

スプレー・ペンキ問題について

Remarks on the 'Spray-Paint' Issue

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論 文 要 旨

It is generally believed that the locative variant of the 'spray-paint' construction makes the object NP partitive in a certain sense while the transposed one makes it holistic. Arguing that there are in fact many more factors operative, this paper attempts to get a clearer perspective on the issue.

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1. Introduction

The so-called 'spray-paint' issue involves such sentences as in (1)-(3) :

- (1) a. John smeared paint on the wall.
b. John smeared the wall with paint.
- (2) a. John jammed pencils into the jar.
b. John jammed the jar with pencils.
- (3) a. Bees are swarming in the garden.
b. The garden is swarming with bees.

In section 2, we will be concerned with the semantic differences between the two alternants of each such pair. In section 3, we will be looking into the verb- classes which show such an alternation. The purpose of this paper is to give a clearer perspective on the 'spray-paint' issue.

2. The Nature of the Semantic Differences

The most noticeable semantic difference between the two alternant forms is that (a)-sentences are "holistic" while (b)-sentences are "partitive," in J.M.Anderson's terminology, in the sense that the former imply that the subjects are affected in whole by the objects of the prepositions, while there is no such implication in the latter sentences. (Henceforth, we will refer to (a)-sentences and (b)-sentences as L-forms (locative forms) and T-forms (transposed forms), respectively, in line with Salkoff(1983).)

Chomsky(1972) makes the semantic difference clearer by observing the following :

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(4) a. Bees are swarming in the garden [i.e., around their nest] but most of the garden has no bees in it.

b. The garden is swarming with bees, but most of the garden has no bees in it.

(4.b) is a contradiction, which follows from the assumption that T-forms are holistic.

This semantic distinction shows up syntactically as well. First, phrases like ‘one by one’ cannot occur in T-forms, as observed by J.M.Anderson(1977) :

(5) a. The boy loaded the boards one by one on to the wagon.

b. * The boy loaded the wagon with the boards one by one.

Second, when a verb is prefixed with ‘over-’, it cannot be subcategorized so as to take an L-form (ibid.) :

(6) a. * Harry overloaded hay on to the wagon.

b. Harry overloaded the wagon with hay.

Third, only L-forms have derived nominal counterparts (Fraser(1971)) :

(7) a. the robbery of (the) jewels

b. * the robbery of the woman

(8) a. the inscription of the motto

b. * the inscription of the wall

Fourth, the two forms behave differently with respect to the word “full” (ibid.) :

(9) a. * They planted full of oak trees in the garden

b. They planted the garden full of oak trees.

(10) a. * He packed the clothes full into the suitcase.

b. He packed the suitcase full of clothes.

Fifth, Fraser(ibid.) observes the following contrast :

(11) a. He {crammed/stuffed/wadded} a pencil into the suitcase.

b. He {crammed/stuffed/wadded} the suitcase with { * a pencil/pencils} .

(12) a. They loaded a box onto the truck.

b. * They loaded the truck with a box.

Sixth, particles can only occur in T-forms (ibid.) :

(13) a. * They loaded up the goods onto the wagon.

b. They loaded up the wagon with the goods.

(14) a. * They splattered up water on the floor.

b. They splattered up the floor with water.

Lastly, L-forms require the presence of PPs in contradistinction with T-forms, for which PPs are optional :

(15) a. * He crammed toothpicks.

b. He crammed the jar.

(16) a. * He stuffed another book.

b. He stuffed the bookcase.

(17) a. * He showered the water.

b. He showered the people.

Since the ultimate explanation of these phenomena seems to turn on the holistic-partitive contrast, it would be appropriate to consider it in some detail.

S.R.Anderson(1977) points out that a holistic interpretation can only be given to the theme of a clause. Consider (18)–(21) :

- (18) a. The farmer plowed the field.
- b. The farmer was plowing in the field.
- (19) a. John painted my picture this morning.
- b. John painted on my picture.
- (20) a. A vandal smeared the paint on my house.
- b. A vandal smeared my house with the paint.
- (21) a. The garden swarmed with bees.
- b. Bees swarmed in the garden.

S.R.Anderson notes that the underlined NPs are all themes and are interpreted as holistic : the whole field was plowed in (18.a), the whole of my picture was painted in (19.a), the whole paint was smeared in (20.a), the whole of my house was smeared in (20.b), and the whole of the garden was swarming with bees in (21.a).

Setting aside the vagueness of the concept of theme as used by Anderson, what is interesting about these examples is a fact about (20.a). Let us compare (20.a) with (1.a), repeated in (22) :

- (22) a. A vandal smeared the paint on my house.
- b. John smeared paint on the wall.

J.M.Anderson observes, as already noted, that (22.b) does not have a holistic reading, while S.R.Anderson claimed that (22.a) does. The difference quite clearly stems from the definite-indefinite contrast of the underlined NPs. This observation will lead us to the conclusion that the semantic holistic-partitive contrast cannot be attributed solely to the purely syntactic T-form vs. L-form contrast; there is more to the picture.

In fact, it is pointed out by Jeffries and Willis(1984,J&W) that the holistic- partitive contrast is not so simple a phenomenon as it appears. Consider (23) from J&W(ibid.) :

- (23) a. The fireman sprayed the fire with water.
- b. The fireman sprayed water on the fire.

(23.a) has a T-form and (23.b), an L-form. J&W note that both the sentences can be naturally followed by the sentence (24) :

- (24) Most of the fire didn't get any water on it (and so it didn't go out).

This is (partly) attributable to the fact that a fire does not have a definite form,unlike, say, a wall. The following sentence also shows the importance of the role that our knowledge of the real world plays in interpretation :

- (25) a. The English boy sprinkled the hot water with tea.
- b. The Japanese boy sprinkled tea on the hot water.

Here, our knowledge about tea and hot water is conducive to the holistic reading of (25.a) and (25.b) both. This observation shows that our knowledge of the world can be a

factor in assigning a holistic or partitive interpretation to a sentence.

The following set of sentences, quoted from J&W (ibid.), demonstrate the relevance of the definiteness of NPs in the semantic contrast we are considering :

- (26) a. She sowed the seeds in the flower bed.
 b. She sowed the seed in the flower bed.
 c. She sowed seed in the flower bed.

In (26.a), 'seed' is used as a countable noun and is definite. In this case, the theme is interpreted holistically, as observed by S.R.Anderson, the interpretation being that all the seeds in question were sown. 'Seed' can also be used as a mass noun, and therefore as an uncountable noun. In (26.b), we have an uncountable definite noun, in which case all the seed in question may have been sown or maybe not. The noun is uncountable and indefinite in (26.c), which does not have a holistic reading of 'seed.' This observation is parallel to the one we have already made with respect to (22.b).

That aspect matters is shown in the following pair :

- (27) a. He sprayed the wall with paint.
 b. He's spraying the wall with paint.

The preferred reading of (27.a) is that the whole wall got painted. (We will see later that it is merely the "preferred" reading, and not the only one.) The sentence (27.b) has no such reading due to its present progressive aspect.

These observations make it clear that a lot of factors are in fact operative in determining interpretive possibilities relating to the holistic-partitive contrast. Of more importance, however, is the question of what exactly it means for a sentence (or an NP, to be more precise) to have a holistic (or partitive) reading. Let us take the following sentence for example:

- (28) He loaded the truck with a box.

Although Fraser finds this sentence unacceptable, it is in fact acceptable if we assume that the box in question is large enough to occupy the whole truck. In that case, holism is taken literally; it is interpreted with respect to space. However, the sentence can also be appropriately uttered even when the box is of the usual size and therefore there is still a lot of space left in the carrier of the truck, given a situation in which the truck can be regarded as full even with one box on it (e.g., a situation in which the boxes all contain valuables and therefore it is necessary to carry them one by one). Holism in this case is not just a matter of space. This extended interpretation of holism can be seen more clearly with such verbs as 'stock' (J&W (ibid.)) :

- (29) He stocked the shop with envelopes.

The normal interpretation of (29) is not that the whole space of the shop was filled with envelopes, but that the shop had a sufficiently large amount of envelopes in it. Note that the sentence (11.b) can also be given such a metaphorically holistic interpretation.

2. Verb-Classes

Let us now turn to the problem of verb-classes mentioned in the introduction. As is well known, not just any verb can appear in both T- and L-forms. This is seen in the following examples, quoted from Salkoff(1983) :

- (30) a. Bees are flying in the garden.
 b. * The garden is flying with bees.
 (31) a. The deer congregated in the glade.
 b. * The glade congregated with deer.

The whole range of this problem goes beyond the bounds of the present discussion, and an interested reader is well advised to refer to Salkoff(1983), which is at present the most comprehensive work on the topic. We will make a brief note relevant to the present discussion here.

J&W(1983) claim that there are at least three types of verbs which show up in the spray-paint problem. The first group contains the following verbs :

- (32) clean, clear, drain, empty

These verbs give holistic interpretations to the underlined NPs of the following sentences, without regard to the T- and L-form contrast :

- (33) a. He drained the water out of the pond. [L-form]
 b. He drained the pond of water. [T-form]

The behavior of these verbs is in conflict with some of Fraser's observations shown above. He noted that particles can only occur in T-forms, as seen in (13)-(14), and that L-forms require PPs, as in (15)-(16). These observations, however, are not true of the verbs in (32), as is clear from (34)-(36) :

- (34) a. Drain the tank (out). [T-form]
 b. Drain the water (out). [L-form]
 (35) a. Clean the room (up). [T-form]
 b. Clean the dirt (up). [L-form]
 (36) a. Empty the tank (out). [T-form]
 b. Empty the water (out). [L-form]

The second group of verbs contain 'swarm' and 'jam.' This type of verbs was used by J.M.Anderson and Chomsky to demonstrate the correspondence of a T-form and an L-form with a holistic and a partitive interpretation, respectively. However, this idea of form-meaning correspondence does not seem to be the only one available to us. There is the possibility of such verbs as 'swarm' and 'jam' each having two more or less independent meanings, and there is some evidence to show that it is in fact truer to the fact. Consider the following examples from J&W(1983) :

- (37) a. The bees swarmed in the garden.
 b. The cattle herded in the field.
 c. The men huddled in the corner.
 d. The Bishops congregated in the hall.
 e. The raindrops clustered on the sill.

The underlined verbs here have something in common, which could be phrased something on the order of "to form a group or conglomerate." Note also that they have corresponding mass nouns (a 'swarm,' a 'herd,' a 'huddle,' a 'congregation,' a 'cluster'). If we assume that the so-called L-form 'swarm' is simply one of these verbs, then everything seems to fall in place. Other evidence leads us to suspect that the so-called L-form 'swarm' belongs to a different verb-class. Consider (38):

- (38) a. The garden swarmed with bees.
 b. The shop seethed with bargain hunters.
 c. The town crawled with soldiers.
 d. The square bristled with armed men.
 e. The disco was alive with dancing figures.

These verbs can be characterized as sharing the meaning "be filled with." Note also that none have corresponding mass nouns (* a 'swarm,' * a 'seethe,' * a 'crawl,' * a 'bristle,' * an 'alive'). If the suggestion here points to the right direction, it does not follow that there is any correspondence between syntactic form and meaning. Rather, what appeared to be a single, monolithic verb turns out to be two separate lexical items.

The third group contains 'spray' and 'load.' There seems no independent motivation for setting up separate lexical items for these verbs, unlike verbs of the second type above. To the extent that this is so, they might be taken to provide genuine examples in which differences in syntax accompany differences in semantics, though it is not absolutely clear that any lexical explanation is precluded in principle. It is probably relevant in this context that it is exactly with this class of verbs that interpretive possibilities vary greatly according to such factors as aspect, definiteness of NPs and our knowledge of the world.

3. Concluding Remarks

We have seen that there is more to the story of the L-form vs. T-form distinction than was supposed by Chomsky and J.M.Anderson, among others. While it seems correct to assume that an L-form in general gives rise to a partitive reading of the object NP and a T-form in general gives rise to a holistic reading of it, which in turn might be accountable for on the assumption that it is the theme of a clause that gets affected by the verb, a complete account of the spray-paint issue will have to take into consideration a variety of factors such as the aspect of the clause, the definiteness of NPs, our knowledge of the real world, and verb-classes.

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