Frames, Pragmatic Functions, and Constructional Meaning: Using Frames-and-Constructions Analysis Toward Multilingual Constructicography

Kyoko Ohara

Toward multilingual constructicography, I will bring up two related questions that pertain to the basic tenet of Construction Grammar, namely, the understanding of a grammatical construction as a form-meaning pair. One question is how to find corresponding constructions across typologically unrelated languages; the other is whether constructional meaning can be solely described by FrameNet frames. Regarding the first question, I have claimed that the frames-and-constructions analysis, a method to describe meanings and structures of sentences by focusing on the semantic frames evoked by linguistic forms, is useful to identify corresponding constructions in two languages that exhibit structural divergence and frame mismatch but that share the same pragmatic function (e.g. Ohara 2019, 2020; cf. Czulo 2013, 2017). I will report on results of applying this method to English and Japanese translations of *Le Petit Prince* that confirm the validity of this method to align English and Japanese constructions that appear in novels.

Application of the frames-and-constructions analysis to German and English texts (Czulo 2013, 2017) and Japanese and English texts (Ohara 2019, 2020) has led to the suggestion that the function of a construction may take precedence over exact frame match. This finding seems to be in line with Croft’s claim that syntax is primarily motivated by information packaging and secondarily by semantics (Croft In Preparation; Croft et al. 2017). I will thus discuss whether what the proponents of the frames-and-constructions analysis have called “pragmatic function” can be identified with Croft’s “information packaging.”

This, in turn, relates to the second question of whether constructional meaning can be solely described by semantic frames such as those in the existing framenets (cf. Perek and Patten 2019). Some researchers argue that constructional meanings may involve not only semantic frames but also interactional frames, defined in Fillmore (1982), a seminal paper on frame semantics, as “[having to do with] how we conceptualize what is going on between the speaker and the hearer, or between the author and the reader.” (e.g. Ohara 2018). Others argue that some constructional meanings pertain to “pragmatic frames” and that they should be incorporated into framenets (e.g. Czulo et al. 2020). I will therefore discuss whether “pragmatic frames” may be equated with Fillmore’s interactional frames and if it is plausible to define them in framenets along with existing semantic frames.
To summarize, based on Construction Grammar’s basic idea that a grammatical construction is a form-meaning pair, the talk will propose the following for the purpose of building a multilingual constructicon: that the frames-and-constructions analysis is effective in aligning constructions that exhibit structural and semantic-frame mismatches yet share the same pragmatic function; and that constructional meanings not only involve semantic frames but also pragmatic functions but pragmatic functions should be separated from semantic frames.

**Selected References**