

Transitive causative constructions with verbs of self-agentive locomotion

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Transitive causative constructions of the type:

John walked Mary to the station.

The trainer swam his trainees to the other end of the swimming-pool.

The sergeant marched the soldiers to the barracks.

The trainer ran the athletes around the track.

John danced (/waltzed) Mary around the ballroom.

John jumped the horse over the fence.

John trotted (/jogged/ cantered/ ambled / pranced/ galloped) the horse.

These constructions employ inherently monadic verbs, which enter into a process of causativization (e.g., Levin and Rappaport Hovav 1994), with a causer as an additional argument (e.g., Dixon 2000, Wunderlich 2006). The verbs' intransitive use is primary and their transitive causative use is secondary (e.g., Dixon 2000).

Causation is carried out along a volitional axis (Cruse 1972). The causee represents a second energy source (Davidse and Geyskens 1998). Since the causee has a Janus-headed position, these constructions are termed 'secondary agent constructions' (Kudrnáčová 2013).

Which verbs are admitted into these constructions?

Levin and Rappaport Hovav (1994 and 1995): these constructions admit verbs encoding internal causation; they are barred for verbs describing aimless motion (*stroll, meander* or *wander*):

* *John strolled (/meandered /wandered) Mary round the park.*

Rappaport Hovav and Levin (1998): manner of locomotion verbs display a uniform syntactic behaviour (idiosyncratic components of meaning are not syntax-sensitive).

Jackendoff (e.g., 1983, 1990, 2002): differences between the manner of locomotion verbs (e.g., *walk, limp, jog, or strut*) belong to spatial structure (i.e. they are not encoded in conceptual structure, hence are not manifested at a syntactical level).

All the above observations do not account for the unacceptability of the following:

* *John staggered (/strutted/ lolloped/ trudged) Mary to the door.*

Boas (2006, 2008) rightly observes that there are connections between the syntactic usability of verbs and the richness of their meanings. The lower the verb's specificity and complexity, the higher the degree of the verb's syntactic flexibility:

1st group: *walk*

2nd group: *jog, jump* and *waltz*

3rd group: *bustle, hike, parade, swim* and *wander*

4th group: *amble, crawl, creep, frolic, limp, meander, scurry, stagger, totter, trot, wade* and *wander*

However, it remains to be explained why some verbs from groups 2 and 3 can appear in transitive causative constructions and some cannot, e.g.:

John waltzed Mary round the room. – * *John jogged Mary round the park.*

John swam the cattle to the shore. – * *John hiked Mary round Scotland.*

Moreover, the differences between the groups are not quite clear. Cf., e.g., *jump* (2nd group) vs. *crawl* (4th group).:

* *John jumped Mary to the window.*

* *John crawled Mary to the window.*

Factors determining the type of verbs admitted: type of energy, causal patterning, syntactic configuration

The physical energy exerted by the mover is confined to their body: the external causation of a self-agentive locomotion can only be carried out by imposing the causer's volition upon the causee's volition.

Owing to the inherently monadic nature of self-agentive locomotion verbs, external causation can only be effected syntactically. The condensed syntactical pattern ('NP – VP – NP (– PP))' is a realization of a single event (e.g., Haiman 1985): the causing event and the caused event merge (the causer and the causee are thus arguments of a single verb).

The condensed syntactical pattern necessitates that the participant in the direct object position be totally affected by the action of the participant in the subject position (Anderson 1971).

Therefore, transitive causative constructions only admit verbs designating movements that are wholly under the causee's volitional control (cf. Kudrnáčová 2013).

However, total affectedness of the causee is still not enough to explain the unacceptability of the following:

* *John staggered (/strutted/ lolloped/ trudged) Mary to the door.*

An extension to Kudrnáčová 2013: The caused event must not only be under the causee's control but also under the causer's control (this stipulation follows from the merging of the causing event and the caused event). Therefore, these constructions only admit verbs whose lexico-semantic structure makes it possible to accommodate both the causer and the causee and, at the same time, to allow for their agentivity involving the exertion of volitional control over the action.

Therefore:

- 1) * *John staggered (/strutted/ strode/ scurried/ scampered/ stumbled/ limped/ waddled/ tottered/ lolloped/ trudged) Mary to the car.*

The movements are not wholly under the agent's control and/or encode information about the agent's physical or mental self. (But: *John trotted (/ambled/ pranced/ galloped) the horse.* Owing to the specificity of animal agentivity, the verbs are deprived of their capacity to encode information about the agent's self and only encode a physical patterning of the motion.)

- 2) * *John waded Mary to the shore.*
* *John paddled Mary to the shore.*

The verbs carry information about specific external circumstances of the motion (*wade*: movement in mud or deep water, *paddle*: movement in shallow water, e.g. at the seaside).

- 3) * *John jogged Mary round the park.*

The verb carries information about a broader pragmatic anchoring of the movement; the purpose of the motion transcends the motion *per se*.

Verbal semantics in relation to causal patterning (an extension to Kudrnáčová 2013):

All the above supplementary aspects of the motion do not effect the mover's translocation. Therefore, external causation can only cover those elements that are causally related to the mover's change of location.

Other factors barring verbs from transitive causative constructions:

1) Non-prototypicality of motion scenarios (cf., e.g., Shibatani 1976):

?? *John jumped (/crawled) Mary to the window.*

2) Constructional blocking:

* *John paddled Mary to the shore* (in the sense 'John intentionally made it happen that Mary paddled to the shore')

* *John skied Mary down the slope* (in the sense 'John intentionally made it happen that Mary skied down the slope')

* *John skated Mary round the rink* (in the sense 'John intentionally made it happen that Mary skated round the rink')

These constructions are used to express caused motion situations of a different type. The energy flow (whose source is the causer) is directed at an object (some means of transportation); the patient's translocation is causally related to the movement of the object (*John paddled Mary to the shore*: John moved the boat using a paddle).

Conclusions

These types of transitive causative constructions represent verb-class-specific constructions (cf. Croft 2003):

- a) They are open for a fairly limited and well-defined set of verbs.
- b) Their meaning, involving a very specific causal structuration, is the result of an interplay between the lexical meaning of the verbs and condensed syntactical configuration.

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