

Syntactic properties of resultative constructions in Russian Sign Language

Elena Pasalskaya
Email: lena@ales.ru

About RSL

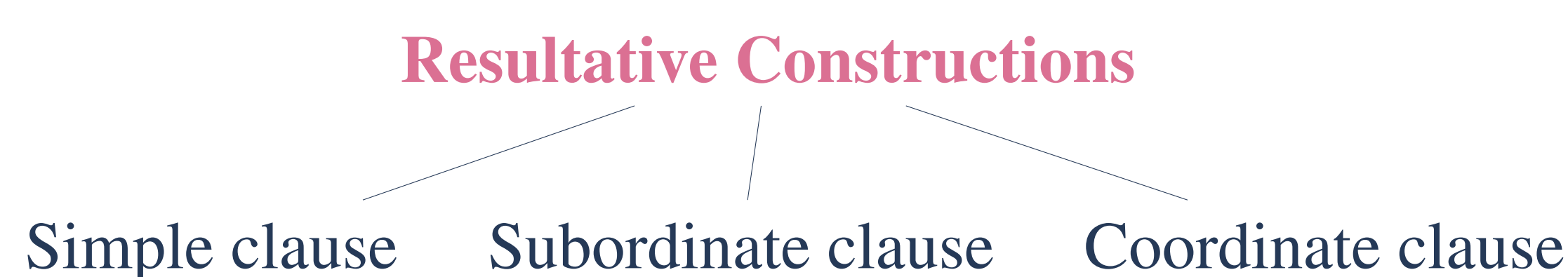
- ◆ used by Deaf and half-of-hearing people in Russia and post-Soviet states
- ◆ 120,000 signers
- ◆ 1806 - first school for Deaf people in Russia
- ◆ investigated from 1992

What are resultative constructions? Resultative constructions are used to describe cause-result events. They consist of two predicates: manner of causation and result state (Kentner 2014; a.o.)

- (1) John hammered the metal flat.

process result

- (2) I HAMMER WINDOW BREAK
'I hammered the window broken.'



Research Question: What is the syntactic structure of resultative constructions in RSL?

Tests (Loos 2017):

- ◆ Fronting - the extraction of a word or phrase to the beginning of a sentence for emphasis
- ◆ Wh-movement - the extraction of wh-words (in RSL, rightward)
- ◆ Scope of modal verbs - the placement of modal verbs

Apply to different types of clauses:

- ◆ simple clause (GIRL EAT CHOCOLATE 'The girl is eating a chocolate.')
- ◆ control clause (BOY WANT GO CINEMA 'The boy wants to go to the cinema.')
- ◆ know clause (DAUGHTER PERSUADE MOTHER COOK CAKE 'The daughter persuades the mother to cook a cake.')
- ◆ want clause (BOY WANT HERE BUS STOP 'The boy wants that the bus stops here.')
- ◆ coordinate clause (BOY DRINK J-U-I-C-E GIRL EAT APPLE 'The boy is drinking a juice, and girl is eating an apple.')

Fronting

	Expectation Reality	
simple clause	ok	ok
subject control	ok	ok
know-type clause	ok	*
want-type clause	ok	*
coordinate clause	*	*

We avoid fronting of subjects in simple clauses, in order to differ them from the sentences with extraction.

- (3) a. SOUP BOY EAT
'The soup, the boy is eating.'
b. *BUS BOY KNOW HERE STOP
Intended: 'This bus, the boy knows it stops here.'

- c. WINDOW I HAMMER BREAK

'The window, I hammered it broken'

Wh-movement

	Expectation Reality	
simple clause	ok	ok
subject control	ok	ok
know-type clause	*	*
want-type clause	*	*
coordinate clause	*	*

Wh-phrases in RSL obligatorily occupy the final position in simple clauses (4a). Rightward wh-movement is impossible from both coordinated clauses (4b) and across subordinate clauses (4c). The acceptability of rightward wh-movement, however, (4d) suggests that resultative constructions have properties of monoclausal constructions.

- (4) a. *t* READ BOOK WHO_{*t*}
'Who is reading the book?'
b. * *t* WATCH TELEVISION FATHER SLEEP WHO_{*t*}
Intended: 'The father is sleeping and who is watching television?'
c.?? *t* WANT MOTHER BUY CHOCOLATE WHO_{*t*}
'Who wants the mother to buy a chocolate?'
d. *t* CLOSE HANG DRY WHO_{*t*}
'Who hung the close dry?'

Scope of modal verbs

	Expectation Reality	
simple clause	ok	ok
subject control	ok	ok
know-type clause	*	*
want-type clause	*	*
coordinate clause	*	*

Modal verbs occupy second or final position in the clause. The different positions of the modal verb (5a) and (5b) results in distinct interpretations. In contrasts, in resultatives the different position has **no** influence on the meaning (5c).

- (5) a. YOU MUST KNOW R-E-T-Y-A DO HOMEWORK
'You must know that Petya is doing his homework.'
b. YOU KNOW P-E-T-Y-A DO HOMEWORK MUST
'You know, that Petya must do his homework.'
c. I MUST SUITCASE CLOTHES THROW FULL
'I must pack the suitcase.'

Conclusions

After analyzing our data, we conclude that resultative constructions in RSL are monoclausal as has been demonstrated for ASL and DGS.

References

- Hoekstra, Teun. Small clause results. *Lingua* 74.2-3 (1988): 101-139.
Kentner, Ashley. Event structure of resultatives in ASL. Diss. Purdue University, (2014).
Loos, Cornelia. The syntax and semantics of resultative constructions in Deutsche Gebärdensprache (DGS) and American Sign Language (ASL). Diss. (2017).

Acknowledgements

The poster was prepared within the framework of the Academic Fund Program at the National Research University Higher School of Economics (HSE) in 2018 (grant 18-05-0053) and by the Russian Academic Excellence Project "5-100".