



# “Tight links” make convenient metaphors but loose explanations: replying to a reply



Seizi Iwata\*

English Department, Graduate School of Literature and Human Sciences, Osaka City University, 3-3-138, Sugimoto, Sumiyoshi-ku, Osaka 558-8585, Japan

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## 1. Introduction

In [Goldberg's \(1995\)](#) constructional approach to resultatives, resultatives are uniformly accounted for by means of constructions, irrespective of whether the “base” verb is transitive as in (1a) or intransitive as in (1b).

- (1) a. He hammered the metal flat.
- b. They yelled themselves hoarse.

[Iwata \(2006\)](#), agreeing that Goldberg's approach is quite attractive, nevertheless argues that not all resultatives are to be handled that way. Specifically, [Iwata \(2006\)](#) contends that while resultatives like (1) (=Type A) may be handled along the lines of [Goldberg \(1995\)](#), those like (2) and (3) (=Type B) are to be analyzed by means of a result phrase construction.

- (2) a. He painted the wall red.
- b. The lake froze solid.
- (3) a. He cut the meat thin.
- b. He tied his shoelaces tight.

[Iwata \(2006, appendix\)](#) also argues that the Type A/Type B distinction cannot be accommodated in [Broccias' \(2003\)](#) theory, by pointing out a number of problems, in an appendix.

Now [Broccias \(2013\)](#), as a reply to [Iwata \(2006\)](#), claims that “Iwata's theory is based on questionable assumptions and that Broccias' theory is compatible with Iwata's observations without the need to invoke any of its conceptual machinery.”

\* Tel.: +81 666052428.

E-mail address: [s\\_iwata@kcc.zaq.ne.jp](mailto:s_iwata@kcc.zaq.ne.jp)

The aim of this paper is to examine whether Broccias (2013) indeed achieves what he claims to do. This paper is organized as follows. Section 2 briefly reviews Iwata (2006) and then Broccias (2013). Section 3 examines Broccias' arguments to show that Type B resultatives can be analyzed in the same way as Type A resultatives, and Section 4 examines his claims about "tight links." Section 5 further examines the validity of his "tight link" approach as applied to sentences involving *to one's death*. A conclusion is given in Section 6.

## 2. Two types of resultatives

### 2.1. From verbs to constructions

Let us start by clarifying the significance of Iwata's (2006) proposal in the context of research history on resultatives. Probably the earliest study of resultatives in the generative tradition is Green (1970). Green drew attention to resultatives by citing examples like (4).

- (4) a. Jesse shot him dead.
- b. She painted the house red.
- c. She kicked the door open.

(Green, 1970, p. 271)

While Green herself did not advance a detailed analysis, a specific view of resultatives was implicit in her exposition. That is, Green discussed resultatives on a par with depictives like (5).

- (5) a. He ate the apple whole.
- b. He ate the meat raw.

(Green, 1970, p. 272)

This suggests that Green was implicitly supposing that resultatives are formed by adding an AP to a VP, in the same way that a depictive phrase is added to a VP. Thus, according to this view, *shoot him dead* is obtained by somehow adding the AP *dead* to the VP *shoot him*, as in (6).

- (6) [shoot him] + [dead] = [shoot him dead]

For the sake of convenience, this view of resultatives will be referred to as an *AP-addition analysis*. The AP-addition analysis has been assumed by most of the subsequent studies on resultatives in the generative tradition.

Eventually, it turned out that the AP-addition analysis may not be correct, however. Rivière (1982) pointed out that certain verbs that occur in resultative sentences violate selectional restrictions. In (7), the verb *drink* is followed by animate NPs, despite the fact that this verb should select for an inanimate, in fact fluid, object.

- (7) a. They drank him under the table.
- b. He drank himself senseless.

(Rivière, 1982, p. 686)

Also, subcategorization restrictions may be violated. The verb *laugh* is strictly intransitive, and normally *laugh* cannot be followed by direct object NPs, as shown in (8).

- (8) a. He laughed himself sick.
- b. \*He laughed himself.

All these facts strongly argue against the AP-addition analysis. After all, *laugh himself sick* cannot possibly be formed by adding the AP *sick* to *laugh himself*.

- (9) \*[laugh himself] + [sick] => [laugh himself sick]

Rather, the set of data which Rivière (1982) observes can be elucidated only under an analysis which assumes that the syntactic frame [NP V NP XP] is crucial, irrespective of whether the putative base verb is transitive or intransitive. But this possibility has been rarely, if ever, explored among generativists.

More than a decade later, a solution to the problem raised by Rivière (1982) was proposed outside the generative framework. Specifically, Goldberg (1995) argues that it is constructions, rather than verbs, that account for the phrasal patterns of certain linguistic phenomena, including resultatives.

On a constructional approach to argument structure, systematic differences in meaning between the same verb in different constructions are attributed directly to the particular constructions.

(Goldberg, 1995, p. 4)

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