Cognate Objects and Unaccusative Predicates

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The Plan

1. Cognate Objects 101

2. Unaccusative COs with Reference

3. Vendler Classes

4. Unaccusative COs with Path

5. Summary

Cognate Objects 101

Classic COs: Unergative

- *John slept a long and satisfying sleep.*
- *John slept the sleep of kings.*

Various constraints

- ★ *John slept a sleep.*   MODIFICATION
- *John sang a song.*   PERFORMANCE
- ★ *John pushed the car a strong push.*   TRANSITIVE

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No.

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  1. ⋆ *The river froze a terrible freeze.*
  2. ⋆ *The glass broke a thunderous break(age).*
  3. ⋆ *The wood burned a warming burn.*
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- COs with unaccusatives:
  [Kuno and Takami(2004), Nakajima(2006), de Swart(2007)].

  1. *The tree grew a century's growth within only ten years.*
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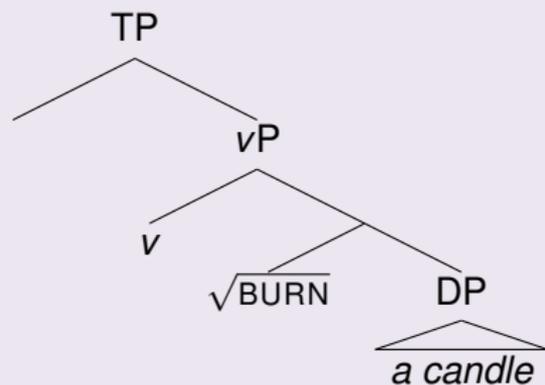
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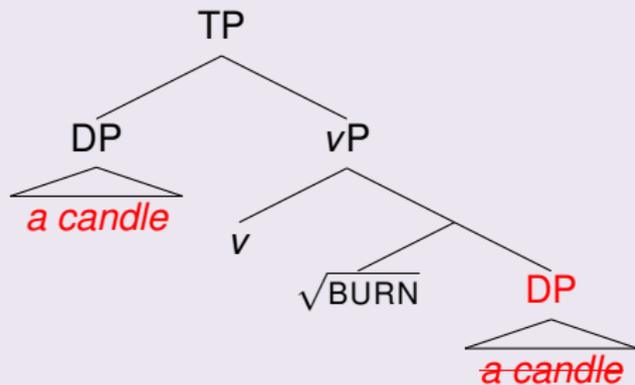
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Why were unaccusatives considered bad?

TP

vP

v

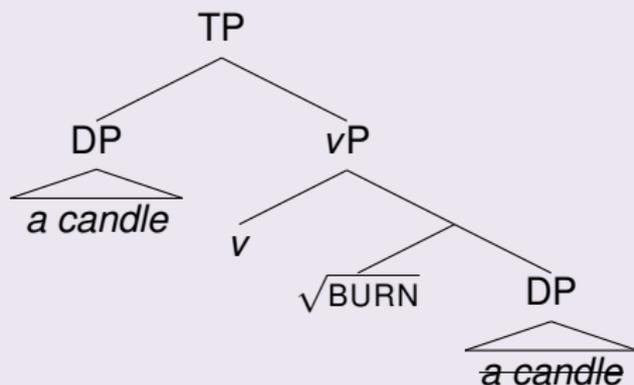$\sqrt{\text{BURN}}$ DP

a candle

- The "there's no slot for it" argument.
- Not just a technical convenience: the CO is not a complement of anything.

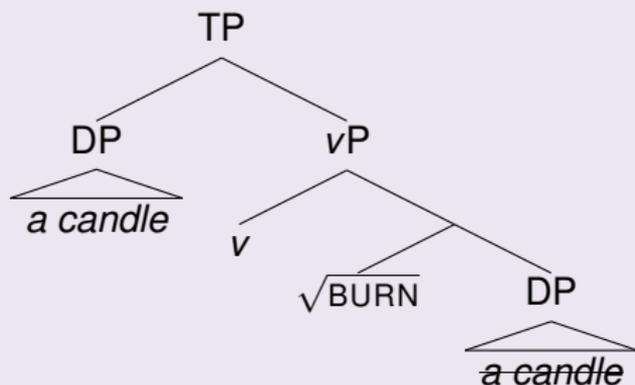## Why were unaccusatives considered bad?

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So why are some of them good?

There are two kinds: the *grow* type and the *drop* type. Let's treat them in turn.

1. *The tree <u>grew</u> a century's <u>growth</u> within only ten years.*
2. *The ball <u>bounced</u> a funny little <u>bounce</u> right into the shortstop's glove.*
3. *The stock market <u>dropped</u> a 250-point <u>drop</u> yesterday.*
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Back to unergatives

- *John sang a song.*
- *Sing an aria.*
- *John danced a jig.*
- *John danced the tango.*
- *He smiled his snarky little smile.*
- *He slept the sleep of the dead.*

John's a busy boy: he is performing an existing entity in each of these examples. [Mittwoch(1998)]

The DPs are referential in the sense that they're performative.

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- *The tree grew a century's growth within only ten years.*
- *The ball bounced a funny little bounce right into the shortstop's glove.*

But:

1. *The tree grew a century's growth.*
2. *★ ? The tree grew a 5 foot growth.*
3. *The ball bounced a funny little bounce.*
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Verb classes

- We need a break for some background now: [Vendler(1957)]
- **State:** *know*, *love*.
- **Activity:** *walk*, *run*, *draw*.
- **Accomplishment:** *walk to the GC*, *run to the subway*, *draw a circle*, *build a house*.
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Unaccusative COs with Path

[Oltra Massuet(2011)]

- Achievements differ from accomplishments:
  the latter can take Degree Phrases as complements.
  - *The rope burned three inches.*
  - *The rope burned by three inches.*
  - *The rope burned a little bit.*
- ⋆*The train arrived (by) three hours.*   ACHIEVEMENT
- ⋆*The train arrived a punctual arrival.*
- *The stock market dropped (by) 250 points.*   ACCOMPLISHMENT
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Problem

This sounds good, but overgenerates with result verbs.

1. ⋆ *The train arrived (by) [three hours].* ACHIEVEMENT
2. ⋆ *The train arrived [a punctual arrival].*
3. ⋆ *Three men appeared [a sudden appearance].*
4. *The apples fell (by) [three feet].* ACCOMPLISHMENT
5. *The apples fell [just a short fall to the lower deck].*
6. *The stock market dropped [its largest drop in three years].*
7. *The rope burned (by) [three inches / a little bit].* RESULT
8. ⋆ *The candle burned [a thorough burn/burning] / a three inch burn.*
9. ⋆ *The vase broke [a shattering break/breaking/breakage].*

Result verbs as can also be modified by a DegreeP. The availability of degree modification does not mirror the availability of a CO.

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Proposal

- The proposal: another kind of degree, PATH.
- The $\sqrt{\text{ROOT}}$ requires specification of the path: [[3ft fall] DOWN]
- Spelling out this degree or path is obligatory, with a CO or with another DegreeP such as a *by*-phrase.
    - The stock market dropped 250 points.
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- ⟦drop a 5 foot drop⟧ $\overset{?}{=}$ ⟦drop 5 feet⟧

Summary

- Unaccusative COs, two kinds:
  Performative/referential, like some unergative COs
  Degree/PATH

- What's so special about PATH when compared to ??*burn a 3 inch burn*?

- *Burn* - maybe achievement, maybe accomplishment. Maybe that's why the CO reading is marginal; difficult to formalize gradience. So why can you get degree modification but not a degree CO?

- How we build our verbs and really - what complements are and what can the $\sqrt{\text{ROOT}}$ dictate.

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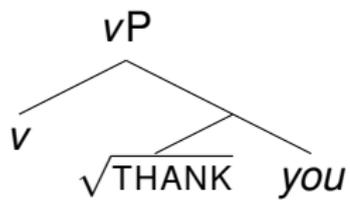
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- *Burn* - maybe achievement, maybe accomplishment. Maybe that's why the CO reading is marginal; difficult to formalize gradience. So why can you get degree modification but not a degree CO?

- How we build our verbs and really - what complements are and what can the $\sqrt{\text{ROOT}}$ dictate.

Summary

- Unaccusative COs, two kinds:
  Performative/referential, like some unergative COs
  Degree/PATH
- What's so special about PATH when compared to ??*burn a 3 inch burn*?
- *Burn* - maybe achievement, maybe accomplishment. Maybe that's why the CO reading is marginal; difficult to formalize gradience. So why can you get degree modification but not a degree CO?
- How we build our verbs and really - what complements are and what can the $\sqrt{\text{ROOT}}$ dictate.

*v*P
v
$\sqrt{\text{THANK}}$ *you*

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