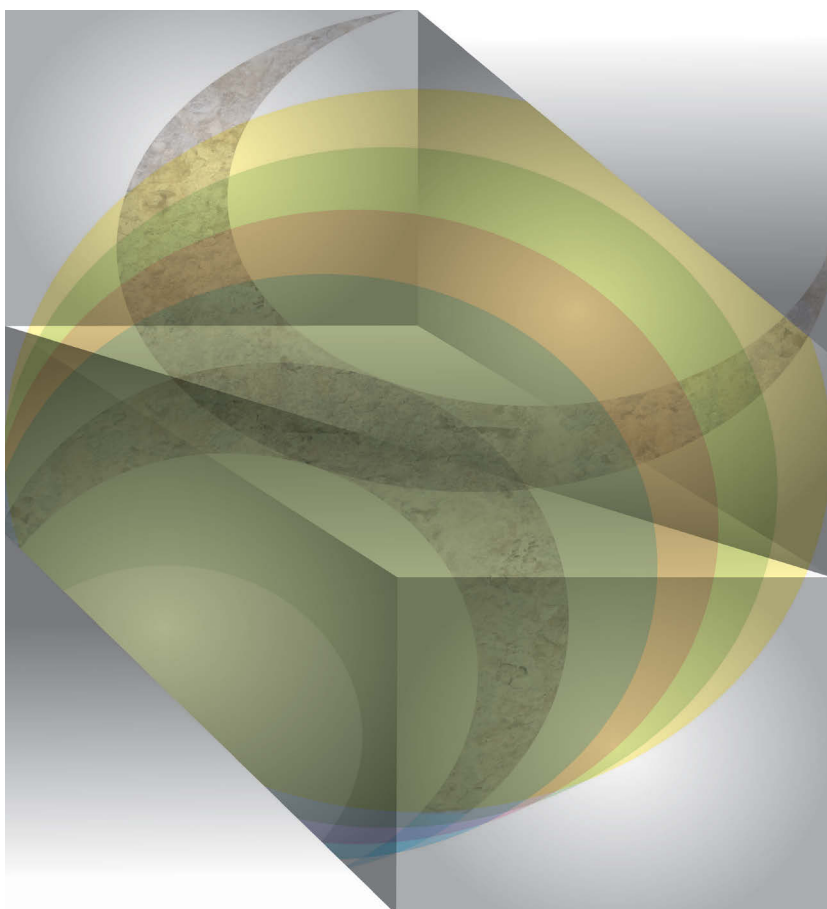


Caused Motion: Secondary Agent Constructions

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Masarykova univerzita
Brno 2013

Acknowledgements:

I would like to express my sincere thanks to the reviewers, Prof. PhDr. Jarmila Tárnyiková, CSc., and Prof. PhDr. Jaroslav Peprník, CSc., for their invaluable comments on this book.

Reviewers:

Prof. PhDr. Jarmila Tárnyiková, CSc.

Prof. PhDr. Jaroslav Peprník, CSc.

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ISBN 978-80-210-7633-4 (online: pdf)

ISBN 978-80-210-6373-0 (paperback)

ISSN 1211-3034

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1 Introduction

This book investigates semantic aspects of caused motion constructions which involve the inductive causation of a self-agentive locomotion. These types of caused motion construction, commonly treated under the heading of induced action alternations and referred to here as “secondary agent constructions”, are exemplified by sentences like *John walked Mary to the station*, *John danced Mary around the ballroom* or *John jumped the horse over the fence*. The analysis offered here demonstrates that the factors which license the formation of this kind of construction can be identified by appealing to the semantic structure of verbs that enter into them (the verbs’ agentive qualia must be homogeneous and their constitutive qualia must be devoid of features that point to the state of the executor of the motion and to the circumstances accompanying the motion) and to the specific interaction between the causer’s prior intention and the causee’s intention in action (on qualia structures see Pustejovsky 1993 and 1995; on the distinction between prior intention and intention in action see Searle 1983). One outcome of this interaction, iconically reflected in the syntactic configuration (Haiman 1985), is a more or less balanced force-dynamic schema (on force-dynamic patterning see Talmy 1988 and 2000).

The identification of a set of principled connections that hold between the verbal semantic structure and the structure of the causative situation, in terms of the relationship holding between the causer’s intention and the causee’s intention, enables us to posit the transitive causative construction in question as representing a regular (and hence to a considerable degree predictable) semantico-syntactic configuration, linked in principled ways to caused motion situations that involve coercive force on the part of the causer (i.e. that display a marked imbalance in their force-dynamic patterning). Secondary agent constructions may thus be viewed as verb-class-specific constructions (cf. Croft 2003), providing strong evidence for the interdependence of semantics and syntax.

The material is taken from the British National Corpus. In some cases, in order to further substantiate the argumentation or to provide an example missing in the British National Corpus, attested examples obtained via the Google web search engine have been used.

2 The Specific Semantico-Syntactic Status of Secondary Agent Constructions

Caused motion situations expressed in sentences like *John walked Harry to the door*, *They swam the cattle to the shore*, *The trainer ran the athletes around the track*, *John danced (/waltzed) Mary to the other end of the ballroom*, *John jumped the horse over the fence*, *John pranced (/cantered/ trotted, etc.) the horse* have a specific character. The syntactic configuration 'NP – VP – NP (– PP)' is the pattern used for lexical causatives, which present situations involving the merging of the causing event and the caused event. The common way of expressing this situation is to say that the cause and the result merge (owing to the absence of a mediating event between the two subevents, the causation has been traditionally described as direct, cf. Fodor 1970, McCawley 1978, Shibatani 1976 and many others). Since lexical causatives require a single clause, they denote a single event only, which is in accordance with the general principles of iconicity in syntax (Haiman 1985). In the types of constructions under consideration, the causing event and the caused event also merge to form a single unit. Here, however, the causee's movement is not solely a result of the energy that is transmitted from the causer to the causee. The causee represents a second energy source that underlies the motion (cf. Davidse and Geyskens 1998). That is, in spite of playing a patientive role, the causee displays features characteristic of agents. More specifically, he is the executor of a volitional impulse instigating the motion and the executor of conscious control over its course. The sentence *John walked Harry to the door* thus entails *Harry walked to the door*. In other words, these constructions express situations in which both the causer and the causee actively participate in the action but each of them displays a different hierarchical position in the causal structuration of the situation: the causer assumes a dominant, controlling position and the causee assumes a subordinate, controlled position.

We may thus say that the causee plays the role of a 'secondary agent' (Lyons 1969:365 uses the term the "agentive object"). The construction expressing the caused motion situations in question will thus be termed a 'secondary agent construction' ('SA construction' henceforth).¹ Although the term 'secondary agent' is a simplified one and cannot grasp

1 Langacker (1991: 412–413) uses the term 'secondary agent' to designate a causee that is "secondary in the sense of being downstream from the original energy source, yet agentive in the sense of having some initiative role".

all the relevant aspects of the situation, its application to the causee in SA constructions captures the Janus-headed position of this participant. In concrete terms, the causee is both a controlled participant, causally affected by the causer (the causee is the recipient of energy transmitted to him by the causer, who is a 'primary agent' in the sense of bearing primary responsibility for the action), and an agent, volitionally and consciously carrying out a given movement. The term 'secondary agent' is explicit enough to differentiate between constructions involving 'multiple agency' (on 'multiple agents' see Parsons 1994: 83) and periphrastic causative constructions, which involve what may, for the purpose of the present discussion, be termed 'double agency'. The former type of construction is exemplified by

- (2.1) a) John and Harry walked to the door.
b) John walked to the door with Harry.

and the latter type of construction is exemplified by

- (2.2) a) John made (/had) Harry walk to the door.
b) John forced (/got) Harry to walk to the door.

In the constructions in examples (2.1a) and (2.1b), 'multiple agents' have the same semantic status in that they both execute the motion denoted by the verb and, at the same time, their movements are not causally related. Certainly, the syntactic configurations in (2.1a) and in (2.1b) differ. The configuration in (2.1b) expresses what Parsons (1994: 83) terms 'displaced conjunction'; the movement of the agent in the subject position thus has a comitative flavour.

In the analytic causative constructions in the examples in (2.2), two agents are on the scene but, importantly, their actions are causally related. The operation of the causer is external because the causer remains outside the caused event, so to say. The causing event (John's action) and the caused event (Harry's movement) do not merge but represent two self-contained units (hence the provisional term 'double agency'). From this it follows that the causing event need not be contemporaneous with the caused event (John may merely initiate Harry's movement) and, also, that the causer need not execute control over the caused movement. These facts are iconically mirrored in syntax (cf. Haiman 1985): the periphrastic construction, effecting the split between the two events, renders the relationship between them as involving conceptual distance.

A secondary agent construction shares one feature with the analytic, ‘double agent’ type of construction, namely, the external operation of the causer. The causer’s activity stays, as it were, outside the causee’s movement because the caused motion is of a type that necessarily involves internal causation in the sense of the physical genesis of the movement (put in plain words, the movement can only be executed by the causee). At the same time, however, the SA construction effects the merging of the causing event and the caused event (or, rather, the causing event is superimposed on the caused event). That is, in spite of the external position of the causer, the SA construction presents the causer as operating “inside” the caused event. In other words, it presents the causer’s activity as forming an intrinsic part of the caused motion – note that the syntactic configuration ‘NP-VP-NP(-PP)’, encoding this very specific causative configuration, employs one verb. That is, it encodes, at a surface level, one action. The causer, functioning as the bearer of primary responsibility for the action encoded in the verb, represents “the starting point of the situation” (cf. Langacker 1990).² Accordingly, he occupies the subject position, i.e. the position prototypically reserved for dominant, controlling participants. The causee occupies the direct object position, prototypically taken up by subordinate, controlled participants. Nevertheless, as mentioned above, the causee has a Janus-headed semantic status: being subordinate to the causer’s activity, he is the patient, and, being the actual executor of the motion, he is the agent.

The syntactic configuration ‘NP-VP-NP(-PP)’, encoding this very specific causative structure, must therefore employ verbs whose semantic structure makes it possible to accommodate both the causer and the causee. The analysis presented in this study will show that what plays a role are the principled connections between verb meanings and the type of causative structuration in question. The analysis will show, too, that the factors that license the formation of SA constructions are also the prototypicality of the caused motion situation and certain systemic relations holding between syntactic constructions expressing caused motion.

By way of concluding this short discussion, a remark concerning the status of SA constructions in relation to analytic causative constructions will be in order. SA constructions (*John walked Harry to the station*) cannot be viewed as variants of analytic causative constructions (*John had (/made) Harry walk to the station*) in spite of the fact that both types of construction involve ‘caused agency’ or ‘inductive causation’. Kemmer

2 The term the ‘bearer of primary responsibility’ is borrowed from DeLancey (1985).

and Verhagen (1994: 119–220) apply the term ‘inductive causation’ to analytic causative constructions of the type *She made (/had) him type the letter*. Talmy (2000: 474) uses the terms ‘caused agency’ and ‘inductive causation’ to refer to situations in which an animate agent induces another animate agent to act; he exemplifies this type of causation by a sentence like *I sent him downstairs*. (For a very informative analysis of formal and semantic aspects of *have* constructions see Martinková 2012.) Owing to the merging of the causing event and the caused event in SA constructions (which also includes a spatio-temporal overlap of the two sub-events), the causer is presented as exercising control over the entire movement, including the possibility of co-moving with the causee: cf. the difference between *John walked Harry to the station* and *John had (/made) Harry walk to the station*.³ The difference between SA constructions and analytic causative constructions is apparent even in situations which exclude the causer’s co-movement – cf. the difference between *The lion-tamer jumped the lion through the hoop* and *The lion-tamer had (/made) the lion jump through the hoop*. The former sentence renders the causer as initiating the movement and as controlling its entire course, whereas the latter sentence presents the causer as a mere initiator of the movement. In actual fact, the presence of control over the entire caused movement is one of the factors licensing the formation of SA constructions of the type *John swam the baby to the shore* (here *the baby* is a patientive, not an agentive participant).

3 Goldberg (1995: 162) adduces the sentence *Sam walked him to the car* as a caused motion situation “involving ongoing assistance to move in a certain direction”.

3 An Overview of Approaches to SA Constructions

This section offers a survey of the relevant literature dealing with SA constructions.

Lyons (1969: 365) views the pair *John walked the horse* – *the horse walked* as an ergative pair, differing from the more common ergative pair *John moved Bill* – *Bill moved* in the agentive character of the participant that occupies the subject position in the intransitive construction and the object position in the transitive construction (Lyons uses the term ‘agentive object’). Lyons points out that the limits on the use of constructions of the *John walked the horse* type are unclear and that verbs that can appear in the pair *John walked the horse* – *the horse walked* represent a highly restricted class. He adds, too, that the difference between *John walked the horse* and “the more common type of ‘double-agentive’ sentence” *John made the horse walk* is that, in the former sentence, John is the direct agent (because he led the horse or rode it) while in the latter no such implication seems to be involved. Interestingly, Lyons takes the semantic role of *John* in *John made the horse walk* as neutral with respect to the distinction ‘direct agent’ versus ‘indirect agent’ (the latter being, in the majority of cases, exemplified by *John had a house built*).

Halliday (1967: esp. 41–47) specifies the semantic role of *he* in *he marched the prisoners* as that of the initiator (because *he* did not carry out the marching) and the role of *the prisoners* as that of the actor (in the intransitive variant *the prisoners marched* the participant in the subject position fulfils a dual role in being both the initiator and the actor). Halliday (1968: 198) takes the relationship between *marched* and *the prisoners* as “a happen-relationship”; the actor is described as the “enforced actor” (1968: 185).⁴

Davidse and Geyskens (1998), elaborating on the theory developed by Halliday (1967, 1968, 1985), regard ergative constructions with intransitive manner of motion verbs as a special class of causative constructions. In these constructions, the active participation of the causee is considerably strengthened in that the causee actually performs the action. The causee thus represents a second energy source. The criteria they use to discriminate between the different types of caused motion situation are

4 Poldauf (1970: 123) points out that Halliday’s description of the transitive *march* in *He marched the soldiers* as ‘cause to march’ is too simplistic.

the following: (a) the presence or absence of physical contact between the causer and the causee in the instigation of the action (this criterion is only optional), (b) the co-extension of the instigation and the induced action (i.e. their co-extensiveness in time and place) and (c) the nature of power asymmetry (i.e. whether there is a strong or a mild power asymmetry between the causer and the causee). Davidse and Geyskens have shown, too, that these constructions do not represent a homogeneous class, both from a semantic and a syntactic point of view. They have singled out six different sub-types and have identified some of the reasons why certain causative situations do not necessitate the presence of directional phrases (against the widely held view that manner of motion verbs can causativize only when they express a directed motion).

Ikegami (1969: esp. 96–99, 162–164) treats the subject in *the man walked* (*the prisoners marched*) as ‘agent’, and the subject and the object in *the man walked the horse* (*he marched the prisoners*) as ‘agentive initiator’ and ‘agent’, respectively. He states explicitly that these two roles “are no more than the variants of one and the same element” (1969: 97) because both refer “to something acting voluntarily” (1969: 96). He observes, too, that due to the semological status (more specifically, due to the association with voluntary movements) of verbs like *march*, *jump* or *gallop*, the object that is caused to move can only be the agent. Interestingly, Ikegami observes that *he* in *he marched the prisoners* displays a low degree of immediacy associated with the agent acting as a causer: *he* “may be a commander who simply gave an order and let his officer take care of the prisoners” (1969: 99). From this fact he concludes that this sentence “is almost synonymous with a sentence involving a simple causative verb: *he caused the prisoners to march*” (1969: 99).

According to Cruse (1972), sentences like *The general marched the soldiers*, *John flew the falcon* or *John galloped the horse around the field* express “causation by command” (1972: 522). They encode situations in which “a human or hominoid causer transmits his will to an obedient, but independent agent” (1972: 521). Contradiction of any element in this causative situation produces the following deviant sentences:

Nonhuman causer: **The floods marched the army further north.*

Defective transmission of will of causer: ?*John marched the prisoners, who did not understand any of his commands, across the prison yard.* Object not obedient: ?*John galloped the horse, which was being totally unresponsive to his wishes, around the field.*

Nonagentive object: **John flew the sparks.*