

Kudrnáčová, Naděžda

## Internally vs. externally operating energy

In: Kudrnáčová, Naděžda. *Caused motion: secondary agent constructions*. Vyd. 1. Brno: Masarykova univerzita, 2013, pp. 68-73

ISBN 9788021063730

Stable URL (handle): <https://hdl.handle.net/11222.digilib/128515>

Access Date: 28. 11. 2024

Version: 20220831

Terms of use: Digital Library of the Faculty of Arts, Masaryk University provides access to digitized documents strictly for personal use, unless otherwise specified.

## 7 Internally vs. Externally Operating Energy

As has been discussed thus far, SA constructions are instantiations of a specific type of caused motion situation in which self-agentive locomotion is caused from outside by an exertion of energy that is underlain by the causer's realization of his intention. The causal operation of "external" intention, not necessarily accompanied by direct physical manipulation (cf. the classic example *The general marched the soldiers*), requires that the caused movements be not only self-agentive but also, and no less importantly, that the energy that underlies the actual physical realization of the movement by the causee operate internally, not externally.<sup>30</sup> By this it is meant that the energy is not externally oriented in that there is no transmission of physical energy from the agent's body to an entity external to the agent's body. The agent is thus both the source and the receiver of the energy. This type of caused motion situation is encoded in, e.g., the verbs *walk, swim, march, strut, amble, crawl, wander, dance, trot, canter*, etc.

In movements caused by externally oriented energy, the agent is a source of physical energy and transmits this energy to an entity external to his body. The external entity thus moves owing to the fact that it receives physical energy from outside. This type of caused motion situation is encoded in, e.g., the verbs *raise, turn, lower, bend, drag, pull, push, open, close, throw* or *fling*. The energy transmitted from one participant to another is encoded in the lexico-semantic content of the verbs as one of their constitutive features. In the verbs of the *walk* or *march* type, by contrast, the potential external causation of the movement, i.e. the transmission of energy from the causer to the causee, can only be expressed syntactically, by means of the 'N-VP-NP(-PP)' syntactic pattern (or by means of a periphrastic causative construction).

The obligatory 'internality' of the operation of the physical energy in self-agentive movements of the *walk* or *swim* type ensures that these movements can be caused "from outside" by the exertion of energy that is underlain by the external causer's intention. These verbs can, then, enter into SA constructions. This eventuality is, however, not possible in movements of the *raise* or *drag* type. Compare the difference between

---

30 Although the causer can come into direct physical contact with the causee and can manipulate him (this is especially the case in situations with animal causees), direct manipulation, accompanied by the transmission of physical energy from the causer to the causee, is a mere collateral feature in SA constructions.

*John walked Harry to the door (John danced Mary round the ballroom) and John raised her, John dragged her to the kitchen, John flung her against the railing.*<sup>31</sup> The verbs of the *raise* or *drag* type represent movements which involve the exertion of physical energy (with the causer as its source) and its transmission to the patient, which bars the verbs from SA constructions.

The distinction ‘internal operation of energy’ vs. ‘external operation of energy’ corresponds to Levin and Rappaport Hovav’s distinction (1995: 90–98) ‘internal causation’ vs. ‘external causation’. The account in terms of the operation of energy as outlined here enables us to capture certain specific aspects of a causal structuration expressed in SA constructions.

Let us first consider the following pair of sentences:

(7.1) John dragged her to the door.

(7.2) John dragged his bags to the door.

The motion of the patient is presented as a direct result of the motion of the causer, irrespective of whether the patient is animate or not (that is, irrespective of the patient’s potential active involvement in the motion, cf. ex. 7.1). The causer moves and, at the same time, imparts dynamic energy to the causee. These two activities (motion plus the transmission of dynamic energy to the patient) ensure that the patient moves as well.

In SA constructions, by contrast, the causee’s movement is not causally related to the causer’s movement (it is causally related to the entire causer’s action, which may or may not involve movement).<sup>32</sup> This means that the situation expressed in

(7.3) John walked (/marched) Harry to the door.

cannot be paraphrased “John walked, whereby he caused Harry’s movement.”

The obligatory externality of the operation of energy in “dragging somebody somewhere” and the obligatory internality of its operation

31 Let me add at this point that the sentence *John dragged her to the door* may, under certain circumstances, be used to encode a situation in which John does not physically manipulate Mary at all. In such a case, *drag* encodes mental coercion (*John dragged her to a concert*).

32 Let us recall, again, that in certain situations the causer does not have to execute any motion at all (cf. the oft-cited sentence *The general marched the soldiers to their tents*, which may imply that the general merely gave orders, or *The scientists ran the mice through the maze*).

in “walking somebody somewhere” has one interesting ramification. Consider:

- (7.4) a) He dragged her to the door.  
       b) He dragged her to the door with him.
- (7.5) a) He walked her to the door.  
       b) \*He walked her to the door with him.

In (7.4a), the causer moves and, at the same time, imparts physical energy to the causee, in this way effecting the causee’s movement. This makes it possible to construe the situation in such a way that the causee’s movement is concomitant with the causer’s movement (7.4b). By contrast, in (7.5a) the causee’s movement is not a result of the causer’s movement, which is why the causee’s movement cannot be construed as concomitant with the causer’s movement.

At this point in the discussion let me add one remark on the potential active involvement of animate patients in caused motion situations rendered by means of the verbs of the *raise* or *push* type. As has been shown, verbs that are admitted into SA constructions denote movements involving physical patterns that ensure an agentive role of the participant in the direct object position. The verbs of the *raise* or *push* type denote movements that include the transmission of physical energy from the agent to the entity external to the agent’s body, which bars them from being used in SA constructions. Nevertheless, owing to the animateness of the patient, these verbs do not exclude the active participation of the patient in the execution of the motion. Cf. an illustrative example with *push*:

- (7.6) But when Jinny stepped towards the back door, he pushed her into the sitting-room instead. “Not yet!” he hissed. (BNC)

Verbs like *raise*, *lift*, *put down* or *lie down* may also be used in caused motion situations which involve active participation of the human patient (or, rather, the patientive causee).<sup>33</sup> The factor that underlies the potential active involvement of the causee in these motion situations is the causee’s spatial position. If the patient is in a horizontal position, the agent must (irrespective of whether it is a movement downwards or upwards) overcome the force of gravitation. The participant is thus an

---

33 The term “patientive causee” has been borrowed from Shibatani and Pardeshi (2002).

inactive patient, merely “suffering the effects” of the verbal action: *John raised her/lifted her/put her down/laid her down (on the sofa)*. Cf., e.g.:

- (7.7) Ariel went to her, and held her by the shoulders and raised her till her feet touched the earthen floor, then pitched her forward /.../. (BNC)
- (7.8) She was no feather-weight, but even the stairs only made him breathe a shade faster. When he'd put her down on the bed he said grimly /.../. (BNC)
- (7.9) After some time, she laid him down on his back and checked his body. (BNC)
- (7.10) /.../ he stooped and lifted her. /.../ The bedroom he carried her into had black polished floorboards /.../. (BNC)

In the verb *turn*, acting against the force of gravitation is not the crucial factor. *Turn* denotes a linear movement around an axis. The axis is, in this case, represented by the patient's body. The crucial factor is thus the position of his body. If the patient is in a horizontal position, his inactive role is not ruled out (ex. 7.11). The patient's active role is involved if he is standing (ex.7.12):

- (7.11) And when the first person to find him had turned him over, presuming him dead, he had bitten a chunk out of that person's thigh. (BNC)
- (7.12) His Mum took him by the shoulders and turned him to face her. (BNC)

Nevertheless, even the verbs of the *raise* type do not exclude active participation of the patientive causee. Consider:

- (7.13) Weeping, he threw himself flat on his face at Henry's feet and begged forgiveness. His father raised him up and gave him the kiss of peace. (BNC)
- (7.14) So now he lifted the woman from the stationery shop to her feet. (BNC)

When one “raises the patient up (/to his feet),” the patient is, then, standing. Standing is a position that requires a release of what may be called stative energy, i.e. energy exerted to maintain a position (the verbs *sit*, *stand* and *lie* are thus commonly classified as being on the verge between stative and dynamic verbs).

The potential active involvement of the patientive causee cannot justify positing such situations as a sub-type of SA constructions. The reasons for this are obvious: the causer is in direct physical contact with the patient and transmits physical energy to him. An active share of the patient (the patientive causee) in the execution of the movement is thus a mere potential feature. It should be added, however, that the transitive causative *sit somebody down* may not only be used in situations in which the patientive causee is helped to sit down (ex. 7.15) but may also be used in situations in which the causer merely brings it about that the causee sits down (ex. 7.16). This latter case represents a sub-type of SA construction because the causee is the actual executor of the self-agentive motion and the causer acts along a volitional axis. Consider:

- (7.15) Her mother had bathed her in the tin bath in front of the kitchen fire, had dried her and sat her down before the fire with a bowl of steaming hot broth. (BNC)
- (7.16) She was at senior school by this time, of course, and the senior mistress sent for her, sat her down and began to question her kindly about conditions at home. (BNC)

By way of conclusion, let me mention one type of caused motion constructions which admit verbs of the *walk* or *dance* type but which involve an exertion of externally oriented physical energy, i.e. which involve physical manipulation. Consider:

- (7.17) You could walk the puppet by alternating the 'L' and 'R' keys while moving the mouse. (<http://mydreamapp.com/contestants/view/joebatusis/>)
- (7.18) “/.../ Here comes Rapunzel,” she said as she slowly marched the doll across the table top. ([http://www.fhcrc.org/patient/patient\\_stories/alyson.html](http://www.fhcrc.org/patient/patient_stories/alyson.html))
- (7.19) He dances the puppet at the edge of the fire, moving it closer and closer until the figure catches fire. (<http://www.fiction-wise.com/ebooks/eBook5184.htm>)

This type of construction has one crucial aspect of meaning in common with caused movements of the type *John walked his fingers along her ribs* (this motion situation will be discussed in Chapter 12.1), namely, the inclusion of the patient in the sphere of the causer. An explanation is in order. Verbs of the *walk* type can be used to denote caused motion with puppets not only because physical (note necessarily direct)

manipulation is involved (cf. ex. 7.17, in which indirect manipulation is expressed), but also because puppets are rendered as animate entities (puppets can thus talk, etc.). Hence when “John walks his fingers along Mary’s ribs,” “his fingers walk” along Mary’s ribs. One’s fingers are not mere parts but stand, on organic grounds, for their “owner” and can, therefore, be stylized as acting on their own, i.e. the energy triggering and controlling the movement is stylized as operating internally. In the same vein, the stylization of the movements of puppets as involving their agentive participation (their acting on their own) enables us not only to “walk puppets” but also “somersault” or “crawl” them. Therefore, when “John walks the puppet,” “the puppet walks.” That is, the requirement that the energy involved in “walking” operate internally is not (or, rather, cannot be) invalidated, which is the factor that licenses the formation of the constructions under consideration.

Let me substantiate the argumentation offered thus far by appealing to the fact that if physical manipulation were the crucial factor licensing the type of caused motion under consideration, it would, in fact, be possible to walk the bicycle up the hill by “causing the bicycle to walk” (and, by the same token, to walk the letter to the post-office by “causing the letter to walk”). That is, it would be possible to form intransitive constructions *\*The bicycle walked* and *\*The letter walked* (the factors that license the formation of constructions of the type *John walked the bicycle up the hill* or *John walked the letter to the post-office* will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 12.3).