

Collocational and idiomatic aspects of composite predicates in the history of English.

Ed. by Laurel J. Brinton and Minoji Akimoto. (Studies in language companion series.)
Amsterdam & Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 1999. Pp. xii, 283.

This book, a follow-up volume to Brinton's 1998 *The development of English aspectual systems: Aspectualizers and post-verbal particles* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), introduces a fresh historical angle to the growing literature on English compound verbs. The seven papers plus introduction by Japanese and Western scholars cover the development of complex verbs from Old to Late Modern English.

The main collocation types examined in this volume are light verb + deverbal noun, such as *do a report, make a call, give an answer*; and verb + postverbal particle, e.g. *write down, dust off, think over*, which often express Aktionsart, or lexical rather than syntactic aspect.

The first paper, which is by the editors, presents interesting representative examples of Old English collocations with verbs such as *(ge)macian* 'make', *sellan, giefan* 'give', *habban* 'have', and *(ge)niman, tacan* 'take' + N, and concludes that this type of construction is a native development in English which was reinforced by a parallel form in Latin. The second paper, by Meiko Matsumoto, continues an examination of the development of these verb types in Middle English. By this time the construction has become partially but not highly idiomatized, a feature partly revealed by the use of adjectival as opposed to adverbial modification of the expression.

In Ch. 4, the third paper, Harumi Tanabe examines 'Composite predicates and phrasal verbs in *The Paston Letters*', a collection of letters and documents from the late fifteenth century. Tanabe does a frequency count and analysis of the various light verb + N constructions, noting the incidence of modifiers such as zero article, possessive pronouns, and adjectives, and the low frequency of passivization of this construction type. Risto Hiltunen picks up the developmental thread for the Early Modern English period in Ch. 5, basing her observations mainly on a corpus of dramatic, poetic and prose texts. Hiltunen identifies four patterns in the constructions based on article use and plurality.

For Ch. 6, Merja Kytö conducted a corpus-based study of the light verbs *make, have, give, take, and do* for the same period, taking special note of similarities and differences between the verbs and their use. Included is an appendix listing which deverbal nouns appear with which verbs. Co-editor Akimoto wrote a comparable chapter for the Late Modern English period, also taking into consideration prepositional phrases such as *in connection with* and *with regard to*.

Ch. 8, by Elizabeth Closs Traugott, offers 'A historical overview of complex predicate types'. This chapter summarizes major events in the evolution of this construction type for each period, putting each development into historical perspective.

An impressive collection of references for the entire volume appears in the back of the book, and there is a short general index, something not always provided in collections of papers.

This carefully and attractively produced volume promises to be a valuable resource to scholars with a particular interest in the growth and enrichment of the English language through complex verb development. [Karen Steffen Chung, *National Taiwan*

University.]