

Light verb objects

Fredrik Heinat, University of Gothenburg

This paper is about the status of the post verbal NP in light verb constructions such as (1a) and (1b). The reason to examine the object status of these NPs is that they have been claimed to have a different behaviour than ‘ordinary’ direct objects. In addition to light verb objects, cognate objects, such as in (1c) and (1d), have been claimed to be referential (for example, Cattell, 1984; Massam, 1990) or predicational (for example, Kearns, 1988/2002; Jones, 1988; Horrocks and Stavrou, 2008) or even zero derived verbs (Jackendoff, 1974; Culicover and Jackendoff, 2005).

- (1) a. Lisa tog en dusch.
Lisa took a shower
b. Lisa took a bath.
c. Lisa drömde en hemsk dröm.
Lisa dreamt a horrible dream
d. Lisa dreamt a horrible dream.

In this paper I go through a number of tests that are generally used to determine objecthood (Kearns, 1988/2002; Horrocks and Stavrou, 2008; Doron, 1988; Hudson, 1992), and referentiality (Doron, 1988; Massam, 1990). Then I discuss the theoretical consequences of the results from these tests. The focus here is on theoretical frameworks where syntactic functions such as subject and object are non-derived primitives.

References

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