

REVISITING GOLDBERG'S SEMANTIC CONSTRAINTS ON THE 'WAY' CONSTRUCTION

ALBA LUZONDO OYÓN*
UNED

ABSTRACT. *This paper aims to revisit what is arguably one of the most creative argument structure constructions, namely, the 'way' construction, in an attempt to shed light on whether Goldberg's (1995) constraints on lexical-constructional fusion are valid to account for the behavior of such a configuration. By providing the reader with novel, less prototypical, examples extracted from various corpora, mainly Google Books, we will point out some of the aspects which we believe to be responsible for the shortcomings in Goldberg's analysis; for example, the idea that the path must be necessarily filled with obstacles, the nature of motion, the distinction between a means and a manner interpretation, and the metonymic operation licensing/motivating such interpretations, among others.*

KEY WORDS. *Construction Grammar(s), way construction, semantic constraints.*

RESUMEN. *Este artículo tiene como objetivo retomar probablemente una de las más creativas construcciones argumentales, a saber la 'construcción de camino', en un intento de arrojar luz sobre el hecho de si la propuesta de restrictores de Goldberg (1995) a la fusión lexico-construccional es válida a la hora de dar cuenta del comportamiento de dicha construcción. Proporcionando al lector ejemplos nuevos y menos prototípicos extraídos de diversos corpus, especialmente de Google Books, señalaremos algunos aspectos que desde nuestro punto de vista son responsables de la insuficiencia explicativa del análisis de Goldberg: la idea de que el camino debe necesariamente presuponer la existencia de obstáculos, la naturaleza del movimiento, la distinción entre la interpretación de modo y manera, la operación metonímica que licencia y/o motiva dichas interpretaciones, etc.*

PALABRAS CLAVE. *Gramática de Construcciones, construcción de camino, restrictores semánticos.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Since the publication of the detailed case study of 'there-constructions' in Lakoff (1987), the field of Construction Grammar (CxG) has witnessed a stimulating proliferation

of an array of “loosely connected models” (Östman and Fried 2004: 1), currently known as the ‘family of Construction Grammars’, in which similarities are argued to prevail over divergences (cf. Goldberg 2006; Goldberg and Suttle 2010; González García 2011). Construction grammarians thus share some central assumptions (cf. Goldberg 1995, 2003, 2006; Fried and Östman 2004; González García and Butler 2006; Boas 2013), among which we may highlight the following:

- (i) Constructions are defined as pairings of form and semantic and/or discourse function in which both non-predictable/non-compositional configurations (e.g. *He loved me back into existence*), as well as fully regular, transparent structures (e.g. *Hello!*) are conceived of as constructions. Although Goldberg (2006: 5) points out that in the latter case “sufficient frequency” is an essential factor for such patterns to achieve the status of constructions, it still remains unclear what the notion of ‘sufficiency’ actually means and on what grounds should we account for it.
- (ii) A construction is a psychologically real, free-standing entity which typically embraces several different non-conflicting constructions.
- (iii) The notion of ‘constructicon’ refers to the fact that constructions give rise to intricate taxonomic networks which capture the totality of our knowledge.
- (iv) Constructions vary in size and complexity or in their degree of concretion and abstraction (e.g. from the morpheme ‘-ing’, going through (partially filled) idioms to high-level structures like the ditransitive, the resultative, etc.).
- (v) Finally, not only constructions carry meaning independently of the lexical items (usually the verbs) that fill them in, but also, they are capable of supplying extra arguments which can by no means said to be derived from the argument structure of a given predicate. This is the case of the arguments ‘y’ and ‘z’ in the utterance [...] *He [x] stared a hole [y] into a heart [z] already trembling with fear*¹. Note that the verb *stare* can have two arguments, (x, y), but the second one is canonically introduced by the preposition “at” (cf. *He stared at me*) and it acts as the goal of the verbal action, whereas in “stare a hole”, the second argument specifies the result of the action. These formal and functional differences in the use of the predicate ‘stare’ arise from its incorporation into the caused-motion construction rather than from the structural and semantic properties of the verb itself. Similarly, the caused-motion use of ‘scare’ in *You scared ten years off my life!*² is not attributed to yet another implausible sense of ‘scare’, but instead, the construction itself adds or supplies the overall sentence interpretation, i.e. ‘you caused me to (figuratively) lose ten years of my life by scaring me’.

Within the field of CxG, Goldberg’s (1995) seminal book has received a lot of attention and criticism, particularly from the lexico-syntactic bottom-up branch advocated by authors such as Boas (2003, 2005, 2008ab, 2009, 2011, 2013), Iwata (2005,

2006ab, 2008), Croft (2001, 2003), among others. For example, Boas (2003, 2008b) contends that Goldberg's constraints on lexical-constructional integration are too coarse-grained to fully specify the reasons why certain verbs are felicitously incorporated into a construction when others, even semantically related ones, are repelled:

- (1) a. The lion licked the bone clean.
 b. The cat ate the bowl empty.
 c. The dog chewed the bone to pieces.
 d. *The wolves devoured the sheep to pieces/clean.
 e. *We consumed the plate empty/clean.
 f. ?He munched himself into a food coma.

We agree with Boas in that some of the constraints that Goldberg (1995) posits prove somewhat inaccurate when checked against larger amounts of data than those she was able to access at that time. As way of illustration, Goldberg rules out sentences involving contact-by-impact verbs such as **Pat shot Sam across the room* since one of the semantic constraints of the caused-motion construction specifies that "if the action denoted by the verb implies an effect *other* than motion, then the path of motion cannot be specified" (Goldberg 1995: 170, our emphasis). For this author, the aforementioned example is unacceptable on the interpretation that Sam both died (first effect, of a non-motional kind) and was flung across the room (second effect resulting from caused motion). However, to us, it seems perfectly possible to understand that Pat (repeatedly) shot Sam thereby causing the affected entity to be violently thrown across the room as a result of the strong impact. Therefore, motion can co-exist with what Goldberg calls "another effect", unless the result is made explicit, e.g. **Pat shot Sam dead across the room*. The following (attested) examples support our thesis: *The force of the water from the pipe shot her across the room*³, *He shot him out of the saddle*⁴, or *Frank shot him out of the tree*⁵.

In this paper we aim to revise the controversial issue of to what extent Goldberg's broad-scale generalizations are valid to account for constructional behavior. We will do so by focusing our attention on one specific construction, the 'way' construction. The study will allow us to assess some of the strengths and weaknesses in Goldberg's analysis and to postulate possible solutions. In order to prove these points, we first introduce the construction under scrutiny, as analyzed by Goldberg (1995), to then revisit in section 3 her proposal of construction-specific constraints in the light of novel data extracted from the Web. Special attention is paid to the issue of whether obstacles are a necessary requirement for the felicity of the 'way' construction, as well as the role that metonymy plays in motivating such a construal. The main conclusions are provided in section 4.

2. THE 'WAY' CONSTRUCTION IN GOLDBERG (1995)

The 'way' construction has been abstractedly represented in Goldberg (1995 [1996]) as [SUBJ_i [V [POSS_i way] OBL]], where V is a non-stative verb, OBL codes a

directional and the noun ‘way’ is a fixed or non-parametrizable element. One remarkable aspect of this structure, as opposed to, for example, the restrictive nature of the resultative construction (cf. Boas 2003, 2005; Goldberg and Jackendoff 2004), relates to its flexibility to incorporate almost any lexical piece in its verb slot (e.g. “She bulldozed/ inchwormed / ate/ danced/ waitressed/ doorbelled her way Z”).

As signaled in Johnson’s (1987) description of the path image-schema, any path contains a source of motion and a destination of motion. In the case of the construction under analysis here, Goldberg (1995: 203-204) points out that motion occurs despite the existence of external obstacles and thus the path is created by the action denoted by the verb. Additionally, three more semantic constraints are postulated (Goldberg 1995: 212-214): (i) motion must be self-propelled (**The wood burns its way to the ground*); (ii) citing Jackendoff (1990), Goldberg states that the verbs occurring in this construction designate a repeated action or an unbounded activity (e.g. **With a single bullet, Jones shot his way through the crowd*); and (iii) since motion must be self-propelled, it must also be directed (**She wandered her way through the field*). Finally, drawing on Levin and Rapoport (1988) and Jackendoff (1990), Goldberg (1995: 202) puts forward two distinct paraphrases of the ‘way’ construction: one in which the verb designates the means of motion (e.g. ‘Sam joked his way into the meeting’ → ‘Sam got into the meeting *by* joking’); another in which the verb expresses some other coextensive manner of performing the action (e.g. ‘Sam joked his way into the meeting’ → ‘Sam got into the meeting *while* joking’). Even though both paraphrases are taken to constitute a disjunctive interpretation, Goldberg concludes that the means interpretation is more central or basic, whereas the latter, more marginal reading is but an extension of the former. Therefore, “the syntactic form of the construction can be motivated by the means interpretation” but not the other way round (Goldberg 1995: 203). As previously advanced, Goldberg notes that one essential characteristic of the ‘way’ construction, in contrast to, for example, the caused-motion syntactic frame, is related to the fact that motion must take place along an either literal or metaphorical self-created, non pre-established path in which some kind of external obstacle is present. Following this rationale, Goldberg assumes that the example *Paula drank her way through the whole bottle of vodka* is more acceptable than *?Paula drank her way through a glass of lemonade* (Goldberg 1995: 204), simply because in the latter one cannot imply that the subject referent ran into any difficulty when metaphorically moving from point A to point B. While this affirmation is *a priori* correct, Goldberg appears to be overlooking the role of contextual parameters. In other words, in a situation in which the metaphorical mover (i.e. Paula) truly despised lemonade, the latter utterance would be as felicitous as the former, e.g. *Paula hates lemonade with all her guts but she finally drank her way through the glass of lemonade*. Conversely, if Paula were an alcoholic, fully accustomed to drinking every day, we wonder how the following example would fit into Goldberg’s hypothesis: *Paula used to drink/was used to drinking her way through a whole bottle of vodka every afternoon*. In fact, as we will see later on, many cases

involving verbs of 'consumption', when embedded into the 'way' construction, do not necessarily imply the removal of any barrier.

Having provided a brief introduction to this construction, we now turn to a critical revision of these constraints, which we will examine in the light of novel data extracted from the web, more concretely, Google Books⁶, as well as the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA) and the British National Corpus (BNC).

3. REVISITING THE 'WAY' CONSTRUCTION

While we reckon that the 'way' construction typically designates iterative actions (cf. **With a single bullet, Jones shot his way through the crowd, *Elbowing once, he made his way into the crowded hall*), we do find that Goldberg's analysis and her proposal of semantic constraints runs into problems when faced with less prototypical instances.

To begin with, Goldberg claims that because "motion must be self-propelled" (regardless of whether the subject referent is volitional, human or none of the above), examples of the type **The textiles found their way through customs, *The wood burns its way to the ground* or **The statements found their way toward the right people* (Goldberg 1995: 212-213) are unacceptable on the basis that these inanimate subjects cannot be construed as entities capable of causing their own motion (see also Kuno and Takami 2004: 101-102). Although clearly, certain objects like a mountain, a skyscraper, etc. would hardly obey such a condition, corpus data retrieves a sufficient amount of examples in which we see inert subjects, e.g. "television", "a movie", "wood" or "clothes", figuratively exploited as (auto-) movable entities or entities propelled by some unknown external force:

- (2) a. Television first muscled its way to the front of journalism's pack (COCA, 2007).
- b. Machete (the movie) slashes its way to Venice (<http://uk.movies.ign.com/articles/110/1109199p1.html>).
- c. Drugs are making their way here through the border (Google Books: *Innocent on the Hill* by Bernard J. Taylor, 2003).
- d. The clothes were squeezing their way through the wringer (Google Books: *Back from the land* by Eleanor Agnew, 2004).
- e. The wood worked its way out of her thumb (Google Books: *Girls with hammers* by Cynn Chadwick, 2004).
- f. One of the first statements that found its way to publicity (Google Books: *The new music review and church music review*, 1909).

Given this, we think that Goldberg is not entirely mistaken in positing the self-propelled motion constraint, but she is in the type of data she offers as supporting evidence. It would nevertheless be more accurate to claim that the subject referent must be *susceptible to motion*, either self-propelled or instigated (cf. ?? "The mountain/

building/bathtub found/ran/worked its way Z”, in the default interpretation). Additionally, we should emphasize the various cognitive operations licensing and/or motivating these examples. In (2a), for instance, a low-level metaphor whereby “television” is understood as a human being, which has the strength to go somewhere, combines with a high-level metonymy (i.e. INSTRUMENT FOR ACTION; cf. Ruiz de Mendoza and Pérez 2001) to realize the overall meaning of the utterance. Suffice it to say that the path is also figuratively exploited on the basis of an image-schematic metaphor, namely GOALS ARE DESTINATIONS.

A similar situation applies to the third constraint, directly connected with the above-mentioned one, i.e. “motion must be directed, it cannot be aimless” (cf. **She wandered her way through the airport*), which again does not hold for a notable number of examples like the ones in (3) below:

- (3) a. Scores of saffron-clad fans in the 6,000-strong crowd wended their way towards the exit (BNC HJ4 7253).
 b. A pitch that would barely serve as a batting practice toss eventually wandered its way over the plate (COCA, 1992).
 c. He wandered my way just as Wingo got back (COCA, 1990).
 d. Professor, you’ve got these motions which are wandering their way through the U.S. Supreme Court (COCA, 2000).
 e. The procession wended its way through the streets (<http://www.ldoceonline.com/dictionary/wned>).

Contrary to Goldberg’s theory, in all of these cases, the function of the non-parametrizable element does not seem to be focused on the removal of obstacles, but rather on placing emphasis on the progressive, continuous aspect of the construction, i.e. the series of contiguous points through which motion makes place.

Our main concern, however, relates to the most central semantic constraint of this construction, namely the fact that a non-pre-established path must be created by the mover because of the *existence of some external barrier* (Goldberg 1995: 203-205). In line with the author, such a hypothesis suffices to rule out basic or superordinate level motion verbs (e.g. **She ran/walked her way to New York*), unless an adequate supporting context provides evidence that motion occurred despite obstacles (cf. *The novice skier walked her way down the ski slope*; Goldberg 1995: 205). From our point of view, “vanilla” motion predicates such as ‘walk’ or ‘run’ should by no means be considered “typically unacceptable” within the ‘way’ construction, as corpus data displays long lists of such occurrences:

- (4) a. The boys walked their way as if nothing had happened, to their plows at the top of the hill (Google Books: *Child to the waters* by James E. Kibler, 2003).
 b. He’d run from so many things, he’d pretty much run his way to the end of his life. (COCA, 1996).

- c. The slavers chase them, but eventually, Vivien and the others run their way out of trouble (COCA, 1998).
- d. Ghandi walked his way across the country to win democracy (From Kuno and Takami 2004: 67).
- e. Moving to the tunes of her IPOD she walked to the café, ordered her usual and walked her way to work (Google Books: *Stolen Innocence* by Willow Schoales, 2010).
- f. "He (the doctor) said the more I pushed, the better it was for my foot, even if it hurt". Barry joined the Prevention Walking Club for support and eventually walked his way up to three miles a day (COCA, 1990).
- g. He steadily woke up and walked his way over to the kitchen to see that breakfast readied (Google Books: *The Forbidden Palace of Wiseman* by George Arpen, 2010).

Goldberg's claim that no "difficulty or indirect motion" is involved in these monomorphemic predicates runs into problems when faced against examples such as (4bcf). By way of illustration, if a person is described in the context of (metaphorically) running from things to the end of his life, it is perfectly reasonable to interpret that the "things" or the "life" from which the subject referent is trying to escape are impediments or hassle that cause the agent to make a path by running. In a similar fashion, (4c) is even more straightforward insofar as "Vivien and the others" are forced to overcome obstacles by "running their way out of trouble". Particularly, the combination of the 'way' construction and the directional PP, in which 'trouble' is perceived as a container, leaves no doubt as to the mistake of solely considering the subject as moving along a path where "there is no necessary implication that the path must be created". Finally, the activity described in (4f) involves an effort on the part of the subject who, after joining the club, eventually acquires the habit of walking three miles a day. In this case, the obstacle refers to the slow attainment of a good physical condition that enables the subject to finally achieve his goal.

Nonetheless, some other examples, fall into a fuzzier area as to whether path is forcefully created because potential obstacles exist (cf. (4aeg) above):

- (5) a. Just as we flew over the coast, British Ack-Ack was exploded and its puffs walked their way down the coastline toward us! (Google Books: *The wrong stuff* by Truman Smith, 2002).
- b. The seacoast, as yet little touched by modern vacation housing and retail development, enthralled the couple, and they drove and walked their way along the ocean during many weeks (Google Books: *William Appleman Williams: The tragedy of empire* by Paul Buhle, Edward Francis Rice-Maximin, 1995).
- c. They walked and walked their way through the passions of the rain. It reached a sudden spontaneous high moment when they both stopped and

kissed, drenching themselves in each other's passion (Google Books: *The landscapes within* by Ben Okri, 1981).

- d. His fingers ran their way across the smooth surface (Google Books: *My kind of America* by Jeremy Poolman, 2001).

Consider example (5b). In this context, the couple, who is fascinated by the beauty of the seacoast, cannot be said to encounter any impediment while enjoying their little expeditions by car or by foot. As advanced elsewhere, the 'way' construction can also be employed to construe activities such as 'walking' or 'driving' in terms of progression along a path. That is, because the couple seems to be 'walking' and 'driving' through every step of the way, the progressive, continuous aspect of the motion event is highlighted through the use of the fixed element ('X's way'). Furthermore, the rain in (5c) can hardly be understood as blocking this clear case of indirect motion. Simply, it just happens to be raining as this other couple rejoices in the pleasure and romanticism of 'walking' and 'walking' (i.e. progressing) through a (possibly) non-pre-established path. At last, in the case of (5d), the agent moves his fingers along a surface to feel its smoothness, in which case not only no struggle is indicated, but also the hand necessarily develops a metaphorical path as it moves. For Kuno and Takami (2004), however, sentences such as **Joe walked his way to the store* are also considered unacceptable, since they do not meet the third requirement of their Functional/Semantic constraint, i.e. motion is carried out in an unusual manner. By contrast, *Gandhi walked his way across the country to win democracy* (4d above) is adequate because Gandhi crossed the country to win democracy in its "own unusual manner (i.e. by walking) and not in a way in which people ordinarily move across a country" (by car, by bus, etc.) (Kuno and Takami 2004: 86). This explanation is questionable for two reasons: firstly, traveling by car, bus or train is "normal" in the context of (modern) western civilizations, and secondly, given the context of this pilgrimage as a way of protesting and reaching out to the rest of inhabitants, 'walking' is certainly the only way of transportation. In conclusion, on the basis of the data shown in (4) and (5) above, we argue that abnormality regarding motion is not a necessary condition for the felicitousness of this construction. By the same token, we wonder whether Goldberg's hypothesis that some kind of impediment appears to block motion should be regarded as a constraint or as a mere description of the original or prototypical semantics of the way construction as in *She made/worked/elbowed her way into the room* (cf. see also Kuno and Takami (2004: 100-104 ff.) for a critical overview of Goldberg 1995).

Let us now see how other verbs from various lexical domains behave when subsumed into the way construction:

- (6) a. While rabbits ate their way through Australian vegetation (Google Books: *Taming the great south land: a history of the conquest of nature in Australia* by William J. Lines, 1991).
 b. The goats chewed, burped and swallowed their way through the cozy night (Google Books: *Equal Rites* by Terry Pratchett, 2005).

- c. She ate her way through a bowl of fruit and two slices of toast spread liberally with marmalade (Google Books: *Fiery Homecoming* by Georgiana Hunt, 2008).
 - d. He ate his way through bread, butter and ham (BNC CDB 730).
 - e. Alex drank his way leisurely through the rest of the bottle (Google Books: *Love Storm* by Susan Johnson, 1995).
- (7)
- a. The driftwood floated its way to the south of the shore of the island (From Kuno and Takami 2004: 113).
 - b. Jackson whistled his way to Main Street, angling toward the Saenger Theater (COCA, 1999).
 - c. In our free time, we walked and talked and shopped our way around Manhattan (Google Books: *At home in the vineyard: Cultivating a winer, and industry and a life* by Susan Sokol Blosser, 2006).
 - d. They giggled their way through it (COCA, 2000).
 - e. We chatted, non-stop after that, until the train had rolled its way through the belly of Manhattan (Google Books: *His intimate voices* by Olubansile A. Mimiko, 2006).
 - f. Santas jingle and ho-ho-ho their way into the home bearing gifts (COCA, 2008).

Truly, the original meaning of the construction indicates that the subject referent makes an effort to move given that some kind of physical or metaphorical barrier is present. This is the case of (6a), in which the rabbits cannot be argued to eat all of the Australian vegetation in a short span of time. Instead, the slow, progressive conquering of the land through the ingestion of food clearly reflects the impediment factor that Goldberg refers to. But as we saw with activity predicates like 'walk', some of the members of the 'consumption' class do not meet such a requirement. In the context described in (6b) above, it would be somewhat hard to understand that the grass, shrubs, or leaves that the goats are feeding themselves on represent actual obstacles for the ruminants. In fact, it seems as though the goats wander freely, while enjoying the 'chewing', 'burping' and 'swallowing' of food. Once again, the function of the fixed constructional element is to underline the progressive aspect of the activity by means of which motion is carried out. That is, 'chewing', 'burping' and 'swallowing' are activities that do not prototypically imply processes that can, by themselves, last a whole night. However, when subsumed within the *way*, the pattern supplies these verbal predicates with a durative, progressive feature which is not inherent in them. In turn, the lexical pieces contribute the means and manner reading to the grammatical configuration. Similarly, if the agent in (6e) is drinking his way leisurely through a bottle, it is hard to arrive to the conclusion that s/he finds any difficulty in achieving the goal. Additionally, unless the floating of driftwood in (7a) refers to the necessarily slow progression of the subject along the sea/ocean, which to us, still does not mean to involve an effort, motion

appears to be fully unimpeded. There are thus many cases in which the path is created without the need of overcoming obstacles, although surrounding contextual parameters are of vital importance when it comes to this issue, e.g. *Mark Spitz swam his way to 7 gold medals in the 1972 Summer Olympics*⁷ vs. *The bran merrily floated its way to the Mississippi*⁸. While in the former the effort (i.e. impediment) does not lie so much in the activity itself, but rather, in the context of winning 7 gold medals by competing, the latter depicts a similar activity (floating in the water) in which the subject is slowly and non-effortlessly transported along the river. In line with what has been said thus far, we claim that part of Goldberg's failure to successfully account for the semantics of the 'way' stems from an unrefined interpretation of certain core notions of her basic constraint, here summarized as follows: a path must be created (not just traveled) because the subject moves despite external difficulty or in some indirect form through a non-pre-established path. In order to arrive at a better understanding of the construction under scrutiny, we would like to call the reader's attention to the following ideas:

- (i) A self-instigated pathway is always created whenever an entity moves from point A to point B⁹. This entails that:
 - a. Obstacles are not a necessary requirement for the construal of a path (e.g. *He went to the store* = 'he (figuratively) developed a path while/by walking to the store').
 - b. The fact that the path is pre- or non-pre-established is an irrelevant factor for (i) to occur. For example, the subject referent can move across a field of flowers, as in a previous example, or in the sentence *Years of buried guilt and shame snaked their way through her body*¹⁰ it can move figuratively through a body (both being cases of non-pre-established paths); or it can move up and down a street (pre-established path, e.g. *They elbowed their way through 5th Ave.*).
- (ii) It follows from (i) that the semantics of the 'way' construction can encode both the creation of a path due to the existence of obstacles, i.e. the *prototypical* sense of the configuration, and the creation of a path even though no barrier is present (e.g. *Staying on the New Jersey side, the train chugged its way along the rails*¹¹).

Another issue that deserves special attention is Goldberg's distinction between the more central means interpretation and the more peripheral manner reading. We have previously argued that for Goldberg, the utterance *He joked his way into the meeting* primarily displays a means reading and a co-extensive (secondary) manner sense, while the example *He whistled his way into the meeting* does only admit the manner interpretation. Therefore, whereas the former can be paraphrased as 'Sam got into the meeting *by/while* joking' (i.e. means, and manner as coextension), the latter can only be rephrased as 'He got into the meeting *while* whistling'. Once again, in her analysis, this last instance does not appear to be a particularly good example, because one cannot

necessarily imply that the subject referent constructed a path while moving. Here are, however, two sentences that specify otherwise:

- (8) His background music (...) went to first place on sheet-music bestseller lists. The song that started with a whistle became a sensation (...) he whistled his way right into a contract with music publisher G. Schirmer¹².
- (9) He whistled his way through the song, belting out words each time he reached "I'm the piano man"¹³.

In the cases at hand here, not only are the readings '*He got a contract while he was whistling' or '*He sang the song while he was whistling' unacceptable, but they are also understood as involving the metaphorical development of a path. These two examples underscore the capacity of what Goldberg calls "the manner interpretation" (displayed here by a sound-emission verb such as 'whistle'), to be actually employed as the *means* through which motion is performed. Consequently, it is each use in context that motivates the syntactic form of the construction, as opposed to Goldberg's statement that "the syntactic form of the 'way' can be provided by the means interpretation, but not by the manner interpretation" (Goldberg 1995: 203). We should point out, however, that Goldberg (1995: 211) does not miss the fact that "means of motion often determines manner of motion". Clearly, the means through which one performs an action is conceptually different from (although closely connected with) the specific manner in which we act. Following Jackendoff (1990: 214), we wonder why a distinction in terms of predominance between means and manner should be posited: "The distinction between the means and manner interpretations is not necessarily clear, and in fact there are many sentences that can be interpreted in either way". From our point of view, both interpretations equally co-occur (at least in the majority of cases), designating two perspectives on the same activity which need not be distinguished, irrespective of whether motion happens through a self-created path filled with obstacles. Within the realm of Cognitive Linguistics, Lakoff and Johnson (1980, 1999) and Grady (1997) have discussed and empirically proved the power of conflation as a conceptual mechanism through which speakers pair subjective experience with sensorimotor experience in order to give rise to hundreds of primary metaphors such as MORE IS UP, AFFECTION IS WARMTH, DIFFICULTIES ARE BURDENS, etc. As much as it is difficult to divorce the two domains in the lexical metaphor STATES ARE LOCATIONS (cf. being cool under a tree or feeling secure in bed; Lakoff and Johnson 1999: 48), manner and means are subject to the same type of experiential conflation. It should be emphasized that, for us, the means interpretation is more central only in the sense that the overall causal configuration of the more frequent or prototypical use of the 'way' involves some impediment to motion and the removal of a figurative barrier, often by employing some kind of instrument (whether physical or not, e.g. *He elbowed his way into the crowd*):

- (10) a. He's dusted his way into the boys' locker room (COCA, 2000).
 c. This operatic cantor sang his way through the anthem (COCA, 2009).

- d. She pushed her way back to the surface (COCA, 2011).
- e. Keeping her gaze on the ground and watching her feet as she felt her way inside (COCA, 2010).
- f. She wandered across the room and talked her way into a job (COCA, 2010).

All the instances in (10) can be equally paraphrased as “he went into the locker room while dusting” or “he went into the locker room by dusting”, “the cantor made his way through the anthem by singing/as he sang”, “the woman made it to the surface by/while pushing” or “she got the job by/while talking. In our opinion, there is no point in regarding one interpretation or the other as more salient, unless we consider it from the perspective of the most basic, neutral form of the construction, i.e. “to make one’s way PP”. In the majority of examples discussed thus far, means and manner conflate to create a complex scenario that in the mind of the speaker is difficult to pull apart, although some specific sentences seem to tend towards one or the other interpretation. For example, we may acknowledge that in (10a), the actor moves *while* dusting (unless additional contextual parameters suggest otherwise), whereas (10d) leads us to believe that the means interpretation may perhaps be more salient. In any case, whenever an activity is performed, there is always some intrinsically related manner of carrying it out, and thus, distinguishing between means and manner is rather irrelevant.

At this stage, we still have to address the fundamental issue of what links the means and manner interpretations in Goldberg’s account. According to her, since both the adverb ‘how’ and the noun ‘way’ are polysemous, we should also expect polysemy to work as a plausible motivating factor for inheritance to take place between the two senses of the construction (Goldberg 1995: 210). This affirmation is insufficient for two reasons: first, because as we have seen, the means and manner distinction is problematic and, in most examples, indiscernible; second, because there is still no explanation as to exactly what motivates the polysemy link. We contend that the underlying factor licensing examples such as *The kid crawled his way into the room* relies on metonymy, a cognitive operation which Langacker (1999: 67) describes as “central and essential to grammar”. Let us now analyze in some detail the above-mentioned instance for the sake of illustration. The ‘way’ construction is a complex syntactic frame capable of amalgamating various conceptual units into one single structure, i.e. [Vb + NP, POSS way] = an activity, the means/manner of carrying it out, a (self-created) path (which may sometimes presuppose obstacles), and motion through a location in which a result or destination may often be included. Going back to the sentence *The kid crawled his way into the room*, the correct paraphrase would be: “the kid made his way into the room by/while crawling”. Further note that one cannot “make his/her way”; rather a path may be traveled by the subject referent. This suggests the existence of a lexical or low-level metaphor, which we could roughly label MAKING IS TRAVELING. Thus, in terms of decoding (cf. Boas 2008b), we argue that the whole string “crawled X’s way” is motivated by the high-level metonymy (cf. Ruiz de Mendoza and Pérez 2001; Ruiz de Mendoza and Mairal 2007, 2011) ACTION FOR THE MEANS/MANNER (OF

PERFORMING THE ACTION), whereas MEANS/MANNER FOR ACTION would be the encoding counterpart (see Dirven 1999 for an analysis of the INSTRUMENT OR MANNER FOR ACTION grammatical metonymy). On this view, the activity of 'crawling' stands for the way in which the same event is performed. It should also be emphasized that, since path is a lexically-realized parameter in this construction, it is only natural that the mover ends up in a different location which, in cases like (10f) above, is realized on the basis of the metaphor STATES ARE LOCATIONS.

Finally, in line with the constructionist perspective, Goldberg argues that the 'way' construction is a kind of conventionalized amalgam which combines the syntax and semantics of creation expressions (e.g. 'he made a path') and those of intransitive motion (e.g. 'he moved into the room'). For this reason the abstract semantics of the construction is reduced to the schema: CREATE-MOVE <creator-theme, created-way, path> (Goldberg 1995: 208). Then again, such a skeletal representation cannot account for the reason why **He described his way through the meeting* is ungrammatical, which is precisely one of the reasons why advocates of the bottom-up usage-based account (e.g. Boas 2003) argue for the need to provide a more detailed characterization of lexical-constructional fusion mechanisms.

4. CONCLUSIONS

Attempting to answer to the question of whether Goldberg's constraints can in fact account for the actual behavior of a given construction when large amounts of data are consulted, we have revised this author's analysis of the 'way' construction in order to confirm or discard such a critique. With this aim in mind, we have first revised Goldberg's account of the 'way' construction to then point out why we believe her approach is problematic in the light of novel data extracted from various corpora, especially Google Books. We have paid especially attention to whether obstacles are a compulsory requirement for the creation of a self-instigated pathway and we have argued that the means and manner interpretations often do not constitute a clear-cut distinction. Rather, in most cases means and manner conflate and it is the high-level metonymy ACTION FOR THE MEANS AND MANNER OF PERFORMING THE ACTION which licenses/motivates such a configuration.

NOTES

- * Correspondence to: Alba Luzondo Oyón. Dpto. de Filologías Extranjeras y sus Lingüísticas. Facultad de Filología, UNED (Despacho 3, planta -2). c/ Senda del Rey, 7. 28040 Madrid. E-mail: aluzondo@flog.uned.es
- 1. Google Books: *Dancing with a kitchen chair* by Sandra M. Rushing, 2007. Accessed in September 2011. Serve this note for the rest of the paper.
- 2. Sentence extracted from the movie *Nightwatch*, 1997.
- 3. Google Books: *The sixties girl* by Victoria Staat, 2011.
- 4. Google Books: *Journey of the Mountain Man* by William W. Johnstone, 1995.
- 5. Google Books: *Peaceful Valley* by Joseph Uzmack, 2006.

6. Google Books is now part of Mark Davis's newest corpus for American English available at: <http://googlebooks.byu.edu/>, which contains no less than 155 billion words.
7. Google Books: *Left is right* by Rae Lindsay, 1996.
8. Google Books: *My friend, Julia Lathrop* by Jane Addams, 2004.
9. It is obvious from this that a necessary distinction should be posited between the material path (e.g. a street, a dirt road, a bike trail, etc.) along which we travel and the self-created pathway developed by the actor while moving.
10. Google Books: *The Every Boy* by Dana Adam Shapiro, 2007.
11. Google Books: *A-Train: Memoirs of a Tuskegee Airman* by Charles W. Dryden, Benjamin O. Davis, 1992.
12. Google Books: *Edmund Goulding's dark victory: Hollywood's genius bad boy* by Matthew Kennedy, 2004.
13. Google Books: *Storm path* by Hadley Hoover, 2002.

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