Where Do Aspectual Variants of Light Verb Constructions Belong?

Aggeliki Fotopoulou, Eric Laporte, Takuya Nakamura

Institute for Language and Speech Processing

Université Gustave Eiffel
Aspectual variants of light verb constructions

You got the habit of reading

Change of state: 'beginning'
A matter of aspect
The 'begin' element of meaning is triggered by the verb get

got the habit of
lose the habit of
keep the habit of
regain the habit of

Aspect is essential to interpretation
Applications: text analytics, digital forensics...
Where do such phrases belong?

Verbal idioms (VI)?

*The event takes place each year*
Irrelevant to the *place of the event*

Light verb constructions (LVC)?

*The woman took a walk*
This meaning is also observed in *the woman's walk*

Compositional phrases (CP)?

*The woman took a study on cubism*
Both *take* and *study* retain a meaning observed in other contexts
The PARSEME decision tree

PARSEME guidelines (Ramisch et al., 2020)

LVC.0: is the noun abstract?
LVC.1: is the noun predicative?
(...)
VID.2: regular replacement of a component ⇒ unexpected meaning shift?
VID.3: regular morphological change ⇒ unexpected meaning shift?
Classic aspectual variants of LVC
Generally classified as CP by the PARSEME guidelines
But the constraints remind LVC
- Lexical constraints between the verb and the noun

- **have some colour**
  - carry out a study

- **(fr) tomber en panne**
  - (lit. 'fall into breakdown')
- **(fr) entrer en conflit**
  - (lit. 'enter into conflict')

- **carry out some colour**
  - **have a study**

- **(fr) Il a l'habitude de sortir et de jouer**
  - (lit. 'He has the habit of going out and playing')
- **(fr) Il a pris l'habitude de sortir et de jouer**
  - (lit. 'He took the habit of going out and playing')
- **(fr) *Il a les habitudes de sortir et de jouer**
  - (lit. 'He has the habits of going out and playing')
- **(fr) *Il a pris les habitudes de sortir et de jouer**
  - (lit. 'He took the habits of going out and playing')

- **Number constraints**

  - **(fr) Il a les habitudes de sortir et de jouer**
    - (lit. 'He has the habits of going out and playing')
  - **(fr) *Il a pris les habitudes de sortir et de jouer**
    - (lit. 'He took the habits of going out and playing')

Aspectual variants of LVC could be considered as a category of LVC (Machonis, 1988; Fotopoulou, 1992)
Cf. causal LVC in the PARSEME guidelines
Judging the meaning added by the verb

Test LVC.3: does the verb only add meaning expressed as morphological features?

- take up position
- hold a position

Osburn takes up position in Thulin  Osburn holds a position in Thulin

Each term of the comparison has a precise sense
The difference between them is minimal
Expanding the PARSEME decision tree

LVC.6: does the verb only add aspectual meaning?
Aspectual variants of prepositional-phrase idioms
Characterizing aspectual variants of prepositional-phrase idioms

*The fisheries agreement came into force in June*

The idiomatic meaning requires the preposition

*the force of the fisheries agreement*

The idiomatic meaning does not require the aspectual verb

*the fisheries agreement in force*

The non-compositional prepositional phrase satisfies the same criteria as the noun predicate in a LVC:
- abstract
- predicative
- the subject of the verb is a semantic argument of the predicate

Change of state: 'beginning', a matter of aspect
The aspectual element of meaning is conveyed by the verb *come*
The fisheries agreement came into force in June

Generally classified as CP by the PARSEME guidelines
But the constraints remind LVC
- Lexical constraints between aspectual verb and predicate

**have some colour**
**carry out a study**

(fr) *tomer entre les mains*  
(lit. 'fall into the hands')

(fr) *entrer en vigueur*  
(lit. 'enter into vigour')

*carry out some colour*
*have a study*

*entrer entre les mains*  
(lit. 'enter into the hands')

*tomber en vigueur*  
(lit. 'fall into vigour')

- Many phrases share these aspectual verbs

(fr) *entrer en application*  
(lit. 'enter into application')

(fr) *entrer dans une impasse*  
(lit. 'enter into a deadlock')

(fr) *entrer en jeu*  
(lit. 'enter into play')

(fr) *entrer en service*  
(lit. 'enter into service')

The verb should not be considered as a part of the idiom (Machonis, 1988)
Judging the meaning added by the verb

Test LVC.3: does the verb only add meaning expressed as morphological features?

The agreement comes into force in June

The agreement is in force in June

The phrase with *be* could be considered as a LVC (Ranchhod, 1983; Cattell, 1984)
Expanding the PARSEME decision tree

LVC.0bis: is the non-compositional PP abstract?
LVC.1bis: is the non-compositional PP predicative?
LVC.2bis: is the subject of the verb a semantic argument of the non-compositional PP?
Conclusion

Computational linguists’ interest for LVC has remained mainly limited to prototypical cases.

Other types of LVC are relevant to applications:

- Aspectual variants
  - You have the habit of reading

- Non-compositional PP compatible with a copula (be)
  - You got the habit of reading
  - The agreement is in force
  - The agreement comes into force
Eric Laporte
eric.laporte@univ-paris-est.fr
+33 1 60 95 75 52