This paper deals with the English cognate object constructions in the framework of cognitive grammar established by Langacker (1987, 1991). Based on the seminal analysis by Langacker, the analysis here not only accounts for the characteristics of the phenomena but also reveals that the cognate object’s usual construal as an instance of the activity designated by the verb varies by virtue of modification. Moreover, it is proposed that there are at least two possibilities for the construal of cognate objects, construal as an instance of an activity (i.e. as an event) or else as a type of activity. Furthermore, it is shown that the present analysis will enable us to account for some problems related with construal and transitivity.*

1. Introduction

This paper is concerned with cognate object constructions in English such as those in (1).

(1)  
  a. She laughed a raucous laugh.  
  b. The old man walked a slouchy walk.  
  c. Bill sighed a weary sigh.  
  d. Alice danced a merry dance.  

A variety of approaches to the cognate object construction have been advanced, but one of the central goals of this paper is to offer a

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cognitive analysis of the above data which accounts for the properties illustrated below.

One of the special features of cognate object constructions is that a normally intransitive verb takes an object whose head noun is a nominalization of the verb stem (or is at least morphologically related). Also, as Iwakura (1976) and Jones (1988) point out, each cognate object construction in (1) has a reading roughly equivalent to an intransitive expression including an adverb:

(2) a. She laughed raucously.
   b. The old man walked slouchingly.
   c. Bill sighed wearily.
   d. Alice danced merrily.

Jones (1988) says that the difference between (1) and (2) is more a matter of style than meaning. If we opt for a cognitive linguistic approach, however, we must recognize that there may be semantic differences between (1) and (2). For, in Langacker's (1987, 1991) cognitive grammar, coding\(^1\) and construal (or semantic structure) are assumed to be closely dependent on each other. Indeed, the difference between the two kinds of expressions is not only a stylistic one, as we will see later.

Moreover, as many linguists have pointed out, the cognate object usually requires modification of some sort. The contrast of acceptability between (3a–c) and (3d) shows that the obligatoriness of modification differs among verbs, but cognate objects without modification are rare except in poetry or lyrics.

(3) a. *She laughed a laugh.
   b. *The old man walked a walk.
   c. *Bill sighed a sigh.
   d. Alice danced a dance.

I believe that a cognitive approach to the cognate object construction can provide an account not only of various grammatical issues that arise in connection with the phenomenon but also of some complicated problems of construal.

Section 2 begins by briefly reviewing previous analyses of the cognate object construction and points out some serious problems in these analyses. We then adopt Langacker's (1991) usage-based approach

\(^1\) Coding is “the relationship between a conceptualization one wishes to express and the linguistic structures activated for that purpose” (Langacker (1991: 294)).
instead and introduce the basic notions of cognitive grammar and a schema of the cognate object construction proposed by Langacker. On the basis of his description, section 3 gives a cognitive account for various properties and for the problems in the previous analyses, and proposes two kinds of cognitive models of the cognate object construction. Section 4 further considers more complicated problems about the difference between conceptual specification and similarity and about the degree of transitivity among cognate object constructions on the basis of our cognitive analysis.

2. Previous Analyses

2.1. The Argument Analysis vs. the Adjunct Analysis

With respect to cognate objects, a central issue is whether they are arguments or adjuncts. Massam (1990) and Macfarland (1994) adopt the argument analysis, but Jones (1988) treats them as modifiers of the VP, and proposes the adjunct analysis.

Among the argument analyses, Massam (1990), for example, characterizes the cognate object as “a syntactic direct object which receives a patient theta role from the verb” (p. 161). Moreover, Massam hypothesizes that cognate objects arise through the process of *Lexical Subordination* proposed by Levin and Rapoport (1988), as (4) shows.

(4) a. \[ x \text{ verb} \]
   \[ (=John\text{ laughed}) \]

b. \[ x \text{ CAUSE} [y_i \text{ BECOME EXIST}] \text{ BY} [x \text{ verb}] \]
   \[ (=John\text{ caused the event } [John\text{ laugh}] \text{ to exist by means of } [John\text{ laugh}]) \] (Massam (1990: 173))

The Lexical Conceptual Structure (LCS) of (4b) involves the subordination of the LCS of (4a). Furthermore, Massam adds the following generalization about the process:

(5) *Lexical Subordination of unergative verbs to CAUSE/EXIST predicates where y=subordinated event creates CO (=cognate object) constructions.* (ibid.)

On the other hand, Jones (1988) claims that cognate objects are adjunct-NPs and defines cognate object constructions as follows:

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2 *Lexical Subordination is a semantic process whereby the basic meaning of a verb is extended.* For more details, see Levin and Rapoport (1988).
... the head noun acts as a surrogate for the verb, with the result that the modification relation\(^3\) assigned to the NP by the adjective or other modifier is transferred to the VP at the level of LF (or Semantic Representation). (Jones (1988: 93))

However, there are some problems which neither the argument nor the adjunct analysis can account for. First, the argument analysis cannot explain the relation between a cognate object construction like (6a) and an intransitive sentence like (6b). The existence of a quasi-paraphrase relation between the two sentences is one of the properties of cognate object constructions observed in the previous section.

(6) a. Bill grinned a sideways grin.
   b. Bill grinned sideways.

On the other hand, the adjunct analysis can capture the relationship. For cognate objects like a sideways grin in (6a) are treated as modifiers of the VP and have the same functions as do adverbs like sideways in (6b). In the adjunct analysis, (6a) is treated as roughly equivalent to (6b). Not all cognate object constructions are, however, parallel semantically to an intransitive sentence including a corresponding adverb, as the pair of sentences in (7) suggest.

(7) a. Mary dreamed a strange dream.

Thus we cannot say that the adjunct analysis provides a sufficient account to capture the parallelism in (6).

Secondly, as shown in (8), the object in the cognate object construction tends to be morphologically derived from (i.e. ‘cognate’ to) the verb.

(8) a. *He slept a sound slumber.\(^4\)
   b. *He died a glorious end. (Konishi (1981: 12))

Massam’s argument analysis treats this fact by using indices as in (4); however it fails to explain the reason behind this behavior. On the other hand, the adjunct analysis cannot treat this issue, because

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\(^3\) A modification relation is regarded as analogous to a \(\theta\)-role.

\(^4\) My informant judges the sentence (i) not unacceptable but less acceptable.

(i) ?He slept a sound slumber. (cf. (8a))

He suggests that the adjective sound in such a peculiar meaning as ‘deep’ takes only one head noun, sleep. Hence, sound slumber is somewhat odd on its own, and the infelicity in (i) thus has nothing really to do with the cognate object construction. This is supported by the fact shown in (9a).
cognate objects are considered as adjuncts. In fact, NPs which are not strictly cognate objects can appear, although some sound a bit strange.

(9) a. He slept a fitful \(\text{sleep/slumber}\).
   b. He smiled a knowing \(\text{smile/?smirk}\).

(Michael T. Wescoat (p.c.))

In the case of the examples in (9), the noun \textit{slumber} represents a kind of sleep, and the noun \textit{smirk} describes a type of smile. That is, each can be regarded as a specific subtype of the corresponding cognate noun. On the other hand, in the case of \textit{end} in (8b) and (10), the noun represents not a kind of death but a conception similar to that of the noun \textit{death}.

(10) He died an untimely \(\text{death/?*end}\).

(Michael T. Wescoat (p.c.))

The difference of acceptability between (9) and (10) hasn’t been sufficiently treated in previous analyses. We will try to explain the difference in section 4.1.

Finally, there is a problem concerning the acceptability of passive of cognate object constructions. Massam’s analysis cannot handle the problem at all, because cognate objects are not differentiated from normal direct objects. On the other hand, Jones uses passivization as a crucial test in order to show whether an NP is an adjunct or not. For example, \textit{an uneventful life} in (11) cannot occur as the subject of a passive, although \textit{a merry dance} in (12) can.

(11) a. Harry lived an uneventful life.
   b. *An uneventful life was lived by Harry.

(Jones (1988: 91))

(12) a. Sam danced a merry dance.
   b. A merry dance was danced by Sam. (ibid.)

In this case, Jones classes \textit{live} in (11a) as an intransitive verb, which can take a cognate object, and \textit{dance} in (12a) as a transitive verb. As shown in (11), (13) and (14), however, the acceptability of passivization varies according to which modifier is applied to the object.

(13) a. Susan lived the life that she wanted.
   b. ?The life that she wanted was lived by Susan.

(Rice (1987a: 210))

(14) a. Susan lived a good life.
   b. A good life was lived by Susan. (ibid.)

Since (13a) and (14a) are both cognate object constructions, Jones’s claim that the passivization test decides whether an NP is an adjunct or
not (i.e. whether it is a cognate object or not) seems to be inappropriate.

Thus we have observed that cognate objects cannot be sufficiently accounted for by either the argument or the adjunct analysis. In order to describe them more precisely, we adopt the framework of cognitive grammar in this paper. Before turning to a closer examination of the cognate object construction, we briefly introduce Langacker's (1991) analysis of the phenomenon in the next section.

2.2. Langacker's Cognitive Analysis

Langacker (1991) notes that the cognate object designates “a single episode of the process type in question—in fact, that episode is identified with the specific process instance profiled by the verb” (p. 363). He regards the cognate object as an episodic noun,\(^5\) and his schematization for episodic nominalization is shown in Figure 1.

As sketched in Figure 1(a), a verb scans sequentially through a series of temporally distributed component states (\(\exists\));\(^6\) thus, according to this notion, the verb includes as an inherent part of its meaning an abstract region including its component states. Since this region is latent within the verb, it is depicted in (a) with a dashed ellipse. However, the latent region can be recognized as such, or even profiled, as sketched in Figure 1(b); the result is an episodic nominalization.

On the basis of this description of episodic nominalization, Langacker offers a schema of the cognate object construction, as in Figure 2, and gives the following account:

In a cognate object construction, ... the abstract region is salient in both the verb and its object: it is profiled by the

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\(^5\) The episodic noun can occur with various verbs: take a walk, make a throw, receive a nudge, etc. See Langacker (1991: 24) for more detail.

\(^6\) In Figure 1 (and Figure 2 seen later), three component states stand for a continuous sequence, and the heavy-line portion of the time arrow indicates sequential scanning.
object, and the verb accords it the status of primary landmark. A correspondence between the verbal landmark and nominal profile effects the integration of the two component structures, in full conformity with the direct-object construction.

(ibid.: 363-364)

Figure 2 indicates that the verb and cognate object may essentially invoke the same conceptual content. Since the cognate object is the reified event, it is difficult to construe it as a distinct participant. Thus the cognate object is “rather peripheral to the direct-object category” (p. 364). Indeed, as observed in (11) above, the infelicity of the corresponding passive (11b) calls its transitivity into question. Moreover, the data in (13)-(14) permit us to insist that transitivity is a matter of degree and depends on the meaning of the whole clause. Research concerning transitivity, e.g. the work of Hopper and Thompson (1980) and Rice (1987a), has shown that many conceptual factors contribute to transitivity. In this paper we indicate the prototypical notion of transitivity, as in Figure 3.7

Figure 3 shows that at least the three following factors are concerned with transitivity: (a) the presence of two discrete participants expressed by overt nominals that function as a subject or an object respectively;

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7 This representation is based on Nakamura’s (1993) representation of cognitive structure, which ties Langacker’s (1991) action chain and Croft’s (1990) causal chain. For more details, see Nakamura (1993) with regard to the integrated model.
(b) the presence of an energetic transition between participants; (c) the existence of an object affected by the action. In the representation, the portions just described are sketched with bold lines, indicating their status as Figure; the remainder is depicted with lighter lines, indicating that it is part of the Ground.

In fact, Langacker's observation seems to be true, but is not enough to describe the various aspects of the cognate object construction. Following his analysis and the basic conception of cognitive grammar, in the next section we try to analyze linguistic facts surrounding cognate object constructions in more detail.

3. A Cognitive Analysis of the Cognate Object Construction

3.1. The Relationship between an Adjectival Modifier and an Adverbial Modifier

In this section I consider the relationship between an adjectival modifier in a cognate object construction and an adverbial modifier that occurs in the corresponding intransitive construction. We then intend to capture the relationship using the tools provided by the framework of cognitive grammar.

As observed in section 1, a cognate object construction like (15b) is thought to correspond semantically to an intransitive construction like (15a).

(15) a. Tom fought ferociously.
     b. Tom fought a ferocious fight.

The modifying relation between ferociously and the verb fight in (15a) seems parallel semantically to that between ferocious and the noun fight in (15b), in spite of the fact that heads and modifiers represent different grammatical categories in the two constructions. However, this parallelism cannot be fully dealt with by the previous analyses, as shown in section 2.1.

Under the framework of cognitive grammar, the adverb ferociously and the adjective ferocious are perceived as being semantically equivalent because they have the same conceptual content and profile the same interconnections, as sketched in Figure 4.
Figure 4(a) depicts the semantic content of the adverb, e.g. *ferociously*, and Figure 4(b) depicts that of the adjective, e.g. *ferocious*. In both diagrams, the upward arrow indicates a scale pertaining to the degree of ferocity. Each predication specifies that some process falls within that portion of the scale located beyond the neighborhood of the norm (n), and chooses the schematically characterized process ($) for its trajector, and the scalar region for its landmark. Moreover, each profiles the interconnections between the process and the scalar region.

In cognitive grammar, a difference in grammatical category is assumed to imply a difference in meaning. What makes the semantic difference between the adverb *ferociously* and the adjective *ferocious*? By the assumptions of cognitive grammar, the semantic distinction resides in whether the trajector is simply construed as a process, as indicated by the bold-line rectangle in Figure 4(a), or is reified to form an abstract region, as indicated by the bold-line circle in Figure 4(b). Although this contrast is subtle, it produces a difference in meaning and is responsible for the difference in grammatical category. In Figure 4(a), because the trajector is processual (i.e. a verb), its structure is adapted for the modification of a verb and is therefore categorized as an adverb. On the other hand, in Figure 4(b), because of the nominal character of its trajector, its structure is categorized as an adjective.

Thus, the modifying relationships are parallel between an adverb and an adjective, because in both instances a process is situated within the landmark region of the scale, but the difference of meaning and category between the two relates to whether the process retains its processual construal or undergoes reification.

Moreover, this analysis can also capture another problem. According to Massam (1990), an adjective modifying a cognate object can be manner- or subject-oriented, as in (16)-(17), but it cannot be speaker-
oriented, as in (18).

(16) a. King Alfred died a gruesome death. (manner)
    b. King Alfred died gruesomely.

(17) a. Henleigh smiled an unkind smile. (subject-oriented, manner)
    b. Henleigh (unkindly) smiled (unkindly).

(18) a. *Hans smiled an evident smile. (speaker-oriented)
    b. Evidently, Hans smiled. (Massam (1990: 174))

This behavior of the modifier with the cognate object can be explained by using the adverbial or adjectival schematic conceptions diagrammed in Figure 4(a)(b). Recall that the parallel construal between an adjective modifying a cognate object and an adverb modifying a verb is related to the fact that their conceptual contents are equivalent. The conception of process can make inherent reference to its participants. In the process designated by the intransitive verb in a cognate object construction, there is only one participant (i.e. the Agent). In the case of (16) and (17), each subject is a participant located within the process and can therefore retain the parallelism of the modifying relationship. On the other hand, a speaker is not a participant but a conceptualizer who is responsible for the conceptualization of the whole event coded in a clausal expression. Because the speaker cannot be situated within the process in Figure 4, an adjective cannot be speaker-oriented, and the modifying relation between an adjective evident and a cognate object smile in (18a) cannot be thought to be equal to that between the adverb evidently and the verb smile in (18b). In other words, the adverb and the adjective can be paraphrased, as in (16) and (17), if only their conceptual contents are as shown in Figure 4 (a) or (b) respectively.

We examine in the next section what verbs are possible in cognate object constructions and why they are regarded as acceptable.

3.2. The Verbs Which Can Occur with Cognate Objects

Let us investigate the issue of verbs which can take cognate objects. Cognate object constructions are not possible with all verbs. As the examples of (19) show, cognate objects are easily omissible, hence the verbs which can take cognate objects are regarded lexically as intransitive verbs.

(19) a. She grinned (a happy grin).
    b. John slept (a sound sleep).
According to Perlmutter (1978), intransitive verbs are classified into unaccusative verbs (e.g. sink, arrive, break) and unergative verbs (e.g. dance, smile, run). Keyser and Roeper (1984), Massam (1990), Levin and Rappaport (1995), and others have observed that only unergative verbs can occur with cognate objects, as in (20), although unaccusative verbs cannot take such objects, as in (21).

(20) a. He walked a funny walk.
    b. She cried a good long cry.
    c. The baby slept a sound sleep.
    d. She ran a good run.

(21) a. *John arrived a late arrival.
    b. *The comedian appeared an amusing appearance.
    c. *We approached a strange approach.
    d. *The actress fainted a feigned faint.

I suppose that differences in construal between unergative verbs and unaccusative verbs lead to this difference in acceptability with cognate objects. Based on Nakamura’s (1993) representation of cognitive structure, we will capture the difference between unergative verbs and unaccusative verbs in what follows.

First, in the case of such unergative verbs as walk, cry, sleep and run in (20), since the actions described by the verbs can be controlled by the subjects, the subjects are supposed to supply energy to themselves in order to bring about the activity. Figure 5 below, which portrays their cognitive structures, indicates that the subject (Agent) itself not only exerts energy but also receives it.

![Figure 5: Unergative Verb (e.g. x walked.)](image)

In other words, the subject is both an energy source and an energy sink. Although actually there is only one participant in the designated event, we can conceive of a transmission of energy from the participant to itself, as Figure 5 shows. But we should note that the transmission of energy is reflexive.

On the other hand, unaccusative verbs like arrive, appear, approach
and faint in (21) are viewed in the present framework as a thematic process whose construal is absolute. For instance, in the case of the verb arrive, the movement per se is saliently evoked and placed in profile, as shown in Figure 6.

Thus, unaccusative and unergative verbs are typically different with reference to energy in construals.

As we have observed the prototype of transitivity in section 2.2, the concept of transmission of energy is one of the conceptual factors contributing to transitivity. For energy can imply not only physical energy, which is transmitted from one participant to another, but also causative force. In fact, some unergative verbs can take not only cognate objects but also other objects, as the sentences in (22) show. For example, the verb walk in (22a) is used in the sense of 'cause to walk (intransitive).'

(22)  
   a. Tom walked the dog to the park.  
   b. Mary danced Bill so beautifully.  
   c. The doctor bled the patient.

However, other unergative verbs do not allow causative uses at all.

(23)  
   b. *The sleeping pills yawned Pat.  
   c. *The pollen sneezed Tony.

   (Levin & Rappaport (1995: 116))

Moreover, in resultative constructions, unergative verbs can occur with both fake objects and resultative complements, as in (24), but unaccusative verbs cannot, as in (25).\(^8\)

(24)  
   a. He walked his feet to pieces.  
   b. Mary laughed herself into a stupor.  
   c. She danced her toes sore.

(25)  
   a. *John arrived himself sick.  
   c. *The mirror broke itself into pieces.

\(^8\) See Horita (1995) with regard to a cognitive analysis of resultative constructions.
The facts pointed out above allow us to say that unergative verbs can take fake objects with resultative complements, or cognate objects, because they are construed as events including the transmission of energy.

An expression's precise semantic value is determined by numerous facets of construal. The type of verb alone cannot decide whether it can take cognate objects or not. For example, the following sentences are different in perspective, although each intransitive sentence includes the unergative verb *run*:

(26) a. She runs straight.
    b. The road runs straight.

Whereas the subject in (26a) moves along a spatial path, the sentence (26b) describes a static configuration in which a spatially extended subject simultaneously occupies every location along such a path. According to Langacker (1990), (26b) is thought to be an instance of *subjectification*. Langacker argues that subjectification represents a common type of semantic change. Data like (26b) represent a general type characterized by the following central property: “spatial motion on the part of an objectively-construed participant is replaced by subjective motion (mental scanning) on the part of the conceptualizer” (p. 19). In this case, although (27a) is a possible paraphrase of (26a), we cannot use a cognate object construction like (27b) as the paraphrase of (26b), even if it is produced from an unergative verb.

(27) a. She runs a straight run.
    b. *The road runs a straight run.*

This is because the structure of the verb *run* in (26b) cannot be represented as in Figure 5, which includes a transmission of energy.

To summarize, the verbs which can occur in cognate object constructions are unergative verbs whose conceptual structures include one participant and a reflexive transmission of energy, as shown in Figure 5.

3.3. On the Unusual Properties of Cognate Objects

In this section, we examine how the unusual properties of the cognate object are treated by our cognitive approach.

3.3.1. Why Is an Object ‘Cognate’ to the Verb?

In the cognate object construction, a head noun of the object is usually a nominalization of the verb stem. We suppose this property
has a close relation to the semantic structures of the verbs in cognate object constructions. We observed in section 3.2 that the cognate object construction is compatible with unergative verbs but not with unaccusative verbs, because a transmission of energy is involved in their semantic structures, as illustrated in Figure 5. Whereas energy is usually transmitted from one participant to another, the transmission of energy is, in the case of unergative verbs, reflexive. As a result, reflexive energy is exerted only to engender a process or an activity. For example, the activity of smiling can produce an entity ‘a smile,’ but it cannot produce other things, as shown in (28a). The produced smile is the subject’s, not any other person’s. Hence, a permissible possessive has to be coreferential to the subject, as shown in (29).

(28) a. *He smiled a silly laugh.
   b. *He died a [suicide/murder]. (Massam (1990: 165))

(29) a. He smiled [his/*her] little smile.
   b. She slept [her/*his] sound sleep.
   c. Juliet lived [her/*his] unhappy life.

The unergative verbs which appear in cognate object constructions can give rise to a nominalization derived by -ing, like laughing, walking, etc. They are morphologically related to the verbs, but derived nouns ending in -ing cannot occur in cognate object constructions:

(30) a. Susan sneezed [a glorious sneeze/*glorious sneezing].
   b. She walked [a funny walk/*funny walking].
   c. Tom laughed [many ridiculous laughs/*a lot of ridiculous laughing].

This tendency concerns the notion boundedness.

As Langacker (1991) points out, episodic nouns like sneeze, walk, and laugh in (30) are conceived as bounded, because a process designated by a perfective verb is inherently bounded, as shown in Figure 1. Thus, the episodic nouns function as count nouns, so they take an indefinite or a definite article such as a and the, as in (30a, b), and tolerate pluralization, as in (30c). On the other hand, derived nouns ending in -ing have the characterization of mass nouns, because their profiled region lacks bounding within the scope of predication.9 Thus, they require no article, as in (30a, b), take quantifiers like a lot

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9 Concerning nominalizations derived with -ing, see Langacker (1991: 25-26) for more details.
of, and do not tolerate pluralization, as shown in (30c). That is, they are conceived as unbounded, and there are no endpoints of the process within their relevant scope.

In cognate object constructions, since the verbs which can appear there represent the bounded events, the event coded by the object noun also has to be construed as bounded. In the case of nouns derived by *-ing*, there is a discrepancy between the event described by the verbs and the event represented by the nouns, so that such derived nouns with *-ing* cannot be permitted.10

### 3.3.2. The Modification of Cognate Objects

In section 1, we observed that cognate objects usually require modification of some sort. Verbs such as *laugh* and *smile* in (31) always need modifiers for their cognate objects:

(31)  
a. *He laughed a laugh.

b. *She smiled a smile.

The modification is done via the addition not only of adjectives before the object’s head noun, as in (32), but also by means of a relative clause or a prepositional phrase after it, as in (33).

(32)  
a. He laughed a mirthless laugh.

b. She smiled a sad smile.

(33)  
a. He laughed a laugh that shook the timbers of even that solidly built old house.

b. She smiled a smile without humor.

As to the reason for the difference between (31) and (32)–(33), Rice (1988) claims that “the acceptability of sentences containing cognate object constructions depends on the expressions’ ability to convey conceptual differentiation of process and processed object” (p. 208). In other words, because modification usually renders noun phrases more concrete and objectified, it is useful in order to show the conceptual difference between a cognate object and a verb. That is, the accompanying modifiers with the object’s head noun allow us to construe a cognate object not merely as the specific event profiled by the verb but as a special, replicable *type*.

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10 When nouns with *-ing* represent bounded events and function as count nouns, they can occur in cognate object constructions:

(i) Francesca was feeling good feelings, old feelings, poetry and music feelings.  

(Robert Waller, *The Bridges of Madison County*, 65)
Then another question arises: why does this conceptual differentiation between a verb and a cognate object make the cognate object constructions acceptable?

The verbs in the cognate object constructions are usually used as intransitive rather than transitive. At a glance, the semantic contrast between a cognate object construction in (34b) and the possible paraphrastic intransitive expression in (34a) is not self-evident.

(34)  a. Tom fought ferociously.  (= (15a))
    b. Tom fought a ferocious fight.  (= (15b))
    c. *Tom fought a fight.

Within the framework of cognitive grammar, however, coding and construal are considered to be closely interdependent, so that we will assume that there is a difference between (34a) and (34b) in construal. In fact, (34a) denotes a durative, perhaps imperfective construal of the activity of fighting, but (34b) is more perfective and, hence, more transitive in construal. In fact, Tenny (1987) also suggests a difference in construal (or reading) between a cognate object construction and the corresponding intransitive expression by means of the following examples:

(35)  a. laugh (non-delimited, delimited)
    b. laugh a mirthless laugh (delimited) (Tenny (1987: 154))

Moreover, the fact that (34c) is ungrammatical does not imply that the mere existence of the post-verbal noun engenders a transitive construal. Then, what imposes a transitive construal on (34b)?

The cognate object's head noun, e.g. fight in (34b) or (34c), specifies a single episode of the process designated by the verb. As observed in section 2.2, since the object constitutes a mere reification of the process itself and what results from the process of fighting is, of course, 'a fight,' we can find no distinction between the two conceptual contents, i.e. between the fight, itself created by the action fight (V), and a fight (O). On the other hand, if a modifier such as ferocious is added to the object, the object can be construed as a distinct type, so we can conceive some difference between a fight as an action and a ferocious fight (O).

As a consequence, we can say that it is this conceived difference that engenders a transitive construal of (34b). That is, because of the conceptual differentiation between a verb and a cognate object with sufficient modification, we can easily conceive some differentiation in cognate object constructions.
The obligatoriness of modifiers, however, varies among verbs. In the following examples, cognate objects without modification are permissible, but they are not problematic; rather, they are compatible with our claims here:

(36) a. Alice danced a dance. (= (3d))
    b. John sang a song.

Since dances and songs are usually precomposed entities, in (36) we can differentiate the conception of the verbs from that of the cognate objects without modification, and conceive some distinction between an action of dancing or singing and a pre-existing entity such as a dance or a song. Thus, indefiniteness of the object NPs does not make the expressions unacceptable.

Consequently, we can say that the existence of the conceived distinction motivates the transitive form of cognate object constructions and makes them acceptable.

In the end, on the basis of what we have shown so far, the representation of the cognitive structure of cognate object constructions like (32) and (34b) should be depicted as in Figure 7.

![Figure 7: Cognate Object Construction](image)

What Figure 7 shows is as follows: an event designated by the cognate object’s head arises from the subject’s (Agent’s) reflexive transmission of energy. By adding modification to the cognate object, we can conceive of some differentiation between the event and a conceptually more specified event. The conceived distinction engenders a transitive construal and makes its transitive form permissible.

3.3.3. The Construal and Referentiality of Cognate Objects

In this section, we will focus our attention on the construal of cognate objects, exploring the relation between construal and referentiality.

First, there are restrictions on pronominalization of cognate objects. Pronouns such as *it* or *them* in the object position are impossible, although the pronominalization by a pronoun *one* or *so* is more acceptable, as shown in (37) and (38).
(37)  a. Mona smiled a tantalizing smile. Rose smiled \[\{\textit{it/one}\}\], too.
    b. Mona smiled a sudden smile. Rose smiled \[\{\textit{it/one}\}\], too.
    c. Mona smiled various smiles. Rose smiled \[\{\textit{them/some}\}\], too.

(38)  a. Mona smiled a tantalizing smile, and Rose did \[\{\textit{it/so}\}\], too.
    b. Mona smiled a sudden smile, and Rose did \[\{\textit{it/so}\}\], too.
    c. Mona smiled various smiles, and Rose did \[\{\textit{them/so}\}\], too.

This property is related with the fact that each cognate object designates not an independent thing but an instance of the action denoted by the verb. For example, when Mona stops smiling, the smile designated by the cognate objects also ceases to exist. Thus, the event of “Mona’s smiling tantalizingly/suddenly” cannot be replicated by the other participant (e.g. Rose).

Secondly, cognate objects cannot be questioned using what, as in (39), but they can be questioned using what sort of, as in (40).

(39) *What did Catherine smile?

(40) What sort of smile did Catherine smile?

These facts suggest that cognate objects are construed not only as an event (an instance of the process/action), but also as a type of the process/action. Indeed, the difference of the construals of cognate objects can be exemplified by whether a cognate object (or a cognate object construction) can be a reply to the question of what sort of ~ or how ~.\(^{11}\) As shown in (41) and (42), when a cognate object is construed as an event, it can be a reply to the question not of what sort of ~ but of how ~. Contrarily, the cognate object construed as a type of action can be a reply to the question not of how ~ but of what sort of ~.

(41) How did Catherine smile?
    a. She smiled a sudden smile.
    b. *She smiled a thin-lipped smile.

\(^{11}\) Omuro (1990: 75) points out that cognate objects alone can be used as the answer to questions with how.
(42) What sort of smile did Catherine smile?
   a. *She smiled a sudden smile.
   b. She smiled a thin-lipped smile.

Moreover, even in the case of cognate objects such as dance, which can be construed as a differentiable thing, (as shown in (36),) the difference in modification leads to a difference in construal of the cognate object, as follows:

(43) How did the girls dance?
   a. A {*traditional/staggering/nervous/merry/slow} dance.
   b. They danced a {*traditional/staggering/nervous/merry/slow} dance.

(44) What (sort of dance) did the girls dance?
   a. A {*traditional/*staggering/*nervous/merry/slow} dance.
   b. They danced a {*traditional/*staggering/*nervous/merry/slow} dance.

A cognate object with the adjective traditional is unacceptable as a reply to question (43), but it is acceptable as a reply to question (44). This is because the cognate object a traditional dance is not construed as an event; rather it is construed as a kind of dance. On the other hand, cognate objects modified by adjectives such as staggering or nervous can be used as the answer to question (43), but not to question (44), because they are construed not as a type of dance executable by other agents but as an event. However, some cognate objects are ambiguous in construal. The cognate objects which are modified by merry or slow can be used as the answer both to the question with how and to the question with what sort of. That is, they are construed as an event in (43) or as a type of the action (i.e. ‘a dance’) in (44). In this case, the construals are determined by the given context.12

Furthermore, the difference in construal is reflected in their referentiality. According to Borer (1994), the presence of referential readings and non-referential readings can be exemplified directly by

12 One of the anonymous EL reviewers suggests that the cognate object a traditional dance in the following sentence is construed not as a type of dance but as a dancing-event:

(i) In this welcome ceremony held for the visiting American President, some children from the kindergarten nearby danced a traditional dance between two very long speeches.

(S)he also thinks the construals are dependent on the context.
their distinct syntactic behavior. For example, non-referential expressions, e.g. sand in (45b), cannot serve as antecedents for pronouns, in contrast to referential expressions, e.g. some sand in (45a).

(45)  
  a. Kim collected some sand, and it was very clean.  
  b. *Kim collected sand, and it was very clean.

(Borer (1994: 41)

As shown in (43) and (44), the cognate object a traditional dance is construed as a type of dance, while a staggering dance or a nervous dance is construed as an event of dancing. The sentences below suggest that the former is referential and the latter is non-referential.

(46)  
  a. Mary danced a traditional dance, and it was noticeable.  
  b. ?*Mary danced a [staggering/nervous] dance, and it was noticeable.

Thus we have seen that there are two possibilities in the construal of cognate objects, i.e. construal as an event and construal as a type of action. The construal depends on the modification, and produces referential or non-referential readings of cognate object constructions. When cognate objects are construed as an event, they tend to be non-referential. On the other hand, if they are construed as a type, they may be referential.

These observations compel us to propose another type of cognitive structure for cognate object constructions like (36), (42b) and (46a), as shown in Figure 8.

Figure 8: Cognate Object Construction (with a type reading)

Figure 8 shows that a cognate object with or without modification designates not an event but a type of action/process or sometimes a pre-existing entity. Because the type is also construed as an entity that is generally replicable, it is like a distinct participant. Thus in Figure 8, not an event but a participant-like entity is profiled. This is the point where Figure 8 differs from Figure 7.

4. Further Speculations

In this section, we will further observe some other empirical facts
that are predicted and explained on the basis of our cognitive analysis.


As seen above, the cognate object construction allows only objects which are ‘cognate’ to the verb.

(47) a. *He died a suicide.
    b. *He laughed an ironical smile.

An object like end in (48) is also more or less unacceptable, even if the meaning is similar to that of its corresponding cognate object death.

(48) *He died an untimely end. (cf. (10))

However, as shown in section 2.1, some objects whose head nouns are neither nominalizations of the verb stem nor morphologically related with the verb can be acceptable in cognate object constructions.

(49) a. He slept a fitful slumber. (cf. (9a))
    b. *He smiled a knowing smirk. (cf. (9b))

Each object in (49) represents not a similar concept but a specified kind of the corresponding cognate noun in contrast with the object end in (48). In the case of (49), there may be differences in judgements of acceptability among speakers. In fact, some speakers regard all sentences in (49) as unacceptable, but the following sentences with verbs such as dance and sing exhibit no differences in judgements of acceptability among speakers:

(50) a. Bernadette danced the Irish jig.
    b. Tosca sang an aria. (Massam (1990: 163))

These objects also depict special kinds of dances or songs.

In order to explain the difference of acceptability between (48) and (49)(50), we have to distinguish conceptual specification from conceptual similarity. As shown in section 3.3.2, cognate objects are conceptually specified and differentiated by adding sufficient modification to them.

The conceptual differentiation between a verb and an object gives rise to transitive construal which motivates the transitive form of the construction. On the other hand, by using the conceptually similar noun instead of the corresponding cognate one, a subtle conceptual distinction may be perceived between the verb and the noun. However, the similar noun cannot be allowed to occur in the direct object position, since the subject’s (Agent’s) activity produces not a similar one but the same one, as shown in Figure 7 or Figure 8.

Thus, since the objects in (49) and (50) represent a specified kind of
corresponding normal cognate objects, they can appear in place of the cognate objects, although objects which represent a similar concept cannot.

4.2. The Degree of Transitivity in Cognate Object Constructions

We have asserted in section 3.2 that only unergative verbs can take cognate objects. However, concerning the verb die, although the verb can take only a cognate object in the direct object position, many researchers, including Perlmutter and Postal (1984), classify it as unaccusative.\(^\text{13}\)

\[(51)\]
\[
\begin{align*}
\text{a.} & \quad \text{My grandfather died a natural death.} \\
\text{b.} & \quad \text{Your son died a soldier’s death in the cause of democracy.}
\end{align*}
\]

In analyses which treat the verb as unaccusative, cognate object constructions such as (51a) and (51b) are regarded as a special or exceptional case. The reasons why the verb is treated as an unaccusative are at least that its subject is not an Agent and that cognate object constructions with this verb can never be passivized.

\[(52)\]
\[
\begin{align*}
\text{a.} & \quad *\text{A natural death was died by my grandfather.} \\
\text{b.} & \quad *\text{A soldier’s death was died by your son.}
\end{align*}
\]

Whether die is an unergative verb or unaccusative verb is controversial, but in our analysis, the verb die in cognate object constructions is supposed to be construed as a kind of an unergative verb. However, the subject of the verb is not an Agent in contrast with prototypical unergative verbs like smile or walk; hence, the verb die may be a peripheral unergative verb. Thus, cognate object constructions with the verb die will show less transitivity than other cognate object constructions with prototypical unergative verbs. Before trying to explain this fact, let us consider the transitivity of cognate object constructions with typical unergative verbs.

The examples in (53) below show various cognate object constructions with the unergative verb smile. The grammatical expressions in (53) are (b), (d), (e), and (g), all of which have such modifiers as an adjective or a relative clause. On the other hand, the cognate objects in (53a)(53c) and (53f) are unacceptable for lack of sufficient modification.

\[\text{13 But some researchers, e.g. Larson (1988), regard it as an unergative verb.}\]
(53)  a. *Shirley smiled a smile.
b. Shirley smiled \(|/a/\, \text{her}|\) silly smile.
c. *Shirley smiled the smile.
d. All the contestants smiled Marilyn Monroe's smile.
e. My father smiled the biggest smile I ever saw.
f. *The actress smiled smiles for the photographer.

(Rice (1988: 209))
g. The actress smiled various smiles for the photographer.

(ibid.)

Cognate object constructions are considered to be not high in transitivity, because they deviate from the prototype of transitivity shown in Figure 3 in regard to many factors. However, transitivity is a matter of degree, so the degree seems to vary among the cognate object constructions. Following Rice (1987a), let us use passivizability as a test in order to indicate the degree to which sentences deviate from some transitive prototype or approximate it.

Let us compare the acceptable active sentences in (53) with their passive counterparts given in (54):

(54)  a. *|A/Her| silly smile was smiled by Shirley. (cf. (53b))
b. Marilyn Monroe's smile was smiled perfectly by all the contestants. (cf. (53d))
c. The biggest smile I ever saw was smiled by my father. (cf. (53e))
d. Various smiles were smiled for the photographer by the actress. (cf. (53g))

The sentences (54b-d) are acceptable, and only (54a) is unacceptable. From the results in (54), we can say that the cognate object constructions (53d)(53e) and (53g) are higher in transitivity than (53b). The reason for the difference in transitivity between (53b) on one hand and (53d)(53e)(53g) on the other hand concerns their construal. The cognate object a silly smile in (53b) is construed as an event, but each cognate object in (53d)(53e) and (53g) is construed as a type of smile and a referential entity. Thus the former is represented as in Figure 7, although the latter is represented as in Figure 8. The latter's participant-like nature affects its transitive construal. Thus (53d)(53e) and (53g) engender a more transitive construal than (53b).

In the case of predicates like dance or sing, the verbs can take cognate objects which designate more participant-like entities. Thus, even if the cognate objects lack enough modification, cognate object
constructions containing them are acceptable and passivizable besides:

(55) a. Alice danced a dance. (=36a))
    b. A dance was danced by Alice. (cf. (54a))

(56) a. John sang a song. (=36b))
    b. A song was sung by John.

This shows that cognate object constructions with verbs such as *dance and *sing are higher in transitivity than those with the verb *smile.

On the other hand, cognate object constructions with *die are never passivizable irrespective of their objects' modification, in contrast with verbs such as *laugh and *smile.

(57) a. *A natural death was died by my grandfather. (=52a))
    b. *A soldier's death was died by your son. (=52b))
    c. *The death of a saint was died by Susan. (cf. (58))

(58) a. The laugh of a very disturbed man was laughed by Neil.
    b. The smile of a woman who knows what she wants was smiled by the actress. (Rice (1987a: 214))

The infelicity of the corresponding passives is related to the fact that the subjects are not Agents. The lack of Agency implies that the verb *die does not feature the kind of a transmission of energy that is portrayed in Figure 7 or Figure 8. Cognate object constructions are not essentially high in transitivity, but those with *die are quite low, because they further lack one crucial factor concerned with transitivity, i.e. the transmission of energy. This explanation can be applied to the unergative verb *sleep. As shown in (59), cognate object constructions with *sleep are not passivizable.

(59) a. Tom slept the sleep of a baby.
    b. *The sleep of a baby was slept by Tom. (cf. (57c)(58))

To sum up, the special status of the verb *die is not sufficiently accounted for, but by showing at least that the infelicity of passivization is due to the lack of Agency, we provide some motivation for regarding the verb *die in the cognate object construction not as an unaccusative verb but as a peripheral unergative. Moreover, concerning transitivity in cognate object constructions, we show that the degree of their transitivity varies according to the verb used and the modification added to the cognate object, although their transitivity is not high.

5. Conclusion

In this paper, we have considered English cognate object construc-
tions from the perspective of cognitive grammar. By employing the basic notions in cognitive grammar and the two cognitive models depicted in Figure 7 and Figure 8, we accounted for the problems which previous analyses cannot handle: i.e. the parallelism of construal between an adjective modifying a cognate object and an adverb modifying a verb, the empirical fact that some objects which are not 'cognate' to the verb are acceptable, and the difference in transitivity among cognate object constructions. Moreover, our cognitive analysis tried to capture the necessity of modification for cognate objects, transitive construal of cognate object constructions, and some complex issues surrounding cognate object constructions.

In this paper, we did not deal with the broader range of cognate objects and the relation to similar constructions such as have a laugh and make a smile. I look forward to extending the techniques employed in this analysis to these residual issues.

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