

### The True Role of Affectedness in NP-Preposing

While affectedness has been known to play a role in both argument realization and aspect (Dowty 1991, Tenny 1992), a definition that both captures the relevant data and has intuitive appeal remains elusive. Focusing on NP-preposing, e.g. passives in action nominals (1) and middles (2), I argue that a scalar, relational view of affectedness can satisfy both of these desiderata. Jaeggli (1986) argues that preposing only applies to affected arguments (cf. the *What happened to X is S* test; Jackendoff 1990).

- (1) The city's destruction/#avoidance by Caesar.  
(What happened to the city was that the Mongols destroyed/#avoided it.)
- (2) This box opens/#avoids easily.  
(What happened to this box was that Pandora opened/#avoided it.)

However, preposing also applies to path and performance objects (Tenny 1992), which are not affected:

- (3) a. The trail's traversal by John.  
(#What happened to the trail was that John traversed it.)  
b. The monologue's performance by Gilda.  
(#What happened to the monologue was that Gilda performed it.)

Tenny redefines affectedness as **measuring out** and **delimitation**, e.g. in (1) and (3) the event is measured out by the extent of the city, trail, or monologue, and culminates at their total affectedness or traversal. However, this approach is problematic. First, in (2) it is not the box itself but its degree of openness that measures out the event. Second, affectedness is intuitively about change; extending it to path/performance participants is conceptually unappealing. Indeed, the affected participants in (3) are John and Gilda, who change location (physically or abstractly) along the trail or in the monologue.

Building on Krifka (1998), Hay et al. (1999), Wechsler (2005), Beavers (2006), I argue instead that affectedness is a two-place relationship between a theme and some argument that defines the change in the theme, including physical/abstract paths (3) and property scales, e.g. scales of destruction (1) and openness (2) (sometimes realized overtly, e.g. *shot dead*). An argument is affected if it changes position along the path/scale; the theme's progress along the path/scale measures out the event. Crucially, the various types of preposed participants above represent both relatum in the affectedness relation. I therefore propose that NP-preposing applies only to objects of predicates entailing affectedness, where the heterogeneity follows from independent principles of argument realization. The theme is typically object due to its high protopatience (Dowty 1991), but when it is subject, in the absence of a causer as in (3), the object position may be filled by the path instead. Whichever argument is object may then undergo preposing. Indeed, with caused motion verbs the theme is object and thus undergoes preposing (cp. (3a)):

- (4) a. John walked the dog down the street.  
b. This dog walks easily.

This captures the spirit of Tenny's analysis without extending affectedness to non-affected arguments. It also suggests that complex semantic relationships between arguments, rather than just individual properties of particular arguments, are relevant for syntactic generalizations, providing a way of lumping otherwise heterogeneous participants under a single semantic definition.