

言語の意味的二重性と誤解 (動詞Ⅱ)

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The Double-Entendre and Misunderstanding of Language (Verb Ⅱ) (Funny Side of English)

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Abstract

I have published several papers serially in the past under the same title as the present one — The Double-Entendre and Misunderstanding of Language — in the Research Reports at Kurume Kosen and Yonago Kosen. The present work has been conducted again with the intention of analyzing the ambiguity of some types of utterances in English caused by their double-meaning features, placing the focus on the comical side of the language at the same time.

The item chosen in the present paper is again 'verb', following the paper I wrote for Research Report No 21 of Yonago Kosen.

1.1 Semi-Cognate verbs and verbal Phrases

With substantives denoting an action or movement, verbs which are in process of losing their original meaning, such as *have*, *give*, *make*, *get*, form innumerable phrases equivalent to cognate verbs. In some of these phrases the object-noun is preceded by an indefinite article or by a possessive adjective referring to the subject of the sentence, as: 'to take a leap (= to leap once)'; 'to make one's petition (= to petition)'; 'to take (or have) a smoke'; 'to

have (or take) a long swim'.

Stenog.: "Boss, will you *advance* me my next week's salary?"

Boss: "Certainly not. I never *make advances* to my stenographers."

Her sweetie: "How long will it be until your sister *makes her appearance*?"

Young Sister: "She's upstairs making it now."
(Copeland 211)

The above-enumerated verbs, combined with substantives denoting things, form phrases expressing verbal action.

Judge: "The police say that you and your wife *had some words*."

Prisoner: "I had some, but didn't get a chance to use them."

Lenny: "My father *makes faces* all day."

Benny: "Why does he do that?"

Lenny: "Because he works in a clock factory."
(H.Hoke 88)

1.2 'Pro-Verb'

The word *do* is employed as a verb-substitute

replacing the verb and its object or complement, if any, so as to avoid repetition, as in: "You saw the truth as clearly as I *did* (= saw the truth clearly)."

A schoolboy wrote the following terse narrative about Elijah: "There was a man named Elijah. He had some bears and lived in a cave. Some boys tormented him. He said: "If you keep on throwing stones at me I'll turn the bears on you and they'll eat you up." And they *did* and he *did* and the bears *did*."

Scott was a hunter of big game and he brought home a sweet little tiger cup, which he gave to Shivers.

Shivers was nervous of it. "Will it do any harm?" he inquired of Scott.

"It's quite all right," replied the hunter. "Why, it will *eat off your hand*."

It *did*.

In this usage *do* can replace any part of a sentence with a verb in it, as in: "I wanted to see him, and I *did* so." (= she wanted to, too)

The bookie arrived home. "Where's Willie?" he asked of his wife.

"He's been using bad language, so I sent him to bed," replied the demure little wife.

"Using bad language, has he?" scowled the bookie. "I'll *teach him to use bad language*." And so saying, the stern parent climbed the narrow staircase in the dark and hit his head on the banister. He *did*.

When the verb is followed by an object or complement, modified by adjectives or their equivalents, expressed or implied, *do* represents the object or complement sometimes (i) exactly as it is, as with: "He admired his wife, and all his friends *did* so (= all his friends admired his wife)," or sometimes (ii) with some of the adjuncts or attributes of the object or complement altered according to the situation, as with: "All of them acted up to their principles, and so *did* I (= ... I acted to my principles, and not theirs).

Bill: "My wife doesn't understand me; *does* yours?"

Jim: "I don't think so. I have never heard her mention your name." (Copeland 267)
(Note: 'Does yours?' implies either 'does your wife understand you?' or 'Does your wife understand me?')

Do as a verb-substitute is generally omitted when it is preceded by an elliptical auxiliary in the same construction. In the following example, *do*, if it were used in the place of *leave off*, would possibly function as a notional verb in the sense of 'acting, performing, etc.'

The modern girl's motto: "Never *leave off* tomorrow what you can *leave off* today."
(Williams 355)

Do is often used as a form-word which is usually of grammatical significance only, but it sometimes plays an important role or has a significance or implication.

(In a restaurant): "We don't cash checks. We *did*."
(Williams 473)

A convicted murderer was freed because '*did*' was omitted from a 366-word indictment.
(Golden, Legal 91)

1.3 Auxiliary Verbs

Auxiliary verbs are used to help other verbs form their voice, mood, or tense. One of the characteristics of auxiliary verbs is that they are never directly preceded or followed by *to*, the sign of the infinitive.

The following correspondence explains itself:

"Dear Mrs. Jones, please let me have a dozen tomatoes if you *can* ... Jane Smith,"

"Dear Mrs. Smith, we are not going to *can*; we propose to pickle. ... Jane Jones"

The words, *be*, *do*, *have*, are used both as notional verbs and as auxiliary verbs.

(A) The Word Be

The auxiliary *be* is used with a present participle to form the progressive or continuous tenses.

Why is a schoolboy studying his lesson like knowledge itself ?

He *is* learning. (Mark Twain 718)

The auxiliary *be* is also used with a past participle to form the passive voice.

Bridget (hearing one of the dairy girls is sick) :
"How's the milkmaid ?"

Milkman: "That's a trade secret !"

Father: "This coffee tastes like mud."

Mother: "Well, it *was* ground this morning."

Why is an interesting book like a toper's nose ?

Because it *is* read to the very end.

(Hupfeld 669)

The stout old lady struggled to mount the high step of the waiting omnibus.

"Come along, ma," urged the conductor, "if they'd given you more yeast you'd be able to rise better."

"Yes, young man," she retorted. "And if they'd given you a bit more yeast you'd *be* better bred."

(Scruggs 115)

(B) The Word Do

The word *do* is used as an auxiliary verb to form the expanded present and past tense for the interrogative or negative statement, or to emphasize the affirmative nature of a statement.

Who in all of Shakespeare's plays killed the most ducks and chickens ?

Hamlet's uncle, because he *did* murder most foul (fowl). (Sagawa 88)

(C) The Word Have

The word *have* is used as auxiliary verb to form the perfect tenses and the perfect infinitive.

Jim Slattery's friend was trying to determine

the former's literary capacity.

"Have you read *Ode to a Code* ?" he asked.

"Niver heard of it."

"How about *Candlelight and Silver* ?"

"No."

"Well, what have you read ?"

"Sure, and ye can see fer yerself Oi've red hair,"

(D) The Word Shall and Will

The paradigm of *shall* and *will* is quite simple, but matters are not so simple that the paradigm cannot do justice to all the complications in the usage of these two auxiliaries. They present endless difficulties to foreigners, even to persons whose mother tongue is English.

Less ambiguous is the response of a man who was asked if he had any trouble with *shall* and *will*.

"Oh, no," he answered.

"My wife says" 'You shall' and I say 'I will'."

(Esar, Humorous 189)

Will and *would*, denoting the will or intention, are employed in the colloquial speech of uneducated people to form a future or conditioned statement expressing ability or capacity.

"Look here, you swindler!" roared the owner of the suburban property to the real-estate man.

"When you sold me this house didn't you say that in three months I wouldn't part with it for \$ 20,000 ?"

"Certainly," said the real-estate dealer calmly, "and you haven't, have you ?"

2. Functions of Nouns after Verbs

(A) Objects and Complement

Nouns which occupy the position of the objects of a verb admit of several interpretations as to their function. They are felt to be direct objects of that verb, or the dative of interest, or the complement. Therefore, a verb followed by a noun can be sometimes transitive and sometimes intransitive according to the function of that noun.

What part of a fish *weighs* the most? The scale.
(H. Hoke 40)

(Note: *Weigh*, used transitively, means 'to ascertain the exact heaviness of an object or substance by balancing it in a pair of scales, or on a steelyard, against the counterpoise of known amount'. The same verb, when employed intransitively, means 'to be equal to or balance a specific amount in the scales'. The specifying word is to be regarded as a predicative complement rather than as governed by the verbs.) (OED)

"The nerve of that grocer, "mumbled Mrs. Jones angrily as she picked up the telephone and prepared to call him."

When the grocer answered the 'phone' she identified herself and demanded to know why he *short-weighed* little boys.

"I sent Howard down to your store," she said, "to get two pounds of grapes. He has just arrived home and the grapes weigh only a pound and half."

"Why scales are inspected regularly," the grocer assured her, "there is absolutely nothing wrong with them and me. Have you weighed Howard yet?" (Meier 321)

(B) *Double Object and Single Object*

Some verbs which are used in one sense with one object express another meaning when they take two objects, as: "He sent *John* to Japan." "He sent *John* a pretty card."

The filmland filly doesn't mind if a man loves her and leaves *her*—provided he leaves *her enough*. (Elmo 96)

Some men don't leave *their wives* nearly as *much* when they die as they do when they are alive. (Lieberman 41)

(C) *Object and Preposition Phrase*

An indirect object may be changed into a prepositional object. The preposition *to* is used with such verbs as *give, offer, show, tell*, and the preposition *for* with such verbs as *buy, get, leave, make, order*.

There are some constructions, however, in which both *to* and *for* may be used.

"*Give me a nice polish*, you young scamp!" said a pork-pie cap.

"I can't," said the lad. "It would take a clever man for me to do that. But I can polish your boots, sir." (Hupfeld 147)

(Note: The italic passage can be paraphrased either as 'Give a nice polish for me = Polish my shoes nicely for me' or as 'Give a nice polish to me = Polish me nicely'.)

Besides nouns denoting the direct object relation, some verbs can take as their single object nouns indicating the indirect object relation, as: 'We *supply* the city (with vegetables) = We *supply* vegetables to the city;' 'They stripped the house (of the carpet) = They *stripped* the carpet from the house.' Note that the objects *the city* and *the house* are equivalent to prepositional phrases showing the places or localities which are related to the action.

Diner: "Do you *serve crabs* here?"

Waiter: "We serve anyone; sit down."

(H. Hoke 80)

(Note: The following two interpretations are possible: 'We serve crabs (= ten-legged shellfish) to anyone'; 'We serve crabs (= sour persons) with food'.)

"I say, Pat, what are you doing—*sweeping out the room*?"

"No," answered Pat. "I am sweeping out the dirt and leaving the room."

Back from a bridge tournament, Mrs. Mayes asked her new maid, "Did you *clean out that refrigerator*, as I asked you to?"

"I sure did, ma'am," said she, "and everything was mighty tasty."

To express verbal action, such as *striking, hitting, grasping*, inflicted upon part of the body, the following two sentence structures are used: (i) to denote as an object the person who is subjected to

such action, and as an adverbial equivalent (= prepositional phrase) the part of the body; as: 'strike him on the head; 'grasp (or hold) him by the hand'; and (ii) to represent as an object the part of the body inflicted on, as: 'strike his head', 'grasp (or hold) his hand'. The latter turn of expression is rather informal, but not infrequent. From the logical standpoint, however, it often conveys an implicit idea that the part of the body is separated from the body.

Boy: "May I *hold your hand*?"

Girl: "It is not very heavy. I can manage, thank you."
(Kohl 71)

She held out her hand and the young man *took it* and departed.
(Temple, 33)

(D) Dative of interest

The dative of interest denotes the person to whose advantage or disadvantage the action results: "She *sang us* a merry song." Some grammarians, however, establish no distinction between the ordinary dative and the dative of interest in that they are not so different from each other.

She: "Oh, I wish the Lord *had made* me a man."

He: "He did. I'm the man."
(Copeland 208)

(E) Ethical dative

The object of dative is often confused with the ethical dative, in which a person no more than indirectly interested in the fact described in the sentence is introduced into it, usually by himself as the speaker, in the dative, to show that he has an emotional or sympathetic interest in the statement. This practice was once common in early modern English.

Petruchio: "Here, sirrah, Grumio, knock, I say."

Grumio: "Knock, sir! Whom should I knock?"

Petruchio: "Villain, I say, *knock* me here soundly."

Grumio: "*Knock you* here, sir? Why, sir, what am I, sir, that I should *knock you* here, sir?"

Petruchio: "Villain, I say, *knock me* at this gate.

And *rap me* well, or I'll *knock your knave's pate*."

(Shakespeare, The Taming of the Shrew, I, ii, 5)

(F) Objects of Result

Various relations are observed between the verb and its object, the latter denoting (i) the person and thing on which the action of the verb is performed and (ii) the object resulting from the action of the verb—in other words, the thing coming into existence as a result of the action of the verb, as with:

I dig the ground. I dig the grave.

He bores the plank. He bores a hole in the plank.

Passer-by: "You're *digging* out the *holes*, are you, Mr. Halloran?"

Gardener: "No, mum, Oi'm *digging* out the *dirt* an 'lavin' the holes."

Question: "What animal eats the least?"

Answer: "The moth. It just *eats holes*."

The object of some verbs indirectly denotes the result of an action.

Do you *run* a car?

No, I let the engine do that.
(Weigle 70)

The infinitive in the construction, 'to teach + one + to-infinitive', denotes (i) the thing taught (how to do something), that is, the act itself, and (ii) the cost and penalty of some act (the result of the act), as: "I will *teach* you *to swim*," and "I'll *teach* you *to meddle* in my business."

Irate Father: "I'll *teach you to kiss* my daughter."

Cornelius: "You are too late. I've already learned."

In this connection there are some cases where the noun denotes the thing that is already in existence when the action of the verb takes place and the thing that is brought into existence when, or after, such an action occurs.

Elly May: "What kind of *husband* would you advise me t'get?"

Granny: "You get a single man an' leave the husbands alone, y'hear?" (Benton 54)

Romeo: "I would so much like to have you for my wife."

Juliet: "What in hell would your wife want me for?"

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