

# Two PPs as a Single Constituent in English\*

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## 1. Introduction

In this paper, I will examine the syntactic and semantic behavior of two PPs in English such as those in (1).

- (1) a. A Martian grzch lumbered down the street toward the frightened  
garbage collector. (Jackendoff (1973: 351))  
b. Bill ran into the room to the blackboard.  
(Gruber (1965/1976: 113))<sup>1</sup>

Jackendoff (1973) argues that the two PPs in (1a) behave as a single constituent of the form P-NP-PP. I will try to explain what kind of PPs can combine as a single constituent to express a path. In this paper, the analyses developed by Gruber (1965), Jackendoff (1973, 1985, 1996) and Kawakami (1978), among others, will be referred to.

## 2. Preliminary Data

### 2.1. Gruber (1965)

Gruber (1965), analyzing verbs of motion, discusses the following types of expressions.

- (2) a. The Expression of Goal  
i. The bird flew into the brush.  
ii. John ran below the deck.<sup>2</sup>  
b. The Expression of Location  
i. The ball rolled in front of the house.  
ii. The bird flew into the brush in the yard.  
c. The Expression of Accompaniment

- i. The ball bounced after the child.
- ii. John flew the kite along with him.
- d. The Expression of Direction<sup>3</sup>
  - i. John ran in front of the house.
  - ii. John aimed into the room. (Gruber (1965/1976: 66-78))

In this paper, I will focus on the combination of two expressions such as those in (3).

- (3) a. John rolled the ball after him into the ocean.
- b. John pushed the cart along with him to the conveyor belt.
- (4) a. John ran in front of the tree into the house.
- b. The horse galloped across the bridge onto the field. (ibid.: 73-77)

Gruber observes that when two expressions combine, there is a preferred order between them. For example, (5a) is preferred to (5b).

- (5) a. The ball rolled out of the house into the hole.
- b. The ball rolled into the hole out of the house. (ibid.: 83)

## 2.2. Jackendoff (1985)

Consider sentence (6). According to Jackendoff (1985), sentence (6) is regarded as acceptable by some people.

- (6) Bill climbed the mountain up a narrow path. (Jackendoff (1985: 291))

The acceptability of sentence (6) may be a counterexample to Jackendoff's (1985) assumption that the verb *climb* takes only one complement. Jackendoff (1985) also cites the following sentences.

- (7) a. Bill entered the house through a window.
- b. Bill ran through the field into the woods.

- c. Bill ran into the woods through the field. (ibid.: 291-292)

It is interesting to consider why the preposed forms of (7b) and (7c) differ in acceptability, as shown in (8).

- (8) a. Through the field into the woods ran Bill.  
b.\*Into the woods through the field ran Bill. (ibid.: 291-292)

The unacceptability of (8b) indicates that *into the woods through the field* is not regarded as a constituent. I will try to solve the difference in acceptability between (8a) and (8b) by using the assumption by Kwakami (1978) in section 5.

Jackendoff (1985) also refers to sentence (9). He observes that (9) is syntactically unacceptable although it is conceptually well-formed.

- (9) \*Bill climbed the mountain up the ropes. (ibid.: 294)

When we compare (6) and (9), we can recognize that in (9) *the mountain* and *the ropes* denote different things, but that in (6) *a narrow path* is included in *the mountain*. This may be part of the reason why sentence (6) is regarded as acceptable by some people.

### 3. Similarity and Order of Two PPs

Gruber (1965) cites the following sentences to show that the two PPs in a sentence should be similar in type.

- (10) a. \*John ran away from on the carpet.  
b. \*John ran away from in the room. (Gruber (1965/1976: 88)

Gruber argues that the sentences in (10) are ill-formed because *away*, a simple PP which corresponds to *to...*, occurs with a complex PP such as *from on the carpet*. The same is true of (11). According to Gruber (1965), the sentences in (11) in which a simple PP occurs with a complex PP are not regarded as

fully acceptable.

- (11) a. The horse galloped from in front of the house to the tent.
- b. The dog ran from under the shed to the house.
- c. The bird darted from above the house to the tree. (ibid.: 83)

When the verb incorporates a complex PP, the restriction becomes stricter. *Enter* cannot occur with *to* and *from*, as shown in (12).

- (12) a. \*John entered the room to the blackboard.
- b. \*John entered the house from the tree. (ibid.: 112-113)

Sentences (10), (11) and (12) indicate that a simple PP is not compatible with a complex PP.

Gruber (1965) also argues that two PPs are subject to an order restriction. The following examples indicate that the expression of Accompaniment has to precede that of Goal.

- (13) a. \*John rolled the ball into the ocean after him.
- b. \*John pushed the cart to the conveyor belt along with him. (ibid.: 73)

#### 4. PPs Occurring with *Enter*

Takakusa (2010) observes that even though (12a), repeated here as (14) is unacceptable, *enter* can, in fact, occur with a PP headed by *to* or *into*, as illustrated in (15) and (16).

- (14) \*Bill entered the room to the blackboard. (=12a)
- (15) a. She entered the library to the left of the house.
- b. He entered the forest to the east of the railroad.
- (16) a. Ronie approached us as we entered the hall into the main lobby.
- b. We entered the city through the tunnel into Manhattan.

c. I reluctantly entered the house through the door into the garage.

(Takakusa (2010: 167-169))

It is helpful here to look at Gruber (1965). Gruber argues that *to* in (17) and (18) is not the expression of Goal, but that of Location. As we have seen in (2a<sub>ii</sub>), sentence (17) implies *to*.

(17) John side-stepped to the left of the on-rushing bull.

(18) a. John stood to the right of the house.

b. The territory is to the south of the river. (Gruber (1965/1976: 67))

It may be possible to paraphrase (15a), for example, as (19).

(19) She entered the library which is to the left of the house.

It seems that (17) and (18) indicate that *to* in (15) is not the expressions of Goal.<sup>4</sup>

Gruber also shows that *into* can occur as the expression of Direction, as shown in (20).

(20) John aimed into the room. (=2d<sub>ii</sub>)

The verb *aim* is not a verb of motion but it can be compatible with a directional *into*. The verb *head*, which is similar to *aim*, does not take *to*, either, as shown in (21b).

(21) a. John headed toward the river.

b.\*John headed to the river.

Based on (20) and (21), we can predict that *into*, as an expression of Direction, can occur with *enter* which incorporates INTO.

The observation above indicates that the assumption by Takakusa (2010)

that there should be continuity between the two PPs in order for the sentence to be well-formed is itself plausible, but that the examples presented by Takakusa (2010) are not so exceptional. On the other hand, in (22) there is no element which makes the sentence ill-formed, because the verb does not incorporate any PPs.<sup>5</sup>

(22) Bill ran into the room to the blackboard. (=1b)

Gruber (1965) also cites the following sentence which is similar to (22).

(23) The bird soared into the tree to its usual perch. (ibid.: 108)

## 5. A Pragmatic View

Let us look again at the examples cited by Jackendoff (1985).

(24) a. Bill ran through the field into the woods. (=7b)

b. Bill ran into the woods through the field. (=7c)

(25) a. Through the field into the woods ran Bill. (=8a)

b.\*Into the woods through the field ran Bill. (=8b)

In this section, I will try to explain the ill-formedness of (25b) by using the pragmatic investigation by Kawakami (1978). Kawakami (1978), based on the concept of “coming into view”<sup>6</sup> in Longue-Higgins (1976), presents an interesting explanation for the difference in interpretation between the sentences in (26).

(26) a. I opened the bedroom door, and out walked the cat.

b. I opened the bedroom door, and the cat walked out.

Kawakami argues that in (26a) the speaker was outside the bedroom and the motion of the cat was seen from outside. On the other hand, in the case of (26b), the sentence has two readings depending on the situations in which the

speaker was standing inside and outside the bedroom door.

It seems to me that this way of explanation is applicable to the contrast between (25a) and (25b). In the case of (25a), the speaker was in the woods and saw Bill running through the field and into the woods. It is possible to assume that there is continuity between *through the field* and *into the woods*. On the other hand, in the case of (25b), the speaker saw the motion of Bill from inside the woods, but in this case, the relation between *into the woods* and *through the field* is difficult to recognize. This seems to be part of the reason why (25b) is ill-formed.

## 6. Concluding Remarks

Motion expressions can involve the two PPs which as a single constituent express a path. There seems to be a preference for the order of two PPs. Based on the difference in acceptability between (25a) and (25b), it is possible to say that the constituency of the two PPs is judged in conceptual structure. The observation above indicates that the interface among spatial representation, syntactic structure and conceptual structure plays an important role in the interpretation of motion expressions.<sup>7</sup>

## NOTES

\* I am grateful to Guy Modica for acting as an informant.

1 In this paper, when I refer to Gruber (1965), such expressions as Gruber (1965/1976: 75) will be used.

2 Gruber observes that sentence (2a<sub>ii</sub>) implies *to* and that it may be paraphrased as ‘to a place (which is) below the deck.’ The same is true of (17) in section 3.

3 Gruber (1965) says that “[the expressions of Direction] appear to be

essentially expressions of Accompaniment modified by expressions of Location and Goal.” (Gruber (1965/1976: 75).

4 It should be noted that pragmatically (15b) may have another reading in which he entered the forest and went to the east of the railroad, because it is possible for the railroad to be in the forest.

5 In relation to the incorporation of prepositions, Gruber (1965) says that “motional verbs that do not incorporate any prepositions or prepositional phrases after them present free extension of Source-Goal patterns, including the possibility of all expressions of Goal, subordinate Goal, Location, Accompaniment, and Direction.” (Gruber (1965/1976: 103-104)

6 As to the concept of “coming into view”, Longuet-Higgins (1976: 2) says that “in *Down the beanstalk climbed a giant*, we have little doubt that Jack is standing at the bottom, with the giant just coming into view. “Coming into view” — perhaps this is the essence of the matter.”

7 Jackendoff (1996: 11), based on the architecture of Representational Modularity, argues that the notions of place and path should be shared between conceptual structure and spatial representation, because locations and paths can be given geometric counterparts.

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