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パストン家書簡集における統語的諸問題

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Some Syntactic Problems of *Paston Letters*

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Ⅰ. Introducion.

This paper is concerned with the two interesting syntactic problems which seem to me to deserve some attention, especially in the field of general linguistic theory and language typology. The data is taken from *Paston Latters and Papers of the Fifteenth Century* edited by Norman Davis.[1]

Ⅱ. Performative.

The notion "performative" was first defined by an English philosopher J. L. Austin. Thus see the following definion (1)−(4):

   (1)   The verbs are in the first person singular present indicative

active.

(2)　The utterances do not 'describe' or 'report' or constate anything at all, are not 'true or false'.

(3)　The uttering of the sentence is, or is a part of, the doing of an action, which again would not normally be described as saying something. 　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　(Austin '62:5)

(4)　*eplicit* vs. *implicit* perfomatives : the former begins with or includes some highly significant and unambiguous expression such as 'I bet', 'I promise', 'I bequeath'. 　　　　(Austin '62:32)

(5)　I order you to go. (explicit performative)

(6)　Go. (implicit performative)

In *Paston Letters* we find an interesting performative sentence, in which *I pray* (as explicit performative) takes another performative (implicit) as its object clause.[2] See the examples (7)—(9).

(7)　I preye yow hertily laboure ye so to my lord……　　(039053)

(8)　I pray Owr Lord send ♯oe mech wyrchyp an as wellto far ♯e as I wold myn-selff. 　　　　　　　　　　　(100017)

(9)　$erfor I pray ♯ew fynd ♯e $e menys...　　　　　(105004)

cf.　(a)　I preye write to myn modre……　　　　　(079001)

　　　(b)　thys jentylman Rycheforthe..., and pray me to wrythe
　　　to ♯ow……　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　(081018)

The following sentences (11)－(15) shows the subordinate clauses modifying implicit performatives. In (10b) the adverbial clause *because* modifies the higher performative *I say*.

(10)　a.　He's not coming to class because he's sick.

　　　b.　He's not coming to class, because he just called from San
　　　Diego.　　　　　　　　　　　　(W. E. Rutherford '70:97)

(11)　, and $erefore I brak ♯owre letter it $ere were ony asti mater.
　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　(114003)

(12)　She seyth she knowyt not what ryght ne titell that ye haue
　　　ther-in but yf ye luste to trobell wyth herre,　　(180127)

(13)　, me thynkyth it were well doo that ye spake wyth hys
　　　brothere at London or he com in-to Norffolk, yf he had any
　　　thyngys of yourys in kypyng towchyng youre maters,　(190036)

(14)　I mevyd my lorde in the mater, acordyng to the jntent of
　　　yowr wrytyng, yf aney axcion were take,　　　　(192091)

(15) she .. kryid owte upon hym pitowsly to her,　　　(045024)

Ⅲ. The impersonal construction.

Presentday English is the kind of language which requires the surface subject, and we can observe the following tendency in forming the subject:

> Subjecthood in PE.: If there is an 'agentive', it is S; if not, if there is an 'instrument'; it is S; if not, if there is an 'affected'; it is S; if not, *if there is an 'effected'; it is S;* (the italicized part is my own); if there is a 'locative' or 'temporal' or 'eventive'; it may be S; if not, the prop word *it* is S.　　　　　(Quirk et al. '73:176)

Fillmore (1968) indicates that each noun phrase has its own semantic case which is effective in determining the surface subject. Thus see the following sentences (1)—(5).

(1) John (= agentive) opened the door.

(2) The key (= instrumental) opened the door.

(3) The door (= objective) opened.

(4) Chicago (= locative) is windy.

(5) It is windy in Chicago.　　　　　(Fillmore '68:25)

Various linguists have noted the differences between ergative and accusative languages. As the first approximation, see the following three types of sentences in (6).

(6)　V＋A　　　　　intransitive sentences with active 'subjects'

　　　V＋O＋A　　transitive sentences with agents

　　　V＋O　　　　intransitive sentences with inactive
　　　　　　　　　　　'subjects'

Based on this distinction, the ergative and accusative languages are defined as follows:

(7)　Ergative : one form to the agent of transitive sentences and another to the remaining cases (＝intransitive sentences with active 'subjects' and with inactive 'subjects')

(8)　Accusative : one form to the object of transitive sentences and another to the remaining cases.　　　　　(Fillmore '68:53-4)

I think the English language has shifted from the ergative-like language to the accusative language. The transition from the 'impersonal' to 'personal' construction reflects this trend. What is important in this transition from 'impersonal' to 'personal' is that a particular noun phrase with a particular semantic case is promoted as the surface subjcet, and not the other noun phrases. Thus see the

following remarks (9) and (10) made by N.A.McCawley, which is concerned precisely with this problem.

(9)   there is a tendency among many languages of the world to not to assign the nominative／ergative case to the human who is 'unvolitionally／unself-controllably' involved in the situation.

(N.A.McCawley 76:194)

(10)   The former Dative has transformed into the new syntactic subject and the new sytactic structures conforms to the cannonical word order of the language. This shift is comparable to the shift of the "3 daughters are to me" pattern to the "I have 3 daughters" pattern.   (*Ibid*. 200-1)

The following sentences (11)−(15) are some of the typical impersonal sentences found in *Paston Letters*.

(11) $e whiche lettres and $e matier ther-of me semyth meruaillous and straunge.   (002016)

(12) $at hem semyth by $e sight of $e instrument and by $e defautes $at ye espied···, $at $e processe in gret part ther-of false and vntrewe.   (004010)

(13) $at it lyke yow ouermore to accepte and admitte $e seyd resygnacion...   (006018)

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(14)　, whech do semith vs shall be to owr seyd lordis honure and
gret rejoy to $e gentilmen of $is shyre,　　　　　　(042A014)

(15)　me thynkyth by my modere that she wold right fayn that ye
dyde well,　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　(190069)

　The following sentences (16)－(26) are interesting because they seem to
reflect the shift in language from ergative to accusative.

(16)　$at in alle hast resonable ye lyke to sende me rede lettres・・・
　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　(002032)

(17)　he lyked wel by $e chere $at I made hym.　　(018004)

(18)　if ye seme thei be licly desire hym to come to London with
on of my men,　　　　　　　　　　　　(077154)

(19)　if it be so it semeth he will sell more;　　(025042)

(20)　ther-for me thowt it had be no sendyng of no lettyr by hem.
　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　(167008)

(21)　And in the seyd lettere was of the demenyng at the assyses
at Norwych and of dyuers othere maters.　　(190008)

⑿　that wyth-in this fourtnyght at Helesdon shuld be bothe new lordes and new officeres.　　　　　　　　　　　　　(199003)

⒀　And also this day was brought me word fro Cayster that (199004)

⒁　Fore and yowre sowdioris be of sweche disposicion that they wyll take that they may gete, it shall no wurchip be to yow nor profite in tyme to come,　　　　　　　　　　　　(197006)

⒂　And this weke was on of Drayton wyth me, and told me that···　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　(213010)

⒃　Yf ye lyk be $e prys of them···　　　　　　　(221046)

The sentence ⒅ is particulary interesting because it shows this shift went so far that the construction which is still impersonal even in presentday English was made personal. Nakao (1972:301) says that *ye seme* occurs only in South Western in the 15th century.

The sentence ⒁ seems to show a particular word order restriction found in the Germanic languages. Thus see the following constraint:

The Verb-second Constraint (V/2) : The finite verb must be the second immediate constituent of the S in which it occurs. (a characteristic of main clauses in German and Dutch=Germanic languages)　　　　　　　　　　(Maling and Zaenen '81:255)

This pattern is found in existential *there* construction whose notional subject is negated. See the following.

(27)　And ther knoweth no man how soon God woll clepe hym,

(03011-2)

(28)　$er xal no man ben so hardy to don···　　　　(128046)

(29)　$ere may non man schete owt wyth no long bowe　(130003)

(30)　$at $er xud no man ben hurt of hem $ett were rehersyd,

(131059)

(31)　yf ther hade no folkys a be left here···　　　(192074)

(32)　it is not lyke that there shal nomore be made there-of this yer

(144003)

(33)　ther shall no man dar appere in $e place.　　(204016)

(34)　there mythe myche there-of a ben sparyd.　　(212021)

cf.　(a)　···that there would some Jewes reprove this his doing.

(Udall, etc. *Erasm. Par. Acts* 43b OED *there* 4b)

(b)　In ars-metrike shal ther no man fynde,

(Chaucer, Summoner 2222)

(c)　Ther may no wrecche have more of wo,

(Chaucer, The Romaunt of the Rose 4673)

Footnotes

1.　As for the letters of the text, $ stands for P, and ♯ ろ. The first three numbers in the parentheses refer to the letter number, and the rest of the numbers refer to the line number.

2.　As far as I can detect, there is no sign of separation or commas between these clauses.

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