Semantic maps in typology: the case of resultative constructions

Shuo Yu

Lancaster University

sophie_yu096@hotmail.com

Key words: Semantic maps; Typology; Resultative constructions

Semantic maps is a method which describes the multifunctional patterns of grammatical morphemes (e.g. Haspelmath 2003). The basic form of a semantic map is a geometrical representation of functions in conceptual/semantic space linked by connecting lines that constitute a network. The configuration of functions is supposed to be universal, whereas various languages differ with respect to the boundaries of semantic maps that represent particular language categories.

The resultative construction, a form-meaning pair (e.g. *He wiped the table clean*), is characterized by the presence of a result XP (e.g. Croft 2012), which refers to a change of state or location of a referent of an NP caused by the action denoted by the main verb.

Resultatives have not been largely discussed typologically, only by Washio (1997) with 4 languages mentioned. In addition, the semantic-map approach has not been applied to resultatives. Based on previous studies, resultatives can be classified regarding various perspectives, for instance strong/weak/spurious (Washio 1997), subject/object-oriented (Rappaport Hovav and Levin 2001).

Data are collected from previous studies on resultatives (e.g. Nedjalkov 1988, Washio 1997), and corpora (e.g. Lancaster Corpus of Mandarin Chinese, McEnery and Xiao 2004). Then resultative constructions in 25 languages are analyzed in terms of various domains. As different languages have distinct properties, diverse distributions of the categories are demonstrated on the semantic map regarding languages. The research offers cross-linguistic comparisons of resultatives from a wide range of languages, which fills the gap in typology in this regard. The building of semantic maps suggests the validity of applying this method to typology.

Reference

Croft, W. (2012). *Verbs: Aspect and Causal Structure.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Haspelmath, M. (2003). Geometry of grammatical meaning: semantic maps and cross-linguistic comparison. In M. Tomasello (Ed.), *The new psychology of language, Vol. 2* (pp. 211-242). Mahwah, N.J.: Erlbaum.

McEnery, A. & Xiao, Z. (2004). The Lancaster Corpus of Mandarin Chinese: A corpus for monolingual and contrastive language study. *Religion 17*: 3–4.

Nedjalkov, V. P (Ed.). (1988). *Typology of resultative constructions*: Translated from the original Russian edition, B. Comrie (Ed.). Amsterdam/ Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company.

Rappaport Hovav, M. and Levin, B. (2001). An event structure account of English resultatives. *Language* 77(4): 766-797.

Washio. (1997). Resultatives compositionality and language variation. *Journal of East Asian Linguistics 6*(1): 1-49.