From *movement into action* to *manner of causation*:
Changes in argument mapping in the *into*-causative

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Over the last 300 years, the *into*-causative (*he talked his father into giving him money*; *they fooled Congress into passing the bill*) increased considerably in frequency and lexical diversity. Such changes are often interpreted as semantic or functional expansion, which has also been suggested for the *into*-causative (Davies & Kim 2018; Rudanko 2011). On the other hand, after its emergence from the caused-motion construction (*They moved the army into France*; *we were baptized into suffering*) in the late 17th century, there is no apparent morphosyntactic change and the types of matrix verbs that characterize its modern use have also remained stable (verbs of force, deception, etc.; Flach accepted).

This paper argues that what appears to be a loss of restrictions on the *into*-causative's verbal slot is the result of subtle changes in argument mapping between semantics (CAUSER, CAUSEE RESULT) and syntax (subject, object, and oblique) (cf. Stefanowitsch 2014; Rudanko 2011; Gries & Stefanowitsch 2004). Over time, the pattern [SUBJ V OBJ OBL*ing*] became a more reliable cue for causative meaning: stronger mapping links increasingly facilitated the use of verbs that are semantically and syntactically atypical. Hence, over its history, the *into*-causative shifted from profiling *movement into action* (cf. origin in, and relation to, the caused-motion construction) to specifying *manner of causation* ('Y CAUSES X TO DO Z *by means of* V').

Data from COHA confirm two predictions of this claim with respect to changes in (i) the semantic classes of the matrix verbs and (ii) the verbs' argument structure profiles outside the construction. Residual-based association plots show a preference of the *into*-causative for typical verbs in the 19th century (i.e., verbs encoding cause-effect relationships with an animate patient) and a relatively stronger preference for atypical verbs in the 20th century (i.e., verbs with inanimate patient/themes). While it is mostly indirect evidence of a relative shift, it supports the assumption that the construction increases in ability to license semantically and syntactically incompatible verbs (cf. *I talk him into giving me money* vs. **I talk him*) that facilitated its rise in frequency and lexical diversity.

The results have implications for models of grammatical change in Diachronic Construction Grammar (DCxG). Using the *into*-causative's development as an example of a relative shift, we critically assess the distinction between *constructionalization* and *constructional change* (Traugott & Trousdale 2013; Hilpert 2018) and argue that the notion of *constructionalization* is difficult to maintain conceptually and empirically.

References

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