Where Do Aspectual Variants of Light Verb Constructions Belong?

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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*

*get 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)?

Light verb constructions (LVC)?

Compositional phrases (CP)?

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

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

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

- Number constraints
  - (fr) Il a l'habitude de sortir et de jouer
    (lit. 'He has 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 l'habitude de sortir et de jouer
    (lit. 'He took the habit 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?

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

- Many phrases share these aspectual verbs

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

Non-compositional PP compatible with a copula (be)

You have the habit of reading

You got the habit of reading

The agreement is in force

The agreement comes into force
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