

Modeling the 'Evaluative Attribution Construction(s)' (EAC) and Its Development in Modern English

This study explores constructs such as the following:

- (1) He still regards himself as a working farmer. ARCHER-1979-NEW
- (2) We consider it almost one of the necessities of life. ARCHER-1875-ADV
- (3) He finds the bromide to be most suitable. ARCHER-1864-MED
- (4) We no longer think of your form of worship as idolatrous. ARCHER-1966-SER

These examples share a common underlying Argument-Structure-Construction wherein an **Attributor** attributes an **Attribute** to an **Attributee**. In contrast to other Secondary Attribute Constructions (D'hoedt & Cuyckens 2017a) or what Quirk et al. (1985) call "Object Complement", this attribution does not alter the state of the Attributee like the "Resultative-Construction" with causative meaning but is a subjective evaluation which may not be factual. (Halliday 1967, 63. Compare: *He considers the couple husband and wife* doesn't mean the couple is actually married, whereas *He pronounced the couple husband and wife* does confer marital status.) This is why the construction, also known as "AGENT-EFFECTED-JUDGEMENT"-Construction (Herbst & Uhrig 2009), will be termed Evaluative-Attribution-Construction in this study, as the "evaluative" or "mental" (D'hoedt & Cuyckens 2017b) version of the Object Attribute Construction from Herbst's and Hoffmann's "Constructionist Approach to Syntactic Analysis" (CASA, Object Attribute Construction Attr:NP).

Despite semantic similarities, there is considerable formal variation which may also interact with finer-grained meaning variations of the construction. Aside from the verb, the construction differs in the Attribute-slot which can, e.g., be a Noun-Phrase as in (1) and (2) or an Adjective-Phrase (3 and 4). Moreover, the construction connects the Attributee with Attribute-slot with either the preposition *as* (1 and 4), without any filler as in (2) or with *to be* as in (3).

The goal of this study is, first, to determine how to most appropriately structure this construction, e.g., if it best represented as one construction, several allostructions of a constructeme or a family of constructions (cf. Cappelle 2006, Coleman 2011, Herbst & Huber 2022, Perek 2015, Goldberg & Jackendoff 2004). Second, an overview of its variation and development will be delineated. This involves analyzing the fillers of these constructions to trace the developments of the contexts and the combination of variables.

Using the ARCHER corpus, the study traces the development of the construction(s) from 1600 to 1990, examining variations between the verbs *regard*, *consider*, *find*, *think* and others as well as the variants of other slots. The findings may reveal factors contributing to the decline in the construction's frequency in general as well as specifically of *think* in this construction, once being one of the most prototypical verbs to express this meaning in Old English. On top of that, this may shed light on the ascent of *consider* and *regard* in this construction following their introduction from French during the Middle English period. Preliminary results already suggest that different verbs prefer specific patterns, i.e., combinations of slot fillers. Especially striking is the difference between high-frequent Germanic verbs (*think*, *find*) and French or Latin loan words (e.g. *regard*, *consider*).

References

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