Concerning the notion of constructional polysemy

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1. ARGUMENT STRUCTURE

Argument structure is a grammatical pattern which is supposed to provide the basic meaning of a lexical expression in a language and specify the arguments a verb can be combined with.

According to Goldberg (1995, 2006), the meaning of a sentence is determined by the interaction of the meaning of the verb and the argument structure.

2. CONSTRUCTIONAL POLYSEMY

In Constructional Grammar, grammatical patterns are seen as:
- inherently meaningful, independent of the lexical items they feature;
- polysemous: each pattern is typically associated with several related senses, organized in a radial network, with a central sense and a few semantic extensions.

3. A CASE STUDY: THE CAUSED-MOTION PATTERN

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sem</th>
<th>CAUSE-MOVE:</th>
<th>sense</th>
<th>cause goal</th>
<th>theme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>R:</td>
<td>PRED</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sys</td>
<td>V</td>
<td>SUBJ</td>
<td>ORL, OBL</td>
<td>OBJ</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Central sense: 'X causes Y to move Z'
- Fam.: kiss V Obj. see V
- Meaning: X causes Y to move Z
- Argument structure: CAUSE-MOVE (causer theme goal)
- E.g.: Pat pushed the piano into the room.

4. THE CENTRAL SENSE

Central sense: 'X causes Y to move Z'
- Fam.: kiss V Obj. see V
- Meaning: X causes Y to move Z
- Argument structure: CAUSE-MOVE (causer theme goal)
- E.g.: Pat pushed the piano into the room.

5. THE NETWORK OF RADIAL EXTENSIONS

- sense 2: conditions of satisfaction imply 'X causes Y to move Z'
- instantiated by verbs of causing with associated satisfaction conditions
  - Pat ordered him into the room.
- sense 3: 'X enables Y to move Z'
- instantiated by verbs of enabling
  - Pat allowed him into the room.
- sense 4: 'X causes Y not to move Z'
- instantiated by verbs of blocking
  - Pat locked him into the room.
- sense 5: 'X helps Y to move Z'
- instantiated by verbs of helping
  - Pat assisted him into the room.

6. PROBLEMS WITH THIS ACCOUNT

An analysis of 1,000 attested occurrences of the pattern in the enTenTen13 corpus suggest that a radial network view does not do justice to the range of similarities and differences between the instantiations of the pattern:
- The wide variety of instantiations can differ along several dimensions: force-dynamics, temporality, deontic nuances, profiling, degrees of verb transitivity, and so on.
- Only a very general meaning common to all these instantiations seems to be detectable, and it does not seem to be necessarily related to a motion event, but rather to a change of circumstances.

7. AN ALTERNATIVE PROPOSAL

A radial network view does not do justice to the range of similarities and differences between the instantiations of the pattern:
- The instantiations of a caused-motion pattern may be better characterised as forming a continuum and standing in a relationship of family resemblance with each other.
- Against this general background lower-level generalizations over similar verb meanings may be drawn (e.g. Boas 2003, 2008).

8. SOME EXAMPLES (from the enTenTen13 corpus)

- I knew it if it was my fault.
- Related through the arm, action and profiled verb-sense associates caused instance.
- I can push him into the profiled path.
- Continuous force exerting, causing radical profiled verb-sense associates caused instance.
- The slow to work the trash into the box.
- Related exerting force exerting, causing radical profiled verb-sense associates caused instance.

9. SOME MORE EXAMPLES (from the enTenTen13 corpus)

- Neither will you put your chips...
- Related exerting force exerting, causing radical profiled verb-sense associates caused instance.
- He should have been kept into the house.
- Related exerting force exerting, causing radical profiled verb-sense associates caused instance.
- He would never let my child through for kissing.
- Related exerting force exerting, causing radical profiled verb-sense associates caused instance.


- Move along the street.
- Related exerting force exerting, causing radical profiled verb-sense associates caused instance.
- The slow to work the trash into the box.
- Related exerting force exerting, causing radical profiled verb-sense associates caused instance.
- From there to the other side into the forest.
- Related exerting force exerting, causing radical profiled verb-sense associates caused instance.

11. CONCLUSION: A CONTINUUM VIEW BASED ON FAMILY RESEMBLANCE

- The 'change' pattern as a continuum of instantiations related via family resemblance. At the realizations of the pattern share a common syntactic structure and a very general meaning, defining a change of circumstances in a situation which involves two different participants in a variety of possible scenarios.
- More generally, a perspective centered on heterogeneity can represent a general background to investigate the relationship between the general meaning of the pattern and that of the lexical items which occur in each specific instantiations, allowing for lower-level generalizations to avoid the proliferation of constraints to rule out implausible sentences.
- This view allows capturing the range of variation in the interaction between lexical items and syntactic patterns at different levels of specificity, also bringing of (verbal and non-verbal) lexical items back to the tree.