BETWEEN CONVENTIONALITY AND COMPOSITIONALITY: THE RESULTATIVE CONSTRUCTION DECONSTRUCTED?

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1. Introduction

Since the “discovery” of the resultative construction in the seminal paper by Simpson (1983), the past two decades have seen an abundance of studies on both descriptive and theoretical aspects of the construction from such diverse and often competing frameworks as Generative Syntax, Lexical Semantics, the Event Structural approach, and Construction Grammar. Nevertheless, it seems fair to say that we still do not have the ultimate answers to resultative mysteries, including questions on the nature of the restriction on the choice of resultative phrases as well as on the linguistic mechanisms responsible for producing various types of resultatives.

The book under review, *A Constructional Approach to Resultatives* by Hans C. Boas, should not be taken as just another contribution to the study of resultatives: It may be described, to my knowledge, as the most comprehensive examination of the construction. What singles out Boas’s study from preceding studies is its incomparable coverage of

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data, which comprises over 6000 resultative sentence tokens collected from the British National Corpus (BNC) as well as other databases, including major theoretical studies of resultatives. Based on careful scrutiny and statistical consideration of the corpus data, Boas puts forth his constructional analysis of the resultative construction from the perspective of a usage-based language model (Langacker (1991, 2000)) equipped with frame semantics (Fillmore and Atkins (1992), *inter alia*). As we read through the pages, the book turns out to be one of the most radical and thus thought-provoking attempts at elucidating the recalcitrant nature of the licensing and production mechanisms of resultative constructions: in essence Boas's ideas amount to saying that there is no such thing as the general "resultative construction"; instead, the so-called constructional meanings of resultatives (including lexical choice of result phrases) are mostly, if not all, conventionalized in the linguistic representations of individual verbs as their lexical specification.

In the following I will first present an outline of Boas's constructional analysis of the resultative construction and then raise several questions concerning his approach in general. In the second half of the article I will offer an alternative perspective on the construction, aiming to demonstrate that more emphasis on compositional/productive aspects should be given in order to fully appreciate what enables us to have a good command of resultatives.

The article is organized as follows: after a brief outline of Boas's book in Section 2, in Section 3 I illustrate how his specific analyses account for resultatives. Next, in Section 4, I raise several questions concerning, in the main, his general methodology. Section 5 presents an alternative view of resultatives in pursuit of possible generalizations of the construction. Lastly, concluding remarks are given in Section 6.

2. Outline of the Book

A Constructional Approach to Resultatives is organized as follows. Chapter 1 provides a brief introduction of the book's contents, according to which the author's aim and scope in this study is "to arrive at an analysis capable of capturing the syntactic and semantic distribution of resultative constructions in English" by developing "a constructional analysis which regards the multiple conventionalized senses associated with verbs as central to accounting for the full range of English resulta-

tives" (p. 1).

The rest of the book is largely divided into two parts: the first half, from Chapter 2 to Chapter 4, offers a lucid exposition of the major approaches in the past along with detailed critiques, while the second half, from Chapter 5 to Chapter 8, presents his constructional analysis of resultatives as well as an explicit manifestation of his stance influenced by usage-based grammar and frame semantics.

In Chapter 2, the author reviews two types of syntactic approaches to the constructions, namely, small clause analysis and predication-theoretic analysis. Chapter 3 offers a critical survey of event structure-based analyses of resultatives in both syntactic and lexical semantic approaches (Tenny (1994), Pustejovsky (1995), Rappaport Hovav and Levin (1998, 2001), *inter alia*), which are broadly conceived as deriving from the generative tradition. Criticizing these analyses, Boas concludes that any approach that is solely dependent on syntactic or aspectual notions such as event structure will fail to fully explain the intricacies of licensing postverbal elements (object NPs and resultative phrases).

Chapter 4 reviews Goldberg's (1995) analysis, which puts a large emphasis on the role of argument structure constructions in accounting for the distribution of resultatives. Despite showing much sympathy toward, and high evaluation of, Goldberg's Construction Grammar approach, the author departs from her analysis by critically suggesting that the explanatory burden should be shifted from the level of abstract constructional semantics to the level of more concrete verbal semantics, based on his observation that "the lexical entries of the verbs postulated by Goldberg often do not distinguish between individual conventionalized senses" (p. 20).

The main thread of his criticism of previous studies, whether syntactic, lexico-semantic, or constructional, comes down to the view that any proposed rules or generalizations that have so far been claimed to explain resultatives are not able to properly characterize the "full range of resultative data" since it seems almost impossible to define the appropriate domain of application for these rules or generalizations. This is because the actual uses of resultatives are so diverse and unpredictable that no single rule or condition can correctly constrain their occurrences.

Moreover, Boas points out one crucial methodological flaw shared by almost all the previous studies on resultatives:

... I noticed that most accounts were based on a somewhat small set

of typically thirty or less constructed example sentences containing the same verbs. Even notable exceptions such as Goldberg (1995) and Rappaport Hovav and Levin (2001) who used corpus examples to support their analyses used limited sets of (corpus) data that did not always take into consideration the full range of argument patterns found with particular verbs (Boas 2003: 11).

Thus, his criticism that, in any of the existing analyses of resultatives, the exact domain of general rule application is not properly characterized so as to explain all the distributional facts without exception anticipates one of his central claims that a serious account of resultatives demands a comprehensive coverage of their actual occurrences, eventually yielding a complete description of resultative sentences.

Boas then offers his fundamental hypothesis that “resultatives are to a large degree lexically specified which explains the difficulty that top-down approaches face when trying to account for the distribution of resultative constructions” (p. 117). Thus, he proposes shifting the explanatory burden from the level of abstract constructional semantics, or for that matter, any general rules or constraints proposed in syntactic and lexical semantic approaches, to the level of concrete verbal semantics in order to be able to account for the distribution of resultative constructions that may occur with a given verb.

Two of his major background assumptions are set forth in Chapters 5 and 6. In Chapter 5, the basic ideas of the usage-based approach to the study of language (Langacker (2000)) are presented. The cornerstone of the approach lies in the general recognition that “the meaning and forms of both words and utterances are to a large degree conventionalized within a given speech community. Thus the analysis of language must focus not only on the structural relations and interdependencies between words in a sentence but also on the way in which words are used in different contexts” (p. 124).

Based on extensive investigation of distributional data in the corpus, then, the author observes that individual verbs lexically subcategorize for specific semantic and syntactic types of resultative phrase, which leads to his central claim that “the distribution of resultative constructions is to a large degree conventionalized in terms of collocational dependencies” (p. 158).

Chapter 6 introduces the basics of frame semantics (Fillmore and Atkins (1992)) as indispensable tools for Boas’s semantic description of the resultative expressions in which he intends each sense of a verb to

be represented by its own rich idiosyncratic packet of semantic information including general world knowledge (encyclopedic knowledge). This approach declares its departure from other traditional semantic theories in that “it refers to a common background of knowledge (a ‘frame’) against which the meaning of each word is interpreted” (p. 164).¹

In this connection, two types of interrelated background information are distinguished: (1) “on-stage information,” which, since it is part of world knowledge, is linguistically immediately relevant information that needs to be overtly realized, and (2) “off-stage information,” which may only be realized linguistically given the proper contextual conditions. The former includes information about the prototypical event participants of an event-frame while the latter is the kind of information that is subconsciously associated with a word by the speech community.

For example, when the verb *run* is used in its prototypical sense, it is associated with a prototypical scene that includes “on-stage” information about (1) a runner, and (2) an energetic movement from point A to point B, while its “off-stage” information may consist of such knowledge as “running necessitates the use of legs and feet, westerners typically wear shoes to run, and energy is expended when running (p. 173).” The latter kind of information becomes relevant in interpreting fake object resultatives such as the following:

- (1) a. Carol ran her legs sore.
- b. Carol ran her shoes threadbare.
- c. Carol ran the pavement thin.

With these theoretical foundations laid down, Boas offers his constructional analysis of resultatives. Chapter 7 highlights the main results of the book, bringing forward the details of Boas’s lexical-constructional approach to resultative constructions and showing how different types of resultatives are licensed in his usage-based, frame semantic framework, respectively. The specifics of his analysis will be reviewed

¹ Throughout his study, the term “event-frame” is adopted by the author instead of “frame” in order to refer explicitly to the necessary background information, including event participants, force-dynamic relations holding between event participants (Talmy (1988)), temporal information, world knowledge, as well as collocational specifications with respect to the types of resultative phrases (categories and often specific lexical expressions) that may occur within a given sense of a verb.

with some illustrations in the next section.

In Chapter 8, Boas explores further by carrying out a contrastive study of German and English resultatives. The final chapter, Chapter 9, contains a brief summary of the proposals developed in the book and some prospects for future study. The book also includes three highly informative appendices, namely "Appendix A: Resultative Phrases," "Appendix B: Verbs," and "Appendix C: English and German Resultatives." Appendices A and B are the results of his exhaustive corpus search of the target resultative phrases (37 APs and 14 PPs).

3. Resultatives Explained Within Usage-Based Analysis

In this section I summarize the main results of Boas's proposals, as demonstrated in Chapters 5 to 7, and show how he explains resultatives within his usage-based frame semantic theory.

3.1. Conventionalized and Nonconventionalized Resultatives

The two types of resultatives are essentially differentiated according to whether the "necessary information for licensing" is conventionalized in the lexical representation of each verb ("conventionalized resultatives") or not ("nonconventionalized resultatives"). The former are further classified into three subtypes based on their communicative functions: (1) "emphasizing the endpoint of an event," (2) "reducing the vagueness in interpretation associated with the endpoint of an event," and (3) "perspectivizing a different event participant than the prototypical patient." The latter (=nonconventionalized resultatives) are also characterized from a communicative point of view as "perspectivizing a participant outside of the conventionalized event-scene." Thus, each class of resultatives is argued to portray an event of change from a specifically different communicative function point of view.

3.2. Conventionalized Resultatives: Three Subclasses

Boas argues that the majority of resultatives are lexically conventionalized in that the possible choice of result phrases is specified in the semantic representation of individual verbs. In other words, the licensing of result phrases (as well as the object arguments) is a matter of convention stored in the verb semantics. The three subclasses of conventionalized resultatives are introduced, each with its specific communicative function. First, examples and the semantic representation of

“emphasizing the outcome of an event” type are illustrated below:

- (2) emphasizing the outcome of an event (p. 151)
 - a. She shattered the vase to pieces.
 - b. They melted the butter to liquid.
 - c. Jill suffocated Kim to death.
 - d. The fridge froze the water solid.
- (3) Event-based frame semantic representation of the prototypical sense of *shatter* (p. 217)

GOAL
(Ag) Pt (p3)

Ag: Entity exerting force
Pt: Object that loses its structural integrity
p3: SYN: PP

SEM: denoting the end result state of physical disintegration
(The box represents the event-frame including the on-stage event-participants. The semantic specifications for the event participants are given under the event-frames. ‘Ag’ (=Agent/Antagonist) and ‘Pt’ (= Patient/Agonist) are adapted from the theory of force dynamics (Talmy (1988)), representing two opposed entities. The parentheses surrounding ‘Ag’ and ‘p3’ indicate optionality of these participants in the representation).

In this type of resultative, “verbs are conventionally associated with a specific result state and, if no other conflicting information is given, will be interpreted to denote exactly that kind of result state ... [A]lthough the resultative is motivated by the speaker’s intention to highlight the outcome of an event, it is restricted by the lexical specifications of individual verbs (i.e. their collocational restrictions) that may be used to describe events (p. 151).” The relation linking the semantic representation to syntactic expressions is shown below (p. 218):

- (4) Linking of event-participants to the syntactic level

(The dotted line indicates linking the relation between each event partic-

ipant and the syntactic entities.)

It is stipulated that an event-frame of this type does not allow recruitment of off-stage information in order to realize event participants other than the prototypical agent and the prototypical patient of an event.

The second subclass is “reducing the vagueness in interpretation associated with the endpoint of an event” type. Examples and the semantic representation are as follows:

- (5) a. Jack painted the house red.
 b. Flora washed her sweater clean.
 c. Dave hammered the metal flat.
 d. Jackie cut the bread to pieces.
 e. Tom broke the vase to pieces.
 f. John strangled Kim to death. (pp. 152–153)
- (6) Simplified event-frame of the prototypical sense of *paint* including world knowledge ‘W’ (p. 191):

GOAL
(Ag) (W p2) Pt (p3)

Ag: object covering a surface with paint

Pt: surface or object exhibiting a surface

p3: AP or NP denoting a color or a property associated with the prototypical intended end result of applying paint to a surface

(The diacritic “p” stands for property (or location) representing the semantic and/or syntactic specifications for the resultative phrase denoting the end result state of each event participant. “W” stands for world knowledge. “The parentheses surrounding both ‘W’ and ‘p2’ indicate that whenever a non-prototypical event-participant is recruited from world knowledge, there has to be some information about the end result state of that event-participant” (p. 190)).

This type minimally differs from the first type in that although it is possible to infer from the information conveyed by the verb that the postverbal NP underwent some change of state, “the exact outcome of the change of state is left vague (p. 152).” Thus, the resultative phrase “serves to reduce the vagueness in interpretation associated with the verb (p. 152).” It is also possible to recruit off-stage information (conventionally expected results), thus allowing a broader range of result

phrases. The alternating linking possibilities are illustrated below (p. 192):

- (7) Linking to syntax from the event-frame of prototypical *paint*

The third class is characterized as “perspectivizing a different event participant than the prototypical patient,” with examples below:

- (8) a. Erin painted the brush to pieces.
 b. Pam ran her feet sore.
 c. Eric swept the broom to pieces.
 d. Troy ran the pavement thin.
 e. Flora talked herself hoarse. (p. 154)

In these resultatives, both the object and the result phrase “are licensed by the verbs, thereby allowing the speaker to express a different perspective of an event than what is conventionally associated with the respective verbs. The speaker takes this specific perspective of the event because she wants to convey an unconventional viewpoint of the event’s outcome” (p. 154).

In (8a), for example, although the same event frame in (6) suffices to represent the necessary specification, in this case world knowledge “(W p2)” as represented as off-stage information is recruited by perspective shift (from the surface of a painted object to the instrument of painting).

The examples in (8b, d, e) are so-called fake object resultatives. The author argues that a reflexive object “serves to portray an event from an unusual perspective, namely from a perspective that describes the agents’ attitudes and emotions towards their movement” (p. 242). Consequently, the fake reflexive is licensed by world knowledge about events contained in the ‘W’ off-stage information of the event-frame for a specific verb. In other words, it is assumed that when an event is

conceptualized from a non-prototypical perspective then—based on world knowledge—it is possible to recruit information about the fact that agents of activities are patients as well as agents.

3.3. Nonconventionalized Resultatives: Creative Use

Let us move to the last class of resultatives, namely nonconventionalized resultatives, which are not “conventionalized” in the sense of the three classes just reviewed above.

From considerations of communicative function, this class is characterized as “perspectivizing a participant outside of the conventionalized event-scene.” “[T]he resultative is used to report an unconventional scenario that falls outside of the class of event perspectives conventionally described by a single verb (p. 157).” Thus, the events described in this type of resultative are not interpretable with conventionalized knowledge of the lexical information of verbs. That is why it is often referred to as a creative or novel verbal usage. In the case of (9), “the meaning of *sneeze* is creatively expanded to highlight a specific perspective of the event.”

(9) Stefan sneezed the napkin off the table. (p. 155)

To demonstrate how the creative use of resultatives is made possible, Boas makes recourse to the notion of analogy. Specifically, the *sneeze* case (*He sneezed the napkin off the table*) is argued to be derived by analogy with a resultative use of the verb *blow* (*He blew the napkin off the table*). Let us briefly examine his account below.

Since the target verb *sneeze* itself does not have an event-frame that corresponds to the resultative syntactic form ([NP V NP AP]), it is necessary to identify a source verb that can serve as a basis of analogical extension, that is, a basic verb that has a resultative event-frame. Here the source verb is identified as the verb *blow*, with which a resultative event-frame is already conventionalized as part of its lexical specification (*He blew the napkin off the table*). In order to be associated with the event-frame of the source verb (*blow*), the event-frame of the target verb (*sneeze*) has to overlap in its frame semantic information with the frame semantic information contained in the event-frame of the source verb (*blow*). In this case, the two verbs in question are argued to share a semantic property where they both express some activities of air emission, with the verb *blow* being regarded as the most basic verb in the relevant verb class and the verb *sneeze* as a more specific instance of the same type of activities.

It is noted that a verb which can serve as a source verb is generally identified as a more prototypical instantiation of a given class of verbs, while a target verb can be regarded as a more concrete instantiation of the same class. It is also suggested that the resultative use of *blow* itself is an intermediate model that is in turn licensed by more basic verbs (*push, pull, take, move, make, put*) in a multiple inheritance hierarchy of constructional inheritance relations (p. 271, footnote 67), although specifics are left open.

In addition to the requirement of sufficient overlap in event-frame information between a source verb and a target verb, it is also pointed out that missing frame-semantic information has to be provided by context, for example, through visual input. Boas suggests that the relevant “discourse information includes the force dynamic relations consisting of a patient participant that changes location as a result of air emission by the agent” (p. 270). That is, in order to establish an analogy between the two verbs in question, the “force-dynamic base” must be identical between a source verb and a target verb in their respective usages.

The overall sketch of the above licensing processes and the shared aspects of the relevant scene are graphically represented (p. 268):

- (10) Analogical association of a verb’s target event-frame with the event-frame of a source verb

- (11) a. Tom blew the napkin off the table.
b. Tom sneezed the napkin off the table.

The essence of his analysis of nonconventionalized resultatives can be summarized in his own words: “a target event-frame (e.g. *sneeze*) is associated with a new syntactic frame that is capable of overtly realizing the non-prototypical event participant as well as its result state. This analogical process, however, is only possible if the target event-frame (e.g. *sneeze*) shows a certain semantic overlap in conventionalized frame

semantic information with a source event-frame that is conventionally associated with the given syntactic frame (e.g. *blow*)” (pp. 316–317).

3.4. Different Uses, Different Senses: Bringing Constructions Back to Verb Semantics

One of the unique steps Boas has taken in his four-way classification of resultatives is to set apart the nonconventionalized resultatives from the rest of the so-called fake object resultatives. The hypothesis behind this analysis is that the majority of fake object resultatives are conventionalized in the lexical specification of individual verbs appearing in the construction, whereas truly novel expressions of resultatives are only produced by strict analogy with more prototypical existing resultatives that have been conventionalized.

By separating nonconventionalized resultatives from conventionalized fake object resultatives, Boas argues, it becomes possible to avoid “the problem of positing implausible verb senses.” Goldberg (1995) originally posed this problem to argue against simple Lexicalism according to which, in order to accommodate such novel examples as *He sneezed the napkin off the table*, intuitively implausible verb senses (e.g. *sneeze* as “to move something by sneezing at it”) have to be lexically specified, and to argue for the necessity to adopt a constructional view of verb polysemy.

Contrary to her view, Boas contends that different senses of a verb are represented as distinct event-frames, which amounts to saying that different uses of a verb do not necessarily share a “basic meaning.” Thus, at this point, he departs from Goldberg’s (1995) version of Construction Grammar, in which abstract constructional meanings are independently postulated from verb meanings. Boas argues that “each verb has its own lexical semantic polysemy network which contains information about the range of possible constructions that the verb may occur in ... the different meaning patterns that Goldberg describes as constructional polysemy fall out naturally from the rich lexical-semantic information associated with individual verbs rather than being attributed to distinct but related constructions” (p. 98).

Put simply, the notion of abstract constructions, which Goldberg once abstracted away from the semantics of verbs, is now brought back into enriched frame semantic representation of verbs as conventionalized knowledge specified with each sense.

4. Critical Assessment of Boas's Approach

One characteristic of Boas's criticism of previous analyses, regardless of theoretical framework, has been to point out their failure in explaining the full distributional data of resultatives by giving a few counterexamples to the proposed rules or constraints. Although this is admittedly a routine procedure within scientific argumentation to refute an analysis by citing cases that are not readily explicable, his argumentation strikes one occasionally as too simple, perhaps even counterproductive, especially to a mind looking for generalizations behind complex linguistic phenomena.

In Chapter 5 of the book, for example, Boas simply discards Wechsler's (2001) "homomorphism" analysis of resultatives through citing several apparent counterexamples containing "minimal endpoint adjectives (de facto open-scale adjectives)," which are not supposed to meet the homomorphism requirement. Traditionally, adjectives such as *damp*, *dirty*, and *wet* have been regarded as unacceptable in the resultative construction.

(12) He wiped it clean/dry/smooth/*damp/*dirty/*stained/*wet.

(Green (1972))

Boas, however, claims that these adjectives are actually possible in resultatives by citing data from his corpus survey (pp. 136–137; contexts are omitted for reasons of space and exposition):

- (13) a. ... {blot/wring/swipe} it damp
- b. ... {mark/color} it dirty
- c. ... wipe it wet
- d. ... lick them wet

He criticizes Wechsler's proposal for its incompleteness, stating that "while [it] lists the necessary conditions, it does not list all of the sufficient conditions involved in licensing the full distribution of resultatives" (p. 136).²

² Although I am not in full agreement with Wechsler's analysis, it seems possible to sidestep Boas's criticism of these cases. I would argue that these resultatives are not true ones, or at least peripheral ones since they cannot feed typical resultative paraphrases in the form "the verb's activity was performed until it became *damp/dirty/wet*." Instead, these result phrases could be analyzed as adverbial modifiers ("spurious resultatives" (Washio (1997); see also Rapoport (1999))), meaning that "someone performed in such a way that it became *damp/dirty/wet*."

Apparently his claim is that if one cannot properly describe all the possible data available (irrespective of their qualities), a generalization should be abandoned. Although it is hard to deny this precept as a general guideline, I wonder, at a practical level, how we can set about establishing any significant generalization in any linguistic analysis without allowing some leeway for healthy abstraction and idealization.

In stark contrast to his abstinence in pursuit of abstract theorization, Boas's treatment of event frame description tends to show an occasional lack of constraint in adding stipulations. It could generally be the case that usage-based analyses are flexible in responding to simple counterexamples by adapting them with hindsight into the lexical specifications of the speaker's mind, but this seems rather unconstrained as a theoretical explanation. For example, in his examination of verbs of motion that disallow perspective shift, it is argued that lack of world knowledge in the event-frame of these verbs explains why they do not occur with a fake reflexive object.

- (16) a. *Chris entered himself into the room.
 b. *Ed returned himself to the bar.
 c. *Pat zigzagged herself across the street.
 d. *Eric roamed himself downtown. (p. 245)
- (17) Event-based frame semantic information representing the verbs *enter*, *return*, *zigzag*, and *roam* (p. 245)
 Ag: enterer, returner, zigzagger, roamer
 p1: directional PP

GOAL
Ag (p1)

- (18) Linking from the event-frame for the prototypical sense of *run* (including on-stage and off-stage frame semantic information) (p. 247):
 Ag: animate object moving legs quickly
 p1: directional PP
 W: world knowledge containing knowledge about non-prototypical event-participants of running events
 p2: change in state or location of event-participant from 'W'

As shown above, however, whether a verb (or verb sense) can have access to world knowledge as off-stage information is only stipulated in each verb's event-frame. Thus, in this framework, it could in practice be a matter of lexical specification whether a verb can appear with or without a reflexive object in resultative context.

However, the occurrence of reflexive objects with some unergative verbs does seem to be constrained by certain general semantic notions: when the verbal event describes a change of state a reflexive object is required; when it describes a change of location (or spatial orientation) a reflexive object is not usually available.³

- (19) a. John walked (*himself) tired.
 b. John ran *(himself) into the room.
 c. She cried (*herself) to sleep.
 d. She cried *(herself) to her mother.

Although a full explanation for the distribution of reflexive objects in resultatives is beyond the scope of this paper, it seems rather apparent that some mechanism behind the above contrast should utilize the general semantic/conceptual dichotomy of change of state and change of location, something which is not properly captured in Boas's analysis.

Note also that formation of reflexive resultatives with unergative verbs enjoys productivity to a greater degree as shown in (20). This seems to be a fact that is at odds with Boas's treatment of reflexive resultatives (The following examples are taken from a Google search.).

- (20) a. So he coughed himself tired, and sunk to slumber.

³ See Rappaport Hovav and Levin (2001) and Goldberg and Jackendoff (2004) for the alternating possibility of reflexive objects with unergative verbs. The majority of the cases discussed show that the relevant changes are locational (spatial) and not of a state.

- b. Everytime I go there, I have to explain myself hoarse what's it's all about.
- c. I have ... googled myself blind, but have not yet found a solution.

Although Boas could in principle specify the recruitment of world knowledge about those non-prototypical event-participants (=reflexive objects) in each verb's lexical information, it does not seem to capture the productivity of these expressions.

In relation to the productivity issue, allow me to add one more skeptical thought on his treatment of creative resultatives. As we have seen in 3.3, Boas presents an analysis of the *sneeze* case in which possession of very specific knowledge about a resultative event-frame associated with the source verb *blow* is required for proper understanding of the resultative use of *sneeze*. However, this is rather counterintuitive when we consider the fact that English speakers can normally understand with no apparent difficulty the resultative *sneeze* at their first encounter. This could be taken to suggest the other way: they have a more general mechanism for the resultative interpretation at hand. As the author himself notes, "although resultatives are transparent in meaning and pose no problem for decoding, they do pose a problem for encoding" (p. 141). If this is indeed the case, demanding from the hearers the burden of extremely specific and uniform lexical knowledge for each verb seems to be misdirected.

So far I have raised several questionable points in the author's approach. Due to his methodological adherence to enriched lexical specification in individual verbs at the expense of seeking possible generalizations, his usage-based enterprise gives the impression that it is somehow pointless and ineffectual to directly tackle the specifics of his analyses observationally. Recognizing also that it is beyond the scope of the present article to discuss critically the theoretical validity of a usage-based view of language in a full-fledged way, I would like to take a detour and develop below an alternative view of resultatives with respect to some more general aspects of the construction that are not fully appreciated in Boas's study. I hope to demonstrate that an attempt to draw possible generalizations about resultatives is not necessarily doomed to failure but can turn out to be a profitable research strategy.

5. An Alternative View of Resultatives

In this section, I venture an alternative, or rather counterbalancing, view of resultatives, focusing mainly on two issues on which Boas's analysis does not seem to have much to offer: (1) why resultative predicates must be "bounded," and (2) how and why resultatives are different from *make*-causatives. Both concern the (semi-)productivity of the construction.

5.1. Boundedness in Resultatives

A number of studies on resultatives have concerned themselves in one way or the other with versions of boundedness observed in the construction (Goldberg (1995), Pustejovsky (1995), Tenny (1994), Vanden Wyngaerd (2001), Wechsler (1997, 2001), among many others). In view of this current state of the research, though, it is rather strange to find that Boas has very little to say about this property of resultatives.^{4, 5}

In this section, I would like to show that it is certainly profitable to establish some generalizations on boundedness in resultatives. Specifically, I argue that the following constraint is operative in the formation of the resultative construction.

- (21) The Resultative Constraint: the resultative construction necessarily involves a transition on a unique scale/path that contains a boundary.

⁴ In fact, throughout his book, there is only one mention of closed-scale adjectives (p. 135): his criticism of Wechsler's homomorphism analysis. We can also find in his book only sporadic mentions of event telicity, with no substantial discussion.

⁵ Goldberg and Jackendoff (2004: 542–543) cast some doubt on the view that resultatives are always telic by giving the following examples of *A-er* and *A-er* and *ever A-er* constructions.

- (i) a. For hours, Bill heated the mixture hotter and hotter.
 b. For hours, Bill hammered the metal ever flatter.
 c. For years, Penelope wove the shawl longer and longer.

Apart from the fact that the two authors themselves admit that these expressions might possibly be treated as special constructions, thus not representing the genuine tendency of resultatives (Goldberg and Jackendoff (2004: p. 542, fn. 14)), telicity *per se* is a complex property that is also influenced by the count/mass distinction of object nouns (e.g. *He hammered metals flat for two hours.*). Therefore later in section 5.2, I will also suggest that boundedness might not be a prerequisite for resultatives of change of location.

A boundary is defined based on the notion of complementary opposition, originally a semantic relation that holds between two properties expressed by adjectives in opposition. From a more general perspective it may be conventionally or contextually interpreted as a critical point that differentiates two distinct states/locations of an entity predicated.

Uniqueness of scale/path reflects the existence of a boundary, i.e., a scale or path can be unique if it contains a boundary that leads to a complementary interpretation. The intuition behind this constraint is that at the core of the resultative description there is a transition that involves two distinct states, an initial state and a final state, which are separated by a boundary in the scalar structure.

Let us first clarify the notion of complementary opposition through comparison with two other types of opposition. Adapting insights developed in previous studies on antonyms (Cruse (1980, 1986, 2000), Gnutsmann (1975), Lyons (1968); the notion of scale in adjectives is originally attributed to Sapir (1944)), we define three types of adjectives in opposition relations: “complementary opposites,” “non-complementary opposites” and “false opposites,” which are schematically illustrated below (terms such as “non-complementary opposites” and “false opposites” have been deliberately coined by the present author for expository purposes and are not found in the original studies):

(22) Three Types of Opposites

- a. complementary opposites: {dry/wet, sober/drunk, smooth/rough, straight/bent, dead/alive, safe/dangerous}

clean
dirty

$\langle + \text{-----} \rangle$

(/+ indicates an endpoint of a scale.)
- b. non-complementary opposites: {deep/shallow, long/short, fast/slow, wide/narrow, heavy/light, large/small, thick/thin}

deep
shallow

$\langle \text{-----} \text{=====} \text{-----} \rangle$

(===/ indicates a mid-interval on a scale.)
- c. false opposites: {good/bad, easy/difficult, happy/sad, beautiful/ugly, kind/cruel, clever/dull, polite/rude, intelligent/stupid}

happy
sad

$\langle \text{-----} \text{-----} \rangle$

Complementary opposition is characterized as a property in which

“some definite conceptual area is partitioned by the terms of the opposition into two mutually exclusive compartments, with no possibility of ‘sitting on the fence’” (Cruse (2000: 168)). Accordingly, complementaries have no mid-interval on the scale defined by a pair of opposites, while the other two types either allow some mid-interval (non-complementary opposites), or do not actually form a continuous scale with two opposites in the strict sense (false opposites). One basic test for identifying complementaries can be stated as follows (Cruse (2000: 168)): it is not acceptable to say X is neither A nor B but in-between (where A and B are opposites). Let us take the pair of *clean/dirty* as an example: if X is not *clean*, it is *dirty*; if X is not *dirty*, it is *clean*. Nothing can be neither *clean* nor *dirty*, but rather in-between.⁶ I will argue below that this type of opposition constitutes the core schema of resultative interpretation.

Non-complementary opposites include pairs such as *deep/shallow*, which do not pass the complementary test. Instead, scales on which they are located can typically have a mid-interval. For example, a river can be neither *deep* nor *shallow* but *in-between*. Adjectives of this type generally describe “degrees of some objective, unidimensional physical property, prototypically one which can be measured in conventional units such as centimeters, kilograms, miles per hour, etc” (Cruse (2000: 170)), which seems to follow from the fact that, despite their lack of complementarity, they still constitute a single scale (with a mid-interval).⁷ The existence of a mid-interval potentially leaves room for contextual interpretation, which inevitably invokes subjective evaluation of a given situation by the speaker (conceptualizer).

False opposites generally lack conventional or objective measures to gauge their degrees and typically concern subjective evaluation, often

⁶ The pair of adjectives *dead/alive* differs from others in this type in that neither of the pair normally allows a scalar interpretation. Nevertheless the two are located on a single scale in a complementary way as a test shows: if X is not *dead*, it is *alive*; if X is not *alive*, it is *dead*.

⁷ Interestingly, this type of adjective can be often used adverbially without *-ly* suffixation (as “flat adverbs”). I suggest that the adverbial uses of these adjectives can be integrated into one peripheral type of resultative construction, namely “spurious resultatives” (Washio (1997)) or “false resultatives” (Rapoport (1999)), one of their characteristics being lack of strict boundedness in their result phrases. See Washio (1997) for some characteristics of these adverbial resultatives.

with positive/negative polarity. This type is differentiated from the other two types in that two adjectives of a pair do not form a single scale; unlike complementary opposites and non-complementary opposites, each member of a false opposite is defined independently on its own scale (although two scales might be conceptually associated in our mind). For example, the statement that he is neither *happy* nor *sad* does not necessarily imply that he is somewhere on a single scale between “happiness” and “sadness”; instead, he could be *angry*, *serious*, *embarrassed*, etc.

With this background in mind, I propose that formation of a scale defined on the notion of complementary opposition plays the core role in felicitous resultative interpretation.

First, consider normal resultatives.⁸ Consider the following adjectives that are frequently encountered in normal resultatives (cf. Boas (2003), Goldberg (1995), Goldberg and Jackendoff (2004), Wechsler (2001)):

(23) awake, clean, dead, dry, flat, smooth, straight

These adjectives belong to the class of complementary opposites: each of them has a lexical opposite with which it constitutes a unique scale of complementary opposition: *Awake* can be paired with *asleep*, *clean* with *dirty*, *dry* with *wet*, and so on.

It has already been pointed out in the literature that adjectives in resultatives generally have a bounded reading, that is, they must be closed-scale (nongradable) adjectives that denote an endpoint of a scale (see Goldberg (1995), Vanden Wyngaerd (2001), Wechsler (2001) *inter alia*).⁹

It must be noted that normally only one member of a complementary opposition pair denoting an endpoint of a scale is allowed in resultatives, while the other member covering all the values left on the scale

⁸ For expository purposes, I adopt the major distinction between normal (selected) resultatives and fake (unselected) object resultatives: from the perspective of verbal selection, the former involve selected objects and the latter involve unselected objects. For a similar distinction see Wechsler (1997), and for a related but slightly different one see Washio (1997); see also Goldberg and Jackendoff (2004).

⁹ As a caveat, note that it is often the case that tests for gradability do not always yield clear-cut results, and the adjectives in (23) could be used as gradables in different contexts (e.g. *The table became very clean.*). The point here, however, is whether these adjectives can be readily construed as nongradables when appropriate contexts are given, namely the resultative context. Thus we should consider nongradability (= closed scaledness) as a potential property of these adjectives.

is normally excluded. This is not surprising because complementary opposition involves by definition a boundary which demarcates complementarily two components on a scale, and for a scale to be uniquely identified its boundary must be named by either of the two adjectives as a point of X-ness (which equals zero Y-ness). Naturally, an adjective naming a boundary has to be interpreted as nongradable (closed-scale), while the other one can be interpreted as gradable. Therefore, the adjectives in (23) are all nongradables (in the resultative context), whereas their counterparts in opposition normally assume gradable readings, and thus are excluded from the normal resultatives.

- (24) a. *He wiped the table dirty/wet.
b. *He hammered the metal rough//bumpy/bent.

Next, consider fake object resultatives, especially those with reflexive pronoun objects. Events they describe can be typically characterized as various dysfunctional states of an entity deviating from normalcy. A representative, if not exhaustive, list of adjectives that typically appear in fake object resultatives is shown below (cf. Goldberg (1995)):

- (25) sore, sick, hoarse, silent, silly, threadbare, tired, speechless, senseless, helpless, blind, deaf

As is suggested from the presence of several adjectives with the negative suffix *-less* in (25), these adjectives commonly describe states of dysfunction in which an entity, typically human, is unable to perform its normal activities due to some negative effect upon its bodily functions. To quote Goldberg (1995: 196), they “imply that the patient argument has “gone over the edge,” beyond the point where normal functioning is possible.” A similar observation is also noted by Jackendoff (1997) with the phrase “excessive activities.”

As for this type of resultative, I argue that it is the potential existence of an implicit standard (= a norm) that suffices for the successful formation of a complementary scale. Although there are generally no explicit lexical counterparts available for realizing the notion of normalcy in these cases, it is plausible to speculate that the relevant change of state is characterized as from normalcy to dysfunction, because these adjectives generally denote some negative, dysfunctional states. In other words, we have a bipolar scale on which the turning point is the boundary between normalcy and dysfunction, with the latter serving as an upper bound for the relevant transition. The following is a schematic representation of the dysfunctional scale for fake reflexive object resultatives:

ically confined to those that describe directional paths involving a boundary defining two distinct and complementary regions. Thus, PPs in resultatives fall into either of the following two classes: those that refer to “ingression” into a specified region, and those that refer to “egression” from a specified region. The two types of transitions are schematically illustrated as follows:

(29) Two types of transitions expressed by resultative PPs

a. ingression (e.g. *to*, *into*)

-----/==>

(== indicates a region denoted by the nominal complement.)

b. egression (e.g. *out of*, *off*)

===== /----->

In both (29a) and (29b), the location of an entity in motion at any time can be specified on either the inside or outside of the relevant region.¹¹ In other words, the path on which a transition occurs can be complementarily divided into two components, with a spatial boundary serving as an upper limit in just the same way as with adjectives in complementary opposition.

So far we have characterized the parallelism detected in adjectival resultatives (normal resultatives and fake object resultatives) and PP resultatives in terms of a complementary opposition scale with a boundary, as expressed in the resultative constraint in (21). The uniqueness of a scale is intended to capture its boundary-crossing nature; by crossing a boundary of complementary opposition, a transition is qualified to have a unique scale/path. We will discuss further the origin of the boundedness in the next section.

¹¹ As one anonymous reviewer correctly pointed out to me, among the prepositions given in (29), *to* and *off* by themselves do not denote an ingression into or an egression out of a specific region, but only a transition without necessarily involving a boundary. However, the use of these prepositions obviously presupposes attachment to a region before or after transitional event, as indicated by their interpretation in resultatives (e.g. *to sleep*, *to death*) where it is implied that the transition culminates in a relevant state (= boundary). In this sense, I consider that these prepositions conceptually involve a boundary. See also Jackendoff (1983: 165), where they are classified as expressing “bounded paths.”

5.2. The Origin of Boundedness: Complex Predicate Formation

In this section I would like to explore the origin of the resultative constraint in (21): why it needs a stipulation whereby a relevant scale/path involves a boundary. Although my answer to the question remains somewhat speculative, I would like to suggest that the formation of a bounded scale/path as expressed in (21) is a conceptual requirement contingent upon the process of complex predicate formation based on the structure [NP V [_{SC} NP XP]].^{12, 13} I assume that complex predicate formation has two interrelated syntactic and semantic aspects: on the syntactic level, it presupposes for locality reasons the particular configuration of a small clause embedded in the complement position of a matrix verb; on the semantic level, it necessarily involves some kind of “coercion” (cf. Pustejovsky (1995)) that assimilates an adjective that is by definition atemporal into a temporal axis headed by a verb that is inherently temporal.¹⁴

Let us see how semantic coercion proceeds. Being atemporal, adjectives in predicative use must somehow be temporally located on a temporal axis of events. Suppose that there are, in principle, two conceptually motivated ways to temporally introduce secondary predicates: as a point of culmination, or as an extended state. Consider then the most typical case of complex predicate formation where a verb has a “temporally extended” reading without an inherent boundary. If an adjective is to be interpreted as denoting a point, it must be understood as the point of culmination of an extended process denoted by a verb because there seems to be no linguistically conceivable event type that has a

¹² There have already been several preceding analyses that embrace various versions of complex predicate formation in the literature. See Verspoor (1997), Wechsler (2001), Wunderlich (1997) among others; see also Snyder (2001) for typological implications of complex predicates.

¹³ Correlation with this particular syntactic structure is intended to obtain the effect of Direct Object Restriction, in particular the occurrence of fake reflexive objects and the prohibition against conative objects in resultatives (cf. Levin and Rappaport Hovav (1995), Napoli (1999), Simpson (1983)).

¹⁴ Here I assume that adjectives (in their predicative use) are atemporal in that they simply cannot be related to the temporal transition of events by themselves since they intrinsically denote a property independent of temporal event interpretation. Thus, for adjectives to be properly interpreted in a verbal event, they must be mediated by verbs that are temporally oriented and on which temporal event properties are morphologically manifested.

bound somewhere in the middle of its progression. Thus, a resultative interpretation follows. On the other hand, if an adjective is to be interpreted as denoting an extended state, it is naturally interpreted over the entire course of an event, leading to the so-called depictive interpretation. Therefore, adjectives that can appear in resultatives are usually limited to those that are inherently disposed to denoting a boundary (thus, typically, closed-scale adjectives), which then yield the sense of “change” that is traditionally represented by the abstract BECOME predicate in LCS representation.

A natural question to be posed here is how PP resultatives are integrated into this interpretive system. There is at least one indication that adjectives and PPs behave differently in an embedded small clause structure: unlike adjectival resultatives, PPs can sometimes be left unbounded (and thus atelic) in this compositional structure depending on the path description, as shown below:

- (30) a. John waltzed Matilda around and around the room for hours.
 b. John walked Mary along the river all afternoon.

(Harley and Folli (2004: 8))

These examples suggest that the boundedness requirement in PP resultatives depends on the informational content of the PP, whether the path itself is bounded or not. Category distinction between adjectives and prepositions seems therefore to play a part in the interpretation of resultatives: while the atemporal nature of adjectives necessarily induces a bounded interpretation, the elasticity of prepositions in their temporal interpretation, perhaps due to explicitness of path denotation, permits potential ambiguity in boundedness interpretation.¹⁵

5.3. Resultatives and *Make-Causatives*: Why They Are Different

Although Boas deals with a comprehensive range of conventionalized

¹⁵ Cases discussed here might look contradictory to the characterization of PP resultatives given in 5.1, where I have argued that resultative PPs must denote a transition with a boundary. Note, however, that motion resultatives like (30) must still contain a path-denoting PP. It seems to be the case that to appear in resultatives PPs are primarily required to denote a path, and boundedness is a more derivative effect of this requirement. The fundamental difference between a change of state and a change of location (= motion) in resultatives should be an interesting issue for future research.

resultatives, discussion on nonconventionalized resultatives in his book is virtually confined to the single case of *sneeze*. This is rather disappointing because I believe that the “magic” of resultatives which has been attracting so much attention from quite a few linguists in the past two decades is their creative aspect. In this section, I examine critically Boas’s analysis of innovative (nonconventionalized) resultatives based on analogy and point out that there exists a gap between creative resultatives and their alleged modeling on basic verbs (in particular, *make-causatives*) that cannot be bridged by having recourse to simple analogy.

Resultative sentences are often analyzed as denoting a “causative” event in which the patient (= object) undergoes a certain change of state/location as a direct result of the agent’s (= subject) activity. Quite understandably, Boas (2003: 271, 280) considers that the “resultative” usages of several basic (causative) verbs such as *make*, *push*, *pull*, *take*, *move* with an [NP V NP XP] structure function as sources for deriving nonconventionalized (= creative) resultatives by supplying the respective force-dynamic relationships in combination with the proper contextual background information. It is suggested that “on a case-to-case basis a given target verb will have to be associated with a source verb in order to acquire the nonconventionalized syntactic pattern” (p. 280, fn. 76). Among the basic verbs named above, *make* is considered to be the most likely candidate for the prototypical model of change-of-state resultatives since one of the most transparent realizations of causal events (especially of a change of state) is arguably considered to be the *make-causative* construction.

The following observation, however, suggests it is necessary to view the matter from a slightly different perspective. A conspicuous characteristic of the *make-causative* is its ability to bear a wider variety of adjectives as its resultative phrases. Permissible adjectives include open-scale adjectives with degree modifiers as shown below:

- (31) a. Her remark made me {very/a little} sad/happy.
 b. Her loud singing made her voice {very/a little} hoarse.
 (cf. Max shouted himself {completely/almost/half/*very} hoarse. (Vanden Wyngaerd (2001: 64)))

The difference between resultatives and *make-causatives* is attributable to the fact that the former describe a transition on a scale of complementary opposition whereas *make-causatives* only denote an event of atomic change with no specific reference to an accompanying process. That is, the two types of construction behave differently with respect to

their event aspectual properties.^{16, 17}

Informally speaking, the difference can be further associated with the fact that *make* is a causative light verb that lacks manner specification, in contrast to verbs in resultative constructions that are more or less lexically specific about their manner. In other words, *make* projects an abstract empty causative frame that must be filled with an adjective that specifies a resultant state.¹⁸

Thus, *make*-causatives are not, in our terms, “true resultatives” in that they do not share the resultative constraint requiring a transition on a

¹⁶ Because of space limitations I have been obliged to omit discussion of formal treatment of this event aspectual difference. For a useful analysis of aspectual structure in general, see Rothstein (2004), where an event of atomic change is formally differentiated from an accomplishment event involving a gradual process that takes a period of time leading to culmination.

¹⁷ A similar but slightly different point is made by Vanden Wyngaerd (2001: 72–74), who distinguishes two types of transition, “value transition” and “property transition,” based on their interpretation under negation, and argues that resultatives that represent changes of value transition should be distinguished from *make*-causatives that represent changes of property transition. The two types of transition are schematically illustrated as follows:

- (i) a. value transition: 0 ----- α ----- 1
- b. property transition: $\sim A \rightarrow A$

The crucial difference between the two types of transition is that, in the former, negation of an adjective yields the complement set of values, whereas, in the latter, it yields “an infinite set of properties that share the characteristic of being distinct from the property being negated” (Vanden Wyngaerd (2001: 73)), instead of a complement set of values. The fact that *make*-causatives tolerate a far wider variety of (unbounded) adjectives that are not allowed in normal resultatives is attributed to the peculiarity of the former permitting property transition from not-*A* to *A* as well as value transition.

¹⁸ The same argument applies to such basic verbs as *get* and *put*, which are also designated as model verbs for resultatives. In particular, the verb *put* can be regarded as a close counterpart of *make* in causing motion interpretation. Consider the following examples:

- (i) a. Howard put the toy {in/into} the box.
- b. *Howard put the toy.

Put obligatorily selects either a directional (= dynamic) PP or a non-directional (= static) PP for its complement. This is at first unexpected since, as we have seen, prepositions in resultatives are normally restricted to directional ones of ingression or egression interpretation. The above examples with non-directional prepositions (*in* and *on*) can be taken to reflect the fact that *put* is a light verb with little manner specification; under the present view, *put* only denotes an atomic change (of location) without further specification of any culminating process of motion.

In support of this analysis, it can be further pointed out that not all resultatives have a causative interpretation. The following examples, indicating typical resultative properties except that the events described are not necessarily interpreted as causative ((32a, b) are from Rothstein (2004: 131)):

- d. They stared the fire into an ash. (Google)

To summarize this section, I have argued that it is not plausible to simply relate resultatives to *make*-causatives by analogy, since the two constructions exhibit quite different properties with respect to the choice of their secondary predicates. This is attributable to the peculiarity of *make* as a causative light verb ensuring its immunity from the resultative constraint; the lack of a specific manner description in *make* prevents it from successfully forming a unique transition on a scale with a boundary. These considerations in turn give support to our view that true resultatives demand an independent characterization with its own architecture.

The main claim of Boas's enterprise is that the so-called construction-

al meanings of resultatives (including the lexical choice of result phrases) are mostly, if not all, conventionalized in lexical representations of individual verbs. This leads to a recognition that there is no such thing as resultative constructions since his approach does not afford us any generalized notion of resultatives except that some kind of “resultativeness” could be scattered or distributed through the lexical specification of individual verbs. In this sense, constructions, or for that matter, grammar(s), are regarded as merely an emergent property of our language use, hence the title of this review article: “The Resultative Construction Deconstructed.” This way of looking at resultatives, however, strikes me as a stronger or even the strongest version of Lexical Determinism (cf. Ono (2001)), which places a special emphasis on the conventionalized aspects of language use while apparently underestimating its compositional and thus productive aspects.

This seems to me a theoretical drawback, which is partly due to the strong inclination of usage-based model approaches toward perfection in description. Consequently, while accepting that this book offers many valuable observations on and insights into resultatives, I feel that several intriguing questions have been left unanswered including those examined in the previous section. My overall evaluation of Boas’s study can thus be summarized as follows. The work, in its adherence to the conventionalized view of language use, is both innovative and conservative at the same time. It does considerably better at illustrating lexically specified aspects of individual resultative sentences, although it misses some significant generalizations on the construction capable of facilitating our creative use of resultatives, and expanding our repertoire of linguistic expressions. In this respect, I am very much in agreement with Goldberg and Jackendoff (2004), when they comment upon his approach that:

“[A]n approach that disallows any degree of productivity runs into just as much trouble. For example, we feel that Boas (2000, 2003) takes the implications of the semi-idiosyncrasy of the resultative too far when he claims that “In order to be able to describe which senses of a verb may occur with a specific semantic and/or syntactic type of result phrase, we must encode this information in the event-frames representing the individual senses of the verbs” (2000: 301)” (Goldberg and Jackendoff 2004: 562).

It might rather be a matter of one’s intuitive choice of whether to regard the nature of the resultative construction as “conventionalized” or

“compositional.” The fact that resultatives are not fully productive as a construction has already been recognized in the literature (e.g., compared with the *way*-construction; cf. Goldberg (1995), Jackendoff (1997) *inter alia*). Thus, when the rationale behind its semi-productivity is to be explored, one is tempted to choose between two alternative viewpoints: seeing it as “conventionalized” or “compositional.” This choice seems to depend largely on how one visualizes grammar (the system of language), which is far from a simple issue, and as a multitude of studies suggest, the resultative construction is certainly a special “construction” that has emerged sitting on the fence between the conventionality and compositionality of grammar, as Boas himself also notes (p. 141).

Although, as a reviewer of this book, I am perhaps a little biased since in a broad sense I personally share more interest in the compositional (and computational) aspects of language with researchers in the generative field, I am not loath to acknowledge the significance of the insights gained in various recent studies of cognitive-oriented approaches. I find that one of the most far-reaching consequences brought out by this study is the revelation about resultatives that “the more off-stage information is needed to license a resultative with a given verb, the fewer are the collocational restrictions that an event-frame imposes on the verb’s post verbal constituents” (p. 282). Although I am not in full agreement with the author on which resultative case should be located where on the conventionality/compositionality continuum (from totally fixed resultatives to extremely free combinations such as *sneeze-off-the-table*), I believe that this general perspective is worth keeping in mind when one studies other constructions that stand between conventionality and compositionality. Nevertheless, I would still like to speculate that some general mechanism (such as the resultative constraint in (21) and complex predicate formation) should be largely responsible for the proper structuring of all resultative sentences as the generative source.

In conclusion, despite my general skepticism on his methodological bias toward conventionality, I do recommend Boas’s *A Constructional Approach to Resultatives* as a book full of insights into the wide-ranging aspects of resultatives as well as in-depth reflections on the conventionality/compositionality dilemma. The wealth of detailed observations based on the largest set of data ever collected on naturally occurring resultative sentences will surely impress those researchers interested in the resultative construction, including practitioners of generative studies.

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