

MASARYK UNIVERSITY

**Directed Motion
at the Syntax-Semantics Interface**

Naděžda Kudrnáčová

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Introduction

The study is a contribution to the analysis of the principled connections between verbal meanings and syntactic configurations. It offers an analysis of English motion verbs in relation to the directionality of motion. It posits directed motion as a distinct category and shows the role that the directionality of motion plays at both a semantic and a syntactic level. The analysis covers also the causal structuration of motion events, paying special attention to the position of the directionality of motion.

The analysis is based on the British National Corpus. The bracketed symbols after the examples indicate the respective text samples. In order to further support the argumentation (or, in one case, to compensate for a lack of an appropriate example in the British National Corpus) four attested examples obtained via the Google web search machine have been included.

The layout of the study is as follows:

Chapter 1 offers a short classification of motion verbs into two lexical semantic categories as given in the relevant literature. A subsequent analysis of the semantic structure of a selected group of self-agentive verbs of locomotion as reflected in their syntactic behaviour shows that argument expressions need not effect the extension of the verb's meaning.

Chapter 2 is a continuation of the analysis of the interaction between the verb and its arguments as presented in Chapter 1. It demonstrates the constitutive role of the concept of 'directed motion' in the formation of certain syntactic configurations and addresses the question of the incompatibility of verbs expressing directed motion with arguments expressing a change of state. This chapter includes also the analysis of the difference of the conceptualization of path in literal and metaphorical motion and shows that this difference is a result of the conceptual difference between a change of location and a change of state.

Chapter 3 offers a semantico-syntactic analysis of selected groups of motion verbs in relation to the directionality of the motion. It provides further evidence that the directionality of the motion does not represent a mere extension of the verb's meaning. It also pays attention to the degree of semantic weight as borne by the traversal of the path and by the manner of its execution, and looks at the explicit dissociation of the two phenomena as effected in one, relatively rarely studied, type of syntactic construction.

Chapter 4 looks at the temporal progression in space as expressed in pace adverbs. It also points to their evaluative status, underlain by their inherently relative nature.

Chapter 5 provides a case study of the verb *burn* in its directed motion sense. The analysis is carried out with special regard to the relation between the traversal of the path and the manner of its execution as manifested in the causal structuration of the situation. The analysis confirms the difference in the conceptual status of a change of location and a change of state.

Chapter 6 presents an analysis of two types of semantico-syntactic patterns that effect the conflation of a change of location and a change of state. It looks at the ways in which a change of location and a change of state can be accommodated in a single causal frame. The analysis provides further evidence of the non-incremental formation of verbal meanings and of the non-additive status of the directionality of the motion.

Chapter 7 deals with resultativity in directed agentive locomotion events. It addresses the question of the relationship between the traversal of path and manner of motion in the causal structuration of a directed motion event and shows that the non-additive status of the directionality of the motion asserts itself at this level, too.

1. The Formation of Verbal Meanings

1.1 Classification of Motion Verbs

Motion verbs are commonly classified into two distinct categories, manner of motion verbs and path verbs. Manner of motion verbs encode information about the physical modality of motion but, in contrast to the so-called path verbs, do not provide information about a specific direction of motion unless they combine with a directional phrase (cf., e.g., Levin 1993: 267): *John walked, John ran, John staggered, John swam*, etc. By contrast, path verbs, also referred to as “verbs of inherently directed motion” (Rosen 1984), are mute about the manner of motion and only encode information about the direction of the motion: *John came, John left, John arrived*, etc. The aspects of the path encoded in these verbs “concern the configuration and position of the path, often specified in relation to the direction of motion” (Matsumoto 1996:190). Therefore, it is sometimes claimed that manner of motion is in complementary distribution with direction (e.g., Levin and Rappaport Hovav 1992:252). In the typology offered by Asher and Sablayrolles (1996), path verbs are referred to as “verbs of direction” and manner verbs as “verbs of displacement”. As shown by Talmy (1985), the dominant pattern of lexicalization in English is to conflate motion with manner, leaving path to be expressed by path phrases or by verb particles, termed by Talmy “satellites” (e.g., *in* or *out* as in *I ran in, I ran out*).¹

Manner of motion verbs do not form a uniform lexico-semantic class but include a number of sub-types (cf., e.g., Miller and Johnson-Laird 1976). Levin and Rappaport Hovav (1992) classify manner of motion verbs into two types. The first type comprises verbs that imply a direct external cause, thus not involving what Levin and Rappaport Hovav term “protagonist control”: *move, roll, spin, rotate, whirl*, etc. The second type comprises verbs that do not encode a direct external cause. Therefore, they typically involve “protagonist control”, e.g. *walk, run, swim, jog* (these verbs denote self-agentive locomotion).

The analysis presented in this section will concentrate on the self-agentive manner of motion verbs and will demonstrate the following facts:

- a) Contrary to the view that manner of motion verbs form a more or less coherent group with regard to their syntactic behaviour, not all verbs belonging to this class behave in the same way (therefore,

¹ In Romance languages, for example, the characteristic pattern is to conflate motion and path (Slobin 1996, Talmy 1985).

- lexical semantic structures of verbs necessitate a more detailed analysis).
- b) In the process of the integration of the verb into the construction, the verb's meaning may undergo substantial changes.
 - c) The verb's meaning is thus not "extended" by the addition of argument expressions (particularly in view of the fact that the possible combinations of argument expressions are subject to a number of restrictions).
 - d) The bare construction (*John walked*, *John ran*) bears its own meaning potential, in a way which is not shared by the "extended" constructions.

1.2 The Heterogeneousness of the Class of Self-Agentive Locomotion Verbs

According to theories that take the building of verbal meanings as based on the incrementality of their semantic augmentation, verbs used in "basic" constructions (exemplified, in the self-agentive locomotion domain, by constructions of the *John walked* type) represent core lexical units whose meanings can be augmented by the addition of certain combinations of argument expressions (see esp. Levin and Rappaport Hovav 1992 and 1995, and Rappaport Hovav and Levin 1998). The view that constructions with the minimal possible amount of arguments are basic owing to the fact that the more complex, "extended" constructions are formed from these simpler ones can also be found in Hale and Keyser (1998). The constructions in which the verbs occur represent projections of the verbal semantic structure (cf. also Pinker 1989). The verbs are viewed as factors licensing the arguments and their possible combinations and the syntactic constructions are viewed as realizations of the syntactically relevant components of the verb's semantic structure. The idiosyncratic aspects of the verb's meaning are taken as not participating in the formation of a given construction but as serving to merely differentiate between individual members of the verbal class. That is, the number and types of complements (and their possible combinations) are not associated with individual verbs but with verbal classes. What may be called the 'regularity in the variation' is licensed by the verbal semantic structure – more specifically, by a certain set of semantic features supposed to be shared by all the members of the given verbal class. These features then represent those components of the verbal lexico-semantic content that are syntactically relevant, i.e. that determine the verbal syntactic behaviour.

In the projectionist theory manner of motion verbs are taken as forming a distinct group marked by its characteristic syntactic behaviour with the component ‘manner of motion’ representing the semantic factor determining the verbal syntactic behaviour. To demonstrate the syntactic variability of agentive manner of motion verbs, Rappaport Hovav and Levin (1998:98) adduce the following set of syntactic constructions into which these verbs may enter:

- (1) Pat ran.
- (2) Pat ran to the beach.
- (3) Pat ran herself ragged.
- (4) Pat ran her shoes to shreds.
- (5) Pat ran clear of the falling rocks.
- (6) The coach ran the athletes around the track.

By contrast, the range of syntactic constructions available for path verbs is considerably restricted:

- (7) John went (/arrived/left).
- (8) John went to the station (/arrived at the station/left the station).
- (9) * John went (/arrived /left) himself ragged.
- (10) * John went (/arrived/left) his shoes to shreds.
- (11) * John went (/arrived/left) clear of the oncoming car.
- (12) * John went (/arrived/left) the athletes around the track.

Rappaport Hovav and Levin (1998) explain the syntactic rigidity of path verbs by appealing to the fact that the so-called result verbs, to which path verbs belong, are considerably constrained in their behaviour. Path verbs lexicalize the result of the event, whereas manner of motion verbs lexicalize the type of the process leading to the result and, as such, readily appear in a number of syntactic constructions.

The presence (and, by the same token, the absence) of the information about the manner of the given process is thus seen as the crucial factor licensing the syntactic behaviour of motion verbs. However, in view of the fact that the absence of the information regarding the manner of the motion cannot, by itself, explain why syntactic constructions with path verbs in (7) and (8) are possible, whereas those in (9)–(12) are not, the reason must be sought in the nature of the link of this factor to some other aspect of meaning, namely, to the verb’s potential to express agentivity. It cannot be overlooked that path verbs are not admitted into constructions that convey complex, causative events – cf. the acceptability of these constructions with manner of motion verbs in (3), (4) and (6). Causativity is underlain by transitivity. More specifically, it is underlain by the transmission of energy from one participant to another (this may be the same participant, i.e. the

participant whose “self” is divided into the acting self and the acted upon self, as in *John walked himself to the station*, *John walked himself to exhaustion*). Manner of motion verbs, owing to encoding information about the manner of the activity, bear reference to the source of energy underlying its execution, hence they are admitted into the causative constructions under consideration. These constructions convey the frame meaning “an agent performs an action and this action has a back effect on his state”, which rules out path verbs because they do not encode agents. In other words, path verbs, merely encoding information about the type of the path, do not have the capacity to refer to the source of energy underlying the motion. They encode information about the motion in its “bare” form, deprived of all the “additional” information, so to say. That is, they refer to the mere fact of progression in space, which is an aspect of meaning that is not directly related to the executor of the motion (or, rather, does not need the executor for its expression). These observations are in line with Perlmutter’s (1978) account, namely, that subjects of unaccusative verbs, to which path verbs belong, are deep-structure objects (cf. also Dušková’s (1988:357) differentiation between the agent and the bearer of the event).

By contrast, the meaning component ‘a manner of motion’ lends itself easily to be a carrier of the information about whether the motion is agentive or not, owing to the simple fact that the manner of the motion is related to the manner of its execution (this fact has also been noted by Levin and Rappaport Hovav 1992). Manner of motion verbs, bearing reference to the source of energy underlying the motion, can thus be used in causative constructions:

- (13) John walked himself to the station.
- (14) John walked Michael to the station.
- (15) John walked himself to exhaustion.
- (16) John walked Michael to exhaustion.

However, not all manner of motion verbs are admitted into these types of syntactic constructions (cf. also Boas 2003). Rappaport Hovav and Levin’s (1998) claim that manner of motion verbs form a coherent class, in that they display the same syntactic behaviour, is untenable. Faber and Mairal Usón (1999) put forward basically the same view as Rappaport Hovav and Levin. They regard what they term “perceptual and semantic parameters” in manner-of-walking verbs (*stamp*, *strut*, *stagger*, *totter*, etc.) as only semantic “because they do not significantly affect syntax” (1999:114). Consider, e.g., the implausibility of the verb *jog* in the causative types of constructions:

- (17) * John jogged himself to the park.

- (18) *? John jogged Michael to the park.
- (19) * John jogged himself to exhaustion.
- (20) *? John jogged Michael to exhaustion.

These constructions are open for verbs that encode the basic types of human agentive locomotion such as *walk*, *march*, *dance*, *swim* or *run*. They are barred for manner of motion verbs that

- a) encode movements that are not subject to the executor's control in their entirety:
 - (21) * John staggered (/stumbled/limped) himself to exhaustion.
 - (22) * John staggered (/stumbled/limped) himself to the door.
 - (23) * John staggered (/stumbled/limped) Michael to the door.
- b) have an evaluative status, as in *pad*, *strut* or *amble*:
 - (24) * John strutted (/padded/ambled) himself to exhaustion.
 - (25) * John strutted (/padded/ambled) himself to the house.
 - (26) * John strutted (/padded/ambled) Michael home.
- c) deviate from the kinetic norm, as in *waddle*, *totter* or *lollop*:
 - (27) * John waddled (/tottered/lolloped) himself to exhaustion.
 - (28) * John waddled (/tottered/lolloped) himself to the house.
 - (29) * John waddled (/tottered/lolloped) Michael home.
- d) provide information on pragmatic aspects accompanying the motion. These verbs encode information on the situational frame in which the motion is set. The verb *jog*, e.g. refers to the goal underlying the motion (this fact may, in addition, have a bearing on the manner of the motion itself). The verb *wander*, by contrast, encodes the absence of the goal of motion. Cf.:
 - (30) * John wandered himself to exhaustion.
 - (31) * John wandered himself to the park.
 - (32) * John wandered Michael to the park.

The groups specified in (a), (b) and (c) do not represent sharply delimited verbal categories but display overlaps. The verb *strut*, for example, points to the agent's state and, at the same time, expresses the meaning that the execution of the motion is not subject to the agent's conscious control in all its aspects. Moreover, the verb *strut*, functioning as a troponym of *walk* (Fellbaum 1990), may be evaluated as encoding a movement that deviates from the kinetic norm as involved in "walking".

There is yet another semantic factor that may come into play, namely the cyclicity of the motion. This factor is undoubtedly in operation in the causative construction of the *John walked himself to exhaustion* type, which expresses the effect that the motion has on its executor. This construction

requires that the movement achieve a certain degree of intensity, which can underlie the causative role of the movement with respect to the change of the agent's state (the term 'iterativeness' does not seem appropriate here, because it denotes the repetition of the same movement, i.e. the repetition of delimited, bounded motion units). *Walk, dance, march, run* or *swim* encode the cyclicity of the movement as part of their inherent meaning, but *jump* does not:

(33) *John jumped himself to exhaustion.

Admittedly, jumping may be repeated (i.e. one can perform a series of jumps), but this very fact does not improve the plausibility of the construction. One may speculate that the implausibility of this construction with *jump* is underlain by a purely pragmatic factor, namely by the non-prototypicality of the type of repeated motion in question. However, in the face of the possibility of forming this construction with *sneeze*, even this factor loses (some of) its explanatory power:

(34) Ages seemed to pass although it was only moments, until a pollen-laden grass flower tickled his nose and he sneezed himself back to life again. (ACB)

This sentence is a good example illustrating the role that the 'cyclicity' (or, as is the case here, the 'iterativeness') of the action plays in forming the "back-effect" type of causative construction under consideration, although it may be argued that *sneeze* is not a motion verb "proper". Nevertheless, it does involve a motion component, as evidenced by the possibility of forming a caused motion construction of the type *John sneezed the napkin off the table* (cf. Goldberg 1995).²

It should be pointed out here that even the 'cyclicity of motion' as one of the factors deciding on the verb's applicability in the "back-effect" type of causative construction cannot, by itself, explain why rotation, in spite of representing a clear instance of cyclicity, need not ensure that the verb lexicalizing this type of movement is admitted into this type of construction:

(35) ? The dervish rolled himself to exhaustion.

This sentence is highly questionable even when used in an appropriate context (for example, when the dervish rolls himself on the ground for a considerably long time).

² As pointed out by Vendler (1984:299), all overt actions involve bodily movement. Therefore, it is not always possible to draw a sharp dividing line between verbs denoting "pure" motion and those denoting other types of physical activities.

Consider, on the other hand, the acceptability of this construction with the verbs *spin* and *whirl*:

(36) The dervish spun himself to exhaustion.

(37) The dervish whirled himself to exhaustion.

We have seen that there are significant differences among the verbs under consideration, indicating that the component ‘a manner of motion’ does not behave as a compact, not internally structured unit whose absence (presence) differentiates between the two major classes of verbs, namely, between the class of path verbs (encoding the mere fact of spatial progression) and the class of manner of motion verbs encoding the manner in which the progression is effected. Idiosyncratic properties of manner of motion verbs are syntactically relevant and do not merely serve to differentiate between individual members of the class of manner of motion verbs. This fact shows itself in causative transitive constructions, into which manner of motion verbs enter on account of the fact that they bear reference to the source of energy underlying the motion (the meaning complex ‘a manner of motion’ functions as a carrier of the information about the agentivity of the motion).

1.3 Potential Changes in the Verb’s Semantics (the Case of *Run*)

The theory of the monotonicity of building verbal meanings rejects the possibility of positing a specific lexical semantic representation for each verb in a given semantico-syntactic configuration because this would necessitate positing six different meanings of *run*, each manifesting itself in a different semantico-syntactic configuration (cf. examples (1)–(6)). Therefore, Rappaport Hovav and Levin (esp. 1998) contend that verb meanings are built in a monotonous way.

It should be stressed that the monotonicity of this process necessarily rests on the assumption that the verb does not undergo any substantial change in its meaning. That is, “the nature of the concept which the verb lexicalizes” (Rappaport Hovav and Levin 1998:104) is the same, and the argument expressions merely effect an extension of the verb’s meaning.

The compositional nature of the formation of verbal meanings forms the basis of the process of lexical subordination, cf. Levin and Rapoport (1988) and Rappaport and Levin (1988). The verb’s original meaning is subordinated under the extended meaning by means of a lexical rule which

shifts the verb's meaning into another category.³ In the same vein, Levin and Rappaport Hovav (1992:259–260) propose an analysis of the lexical semantic representations of the manner of motion *run* and the directional *run* as based on the notion of the extension of the verb's meaning:

run (manner of motion): [x MOVE in-a-running-manner]

run (directional): [x GO TO y BY [x MOVE in-a-running-manner]]

The extension of the verb's meaning based on the subordination of its original meaning under a more complex meaning unit does not pay due attention to the interaction between the verb's meaning and the meaning borne by the 'extended' construction. The point can be illustrated by means of examples with the manner of motion verb *run*. Consider, e.g.:

(38) John ran Michael home.

This sentence represents the realization of the construction, given in (6) above and repeated here in (39), adduced by Rappaport Hovav and Levin (1998:98) as belonging to a set of constructions in which the manner of motion verb *run* may appear:

(39) The coach ran the athletes around the track.

As opposed to (39), the verb in (38) does not have to encode its basic (self-agentive bipedal) meaning at all. The sentence in (38) may mean, depending on the context, that John took Michael home in a car, or that John forced Michael to go home (in this latter case Michael did not have to execute "running" at all). This interpretation would also obtain in the following example:

(40) John ran Michael out of the pub.

Needless to say, this sentence also excludes, on pragmatic grounds, a transportation meaning. The verb *run* in

(41) John ran himself ragged.

does not have to refer to "running", either. One can *run oneself ragged* not only due to excessive "running" but also due to other types of activities. The verb *run* may thus lose reference to a concrete type of motion, i.e. it may represent a physical activity of a more general kind. On the other hand, it must be admitted that the phrase *run oneself ragged* displays a high degree of idiomaticity in that the interpretation of the precise meaning of the verb depends on the larger context (on idiomaticity as a continuum of a number

³ Pustejovsky (1995b:90) holds, by contrast, that the verb's various meanings should be treated as "derived through generative mechanisms in composition with its arguments". The complements of the verb "carry information which acts on the governing verb, essentially taking the verb as argument and shifting its event type" (Pustejovsky 1995b:90).

of dimensions see, e.g., Kavka 2003).⁴ This phrase may be evaluated as an instance of what we may call an “idiosyncratic semantic bleaching” (the term “semantic bleaching” is traditionally given to the process of depriving the lexeme’s meaning of some of its constituent elements). This view receives further support from the fact that the configuration ‘a manner of motion verb + the reflexive + a phrase specifying the resulting change of state’ does not necessarily have to involve a shift in the verb’s semantics towards the more general. For example, when one “swims oneself sober”, one does execute “swimming”, and when one “walks oneself to exhaustion”, one does execute “walking”.

Changes in the lexical semantic structure of the self-agentive locomotion verb *run* are, in fact, quite typical of this verb. In contrast to *walk* (as its most natural counterpart), *run* is very sensitive to its semantico-semantic environment. It is prone to changes in its meaning depending on the type of syntactic configuration and the types of arguments taking up individual syntactic positions (on this see also Ritter and Rosen 1996, 1998). A causative transitive construction with a directional phrase may serve as an illustrative example:

(42) John ran his friend to the hospital.

The situation encoded in this sentence may involve John’s taking his friend to the hospital in a car but the interpretation “John caused his friend to quickly carry out a self-agentive movement to the hospital” is not ruled out. Note, however, that even in this semantic reading the verb designates “a quick self-agentive locomotion, not necessarily involving running”. This latter interpretation, involving the verb’s increase in vagueness, also obtains for the sentence

(43) John ran the prisoner to his cell.

As can be seen, then, not only the type of construction is at play, but also the types of participants and the types of spatial goals.

It cannot be overlooked, however, that even an intransitive construction with a prepositional phrase designating a spatial goal (as a prototypical construction in which self-agentive verbs of locomotion occur) does not guarantee that verbs that enter into this type of construction preserve their “basic” meaning. To give an example with *run*, this verb in the combination ‘*run* + the *into*-path phrase’ may retain its basic meaning (a bipedal agentive

⁴ The correlation between the degree of idiomaticity and the degree to which the verb *run* leaves its basic (kinetic) domain can be illustrated in the following example:
Some saw it as the beginning of the end of Nazism, which had again almost ‘run itself to death with victories’. (ADD)

locomotion in which both feet are above the ground in a certain phase of the movement), but it may also denote a motion equivalent to *bump into*. That is, the sentence

(44) John ran into the house.

may, depending on the larger context, denote a situation in which the agent does not move his body but operates a car.

The intransitive construction with the *to*-path phrase does not yield an unequivocal interpretation either. For example, the sentence

(45) John ran to the store (to buy a present for his girl-friend).

may mean that John did not run but executed “quick walking”. Consider also the following example, in which the verb designates a rapid self-agentive locomotion of an unspecified kind:

(46) Harvey said, “We have to talk business, hon, why don’t you run downtown and buy those shoes you need?” He peeled a hundred-mark note from a big roll. (HR7)

One cannot overlook one apparent fact, namely, that an increase in the vagueness of the verb’s meaning is accompanied by the evaluative presentation of the situation (on affective uses of vagueness see Urbanová 2003:78–79). This is the case in example (42) (in its non-transportation meaning), example (43), example (45) (in the “quick walking” interpretation) and in example (46). The speaker presents his interpretation of the outwardly observable aspects of the motion by means of relating them to the inner state of the executor of the motion (e.g., the agent may be in an agitated state of mind). In example (46), the person is instructed to get to a certain place quickly and/or spend a short time there. However, what is at issue here is not the fact that the agent will get to a place quickly and/or will spend a relatively short time there, but the fact that these temporal aspects serve to point to the relative unimportance of one’s stay in that place. Note in this connection that one would not say

(47) Why don’t you run downtown and buy a new Mazda?

even if one supposed that the actual business transaction would take a short time. That is, the short duration of a situation may be indicative of a relatively low degree of the significance as attributed to it by the evaluator. This fact shows that reference to certain temporal aspects of the situation (expressed indirectly, via the meaning of the verb) may potentially fulfil an evaluative function. That is, the speaker not only depicts the kinetic, outwardly observable aspects of the motion situation but also presents his evaluation of the situation by interpreting those aspects that are not directly accessible to the onlooker – in concrete terms, by presenting the agent’s

state of mind as having a bearing on the character of the motion. In such cases, the verb fulfils both a descriptive function and an evaluative function.

This augmentation of the verb's functional load does not, however, mean that the evaluative function is simply added to the descriptive function as a kind of appendix to it. It should be realized that the shift in the verb's meaning (here, the increase in its vagueness) serves a specific purpose, namely to signal evaluativeness. From this it follows that if the verb did not undergo a change in the part of its meaning that encodes purely kinetic aspects of the motion, it would lose its capacity to convey evaluativeness.

Let me now offer evidence in support of this claim. The basic, non-evaluative *run* encodes a concrete kinetic pattern. The verb designates, roughly, a bipedal self-agentive motion on the ground in which both feet are above the ground in a certain phase of the movement. In order to get both feet above the ground, a certain speed must be attained.⁵ This does not, however, mean that the combination '*run* + *slowly*' is ruled out (cf. also Miller and Johnson-Laird (1976:551–2)). The evaluative *run*, by contrast, excludes the possibility of being used with *slowly* because the meaning component 'high speed' serves as a bearer of evaluativeness. Consistent with this evaluative function of 'high speed' is the fact that – given the vagueness of the verb's meaning in its evaluative use – high speed assumes a dominant position in the verb's lexical semantic structure, i.e. it becomes the verb's focal semantic component. The sentence

(48) Mary slowly ran to the neighbours for help.

is, on pragmatic grounds, odd because "running for help" involves, under standard circumstances, the agent's agitated state of mind. The compatibility of this type of goal (linked to the specific state of mind of the executor of the motion) with the non-evaluative *run* is thus open to doubt.

As illustrated in the verb *run*, in the integration of the verb into a given syntactic configuration the verb's meaning may undergo substantial changes, also depending on the type of participants involved. The verb may undergo the process of semantic bleaching (the increase in the verb's vagueness may serve to signal evaluativeness).

⁵ This is the reason why *run* is commonly described as representing a quick motion (see, e.g., Nida 1997, Taylor 1996, Vaimberg 1983) and why it is taken as representing a "quicker" motion than *walk*. Fellbaum (1990:288–9) regards *run* and *walk* as "direct antonyms".

1.4 Against the Basicness of the “Bare” Construction

The changes in the categoriality of the verb’s meaning depending on the type of syntactic construction and the type of the argument expressions, as demonstrated on the verb *run* in the previous section, indicate that, at least in certain cases, the verb’s meaning is not simply augmented by the addition of argument expressions. Related to the problem concerning the monotonicity of building verbal meanings is the status of the construction that we term, for the purposes of the present discussion, the “bare” construction, i.e. the intransitive construction representing only the agent and the motion: *John walked (/ran/swam)*.

The theory of the monotonicity of building verbs’ meanings tacitly takes the “bare” configuration as basic owing to the simple fact that it contains no other arguments apart from the external one. The problem with this analysis is that the augmentation of the verb’s meaning by the addition of a complement does not result in the simple extension of the verbal meaning but in its alteration. The alteration is an outcome of the integration of the verb into the given syntactic construction. For example, the directional phrases in

(49) John ran to the store.

(50) John ran towards the store.

not only “add” direction to John’s running. If this were the case, it would, in theory, be possible to add these types of phrases to motion events of the type *John ran himself to exhaustion*, which is evidently not possible:

(51) * John ran himself to exhaustion to the store.

(52) * John ran himself to exhaustion towards the store.

Levin and Rappaport Hovav (1992) explain the impossibility of these constructions by appealing to Tenny’s observation (Tenny 1987 cited in Levin and Rappaport Hovav 1992, and Tenny 1994), namely, that an event does not allow the co-occurrence of two delimiters. Since both *to the store* and *to exhaustion* present the events as bounded, they cannot be ascribed to the same movement. Although this account cannot, for obvious reasons, be rejected, it cannot be overlooked that it is valid only insofar as it observes that an event does not admit two delimiters. That is, this account fails to explain why the construction *John ran himself to exhaustion towards the store* is ungrammatical, in spite of the fact that it contains just one delimiting phrase (*to exhaustion* coerces a bounded interpretation onto the event, whereas *towards the store* coerces an unbounded interpretation).

On closer inspection, it shows that *John ran himself to exhaustion to the store* is ungrammatical not only because it contains two phrases, using

Tenny's terminology (Tenny 1994), "measuring out" the event, but also because the spatial phrase *to the store* cannot specify the direction of the action due to the conceptual incongruity between direction and the action encoded in *John ran himself to exhaustion*. The same reason underlies the unacceptability of *John ran himself to exhaustion towards the store*. Let me offer an explanation. The path phrases *to the store* and *towards the store* specify spatial goals of the activity of running, i.e. they specify such aspects as belong to the kinetic domain, and, as such, require that the verbs belong to the conceptual class of "verbs of motion". The phrase that specifies an aspect that does not belong to the kinetic domain, requires a verb of (general) action (albeit having, as is the case here, purely kinetic characteristics). In other words, the verb *run* in "run oneself to exhaustion" belongs to a different conceptual category than the verb *run* in "run to the store". In the former case (*John ran himself to exhaustion*), the verb is one of action, in the latter case (*John ran to the store*, *John ran towards the store*), it is one of motion.

Viewed from the point of view of the argument structure, the directional phrases *to the store* and *towards the store* cannot, for reasons adduced above, function as arguments of the activity of "running oneself to exhaustion", because arguments must, as is well known, be semantically coherent with the verbs (cf. also Goldberg 1995, Goldberg and Jackendoff 2004).

As is evident, this explanation takes into consideration not only the verbal meaning, but also the meaning of the syntactic configuration. This approach enables us to recognize the changes in meaning that the verb undergoes depending on the type of construction into which it enters. Construction-based theories (e.g., Borer 2005, Goldberg 1995 and 2006, Ritter and Rosen 1996) interpret the syntactico-semantic configurations as a result of the interaction between the verbal meanings and the meanings borne by the syntactic constructions themselves. The analysis of the interaction of the verb with its arguments, presented in the following section, will shed more light on the difference between motion as a strictly kinetic phenomenon and motion as a type of activity (having, in this case, purely kinetic characteristics).

We can conclude that the bare construction does not represent the basic construction in the sense that its "extended" forms add some features to its meaning. The bare construction can be taken as basic only in the sense that it encodes the motion event in its minimal configuration. Consistent with this is the fact that the bare construction, which expresses motion in its non-directional sense, bears its own meaning potential, such as is not shared by the "extended" constructions. (The analysis in section 3.7 will provide

further evidence in support of this claim. It will demonstrate that motion events with certain types of directional and temporal phrases are conceptualized as discrete units. Motion events presented in the bare, minimal configuration are endowed with the potential to encode motion as both a discrete and a non-discrete unit.)

In the following section, we will look into the difference between directed motion and non-directed motion from the point of view of the difference between what we term ‘pure’ motion and motion as an ‘activity’.