication of monographs carrying the term within their title (e.g. Neeleman 1994, Matsumoto 1997). The present volume, a collection of articles on complex predicates, which grew out of a workshop organized by the editors at Stanford in 1993, undoubtedly fits into this trend. It includes an introductory chapter, followed by 13 papers dealing with phenomena as diverse as serialization, auxiliarization, noun incorporation, particle verbs, phrasal verbs, causatives, denominal verbs and others. The data come from a variety of languages which are approached from a variety of theoretical frameworks.

The basic problem that underlies the core cases of what is currently being discussed as complex predicates can be characterized as follows: there are some linguistic items (words, phrases) that behave like simple (“lexical”) units in certain respects but like complex (“phrasal”) units in others. For example, morphological causatives may be analyzed as simple with respect to phrase structure but as complex with respect to argument structure. Thus, the problem complex predicates raise for syntactic theory is how to deal with mismatches of this kind. One tendency found within the current discussion is to regard those mismatches as direct evidence for the existence of different levels of syntactic representation (like argument structure, phrase structure, functional structure etc.; see the papers by Alsina, Butt, and Mohanan). In contrast, others, claiming that there are no mismatches at all employ different strategies to subsume complex predicate constructions under the familiar cases of syntactic complementation, head movement, word formation etc. (Baker, Hale and Keyser, Kiparsky, Rosen). Between these

two extreme poles, other approaches are conceivable, some of them are pursued in this volume.

Edwin Williams ('Lexical and Syntactic Complex Predicates', 13–28) argues for the existence of two sorts of complex predicates which are formed in the lexicon or in the syntax, respectively. In English, only lexically complex predicates can be found. These include structures of the types Verb + Adjective (*make clear, wipe clean*) or Verb + Preposition (*put together, kick over*). Williams does not consider small clause constructions to be complex predicates, but rather treats them as simple subject-predicate structures. Both kinds of complex predicates can be found, in contrast, with French causatives. Disregarding the so-called *faire-par* construction Williams argues that the causative predicate is lexically complex if the embedded verb is intransitive as in *J'ai fait partir Pierre* and syntactically complex if the embedded verb is transitive as in *J'ai fait manger la pomme à Pierre*.

A quite different topic is addressed in the paper by **Ken Hale and Jay Keyser** ('On the Complex Nature of Simple Predicators', 29–65). They start out with the proposition that 'a certain degree of complexity is inherent in all verbal predicators' (30). Within the approach advanced by Hale and Keyser, all (verbal) lexical items are regarded as complex syntactic structures built up by atomic components and licensed by syntactic principles. Focussing on English denominal verbs, the authors argue that the blocking of certain derivations can be explained as violations of syntactic principles that have independent motivation in syntax.

A direct response to the proposals of Hale and Keyser is **Paul Kiparsky's** 'Remarks on Denominal Verbs' (473–499). Kiparsky argues that a purely syntactic approach cannot explain why certain interpretations of denominal locatum and location verbs ("putting" verbs) are systematically blocked. He shows that in order to derive the correct interpretation in each case reference to conceptual knowledge is necessary. Kiparsky's own proposal follows the semantic theory of Bierwisch (1983) and Wunderlich (1997), which distinguishes between a level of Semantic Form and a level of Conceptual Structure. This approach allows the formulation of appropriate semantic constraints that involve reference to conceptual knowledge. For example, Kiparsky introduces a constraint which says that if an action is named after a thing it involves a canonical use of the thing (482). This constraint explains why we cannot say *to house the paint* (when we mean "to paint the house") as it is not a canonical use of houses to put paint on them. Conversely, it is a canonical use of paint to put it on houses, hence we have *to paint houses*.

Farell Ackerman and **Philip Lesourd** ('Toward a Lexical Representation of Phrasal Predicates', 67–105) investigate particle verbs in Hungarian which are syntactically separable, but nevertheless allow morphological derivations. Distinguishing between what they call syntactic words as opposed to lexical words, they argue that Hungarian particle verbs are to be analyzed as single lexical words that may consist of two syntactic words.

The article by **Miriam Butt** ('Complex Predicates in Urdu', 107–149) examines permissive and instructive constructions in Urdu as well as complex predicates involving aspectual light verbs. Butt adopts a version of Lexical Functional Grammar that distinguishes between three levels of grammatical representation, argument structure, functional structure and phrase structure. Complex predicates are defined as having a complex argument structure but a simple functional structure. The phrase structure, in contrast, is supposed not to be decisive for the status of a complex predicate. Butt shows that the permissive in Urdu qualifies as a complex predicate whereas the instructive must be analyzed as a complement construction. As for aspectual verbs, Butt argues that their influence on the case marking properties of the complex predicate can be accounted for in terms of what she calls an 'elaborated argument structure', thereby building on the semantic theory of Jackendoff (1990). She finally shows that her approach can also be applied to Italian restructuring verbs.

In the same spirit, **Tara Mohanan** ('Multidimensionality of Representation: NV Complex Predicates in Hindi', 431–471) argues that an adequate account of noun–verb complex predicates in Hindi necessitates the assumption of four different levels of syntactic representation: argument structure, semantic structure, grammatical function structure and grammatical category structure. Like in the framework proposed by Butt, these levels are supposed to be independent dimensions interrelated by mapping principles. Hindi NV complex predicates are shown to be complex at the level of grammatical categorial structure, i.e. they are syntactic phrases, but simple at the level of argument structure. At the same time, each part of a complex predicate retains its own semantic structure, a level of representations similar to what is called lexical-conceptual structure in other approaches. Thus, in a complex predicate in Hindi, a simple argument structure corresponds to a complex semantic structure on the one hand and to a complex grammatical category structure on the other hand. Moreover, the same grammatical category structure can be related to two different grammatical relation structures, because the noun behaves like a syntactic

argument in some cases but like a part of the syntactic predicate in others. Mismatches like these are in turn regarded as evidence for the assumption of different structural levels.

The question what sort of grammatical complexity is decisive for the status of a complex predicate is addressed by **Alex Alsina** in his contribution 'A Theory of Complex Predicates: Evidence from Causatives in Bantu and Romance' (203–246). Alsina gives a contrastive analysis of the causative constructions in Chicheŵa where the complex predicate is represented as a single verb form and in Catalan, where it consists of two verb forms. Adopting an LFG framework similar to that adopted by Butt, Alsina argues that the causatives of both languages are identical at the level of argument structure but different at the level of phrase structure: while in Chicheŵa causatives are formed in the lexicon, in Catalan they are formed in the syntax.

Adele E. Goldberg ('Making One's Way through the Data', 151–173) examines the *way* construction in English, an instance of which is given by the title of her paper. Goldberg shows that the meaning of a *way* construction cannot be compositionally derived from the lexical meaning of the items involved. Rather, it seems to involve a special and irreducible construction sense, which can be easily accounted for within the framework of Construction Grammar Goldberg adopts.

In her paper 'Auxiliation and Serialization: On Discerning the Difference' (175–202), **Carol Rosen** deals with the difference between complex predicates in Italian involving an auxiliary or a serial verb, respectively. According to Rosen, this difference amounts to the fact that a serial verb does provide a semantic role of its own whereas an auxiliary does not. She also offers an interesting generalization which says that serialization always takes place before auxiliation. Thus, no complex predicate already including an auxiliary can further combine with a serial verb but only with another auxiliary. These constraints – as well as the analysis – are presented within the Relational Grammar framework.

Mark C. Baker ('Complex Predicates and Agreement in Polysynthetic Languages', 247–288) focusses on polysynthetic head-marking languages which he defines as 'those languages that have obligatory verbal morphemes to cross-reference nominals of any primary grammatical function (subject, object, and indirect object) and that have productive noun incorporation' (248). Concentrating mainly on data from Mohawk (Northern Iroquoian), Baker argues that two characteristic properties of complex predicates found within these language can be directly derived from

head-marking nature of these languages: First, not surprisingly, that complex predicates are always single words, and second, that morphological causatives can only be formed from unaccusative verbs.

Mark Durie ('Grammatical Structures in Verb Serialization', 295–354) deals with serial verb constructions in a variety of languages, thereby highlighting 'that constructions called verb serialization occur with remarkably similar properties in languages of very different morphosyntactic types' (291). Durie offers a functionalist approach to account for restrictions on serial verb formation. One central assumption is that serial verb complexes, just like simple verbs always denote situations that qualify as salient, stereo-typical event-types for the relevant speech community. This not only explains, according to Durie, the strong tendency for serial verb combinations to lexicalize but also the presence of language dependent constraints on the productivity of serial verb combinations. Restrictions on the order of verbs are said to follow an iconic principle reflecting the order of causation in the conceptual structure of the verb complex. Durie also proposes an account of argument structure merging in terms of lexical-conceptual structures (Jackendoff 1990).

In 'Polysynthesis and Complex Verb Formation: The Case of Applicatives in Yimas' (355–395) **William A. Foley** examines applicatives in Yimas, a polysynthetic, agglutinative language spoken in Papua New Guinea (Lower Sepik). Foley argues that complex predicate formation in Yimas cannot be adequately described using theta role notions like agent, theme etc. as these concepts are not sufficiently fine grained. Instead, he favours an approach in terms of more specific semantic representations such as those of Conceptual Semantics (Jackendoff 1990).

Nick Evans ('Role or Cast? Noun Incorporation and Complex Predicates in Mayali', 397–430) examines trivalent verbs emerging from benefactive and comitative applicative constructions in Mayali, a polysynthetic language of Australia (Gunwinyguan). The main issue Evans addresses is to predict which argument of a multivalent applicative verb will incorporate. Previous approaches have referred to phrase structure configurations (Baker 1988) or thematic role hierarchies (Mithun 1984) in order to account for an argument's eligibility to incorporate. However, as Evans shows, with trivalent applicatives of the comitative type, it is always the argument denoting a prototypically inanimate referent that will incorporate. Thus, in these cases at least, animacy, a property of referents ('casts') rather than a property of roles or phrase structure configurations turns out to be the decisive factor. This leads to a concluding discussion of

some general implications of reference-based effects for a theory of argument structure.

All in all, this volume is worth reading as each paper offers new and interesting insights into various aspects of the relation between syntax and lexical semantics. However, it is also fair to ask whether it makes sense to subsume such a variety of phenomena under the single notion of a complex predicate. For example, I cannot see what English denominal verbs and Italian periphrastic verb forms really have in common. Neither am I able to discover any significant links between the English *way* construction and applicatives in Yoruba. A concept that applied to all these cases alike could only be extremely vague and thus either linguistically uninteresting or at least in need of further sharpening and differentiation. What unites these phenomena is at most some “family resemblance” which, however, hardly suffices to define a reasonable linguistic concept.

Nevertheless, it would have been helpful if the editors had provided a discussion of and subdivision into possible types of complex predicates. Instead, in their introductory chapter, ‘Complex Predicates: Structure and Theory’ (1–12) they start out with a definition, which says that ‘Complex predicates may be defined as multi-headed [,] composed of more than one grammatical element (either morphemes or words), each of which contributes part of the information ordinarily associated with a head’ (1). Then, after a short, one-page overview, that at least attempts to draw links from a theoretical perspective, each article is briefly summarized. The editors’ failure to offer any structured and differentiated access to the area is also reflected in their arrangement of the articles which seem to be lumped together in random order. For example, Kiparsky’s reply to Hale and Keyser appears as the last contribution whereas Hale and Keyser’s paper appears as the second one. Likewise the papers by Alsina, Butt and Mohanan, all offering an approach in terms of multiple representations, appear separated as the 8th, 5th and 13th contribution. This is all the less comprehensible as both Butt and Mohanan deal with complex predicates in Hindi–Urdu.

What one may learn from this volume, then, is that the concept of a complex predicate as currently employed by linguists is at best a collective term applying to rather diverse phenomena and thus of little theoretical interest. A ‘theory of complex predicates’ which the editors seem to envisage is not in sight. It remains to be an open task to transform the vague notion of a complex predicate into a sharp and cross-linguistically valid concept. The present volume, however, does not contribute to this task.

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