INVESTIGATING THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE ENGLISH *WAY*-CONSTRUCTION AND THE FAKE REFLEXIVE RESULTATIVE CONSTRUCTION

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Abstract

This paper investigates the English *way*-construction and the English fake reflexive resultative construction to determine what aspects of each construction should be included in a grammatical model. It details a model which reflects similarities and differences between the two constructions.

1 Introduction

The English *way*-construction (1) and the English fake reflexive resultative construction (2) are distinct constructions which nevertheless have many commonalities in their use and meaning. The two constructions can be used in the same situation to describe the same event, as shown in (3) and (4). However, not all events can be expressed by both constructions, as shown by the difference between (2) and (5), and even when both expressions are possible, there are limitations on the interpretations available in each sentence.

(1)   John elbowed his way into the room.

(2)   John laughed himself silly.

(3)   The rat chewed his way through the wall.

(4)   The rat chewed himself through the wall.

(5)   * John laughed his way silly.

Previous authors have proposed to treat the two constructions as either extremely similar, almost identical phenomena (Jackendoff, 1990; Marantz, 1992; Levin, 1993), or related, but fully distinct phenomena requiring separate analyses (Goldberg, 1997; Asudeh et al., 2008; van Egmond, 2009). However, even in these latter approaches, the differences between the two constructions have not been carefully investigated.

According to Goldberg (1997), interpretation of the *way*-construction crucially involves the creation of the path that is traversed by the subject (p. 170),

whereas the fake reflexive construction places the focus on the final state of the participants. Moreover, the *way*-construction is able to convey interpretations where the main predicate of the sentence can be seen as either a means or a manner interpretation for the motion involved in the sentence (Jackendoff, 1990; Goldberg, 1995; Asudeh et al., 2008), while the fake reflexive construction is not able to convey the manner interpretation (Goldberg, 1997; van Egmond, 2009). This paper will provide an analysis which relates the two constructions while also capturing their differences more thoroughly than has been the case before, and will propose separate analyses of the two constructions which can reflect both the similarities and differences.

Section 2 will detail the properties of the *way*-construction. Section 3 will investigate the same properties discussed in section 2 to see if they hold for the fake reflexive resultative construction. Section 4 will look at similarities and differences between the two sets of constructional properties. Section 5 will provide an analysis. Finally, section 6 will draw some final conclusions.

2   English *way*-construction

The *way*-construction can be identified by the existence of an object DP of the form "possessor's *way*," as shown by the representation in (6)[1]. The construction gives a traversal meaning to the sentence, in which the subject moves along a path denoted by the oblique phrase. The construction can be used for both a literal path or concrete change of location (7) and an abstract path or abstract change of location (8) sense.

(6)   [SUBJ$_i$ [V [POSS$_{i/j}$ *way*] OBL]]

(7)   Sally made her way home.

(8)   I snored my way into a hangover. (Mondorf, 2010, ex. 17a)

Most examples of the *way*-construction contain a co-referenced subject and possessor, which has led many authors to state that the subject of the sentence and the possessor of the *way*-phrase should be co-referenced (Jackendoff, 1990; Goldberg, 1995, 1997; van Egmond, 2009). However, Asudeh et al. (2008) have given evidence that there are sentences in which this is not the case, as shown by (9).

(9)   He had bought his son's way into an exclusive military academy normally reserved for the gentry and had outfitted him in style. (Asudeh et al., 2008, ex 9)

By extending the *way*-construction in this manner, speakers may be continuing the grammaticalization process noted by Mondorf (2010) (see section 2.3 for

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[1]The structure in (6) has been adapted from (Goldberg, 1997, example 2)

further discussion). Since the possessor in this case is allowed to not be coreferenced with the subject, then the action which occurs in the construction is not inalienably possessed, a feature often cited as one of the basic properties of the *way*-construction. Goldberg's (1997) account directly assumes this by stating that the subject and possessor must be co-referenced. However, the evidence from Asudeh et al. (2008) shows that one participant is able to affect the action of the sentence to yield an outcome for another participant. Mondorf (2010) notes that the *way*- construction has been extended from primarily literal uses to both literal and metaphorical or abstract uses (Mondorf, 2010, figure 5), and (9) shows an extension of that process for the action of the sentence, moving from inalienably possessed movement to more abstract movement.

2.1 Manner and Means Interpretation

According to Jackendoff (1990), the *way*-construction can be given two interpretations (section 10.1). The first interpretation is one in which the main verb can be seen as the means of achieving the motion along a path, as shown by (10a) and its paraphrase in (10b). The second interpretation is one in which the main verb can be seen as the manner in which motion along path occurs, as shown by (11a) and its paraphrase (11b).

(10)   (a) John elbowed his way into the crowd.

       (b) John entered the crowd by elbowing (through the use of his elbows).

(11)   (a) John whistled his way across the room.

       (b) John moved across the room by walking, while he was whistling.

However, Goldberg (1995) notes that manner interpretations are not universally acceptable. Using an example from Jackendoff (1990), Goldberg showed that if a speaker does not allow the manner interpretation of a *way*-sentence, they will also label sentences which can only be interpreted with the manner paraphrase, such as (12), as ungrammatical (Goldberg, 1995, p.202).

(12) Bill belched his way out of the restaurant. (Jackendoff, 1990, p. 211, ex (1))

Given these previous observations, it can be concluded that it is possible for many, but not all, speakers to interpret the *way*-construction as expressing either the means or the manner of the action denoted by the sentence. These two possible interpretations allow some speakers to have two distinct readings of *way*-sentences, as demonstrated by the two possible interpretations of the sentence in (13).

(13) Ashley danced her way to the stage.
        ≈ Ashley got to the stage while dancing. (Manner)
        ≈ Ashley got to the stage by dancing. (Means)

2.2 Telicity

According to Tenny (1992), events can be divided into two types: those that are delimited and those that are nondelimted (Tenny, 1992, p. 5). Delimited events have a required end point, whereas nondelimited events carry no such restrictions. Citing tests devised by Dowty (1979), Krifka (1992) terms the verbal expressions of these two types of events as telic and atelic, stating "a verbal expression is atelic if its denotation has no terminal point, and it is telic if it includes a terminal point" (Krifka, 1992, p.30). The most common test for the telic/atelic distinction is the ability to co-occur with the phrases "in an hour" (telic) and "for an hour" (atelic). Noting differences in the abilities of the two constructions to be used to describe these two types of events can shed light on potential reasons why a speaker would choose one construction over another.

(14)   The rat chewed his way through the wall in an hour.

(15)   The rat chewed his way through the wall for an hour.

Given the test sentences in (14) and (15), we can investigate the ability of the *way*-construction to describe the two types of events. The first test phrase, *in an hour*, shown in (14), shows that the *way*-construction can be used to describe telic or delimited events, which have a necessary completion point. The second test phrase, *for an hour*, shown in (15), demonstrates the construction's ability to describe events which are atelic or nondelimited. These two sentences show that the *way*-construction can acceptably be used to express both telic and atelic events.

Since an atelic sentence lacks an entailed endpoint, there is an interesting consequence: the action in the sentence may not have been fully completed. When we compare (14) and (15) to (16) and (17), we can see that only the atelic sentence can be used for an action which is left incomplete.

(16)   The rat chewed his way through the wall in an hour and now he's stuck there. (there ≠ in the wall)

(17)   The rat chewed his way through the wall for an hour and now he's stuck there. (there = in the wall)

The ability of the *way*-construction to be used to describe both telic and atelic events allows it to be used not only in situations where the event in question is fully completed, but also in situations where the participant(s) failed to reach the goal of completing the action denoted by the sentence, in the above case, reaching the other side of the wall.

2.3 Creation of a path

Since the *way*-construction is used to denote motion along a path (Goldberg, 1997, p. 152), it is important to discover whether or not that path is something which

can be referred to outside of the original utterance. By investigating the properties of the *way*-construction from the fifteenth century to modern English, Mondorf (2010) shows that the word *way* has undergone a process of grammaticalization in the construction, not only losing its nominal declension for singular and plural, but also being extended from only physical transitions to metaphorical transitions (Mondorf, 2010, pp. 407-410). Given that the word *way* has been semantically bleached, and is syntactically unmarked, the extension of use must come from the construction and not the word on its own.

Since the lexical meaning of the word *way* is not available for later reference, we should investigate if there is still an entity which can be referred to anaphorically. Given the sentence and response in (18), one could draw the conclusion that there is no path implicitly created by the *way*-construction which can be used as a reference point in another sentence. However, the existence of an entailed element is not as clear-cut as (18) would make it seem, as (19) presents an almost identical response which is grammatical.

(18)   My pet rat chewed his way through the wall. ?It was rather circuitous.

(19)   My pet rat chewed his way through the wall. It was rather slow.

In sentence (18), the pronoun *it* must refer to a path argument based on the adjective which modifies it. Given the sentence and response in (19), where the pronoun must refer to an event, we can see that an event modifying adjective is able to modify the pronoun in the response where a path modifying adjective was not. This shows us that there is an argument entailed by the *way*-construction which can be referred to in future utterances. This contrast shows that there is not an implicit path argument available for subsequent anaphoric reference. However, there can be subsequent reference to the traversal event. The full extent of possible anaphoric dependencies in way-constructions is a potential topic for future research.

2.4   Event time frame

Expressive differences in possible event timing from construction to construction can allow us to convey information about how and when events take place, without having to explicitly state that information. By investigating what kinds of event time frames can be expressed by each of the constructions, we can discover if the spacing of the events in question affects the choice of construction we make for a given utterance. Both the *way*-construction and the fake reflexive resultative construction involve the description of two connected events, one which, at a minimum, begins before the other. There may be interesting differences, however, in when the events end, and if there can be intervening events in between.

(20)   Kelly Clarkson sang herself into the finals.

    (a) ≈ She sang tonight and got into the finals tonight.

(b) ≈ She sang last night, other people sang tonight, and the finals are tomorrow night.

Given the example sentence in (20), we can discuss two possible interpretations, as stated in (20a) and (20b) (although other interpretations do exist). These two interpretations show that not only is the *way*-construction able to describe events which are directly consecutive, but it also can be used to discuss events which contain intervening time intervals. The existence of intervening time intervals, and the possibility of intervening events between the action denoted by the verb and the state or location denoted by the oblique phrase is something that, according to Kratzer (2005), is not possible for adjectival resultatives (section 4). If the fake reflexive resultative construction is subject to the same restrictions as the adjectival resultative, then the ability of the *way*-construction to be used for these types of events could potentially fill an expressive gap.

3 Fake reflexive resultative construction

The fake reflexive resultative construction (21) can be identified by the existence of a reflexive pronoun in object position for verbs that would not normally take an object, as shown by the representation in (22). Like the *way*-construction, there is a version of the resultative in which the postverbal element (the reflexive element in this construction) is an outside source (23). However, since this paper is investigating the fake reflexive version of the resultative only, the non-reflexive resultative is not directly relevant for the current discussion.

(21) The rat chewed himself through the wall.

(22) [SUBJ$_i$ [V [SELF$_i$] OBL]]

(23) The joggers ran the pavement thin.[2]

The meaning of the fake reflexive resultative construction consists of a postverbal DP which is coreferenced with the subject, and travels towards a goal or location. Thus, the action denoted by the sentence is usually seen as a delimited event, with a set point of completion, as once the goal is achieved, the action is complete.

3.1 Manner and Means Interpretation

In order to contrast the two constructions, we will now look at the same comparison points for the fake reflexive resultative construction as we did for the *way*-construction. Recall that for many speakers, there are two interpretations of the *way*-construction available: one in which the main verb can be seen as the means of achieving motion along a path, and one in which the main verb can be seen as

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[2]Example (23) is based on a well-known example from Carrier and Randall (1992), their example (2a).

the manner in which motion along a path occurs. When looking at the fake reflexive resultative construction, we can see that the means interpretation is available, as shown by (24a) and its paraphrase (24b). However, the manner interpretation is entirely unavailable for the fake reflexive resultative construction, as shown by (25a) and its paraphrase (25b).

(24)   (a) John elbowed himself into the crowd.

        (b) John entered the crowd by elbowing (through the use of his elbows).

(25)   (a) ?John whistled himself across the room.

        (b) ≠ John moved across the room by walking, while he was whistling.

Given that most speakers were able to have a grammatical reading of manner only *way*-construction sentences, we can also test the fake reflexive resultative construction for this manner only interpretation. The sentence in (26) is the fake reflexive counterpart to the manner only *way*-construction sentence in (12).

(26)   *John belched himself out of the restaurant.

In this sentence, we can note that unlike with the *way*-construction, where some speakers accepted the manner only interpretation, manner only fake reflexive resultative construction sentences are entirely ungrammatical. The only way to save the sentence in (26) is to posit an interpretation of the verb *belch* in which the outgoing force of air from the stomach causes the participant to move in a given direction, which is rather implausible.

3.2 Telicity

Noting again that a telic event is one that necessarily entails an endpoint to an action, and an atelic event is one that is unbounded, we can investigate the telic and atelic properties of the fake reflexive resultative construction. As discussed above, the fake reflexive resultative construction involves motion towards a goal or location. We can expect that the fake reflexive will be dispreferred for use with atelic events, as moving towards a goal entails an endpoint to be expected when that goal is achieved.

Given the example sentences in (27) and (28), we can see that the prediction is born out. The fake reflexive resultative construction is acceptable with the telic test phrase, *in an hour*, and so is able to describe events which have a necessary terminal point. However, the sentence in (28) is ungrammatical, thus showing that the fake reflexive resultative construction is not able to be used for ubnounded events.

(27)   The rat chewed himself through the wall in an hour.

(28)   *The rat chewed himself through the wall for an hour.

Similarly, when the attempt is made to refer to incomplete events in (29) and (30), we can see that, like with the *way*-construction, the telic sentence is odd, as the pronoun seems to lack a proper antecedent. However, the atelic variant (30) is now unacceptable. The fake reflexive resultative construction is not able to refer to the ongoing action denoted by the phrase *for an hour*, so (28) becomes ungrammatical.

(29) The rat chewed himself through the wall in an hour and now he's stuck there. (there ≠ in the wall)

(30) *The rat chewed himself through the wall for an hour and now he's stuck there. (there = in the wall)

The above examples have shown that the fake reflexive resultative construction, unlike the *way*-construction, is only capable of yielding the means interpretation. The fake reflexive cannot be used to convey the manner in which the action occurs, and must denote the means of achieving the

3.3 Creation of a path

Continuing with the goal of using the same comparison points for the two constructions, I will now look at the existence of a path argument within the fake reflexive resultative construction. Since there is no bleached lexical item which can be used to convey motion in this construction, we expect to find that it is impossible to refer to the path of motion. By examining the sentences and responses in (31) and (32) we can compare and contrast the properties of the two constructions.

(31) My rat chewed himself through the wall. ?It was rather circuitous.

(32) My rat rat chewed himself through the wall. *It was rather slow.

These examples demonstrate that the fake reflexive resultative construction, like the way-construction, does not permit anaphoric reference to a path argument, which indicates that no such path argument should be part of the representation of this construction. Moreover, if we attempt to refer to an entailed event, as was possible with the *way*-construction, we find that the fake reflexive resultative construction does not support reference to such an argument. Unlike with the *way*-construction, the use of an event modifying adjective in the response is still unacceptable in (32). In fact, the event modifying adjective is worse than the path modifying adjective for the fake reflexive resultative construction. This means that the fake reflexive resultative construction is not only unable create a path for further reference, but it is also unable to allow further inspection of the traversal event itself.

3.4 Event time frame

The next point of comparison for the *way*-construction and the fake reflexive resultative construction is the time frame that connects the two events the constructions are describing. Recall that both constructions describe two connected events, one of which must start before the other. The beginning of the second event can be directly consecutive to the first event, or it could be separated by intervening time intervals. According to Kratzer (2005), intervening events are not permissible in adjectival resultatives (section 4), and so we expect to find that intervening time is not permissible in the fake reflexive resultative construction either.

Given the example sentence in (33), we can discuss our two possible interpretations, stated in (33a) and (33b) (remembering again that other interpretations do exist). Although answers vary from speaker to speaker when asked, both interpretations are equally available for the fake reflexive resultative construction when taken.

(33) Kelly Clarkson sang herself into the finals.

    (a) ≈ She sang tonight and got into the finals tonight.

    (b) ≈ She sang last night, other people sang tonight, and the finals are tomorrow night.

These two interpretations show that, unlike our predictions, not only is the fake reflexive resultative construction able to describe events which are directly consecutive, but it also can be used to discuss events which contain intervening time intervals.

4 Similarities and differences

Once all of the comparison points have been investigated for both of the constructions, we can begin to see where the similarities and differences lie. Table 1 shows the collected similarities and differences for each of the comparison points discussed above. Looking at the table, we can see that there are five points of similarity and four points of difference, with the *way*-construction having the greater number of expressive properties.

Elements which both constructions are able to provide information are their ability to convey the means of the action taken during the event, and their ability to describe events which are delimited and expressed by telic predicates, directly serial events, and events which are separated in time. The constructions also share the property of not entailing a path of motion which can be used for later anaphoric reference. These five elements reflect the ways in which the two constructions have come to be able to describe the same kinds of events, and show that there is some overlap in the meanings that they convey, but they are not as interesting for discussion as the points where the two constructions differ.

The two constructions diverge when the following properties are considered: the ability to convey the manner interpretation of the action denoted by the verb,

	way	Fake Reflexive
Manner Interpretation	Yes	No
Means Interpretation	Yes	Yes
Telic Reading	Yes	Yes
Atelic Reading	Yes	No
PP denotes a path	Yes	No
Path can be referenced	No	No
Entails an event	Yes	No
Consecutive Events	Yes	Yes
Temporally Separated Events	Yes	Yes

Table 1: Summary of similarities and differences between the *way*-construction and the fake reflexive resultative construction

the ability to describe atelic events, the ability for the PP to denote a path (either concrete or abstract), and the ability for anaphoric reference to an entailed event. With each of these properties, the *way*-construction is able to express more information than the fake reflexive resultative construction. When the *way*-construction is used to convey the manner interpretation, most speakers are able to interpret it to mean that the action denoted by the verb is completed along with another action in order to achieve the motion along a path that the construction conveys. However, this secondary action interpretation is not available to the fake reflexive resultative construction.

Similarly, the *way*-construction is able to describe events which do not have a terminal point whereas the fake reflexive resultative construction can only describe actions which have a terminal point. This may be because of the types of events the two constructions are discussing. The *way*-construction describes traversal events, which are inherently ongoing. Conversely, the entire class of resultative constructions describe achievements, which are inherently telic.

Finally, the *way*-construction allows anaphoric reference to an entailed event, whereas the fake reflexive resultative construction is impermeable to such reference. This aspect of the *way*-construction may come from the grammitcalization of the word *way* as described in Mondorf (2010) (pp. 407-410). As the lexical item is robbed of its meaning, the construction as a whole unit takes on the traversal interpretation. Since the traversal is something which takes place over a given period of time, and so must have dimensions in time, the pronominal referent is able to pick out the dimensional event of moving along a path. Since the entire class of resultatives pick out an accomplishment or achievement, as discussed above, the fake reflexive resultative construction is not able to be used in anaphoric reference.

5   Analysis

By designing basic templates for the two constructions, we can discuss the central issues needed to describe the two constructions, which elements should be stated formally, and which elements are entailed by other parts of the template. Through the discussion of the similarities and differences between the two constructions in the previous sections, we have laid the ground work for an accurate representation of their properties.

(34)   *way*-Construction

$$\left[\begin{array}{ll} \text{CAUSE} & \left(\text{X, GO} \left[\text{Y, ALONG } Z_{path} \right] \right) \\ \text{MEANS/MANNER} & \text{F(X)} \end{array} \right]$$

The template in (34), reflects the properties of the *way*-construction. In this template the main predicate function, F, is seen to be either the means or the manner of the action denoted by the verb, and the construction provides the remainder of the sentential meaning. The main portion of the sentential meaning comes from the CAUSE predicate. From this predicate the construction relates the subject of the sentence, X, to the object of the sentence, Y, the traversal predicate, GO, and the path along which the motion occurs, Z. Thus, the entire template states that X causes Y to go along the path denoted by Z either by the means of the main predicate or in the manner denoted by the main predicate. Since the main predicate can be either the means or the manner of the action in the sentence, the template is able to reflect both events which are caused by the action and events which happen independently of the main predicate.

(35)   Fake Reflexive Construction

$$\left[\begin{array}{ll} \text{CAUSE} & \left(\text{X, BE} \left[\text{X, IN } Z_{state/location} \right] \right) \\ \text{MEANS} & \text{F(X)} \end{array} \right]$$

For the fake reflexive resultative construction, the template in (35) is appropriate. In this template the main predicate function, F, can only be interpreted as the means by which the action of the sentence is achieved, while the construction still provides the remainder of the interpretation. Again, the main portion of the sentential meaning comes from the CAUSE predicate. From this predicate the construction relates the subject of the sentence, X, to the secondary predicate, BE, which states that X (the subject argument), is located in the state or location denoted by Z. Thus, the entire template states that X causes itself to be in a given state or location via the action denoted by the main verb.

The differences between the two templates in (34) and (35) directly reflect the differences discussed in section 4. First, the manner interpretation is only available to the *way*-construction. Second, the necessity of the telic predicate for the fake reflexive resultative construction is reflected by the use of the BE predicate, as achieving the status of being in a given location or state is necessarily an endpoint

to the action. Third, the existence of the argument Z_{path} in (34), coupled with the use of the GO predicate, allows for an entailed traversal event to be referred to in future discourse.

Finally, the templates devised here could potentially be implemented using the formal application of templates devised for the *way*-construction as well as several related constructions in Asudeh et al. (2008). In this application, the templates would be called into use by both the syntactic formation and the lexical content of the constructions. For the *way*-construction, the lexical item *way* is able to call the construction into use, and connect the physical formation to the constructional meaning, much as Asudeh et al. (2008) apply their template for the *way*-construction (section 4.3). For the fake reflexive resultative construction, the template could be called into use in a manner similar to the structurally flagged Swedish Directed Motion described by Asudeh et al. (2008) (section 4.1.1). The rule which creates the unique syntactic formation for the fake reflexive resultative would be able to reference the template, and join the syntactic form of the construction with the unique meaning that comes from the the combined parts.

6 Conclusions

In this paper I have presented a description of two constructions, the English *way*-construction and the fake reflexive resultative construction. Special focus has been paid to the similarities and differences between the two constructions. The two share the ability to discuss the means by which an action takes place, as well as the ability describe events which are telic, and can be either consecutive or temporally separated.

However, despite the existence of sentences which can only be expressed using the fake reflexive resultative construction (that that in (5)), the *way*-construction has a broader overall range of possible interpretations, since it can also be used to describe the manner in which an event takes place (for many speakers), as well as describing atelic events, entailing a path of motion and allowing for an entailed traversal event which can be used for anaphoric reference. This paper also introduced two possible templates to describe these features, one for each construction, and proposed that these templates could be implemented in via the theoretical implementation of templates for Lexical Functional Grammar devised in Asudeh et al. (2008), in which templates act as the interface between the syntax and the lexicon.

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