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Cognate Objects as Categorical Expressions

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1. Introduction

The main concern of this paper is to investigate cognate object constructions (henceforth, COCs) whose verbs, normally intransitive verbs, take their cognate nouns in their object positions such as those in (1)

- (1) a. She smiled a friendly smile.
- b. The leader laughed a mighty laugh.
- c. He lived a worthwhile life.

This construction has received much attention in the literature and has been covered in many different ways. A number of attempts are made to account for the status of the cognate objects, the modification requirement, passive sentences of COCs, the possibility of *it*-pronominalization of cognate objects, etc. (Jones 1988, Massam 1990, Langacker 1991, Takami and Kuno 2002, Horita 2005, etc.).

The goal of this study is to clarify the issues relating to COCs from the viewpoint of categories. To accomplish the aim, first the definition and the constraints of COCs will be provided and then consequent syntactic behaviors of COCs will be accounted for. The conclusion of this paper is that COCs specify a member of the category invoked by the verb and that their subject should be spontaneous enough to induce the event described by the verb.

This paper is organized as follows. In section 2, the working definition and the constraints of COCs will be offered and then COCs will be classified into four groups based on the definition and their properties. Section 3 is devoted to examining the different syntactic behaviors of COCs and they will be accounted for according to the types of COCs. Section 4 will discuss what kind of verbs can appear in COCs and section 5 summarizes our discussion.

2. Definition and classification of COC

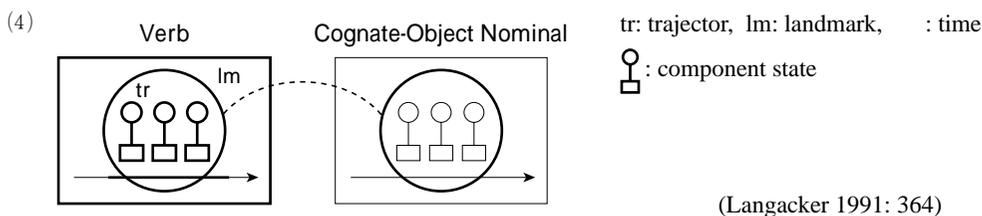
2.1. What are cognate object constructions (COCs)?

This section considers the working definition and the constraints of COCs and examines a COC classification. COCs take cognate objects that are morphologically related to the verbs and usually the verbs are intransitive verbs. The transitivity of COCs is quite low since cognate objects are not targets of activities but ad-

ditional elements to characterize the activities described by the verbs; for this reason, cognate objects can be left out of the COCs as shown in (2), and cognate objects can be separated from the verbs by inserting punctuation marks such as commas, colons, or dashes as shown in (3).

- (2) a. She smiled. (cf. (1a)) b. The leader laughed. (cf. (1b))
- (3) a. He smiled, a toothless smile with bits of breakfast clinging to his beard.
 b. Anthony laughed - a big laugh from deep in his belly.
 c. She shook her grey head and laughed: a youthful sounding laugh which had no trace of bitterness or regret. (these examples were retrieved from the Internet)

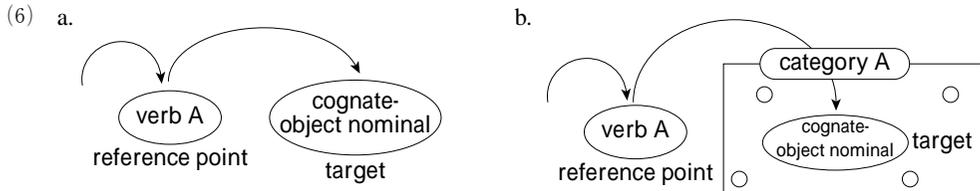
Langacker offers a schema of the cognate object construction in which “the abstract region is salient in both the verb and its object, and the verb accords it the status of primary landmark. A correspondence between the verbal landmark and nominal profile effects the integration of the two component structures, in full conformity with the direct-object construction.” (Langacker 1991: 363-364)



From this figure we can grasp the static relationship between the verb and its cognate object, but cannot explain why COCs require modification of some sort. COCs require some kind of modification.¹

- (5) a. *She laughed a laugh. b. *He slept a sleep. c. *Mary lived a life.

To start with considering COCs intuitively. Many scholars have pointed out that cognate objects of COCs are very similar to the resultant objects (Poutsma 1926, Jespersen 1927, Quirk, *et al.* 1985, Takami and Kuno 2002, etc.). Thus I consider that cognate objects are just targets to clarify what kind of activity happens via the reference points of verbs as shown in (6a). However, this cannot account for the requirement of modification in COCs. Then the figure (6a) can be modified into (6b) from the viewpoint of categories.



(6b) shows that, (i) category A is invoked by the appearance of the verb which works as a reference point and, (ii) the target (a specific member of the category) is identified by checking modification of the cognate object. The category is decided via the reference point (the verb), and the target is found out in the category with the clue of modification of the cognate object. COC is a construction that characterizes a specific member of the category precisely. Considered in this light, the obligatoriness of modification in COCs results from the characterization in COCs. In order to specify a member of the category, cognate objects should be modified in some way. The modification requirement of COCs is easily explained from the viewpoint of categories.

Moreover from the categorial point of view, we can explain what kind of objects can appear in COCs. Cognate objects are morphologically related to the verbs themselves. Then the component structures of cognate objects perfectly conform with the same structures as their verbs as shown in the Langacker's figure (4). Thus naturally cognate objects belong in the categories invoked by the verbs. On the other hand, in most cases non-cognate objects are irrelevant to the category even if their meaning is very similar to those of the verbs. Therefore it is often said that non-cognate objects cannot appear in COCs.

- (7) a. *He slept a sound slumber. b. *He laughed a hearty giggle.
 c. *He died a glorious end. d. *He lived a happy experience. (Konishi 1981: 12)

However there exist acceptable COCs with non-cognate objects as in (8).

- (8) a. He slept a fitful {sleep / slumber}.
 b. He smiled a knowing {smile/?smirk}. (Horita 1996: 225)

All these examples can be accounted for if we consider these non-cognate objects belong in the categories invoked by the verbs. In fact they can be defined by using the cognate nouns of the verbs, thus it is natural to think that both the non-cognate objects and cognate objects belong in the same category. This explains why the sentences with non-cognate objects are acceptable. The most important thing is not whether they are cognate objects, but whether they belong in the category.

2.2. Two types of characterization in COCs

In order to specify a member of the category, cognate objects should be characterized by adding some kind of modifier. COCs have two positions to be characterized: verbs and cognate objects. The verbs, i.e. the activities of the verbs, can be characterized by the modifiers which explain how the activities occur. On the other hand, cognate objects can be characterized by identifying the property of cognate objects to specify a member of the category. I shall henceforth use the term *verbal COCs* for the former COCs and the term *nominal COCs* for the latter ones in this paper.

(9) verbal COCs

- a. The old man died a happy death. c. Bill laughed a hearty laugh.
b. She lived an honest life. d. Tom slept a sound sleep. (Iwakura 1976: 60)

(10) nominal COCs

- a. Fred sang a comical song. c. Mary sang a beautiful song.
b. Sam danced a merry dance. (Hamada 1996: 67, 71, Jones 1988: 91, Araki and Yasui 1992: 256)

Verbal COCs can be roughly paraphrased into intransitive expressions including adverbs since the modifiers of verbal COCs express how the events happen.

- (11) a. The old man died happily. (9a) c. Bill laughed heartily. (9c)
b. She lived honestly. (9b) d. Tom slept soundly. (9d) (Iwakura 1976: 60)

On the contrary, nominal COCs cannot have a reading roughly equivalent to intransitive expressions with adverbs.

- (12) a. Fred sang comically. (10a) c. Mary sang beautifully. (10c)
b. Sam danced merrily. (10b) (Hamada 1996: 67, 71)

Furthermore only nominal COCs can add manner adverbs because in (13) the adjectives describe the properties of cognate objects while the adverbs modify the activities of the verbs. Two different types of modification do not conflict with one another in one sentence. On the contrary, in verbal COCs the activities have already been modified by the adjectives of the cognate objects, thus we cannot add manner adverbs to the verbal COCs as shown in (14).

- (13) a. He dreamed a strange dream strangely.
b. She sang a beautiful song beautifully.

c. Mary sang a comical song sadly. (a,b: Yasui 1983: 84, c: Hamada 1996: 73)

(14) *Bill smiled a bright smile sadly. (Hamada 1996: 73)

To repeat the major point: COCs are divided into two groups according to how they are characterized.

2.3. Working definition of COCs

At first we propose a working definition of COCs based on the discussion above and, as a corollary to this, the working definition imposes two constraints upon COCs.

(15) Working definition of COCs

COC is a construction which identifies a member of the category invoked by the verb.

(16) Constraints on COCs

a. The cognate objects should be members of the categories invoked by the verbs.

b. To identify a specific member of the category, the cognate objects should be modified.

(16a) neatly accounts for the acceptable objects appearing in COCs. Only the members of the category can be objects of COCs regardless of whether they are cognate objects or not. (16b) explains the obligatoriness of modification in COCs.

With regard to the working definition (15) we confront the questions of how to deal with Langacker's timespan limitation and cognate objects without modification. Langacker (1991: 363) asserts that in COCs "the object thus constitutes a reification of the process itself, so its existence is limited to timespan of the verb's temporal profile". We have several choices of how to deal with the concept of the simultaneity of the cognate objects and the activities. In this paper we do not incorporate the idea of contemporaneousness in the definition of COCs (15) because even if there is no simultaneous relationship between the cognate objects and the activities, the sentences identify a member of the categories and there is no reason for ruling out such sentences.

Concretely speaking, cognate objects of verbal COCs characterize the event of COCs, thus the objects' existences are limited to the timespan of the verbs' activities. However, there are two types in nominal COCs according to whether they are limited to the timespan of the activities. In (17) the cognate objects exist simultaneously with the events described by the verbs, while in (18) the cognate objects exist independently of the events.

(17) a. John jumped a mighty jump. b. The athlete ran a good run. (Takami and Kuno 2002: 135)

(18) a. We sang a birthday song. b. He danced a traditional dance.²

Nominal COCs accordingly are broken down into two groups. We will use the term *synchronous nominal COC* when the existence of the object is limited to the timespan of the activity, and the term *asynchronous nominal COC* when there is no limitation of the timespan.

Another question is that some cognate objects do not need any kind of modification as in (19). Since (16 b) states that the cognate objects should be modified, these sentences are seemingly counter-examples of definition (15) and constraints (16).

- (19) a. The people danced a dance with joy.
 b. She has dreamed a dream, but now that dream has left her.
 c. They sang a song together.

However, accurately these constructions are not COCs because the cognate object of each sentence is not a specific member of the category but a mere arbitrary constituent member of the category. *A dance / a dream / a song* are all generic nouns. Generic nouns are nonspecific and considered referring to a whole class of entities in general. The sentences in (19) are not made in order to specify a member of the category and consequently they are not COCs. They are tautological expressions of a sort which are used to redefine the category by backgrounding something (cf. Ogata 2006). *A dance / a dream / a song* in (19) background all the differences among the members of each category. Thus these categories are redefined as consisting of homogeneous members of the categories. From the redefined category an arbitrary member is picked out. This member is not a specific one but a general one. (20a) shows the backgrounding of the differences among all the members to redefine the category and (20b) gives the process of singling out an arbitrary member.



Although the sentences such as (19) are excluded from COCs by definition, these sentences and COCs are very similar in that they also take cognate nominals in the object positions and pick out a member of the category. Therefore in this paper I refer to them as *pseudo COCs*.

Together with the examples in (19), the expressions with numerals also fall under the group of pseudo COCs.

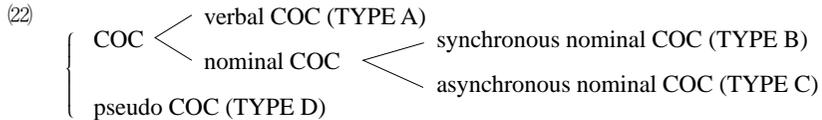
- (21) They danced three dances before they bothered with finding out each other's names.

(*Born with the Century* by William Kinsolving, p.60)

Three dances is interpreted as three arbitrary members selected from the homogeneous category. Numerals just tell us how many members are picked out from the category and they never identify specific members. This inevitably leads to the conclusion that the constructions as in (21) are included in pseudo COCs.

2.4. Properties of each COC

We can summarize the classification of COCs discussed above by showing the table in (22).



According to the working definition of COC (15), the constructions in which the verbs take their cognate objects are first divided into two groups: COCs and pseudo COCs. COCs are classified further into verbal COCs and nominal COCs by the position of characterization. Nominal COCs are further grouped into two types based on the concurrency with the activities of the verbs: synchronous nominal COCs and asynchronous nominal COCs.

Some properties of the types vary continuously, others are discontinuously-varying and thereby the types are sharply distinguished, as is shown in (23). The transitivity of verbal COCs is the lowest among four types, thus cognate objects can be separated from the verbs by adding punctuations. Therefore the cognate objects of verbal COCs are considered to be adjuncts. On the other hand, the transitivity of pseudo COCs is the highest among all types. The cognate objects of pseudo COCs are arguments, which enables the COCs to be passivized. Then the existence of the category is limited to the timespan of the verb's activity in type A and B, therefore the categories of these types are temporal. In contrast, the categories of type C and D are something already existing before the utterances of COCs, therefore they are existing categories. The latter property is closely linked to the contemporaneousness between the categories and the events described by the verb phrases of COCs.

(23)

	<TYPE A> verbal COC	<TYPE B> synchronous nominal COC	<TYPE C> asynchronous nominal COC	<TYPE D> pseudo COC
transitivity	low	↔		high
cognate object	adjunct	↔		argument
category	temporary		existing	
contemporaneousness	synchronous		asynchronous	

In the next section, we consider the different syntactic behaviors among these types of COCs and will see that the differences come from the different characteristics shown in (23).

3. Different syntactic behaviors among four types of COCs.

In this section I will examine the syntactic behaviors of four types of COCs: TYPE A (verbal COC), TYPE B (synchronous nominal COC), TYPE C (asynchronous nominal COC), TYPE D (pseudo COC).

3.1. Passivization

First of all COCs can not be passivized in general as shown in (24).

- (24) a. *An uneventful life was lived by Harry. b. *A weary sigh was sighed by Bill.

(Jones 1988: 91)

This can be explained, in part, by the consideration that cognate objects are just targets through the referent points, the verbs, in COCs. Then it is natural to think that the cognate objects should follow the verbs of COCs. However, some COCs can be passivised as in the examples below.

- (25) a. Susan lived a good life. b. A good life was lived by Susan. (Rice 1987: 210)

- (26) a. Sam dances a merry dance. b. A merry dance was danced by Sam (Jones 1988: 91)

- (27) a. A song was sung by Caruso. b. A dance was danced by Shirley. (Iwasaki 2007: 6, Rice 1987: 214)

But passivization of COCs is possible only for the COCs of type C and D. This is no doubt due to the fact that passivization requires high transitivity in the sentences and that the cognate objects should be highly independent of the events described by the COCs. COCs specify a member of the category invoked by the verbs. The verbs act as reference points and the cognate objects are simply targets. Therefore it is natural to assume that the verbs of COCs should precede their cognate objects. Despite this, if we want to place the verbs after the cognate objects by passivization, a significant restriction is imposed on the cognate objects. They should be somehow independent of the events described by COCs. Since the cognate objects of type A and B belong in the temporary categories and are dominated by the temporary situation, they are strongly dependent on the events described by COCs. For this reason, type A and B cannot accept passivisation of COCs. On the other hand, the categories of type C and D are already existing and somehow independent of the situation predicted by the COCs. Thus type C and D are potential candidates for passivization. However it is natural to consider that other factors affect whether COCs can be passivised or not. Most importantly, from our point of view, the types of COCs play a crucial role in the passivization of COCs.

3.2. *it*-Pronominalization

Let us focus now on *it*-pronominalization. Although *it*-pronominalization can be seen in all four types, there are severe restrictions on it and some differences between the types. The cognate objects of COCs are just targets to be specified in the categories invoked by the verbs. Thus most of the cognate objects cannot undergo *it*-pronominalization, but acceptability of *it*-pronominalization of COCs varies in accordance with the transitivity of COCs. Usually the type C and D easily undergo *it*-pronominalization.

Type C and D

- (28) a. John sang a beautiful song. He *sang it* (= the beautiful song) to cheer her up.

(Kuno and Takami 2004: 132)

- (29) I have dreamed a dream, but now it has left me.

Type A and B

- (30) a. He was horrified, but he smiled a happy smile. *He *smiled it* (= the happy smile) in order to disarm the intruder.

- b. He died a terrible, lingering death. *There was no reason for him to die it (= the death) with all the powerful painkillers we have nowadays.

(Kuno and Takami 2004: 132)

Even if *it*-pronominalization is possible, the pronoun *it* refers to the different things based on the types of COCs. For example, the pronoun *it* in the verbal COC (31a) refers to *Mary smiled a sudden smile*, while the one in the nominal COC (31b) makes reference to *a mysterious smile*.

- (31) a. Mary smiled a sudden smile and it was attractive.

- b. Mary smiled a mysterious smile and it was attractive. (Fujita and Matsumoto 2005: 186)

The pronoun *it* is interpreted as the event in verbal COCs, while in nominal COCs and pseudo COCs *it* is understood as the cognate object. The types of COCs have an effect on the referentiality of the pronoun *it*.

3.3. Gapping

This subsection is devoted to gapping of COCs from the viewpoint of the classification of COCs. COCs of type C and D can leave out the verbs in the follow-on sentences. In contrast, sentences with gapping of type A and B are substantially unacceptable.

- (32) a. Mary smiled a mysterious smile and Jane a beautiful smile.

- b. ??Mary smiled a never-ending smile and Jane a sudden smile.

(Fujita and Matsumoto 2005: 186)

- (33) Mary danced three dances and John four dances.

This can be explained if we offer the same explanation above in the subsection of passivisation. In order to leave out the verbs in the latter sentences, the cognate objects should be highly independent of the events described by the COCs. If we omit the verbs when the cognate objects are strongly connected to the event, we would not understand what is happening because cognate objects only remain in existence during the time-span of the activities described by the verbs. The cognate objects of type A and B are strongly dependent on the events described by COCs since they belong in the temporary categories and they are dominated by the temporary situation. Henceforth, we cannot delete the verbs in type A and B COCs. On the other hand, type C and D are also candidates for gapping since the categories of type C and D are already existing and somehow independent of the situation predicted by the COCs.

3.4. Japanese COCs

Now I look at the Japanese COCs in this section. There are several similarities between Japanese COCs and English COCs in that, (i) Japanese COC verbs roughly coincide with English COC verbs, (ii) Japanese COCs also require some sort of modification in order to identify a member of the category, (iii) there exists a group of pseudo-COCs which do not need the modification of cognate objects. However, the acceptability of Japanese COCs is quite low, compared to English COCs.

This low acceptability is surely due to the fact that the cognate objects precede the verbs of COCs in Japanese. The working definition (16) says that COC is a construction to identify a member of the category conjured by the verbs in which the verbs work as reference points. Thus in nature the cognate objects should be placed after the verbs. Thus Japanese COCs are strongly restricted to those whose cognate objects are independent of the situations described by the COCs. This is the reason why only pseudo-COCs and asynchronous nominal COCs are acceptable in Japanese COCs. The same explanation has already been given in the sections of passivization and gapping.

- (34) *Taro-wa totsuzen-no warai-o warau. <verbal COC>
 Taro-nom sudden laugh-acc laugh
- (35) *Taro-wa dokutoku-na hohoemi-o hohoemu. <synchronous nominal COC>
 Taro-nom distinctive smile-acc smile
- (36) Hanako-wa tenshi-no hohoemi-o hohoemu. <asynchronous nominal COC>
 Hanako-nom angelic smile-acc smile
- (37) Hanako-wa uta-o utau. <pseudo COC>
 Hanako-nom song-acc sing

3.5. Summary

Based on the discussion above, the different behaviors of COCs are shown in the table (37). This table also shows the possibility of paraphrasing cognate objects into manner adverbs, and the modification of COC.

(38)

	<TYPE A> verbal COC	<TYPE B> synchronous nominal COC	<TYPE C> asynchronous nominal COC	<TYPE D> pseudo COC
passive		×		
gapping		×		
Japanese COCs		×		
interpretation of <i>it</i>	activity	cognate object		
manner adverb	paraphrasable	unparaphrasable		
modification	obligatory			×

4. Verbs of COCs

It has been claimed in the literature that only unergative verbs, but not unaccusative verbs, can appear in COCs (Keyser and Roeper 1984; Massam 1990; Levin 1993; Macfarland 1995). Unergative verbs describe volitional actions of their subject referents (e.g., smile, laugh, etc.) or involuntary bodily processes (e.g., sleep, sneeze). On the other hand, unaccusative verbs are those whose subjects are semantically themes or those of existing/happening (cf. Kuno and Takami 2004: 106).

- (39)
- a. *The glass broke a crooked break.
 - b. *The actress fainted a feigned faint.
 - c. *The apples fell a smooth fall.
 - d. *The city sprawled an extensive sprawl around the bay.
 - e. *The ship sank a strange sinking.
 - f. *The door opened its noisy opening.
 - g. *The snow melted a slow melt.
 - h. *Phyllis existed a peaceful existence.
 - i. *The statue stood a heroic stance in the middle of the common.
 - j. *She arrived a glamorous arrival.
 - k. *Karen appeared a striking appearance at the department party.
 - l. *We approached a strange approach.
 - m. *It emerged a strange emergence.

n. *John came an unhappy coming .

(Takami and Kuno 2002: 134-135)

However, Kuno and Takami give many examples which pose serious problems for those who limit the verbs of COCs to unergative verbs. The verbs in (40) and (41) are all typical unaccusative verbs since the subjects of the verbs are all theme, and the verbs describe nonvolitional events. However, they are perfectly acceptable sentences.

(40) a. The tree *grew* a century's *growth* within only ten years.

b. ✓/? The gale *blew* its hardest *blow* yet in the next hour. (Takami and Kuno 2002: 134)

(41) a. The stock market *dropped* its largest *drop* in three years today.

b. The stock market *slid* a surprising 2% *slide* today.

c. Stanley watched as the ball *bounced* a funny little *bounce* right into the shortstop's glove.

d. The apples *fell* just a short *fall* to the lower deck, and so were not too badly bruised.

(Takami and Kuno 2002: 142)

Furthermore Massam (1990: 176) points out that there exist COCs of transitive verbs, provided they have non-affected reading as shown in (42).^{3 4}

(42) a. Let the guy shoot his shoot, for Pete's sake.

b. Jane cut her cut, then I cut mine.

The sentences in (42) are COCs under the working definition (15). *His shoot / her cut* are a specific member of the category invoked by the verbs and their cognate objects are characterized by the pronouns *his* and *her*. Consequently COCs can be made with unergative verbs, unaccusative verbs, and transitive verbs. It seems reasonable to assume that COCs are not constrained syntactically but they are restricted semantically.

Let us return to the sentences with unaccusative verbs as are shown in (39) - (41). It is worth remarking that as pointed out in Hatakeyama *et al.* (2006) all the unaccusative verbs in the acceptable COCs allow transitive alternation, to put it more precisely, causative-inchoative alternation. In other words, the verbs in (40) - (41) are all ergative verbs that are used in the spontaneous event view. The property of the subjects holds extremely important clues to the acceptability of the COCs with unaccusative verbs. The subjects should be spontaneous enough to induce the events described by the verbs. I shall be proposing below in (43) - (44) a revision of the working definition of COCs and one of constraints on COCs.

(43) Definition of COCs:

COC is a construction which identifies a member of the category invoked by the verb and its subject

should be spontaneous enough to induce the event described by the verb.

(44) Constraints on COCs (final version)

- a. The cognate objects should be members of the categories invoked by the verbs.
- b. To identify a specific member of the category, the cognate objects should be modified.
- c. The subjects of COCs should be spontaneous enough to induce the event described by the verb.

Furthermore we need to mention here one more point: the unacceptable sentences in (39) are all verbal COCs, while the acceptable sentences in (40) - (41) are all nominal COCs. Verbal COCs require that their subjects should be agent but in nature the subjects of unaccusative sentences are semantically themes or those of existing / happening. This discrepancy is one reason why the sentences in (39) are unacceptable.

5. Conclusion

In this paper we have examined cognate object constructions defining them as constructions identifying a member of the categories invoked by the verbs. We have shown that the constructions taking cognate objects can be divided into four groups and syntactically different behaviors among COCs can be accounted for if we consider the type of sentences. It can be concluded from the discussion in this paper that cognate object constructions are categorical expressions.

Notes

- 1 . Some sentences with cognate objects do not require modification of any kind such as *dance a dance*, *sing a song*, and *dream a dream*, etc. They are discussed in the section 2.3.
- 2 . In this paper I distinguish the verb phrases such as *sing a song* / *dance a dance* as being different from the verb phrases such as *sing a beautiful song* / *dance a traditional dance*. In other words they belong to different types of COCs.
- 3 . Possessive pronouns always co-index with the subjects of their clauses in COCs as in the following relevant sentences. (i) John nodded his head. (ii) Mary lost her mind. (iii) I envied Mary her beauty. (Yasui 1983: 90)
- 4 . Takami and Kuno (2002) simply rules out COCs with transitive verbs by definition. But if we consider the nature of COCs, we find no reason to remove these sentences from the list of COCs.

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