

## METAPHORICAL AND METONYMIC MOTIVATION OF TRANSITIVIZATION AND INTRANSITIVIZATION

Motivation constitutes a central concern in linguistic theory. Within the cognitive linguistic paradigm Radden and Panther (2004), among other scholars, provide a thought-out overview of this issue. In this proposal we explore some motivational factors which constrain or allow the fusion of low-level lexical items into high-level constructional configurations on the basis that coercion is not idiosyncratic (Goldberg 1995, 2006; Boas 2003; Broccias 2003, 2004). More precisely, we focus on the constraining factors, spelled out in the form of high-level metaphorical and metonymic activity, which underlie the processes of transitivization and intransitivization and the connection of the former with the caused-motion and resultative constructions and of the latter with the middle and inchoative constructions.

On the one hand, certain high-level metaphors and metonymies allow some predicates to be compatible with the caused-motion construction. For instance, *laugh* can participate in the caused-motion construction as licensed by the high-level metaphor AN EXPERIENTIAL ACTION IS AN EFFECTUAL ACTION (e.g. *They laughed the poor guy out of the room*). This case and similar ones undergo subcategorial conversion from intransitive to transitive predicates. This process results from quantitative valency addition in Dik's (1993) terms.

On the other hand, in English intransitivization is achieved by forcing a transitive verb into the inchoative and middle constructions (Levin 1993). Some predicates are liable to experience a process of subcategorial conversion from transitive to intransitive uses by reducing the number of arguments of their usual syntactic layout. In other words, the syntactic makeup of a transitive predicate can be modified as a result of quantitative valency reduction. The possible intransitivization of some predicates in the context of the inchoative and middle constructions is also constrained by high-level metaphorical and metonymic activity. For instance, even though the syntactic layout of the sentence *The coffee spilt on my shirt* does not show an explicit volitional agent who carries out the action of spilling the coffee (as opposed to its transitive counterpart *John spilt the coffee on my shirt*), it is taken for granted that someone or some natural force spilt it. The coffee is not characterized by being volitional per se. This is a linguistic realization of the high-level metonymy PROCESS FOR ACTION, which involves the recategorization of the predicate *spill* and brings about some consequences for the syntactic configuration of the clause.

Additionally, we will study why some predicates belonging to certain lexical domains cannot participate in some constructions because of their internal makeup. For instance, the inchoative construction is blocked in the case of a feeling verb like *frighten* but this same verb adapts itself to the requirements of the caused-motion construction. In the inchoative construction the object acquires agent-like properties. Since in feeling verbs the object is experiential (in the sense that there is no acting on the percept), a clash with the action-oriented semantic structure of the inchoative construction takes place. However, the causative sense of a feeling verb like *frighten* allows this predicate to participate in the caused-motion construction.

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