

## A Constraint on Verb Meanings: Manner/Result Complementarity

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### 1 The complementarity of manner and result

Verbs drawn from various lexical fields are commonly classified as either manner or result verbs:

- (1) a. MANNER VERBS: specify a manner of carrying out an action.  
*cry, hit, pound, run, shout, shovel, smear, sweep, ...*
- b. RESULT VERBS: specify the result of an event.  
*arrive, clean, come, cover, die, empty, fill, put, remove, ...*

As the examples illustrate, this distinction crosscuts the transitive/intransitive verb distinction.

The manner/result verb dichotomy is grammatically relevant (Fillmore 1970, RH&L 1998):

- Each type of verb shows distinct patterns of argument realization:

- (2) a. UNSPECIFIED OBJECTS: Kim swept/\*broke.
- b. NON-SUBCATEGORIZED OBJECTS: Kim scrubbed/\*broke her fingers raw.
- c. CAUSATIVE ALTERNATION: Kim broke/wiped the window; The window broke/\*wiped.

- Manner and result meaning components are in complementary distribution (L&RH 1991, 1995):  
a verb typically lexicalizes only one.

LEXICALIZATION: what a verb lexically specifies as part of its meaning. Lexicalized meaning involves those meaning components entailed in all uses of (a single sense of) a verb, regardless of context; thus, it is distinct from what can be inferred from a particular use of that verb in context.

- many result verbs lexicalize results that are prototypically associated with particular manners.  
e.g., *clean* and *clear* lexicalize a state that may result from removing stuff from a surface.
- many manner verbs lexicalize manners that are prototypically associated with particular results.  
e.g., *wipe* and *scrub* lexicalize a manner and describe actions involving surface contact and motion; these actions are often used to remove stuff from a surface.

HOWEVER, such result verbs don't entail the manners, nor do such manner verbs entail the results.

- (3) I just wiped the table, but it's still dirty/sticky/wet.
- (4) I cleaned the dress by soaking it in hot water/pouring bleach over it/saying "abracadabra".

In English, manner/result complementarity is not a constraint on what can be expressed in a VP.  
When a verb lexicalizes one of manner or result, the other can be expressed outside the verb.

- (5)    a.    A manner verb can combine with a result XP:  
              *Pat wiped the table clean.*
- b.    A result verb can be accompanied by an adverbial XP expressing manner:  
              *Pat cleaned the table by wiping it.*

QUESTION: What is the significance of the observed manner/result complementarity?  
— Does it simply reflect a preference for what type of meaning a verb can lexicalize?  
— Or does it reflect a constraint on verb meaning? If so, what is the nature of the constraint?

PROPOSAL: Manner/result complementarity arises from a real constraint on the complexity of verb meaning, reflecting how much meaning can be “packaged” into a verb.

- For full paper follow this link: <https://buffalo.box.com/s/yl3eeomr8djztfkoa1vwne0zqovizveh>