

On the event structure of resultative verbs: evidence from passives

Isabel Crespi (Queen Mary University of London)

This paper aims at showing what the formal analysis of resultative passive constructions (RPass) and its crosslinguistic study can tell about the event structure of predicates. Specifically, it is shown that RPass constitute an interesting diagnostic to determine if a verb is resultative, that is, if it lexicalises a result component, or not.

According to Embick (2004), RPass express a state that is the result of a previous event. Kratzer (2000), following Parsons (1990), claims that RPass can be divided into two groups, depending on whether they express a resultant state (permanent) or a target state (non-permanent). According to Kratzer, when a RPass expresses a target state (target-s), it can be combined with the adverb ‘still’, because it is expressing a state that can be transitory, and this is what the adverbial ‘still’ requires; while if it expresses a resultant state (resultant-s), it rejects the combination with ‘still’. (1) presents Kratzer’s German examples translated into English:

- (1) a. The presents are (still) hidden
- b. The theorem is (*still) proven

This paper offers a new outlook on the formation of RPass as lexicalisation patterns of the event structure presented in Ramchand (2008, 2018). According to Ramchand (2008), any verbal predicate can be internally decomposed into a maximum of three projections: Initiation (InitP), Process (ProcP) and Result (ResP). Following Ramchand (2018), our main proposal is that a passive construction is the result of lexicalising a subpart of the event structure of a predicate. This means that some projections of the event structure (and their arguments) are not lexicalised. Depending on the subpart of the predicate that is lexicalised, we obtain different types of passive constructions: eventive, resultative (target/resultant-s), stative (Embick 2004).

However, in light of the contrasts found with RPass, some modifications are proposed regarding the structural characterisation of Vendlerian aspectual classes described in Ramchand (2008). The main one concerns a distinction between telicity and resultativity: we defend that results are not culminations but consecutive states. A test to determine if a verb is resultative is precisely the possibility of creating the target-s passive. Kratzer (2000) shows that target-s are created from a result component present in the verb. In a neoconstructionist framework such as the Ramchadian one, this result component would be represented as the ResP (as in Anagnostopoulou 2017). On the contrary, resultant-s can be created from verbs that are resultative or not, since, in Kratzer’s proposal, they are not created from a result component, but with an aspectual operator that “maps properties of eventualities into properties of times” (Kratzer 2000: 12). If we follow Kratzer’s reasoning, the possibility of creating a target-s passive constitutes a test to determine if a specific predicate is resultative or not.

According to Ramchand (2008), achievements always lexicalise ResP, what means achievements are always resultative; on the other hand, accomplishments do not lexicalise ResP, i.e., they are not resultative; instead, they have a Path complement that measures the event and, if this Path is bounded, the event will be telic. However, if we use the target-s test, it shows that some achievements do not allow the creation of the target state (2a), what would suggest they do not lexicalise ResP, and some accomplishments do allow the creation of the target state, what means they lexicalise a ResP (2b). These data are compared and contrasted with data from other languages such as Catalan, Spanish, German and Greek.

- (2) a. *The key is still found (achievement, but incompatible with target state)
- b. The presents are still hidden (accomplishment, but compatible with target state)

Regarding the formal analysis of RPass, our proposal is that a RPass can lexicalise the event structure up to ProcP or ResP. In a similar vein to Anagnostopoulou (2003, 2017), if a RPass lexicalises the event structure of a verb up to ProcP, the result is the creation of a resultant-s; if a RPass only lexicalises ResP, the result is the creation of a target-s. This accounts for the optionality of a result component in resultant states (3a), but the need of ResP in target states (3b). InitP is always excluded and so is the external argument (only possible as a *by*-phrase):

- (3) Resultative passives
 - a. Resultant state: ProcP > (ResP)
 - b. Target state: ResP

Among others, this analysis allows us to predict that (i) all eventive transitive verbs allow the creation of at least one type of RPass, the resultant-s RPass, since they all have ProcP (4), (ii) only resultative verbs (verbs that have ResP) also allow the creation of a target-s RPass (5), (iii) stative verbs do not allow the creation of a RPass (6), because they do not have Proc or Res (only Init), and (iv) only resultant-s RPass will allow eventive modifiers and *by*-phrases, since they have ProcP. In this respect, there are two restrictions regulating the combination of a RPass with a *by*-phrase: (a) as said, the passive must express a resultant-s, and (b) the *by*-phrase must express a direct causer, i.e., a causer permanently involved throughout the causing eventuality, from beginning to end (Fábregas 2014; García-Pardo 2016) (7). This is because indirect causers are introduced at InitP (which is missing in RPass), whereas direct causers are introduced at ProcP. This is illustrated with Catalan below:

- (4) *El document està {signat / amagat}*
the document is {signed / hidden}
- (5) *El document **encara** està {*signat / amagat}*
the document still is {*signed / hidden}
- (6) **El pintor està conegut / admirat*
*the painter is known / admired
- (7) *La ciutat està destruïda {*pels romans / per l'avarícia dels ciutadans}*
the city is destroyed {*by+the Romans / by the avarice of+the citizens}

It has been proposed that participles in Spanish may lexicalise a P as part of their structure (Hernanz 1994; Gallego 2010). After revising the evidence provided by these authors, we agree with the presence of a P in participles, but only in the case of RPass. This P, we argue, is a P of central coincidence (Hale 1984), and it makes the event become a state: if a resultant state participle is the result of lexicalising ProcP (and ResP, if present), this structure would still be expressing an (unaccusative) event, but we know RPass express states. Thus, we propose that the stativisation of the event is carried out by this P. We also explore if the presence of this P could be related to the fact that, in languages like Catalan and Spanish, RPass combine with the verb *estar* (contrary to eventive passives, that combine with *ser*) (Bartra 2002; Ramos 2002). Authors like Zagona (2009) and Gallego & Uriagereka (2009, 2016) have proposed that *estar* in Spanish combines with predicates that are internally PPs and lexicalises their preposition. If resultative participles have a P and then are internally PPs, this could explain why they combine with *estar* and not with *ser*, and why stative passives cannot take *estar* (6) as they lack the P.

Selected references: Anagnostopoulou, E. (2017). Voice, manners, and results in adjectival passives. *The Verbal Domain*, edited by R. D'Alessandro et al. Oxford University Press, 105–128. Embick, D. (2004). On the Structure of Resultative Participles in English. *Linguistic Inquiry*, 35:3, 355–92. García-Pardo, A. (2016). “Agents and causers are (in-)direct causers.” Poster at West Coast Conference on Formal Linguistics 34. Ramchand, G. (2018). *Situations and syntactic structures: Rethinking auxiliaries and order in English*. Cambridge: MIT Press.