

Kudrnáčová, Naděžda

## Summary

In: Kudrnáčová, Naděžda. *Caused motion: secondary agent constructions*. Vyd. 1. Brno: Masarykova univerzita, 2013, pp. 137-139

ISBN 9788021063730

Stable URL (handle): <https://hdl.handle.net/11222.digilib/128522>

Access Date: 27. 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.

## 14 Summary

Secondary agent constructions (SA constructions) represent verb-class-specific constructions (in the sense of Croft 2003). The reasons are as follows: (a) SA constructions include a narrowly defined set of verbs and (b) the resulting meaning is derived from the interaction between the meaning of the verbs and the meaning of the construction, involving a very specific causal structuration (as regards the form of SA constructions, directional phrases can be missing, depending on the type of scenario).

Heavy restrictions imposed on the repertory of verbs that are admitted into these constructions have been explained in the literature by the inherently monadic, non-causative nature of these verbs. It has often been claimed in the relevant literature that manner of motion is not syntactically relevant. However, owing to the apparent restrictions imposed on the syntactic applicability of self-agentive manner of motion verbs (including their usability in SA constructions), it is evident that the claim cannot be maintained. Boas (2006, 2008) has shown convincingly that there are connections between the verb's descriptivity (roughly, the complexity and specificity of the verb's meaning) and the range of syntactic patterns into which the verb may enter. Nevertheless, his account does not make clear exactly which elements of the verb's meaning decide the verb's usability in SA constructions (and in some other types of syntactic patterns).

A solution to this question lies in the nature of the relationship between the semantic structure of the verb and the causal structuration of the caused motion situation encoded in SA constructions. It is the specificity of the construction's causal structuration that imposes heavy restrictions on the repertory of components that verbs admitted into SA constructions may express.

The causal structuration of motion situations expressed in SA constructions displays a specific force-dynamic patterning. The merging of the causing event and the caused event in SA constructions is made possible by the fact that the verb's structure accommodates both the causer's intention and the causee's intention: the causer's action is a realization of his prior intention and the causee's action is a realization of the latter's intention in action (the specific causal structuration of SA constructions is thus underlain by the capacity of intention to function as a direct causal factor). The slot for prior intention is taken up by the

causer, who instigates the motion from outside, as it were. The causer thus enters into the qualia structure of the verb and, at the same time, does not have to execute the motion lexicalized in it. The slot for intention in action is taken up by the causee, who is the actual executor of the motion (this is consistent with the status of intention in action as a causal factor which has a more "immediate" position with respect to the movement in that it underlies a release of energy that is needed for the actual execution of the movement). The composite (yet homogeneous) character of the verbs' agentive qualia makes it possible to render these very specific caused motion situations by means of a syntactic construction which employs one verb (hence it encodes one action) but which, at the same time, involves two agentive participants, each with a different hierarchical position. If the causer is to enter into the agentive quale of the verb, the verb's constitutive quale must be devoid of the information about the inner state of the causee and the agentive quale must be homogeneous. SA constructions thus do not admit verbs whose agentive qualia are heterogeneous in that they contain causal factors other than intention.

The causer's prior intention encompasses two spheres: the purely kinetic sphere and the sphere that transcends the movement itself (this "transcendent" character of the causing event is the reason why SA constructions may be endowed with a variety of pragmatic meanings).

The requirement for the overlap of the causer's prior intention (that which does not transcend the movement) and the causee's intention in action is in line with the holistic meaning borne by the patient in the direct object position. The total object inclusion also explains why it is possible to form reflexive constructions.

An overt signal of the type of force-dynamic patterning is the verb's meaning. In non-coercive caused motion scenarios, the force-dynamic patterning is more or less balanced; the verb thus denotes the type of movement executed by the causee (this is a signal that the causee's intention in action and the causer's prior intention agree). In coercive caused motion situations the causee's intention in action does not agree with the causer's prior intention. An overt signal of the marked imbalance in the force-dynamic patterning is the verb's meaning (an increase in the verb's vagueness with regard to its reference to the kinetic character of the movement is characteristically accompanied by an increase in the degree of coercive force on the part of the causer).

The causal operation of the causer's "external" intention requires that the energy that underlies the actual physical realization of the movement operate internally (in that there is no transmission of physi-

cal energy from the mover's body to an entity external to the mover's body).

Owing to the absence of self-conscious reasoning in animal agentivity, verbs employed to represent animal movements lose their potential to convey information about the mental and/or physical self of the animal executor of the motion and/or about the circumstances of the motion, which enables them to enter into SA constructions expressing animal movement.

SA constructions are typically used for the expression of caused motion situations that represent prototypical scenarios (in spite of the fact that verbs lexicalizing given movements involve the internal operation of energy underlying that movement and that the verbs' agentive qualia are homogeneous). The reason why only a restricted repertory of verbs appear in SA constructions should also be sought in the fact that the meanings of SA constructions are complex in the sense that they do not merely encode the skeletal causative pattern indicated by the phrase 'to cause an animate causee to move'. The factor that enables us to utilize SA constructions for the expression of meanings that are not a mere result of the interaction between grammatical and lexical features of sentences is the general character of these verbs' meanings (such verbs denote the most basic and most neutral types of self-agentive locomotion). The marked dependence of the meaning of SA constructions on the broader situational frame and the basic status of the movements represented in them enable the verbs to undergo the process of semantic bleaching.

Marginal SA constructions represent fused structures, displaying varying degrees of active involvement on the part of the patient.

In reflexive constructions the 'acted upon self' displays a functional overlap with the 'acting self'. The 'acted upon self' is causally affected by an increased release of energy, underlain by the profiling of the agent's prior intention and his intention in action.