

This review originally appeared on the *LINGUIST List* website on February 7, 2020:
<https://linguistlist.org/issues/31/31-548.html>

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TITLE: Causation and Reasoning Constructions

SERIES TITLE: Constructional Approaches to Language 25

PUBLISHER: John Benjamins

YEAR: 2019

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SUMMARY

In his monograph 'Causation and Reasoning Constructions,' Masaru Kanetani investigates the uses of the English conjunctions 'because,' 'since,' and 'for' adopting a constructionist approach. The objectives of the book, explicitly stated in the introduction, are the following: "(i) to give an integrated and comprehensive account of the conjunctions of reason within the framework of Construction Grammar, (ii) to elucidate the nature of causal relations and the reasoning processes; iii) to show the validity of the proposed analysis." (p. 5) An outgrowth of the author's doctoral dissertation (Kanetani 2008), the volume is divided into nine brief chapters, each dedicated to a specific aspect of the topic.

Chapter 1 is a quick overview of the contents of the book. First, the author illustrates the topic with the aid of examples. Then, he discusses previous studies on these conjunctions and reviews the history of the Construction Grammar framework. Finally, he overviews the organization of the following chapters.

Chapter 2 is a summary of the state of the art, which spans over the last forty years. First, the author provides an overview of a few approaches to subordination which influenced his study. He begins with Leonard Talmy's Gestaltist approach, which attempts to account for subordination in terms of Figure (new information, normally expressed in the main clause) and Ground (given information, normally expressed in the subordinate clause). Then, he summarizes Chafe's account of adverbial subordinate clauses as a single category. Next, he reviews Sweetser's approach, based on the observation that the conjunctions 'because' and 'since' appear in three distinct domains of use, which labels 'content,' 'epistemic,' and 'speech-act.' Then, the author introduces Nakau's proposal that 'because' can be either a propositional element or a marker of discourse modality (i.e., a mental attitude toward the utterance), whereas 'since' is always a marker of discourse modality. Finally, he outlines Pander Maat and Sanders proposal, which adds a fourth domain of use to Sweetser's account mentioned above: volitionality, which is concerned when a relationship involves a reason for intentional action. At the very end of the chapter, the author introduces the approach he is adopting in the investigation of 'because,' 'since,' and 'for,' which is based on Goldberg's (1995) influential book but also influenced by Hirose's (1999) and Dancygier's and Sweetser's (2005) studies on 'because' and 'since.'

Chapter 3 presents a Construction Grammar analysis of the constructions featuring the conjunctions ‘because,’ ‘since,’ and ‘for.’ Based on differences in how people understand causal relations (e.g., ‘it has rained and the ground is wet’) and reasoning processes (e.g., ‘Joe broke his leg. He tripped and fell’), the author proposes two schematic patterns: the ‘causal’ construction and the ‘reasoning’ construction. He points out that the conjunctions ‘since’ and ‘for’ only participate in the causal construction, whereas ‘because’ can appear in both. According to the author, while a causal relationship has a single unit of speech acts, a reasoning process has two. This is due to the fact that reasoning is a process in which the speaker takes two situations separately and relates them based on their knowledge (i.e., we know that tripping and falling may cause somebody to break their leg), whereas a causal relation requires the cause and the result situation to strongly cohere. The author then outlines the causal construction, which is characterized by the meaning ‘P1 is a cause of P2’ (P = ‘proposition’) and two possible formal realizations: either ‘C2 because C1’ or ‘because C1, C2’, (C = ‘construction’) which differ pragmatically as in the latter case the ‘because-clause’ is contextually presupposed. Then, he introduces the ‘reasoning construction’, whose meaning can be semantically defined as ‘SA1 is a premise by which to motivate SA2’ (SA = ‘speech act’). The construction can feature the conjunctions ‘because’ (‘C2, because C1’), ‘since’ (‘C2, since C1’ or ‘since C1, C2’), and ‘for’ (‘C2, for C1’). The author then argues that in the ‘reasoning because construction,’ the main clause performs a speech act independent of the ‘because-clause’ (e.g., ‘I’m leaving, because here comes my bus!’). Then, he explains that the ‘reasoning since construction’ and the ‘reasoning for construction’ are similar to the ‘reasoning because construction’ in their being outside the scope of the matrix question (unlike what happens in the ‘causal construction’) and also in their allowing speech act constructions of statement (e.g., ‘I’m going to cheat on my taxes, since who will ever find out?’). Finally, the author emphasizes the difference between the ‘since construction’ and the ‘for construction’ and, at the very end of the chapter, the author situates the causal and the reasoning constructions in a broader construction network, along with other patterns of subordination and coordination, as well as the temporal ‘since’.

Chapter 4 analyzes the possibility to focalize ‘because-’ clauses and ‘since-’ clauses with focusing adverbs, which Kanetani divides into two types: ‘exclusives’ (‘just,’ ‘only,’ ‘simply,’ ‘merely,’ ‘solely,’ ‘precisely’) and ‘particularizers’ (‘particularly,’ ‘especially,’ ‘largely,’ ‘mainly,’ ‘mostly,’ ‘principally’). The author argues that the conjunction used in the causal construction may be focalized by both exclusives (e.g., ‘he went to college just because his parents asked him to’) and particularizers (e.g., ‘it was largely because of you that he failed’), whereas those in the reasoning construction can only be focalized by particularizers (compare the acceptability of ‘normally they were military officers, partly because the army provided a supply of trained talent...’ with the unacceptability of ‘it has rained, just because the ground is wet’).

Chapter 5 draws a comparison between English and Japanese, aiming to show that both English speakers and Japanese speakers understand relations and processes based on the same principle, which is reflected in the grammar of both languages. The author introduces the Japanese word ‘kara’ which, he maintains, is comparable to the English ‘because.’ As a consequence, it is possible to identify a ‘causal kara-’ construction (e.g., ‘Taroo wa Hanako o aishiteiru kara modottekita,’ i.e. ‘Taro came back because he loved Hanako’) and a ‘reasoning kara-’ construction (e.g., ‘Taroo wa modottekita hara Hanako o aishiteiru nodaroo,’ i.e. ‘Taro loved Hanako, because he came back’). With the aid of several examples, the author claims that causal and reasoning ‘because-’ clauses and ‘kara-’ clauses display a similar behavior: the causal clause and its main clause form one unit of speech, whereas the reasoning clause and its main clause are separate speech act units. At the same time, he also highlights that there is a difference between the constructions in the two languages. Namely, the ‘reasoning kara’ construction requires its main clause to be marked with an explicit epistemic marker or performative expression (e.g., ‘Taroo wa modottekita hara Hanako o aishiteiru

nodaroo,' i.e. 'I guess Taro loved Hanako, because he came back'), unlike its English counterpart (e.g., 'John loved Mary, because he came back'). This difference is that because in Japanese a declarative sentence is by default a 'private' expression, i.e., it has a thought-expressing function, whereas in English it is by default a 'public' expression, i.e., it has a communicative function (on these notions, see Hirose 1995).

Chapter 6 accounts for the metalinguistic uses of 'because' (e.g., 'The Blackwell collection was reputed to be the most valuable private collection in the world. Reputed, because no one outside of guests was permitted to see it'), a construction previously investigated by Hirose (1992), who coined the label 'e-because construction.' 'E' stands for 'expression,' since the construction is exclusively made up of the expression in question and the following 'because' clause. The author argues that the metalinguistic 'because' clause conveys the reason for a speaker's use of a specific expression. Moreover, he notes that the construction is restricted in its use: it can only be used when the word in question is assumed to be active in the hearer's mind; otherwise, the speaker has to activate it in the hearer by making use of a pragmatic marker such as 'I say.' This construction is a subpart of the causal construction, both formally and semantically. Therefore, the author posits a subpart link between the 'e-because construction' and the causal construction.

Chapter 7 illustrates the role of analogy in Construction Grammar by providing an account of the sentences featuring the expression 'just because,' either followed by the preposition 'of' (e.g., 'just because of his dumb mistake doesn't mean you're going to have lights out in Manhattan') or not (e.g., 'Just because he made a dumb mistake...'). After briefly reviewing the previous account of this construction, the author proposes that the construction via analogies based primarily on the similarity of the causal construction to the 'inference-denial because-clause' construction. By seeing the latter construction as an instance of the former, what holds in the latter should also hold in the former. Since a causal 'because-' clause may be replaced with a 'because of' phrase, it is expected that an inference-denial 'because-' clause may also be replaced with a 'because of' phrase. This leads to the conclusion that the construction with 'of' is not entrenched. The author argues that, accounting for constructions created on the spot as well as more entrenched constructions, this notion is a valuable addition to the Construction Grammar theory.

Chapter 8 investigates the innovative use of the word 'because' (e.g., 'I cannot go out today because homework,' 'The hypothesis is not a scientific fact, because unproven'), which he labels the 'because X' construction. By comparing this use of 'because' with its canonical usage, the author shows that it conveys a causal meaning. He also considers that it is a proper subpart of the causal construction, since the 'because X' construction is more schematic than the causal construction and the former exemplifies the latter as a set of possible elaborations of the word slotted in X in the former. The author also argued that the word in the X-slot of the 'because X' construction is either the speaker's expressions of feelings (interjections) or part of a proposition that the speaker has in mind at the time of utterance. The speaker's thought-expressing intent generalizes these elements slotted in X.

Chapter 9 makes a summary of the previous chapter and draws the conclusions. The author argues that the causal construction, the reasoning construction, and the 'because X' construction have more than one form and are best characterized as families of constructions. The reasoning construction is a metaphorical extension of the causal construction, and its sense cannot be worked out by summing the meanings of its components; rather, its meaning as a whole is paired with the arrangement of the contents (including, crucially, the comma intonation). The 'e-because' construction is idiomatic and it is a subpart of the causal construction. The author concludes that, by describing these constructions, he showed the connection between our general knowledge of causation and reasoning, on the one hand, and the grammatical patterns as its reflection, on the

other. Moreover, in so doing, the adoption of a Construction Grammar approach can provide an integrated account of both ‘core’ and ‘peripheral’ grammatical phenomena.

EVALUATION

Overall, Masaru Kanetani’s slim volume represents a fine contribution to the study of sentences expressing causation and reasoning within the framework of Construction Grammar. Consequently, it will be particularly interesting to advocates of functional and cognitive linguistics and, more generally, scholars who are interested in the grammatical expression of causal relations and reasoning processes. As a result, this monograph fits in very well in the John Benjamins series ‘Constructional Approaches to Language,’ which includes authoritative studies such as Hilpert (2008) and Boas and González García (2015). The aims of Kanetani’s book are made clear at the beginning, and the volume is made up of seven standalone contributions which are perfectly integrated into a coherent monograph. This is no surprise, given that the book stems from the author’s doctoral dissertation and presents the result of a research program whose ad interim results were published in several journal articles over more than ten years.

Kanetani’s constructional approach to causal and reasoning construction is based on sound arguments, which provide solid support in favor of a constructional grammar approach to this kind of sentence. First of all, the phenomena are defined clearly and in detail and illustrated with the aid of several examples. Moreover, by approaching the causal and the reasoning constructions as generalizations over similar sentences, the author can provide an explicit account of a range of realizations, describing their similarities and differences to show how they are related. This perspective, adopted by Goldberg and Jackendoff (2004), is also reminiscent of the concept of ‘pattern’ as employed in ‘pattern grammar’ (Hunston and Francis 2000). On the basis of his treatment of a number of examples, Kanetani makes a convincing case for ascribing the different behaviors of ‘because,’ ‘since,’ and ‘for’ to the types of constructions they are featured in rather than the conjunctions themselves (which, he underlines –showing a positive attitude to cross-fertilization--is also noted by Haegeman 2002 from a generative perspective).

The author’s discussion of the focalization of ‘because-’ and ‘since-’ clauses is particularly outstanding, as it provides further evidence that difference in the focalizability of these clauses depends on the constructions they appear on rather than on their information-structural differences. To this end, the choice to illustrate examples featuring exclusive and particularizer adverbs was excellent. Although not free from blind spots (see below), the comparison between English ‘because-’ constructions and Japanese ‘kara-’ constructions is efficient in driving home the point that the generalization made for English also holds for an unrelated language.

Another great merit of Kanetani’s volume is the outspoken recognition of the role of analogy in language, and in particular, the use of proportional analogy (which he labels ‘four-part analogy’), although the author fails to credit long-term champions of analogy (e.g., Hockett 1968; Anttila 1972, 1977). The author’s claims at the end of Chapter 7 vindicate the necessity to amend this blind spot in the Construction Grammar framework, whose proponents are normally either reluctant to mention analogy (e.g., Goldberg 1995; Perek 2015) or tend to introduce it as a novel introduction (e.g. Tomasello 2003), perhaps as a heritage of the neglect of the concept in the heyday of generative grammar (e.g., Chomsky 1968). While Kanetani’s advocacy of analogy is perhaps still not strong enough, it represents the positive trend toward the recognition of this important principle in mainstream linguistic theories (cf. Mattiello 2017).

The final strong point of the book I would like to mention is the author’s sensible account of the phenomenon of ‘constructionalization’ (Traugott and Trousdale 2013), which he describes as

divided into the following stages. First of all, the speaker introduces a construction, and the hearer understands it. Then, the hearer establishes the constructional network between the new construction and other constructions already present in the system. By repeating this process, the pattern gets in the process of being conventionalized. If the development continues, the construction eventually becomes part of the language. This perspective resounds with the claim often made by Itkonen (e.g. 1984, 2005) that language variation and change are characterized by two successive steps: mental innovation (at the individual level) and social acceptance (at the collective level).

For the reasons mentioned above, my evaluation of Kanetani's monograph is overall positive. Indeed, this book represents a fine contribution to the study of causal and reasoning constructions and it certainly provides good arguments in favor of the Construction Grammar framework. However, I will now focus on what I consider to be the main weaknesses of this book. First of all, the author fails to address the mainstream Construction Grammar view of the formal pole of constructions as including phonology, morphology, and syntax. While the account of phonology as pure form is relatively uncontroversial, this definition is less than satisfactory concerning syntax and morphology. Indeed, morphemes, words, and phrases are inherently meaningful, i.e., they are form-meaning pairings of their own. It goes without saying that a syntactic unit cannot be at the same time one pole of the construction and the construction as a whole. From this point of view, Langacker's notion of 'symbolic assembly' as a form-meaning pairing with a phonological pole and a semantic pole seems more consistent (see e.g., Langacker 2008).

Another rather problematic issue is the methodology adopted to investigate the Japanese 'kara-' construction. The author writes "I rely on the native speakers' intuitions here from the need to keep the examples in the present chapter as comparable as possible. The main purpose of this chapter is not to describe actual Japanese use, but to show that the constructional analysis of conjunctions of reason in English presented in the previous chapters is valid by applying it to the Japanese counterparts." (p. 93). In principle, this reviewer believes that including native speakers' judgment in linguistic studies is methodologically sound. On the other hand, the choice to invent awkward examples to keep them as similar as possible to their English counterparts seems rather odd. In this way, native speakers are asked to pass their judgment on skewed data. This does not necessarily undermine Kanetani's claims on the similarities between English and Japanese causal and reasoning constructions, but it calls for further support based on the analysis of more genuine, corpus data.

Concerning more formal issues, the book includes a considerable amount of repetition and redundant information. While making summaries at the end of each section may be a good practice in very long texts, they are unnecessary in a 182-page long book, hindering the readability of the book. At the same time, the text is not always well written. The structure of the several paragraphs is a bit messy. Consider the following example: "[T]here are many counterexamples to Schourup and Waida's generalization about the focalizability of because- and since-clauses. Thus, their descriptive generalization is not true. Furthermore, the premise on which the generalization is made is inadequate. That is, as seen in the remainder of this section, a reason introduced by 'because' does not always convey new information, nor does a reason introduced by 'since' necessarily present old information" (p. 72).

At the end of this review, I will just outline a couple of inconsistencies which can be found in the book. On the one hand, it is not clear why the book is entitled 'Causation and reasoning constructions,' when the expressions of causal relations are, throughout the text, labeled 'causal constructions.' On a different note, the words 'inference' and 'inferential' are not used consistently. For instance, at the beginning of the book, the author claims that he will avoid the use of the term 'inference,' which he will replace with 'reasoning process' but at the very beginning of the second chapter, he claims, "In the previous chapter, I set the goals of the present work as follows: To

elucidate the nature of causal and inferential relations, to give an integrated account of conjunctions of reason, and to show its validity.” (p. 9). The author maintains this ambivalent attitude toward the terms ‘inference’ and ‘inferential’ throughout the book.

In summary, Kanetani’s monograph is a valuable contribution to the grammatical expression of causal relations and reasoning processes in English. At the same time, it is a fine contribution to the Construction Grammar literature, showing the potential of this theoretical framework to account for both ‘core’ and ‘peripheral’ linguistic phenomena. On the other hand, the book suffers from a few shortcomings, some of which may be generalized to the constructionist framework in general, and a few formal glitches.

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