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Analogue of the *way*-construction in German and Dutch: another Germanic sandwich?

Abstract: This paper addresses the English *way*-construction [SUBJ_i V POSS_i *way* OBL] and its reflexive analogues in German and Dutch. We argue that the different constructions are best compared using conceptual terms describing middle situations in the domain of autocausative motion (Kemmer 1993). Two dimensions are especially important: path traversal and goal-directedness (or telicity). It will be shown that *way*-constructions and their analogues can be arranged along these dimensions. Moreover, there is a general parallel tendency for newer constructions to occupy the domain of ‘path traversal’. In English, this development has resulted in the *way*-construction being dominant at the cost of the historically prior reflexive resultative construction. In Dutch, the *weg*-construction, which expresses path-traversal, competes with the more generally established Transition-to-Location Construction, which specialises in the expression of telic transition of location. In German, finally, there is no schematic *Weg*-construction: the entire conceptual space of autocausative motion is covered by reflexive constructions – either instantiations of a more general reflexive construction [SUBJ V *sich* OBL] or inherently reflexive verbs.

Zusammenfassung: Der vorliegende Beitrag behandelt die englische *way*-Konstruktion [SUBJ_i V POSS_i *way* OBL] und die äquivalenten Reflexivkonstruktionen des Deutschen und des Niederländischen. Es wird gezeigt, dass sich diese unterschiedlichen Konstruktionen am besten mithilfe von Kategorien vergleichen lassen, die für die Beschreibung von Medialsituationen im Bereich der autokausativen Bewegung entwickelt wurden (Kemmer 1993). Vor allem zwei Dimensionen erweisen sich dabei als wichtig: Zurücklegen eines Pfades und Zielgerichtetheit (oder Telizität). Außerdem wird gezeigt, dass die *way*-Konstruktionen und ihre Äquivalente entlang dieser Dimensionen geordnet werden können und dass jüngere Konstruktionen dazu neigen, zunächst die Domäne des ‘Zurücklegens eines Pfades’ zu besetzen. Im Englischen hat dies dazu geführt, dass die *way*-Konstruktion die historisch ältere reflexive Resultativkonstruktion weitgehend verdrängt hat. Im Niederländischen befindet sich die *weg*-Konstruktion, die das Zurücklegen eines Pfades ausdrückt, in Konkurrenz mit einer bereits etablierten Konstruktion, die auf den Ausdruck eines telischen Ortswechsels spezialisiert ist. Im Deutschen gibt es schließlich keine schematische *Weg*-Konstruktion: Hier wird

die konzeptuelle Domäne der autokausativen Bewegung vollständig von Reflexivkonstruktionen abgedeckt – sei es von Instanziierungen der allgemeineren Reflexivkonstruktion [SUBJ V *sich* OBL] oder von inhärent reflexiven Verben.

1 Introduction

In this paper, we address the English *way*-construction as exemplified in (1), one of the classic constructions of English described in Goldberg (1995), and its analogues in Dutch and German, which differ from the English one in at least two respects. First, both involve the obligatory presence of the weak reflexive marker *zich/sich*, which is not present in the English construction. And second, although Dutch allows the NP *een weg*, cf. (2), German does not have a productive construction with a *einen/den/seinen/ihren Weg* NP. Instead it makes use of a reflexive construction (3) to render the meaning of the English *way*-construction.

- (1) *He swam his way into the final.*
- (2) *Hij zwom zich (een weg) naar de finale.*
- (3) *Er schwamm sich ins Finale.*

That German and Dutch use a reflexive marker while English does not reflects a more general trend, as it is well-known that the use of reflexive markers is more constrained in English than in Dutch and particularly in German. Steinbach (2002: 46ff.), for instance, notes that the English reflexive cannot be used as a middle marker at all (on our use of the notion ‘middle’, see section 3.1), whereas both Dutch and German allow the weak reflexive *zich/sich* in so-called anticausative constructions, see (4), and only German has reflexive *sich* in facilitative constructions of the type illustrated in (5) (for similar observations, see also Oya 2002, 2003).

- (4) *The door slowly opened / De deur opende zich langzaam / Die Tür öffnete sich langsam.*
- (5) *The book reads easily / Het boek leest (*zich) gemakkelijk / Das Buch liest sich leicht.*

In the same vein, only in German can *sich* be used with reciprocal meaning, whereas both English and Dutch make use of other strategies to express reciprocity.

- (6) *They greet each other / Ze begroeten elkaar/mekaar / Sie grüßen sich.*

This seems to suggest the existence of a (kind of) reflexive cline on which English occupies the leftmost position and German the rightmost. It is this cline which we will try to make more specific in this paper, as we will use it to account for the different constructions used in Dutch and German to render the English *way*-construction.

The paper is organized as follows. In section 2, we will address the English *way*-construction and its main alternatives in Dutch and German in detail. Section 3 zooms in on the meaning potential of reflexives in English, Dutch and German, especially in the domain of autocausative motion (see Kemmer 1993; Geniušienė 1987), and tries to link this potential to the constructions discussed in section 2. Section 4 presents a short conclusion and outlook.

2 The *way*-construction and its equivalents in Dutch and German

English has several means to describe goal-directed motion along a path, and the *way*-construction is one of them. Its formal and semantic properties as well as the differences between the *way*-construction and a less common but semantically related reflexive resultative construction will be discussed in the following section. Sections 2.2 and 2.3 will address counterparts of the *way*-construction in Dutch and German respectively.

2.1 The *way*-construction in English

The English *way*-construction is a productive, non-compositional construction with idiosyncratic syntactic and semantic properties that were described in Jackendoff (1990) and Goldberg (1995, 1996), among many others. It consists of a (typically agentive) subject, a verb, and two post-verbal elements: a noun phrase containing the noun *way* following a possessive pronoun that is co-referential with the subject on the one hand, and a directional adverbial describing the path that is created by the action expressed in the verb on the other. Typical instances of this formal pattern are presented in (7a–c):

- (7) a. *Frank dug his way out of the prison.*
 b. *Sam joked his way into the meeting.*
 c. *The hikers clawed their way to the mountain top.*

These examples illustrate some of the peculiarities of the construction. First, it is clear that the NP containing *way* cannot (any longer) be regarded as a straightforward direct object of the verb since the verb in the *way*-construction can be intransitive, as in (7b) and (7c). Second, although the *way*-construction always denotes motion along a path, it is perfectly compatible with verbs that do not express motion at all, as example (7b) demonstrates. The construction can therefore be regarded as a non-compositional “constructional idiom” (Jackendoff 1990: 221) whose meaning cannot be predicted on the basis of its components, but is directly associated with the construction itself. Regarding this meaning, Goldberg (1995: 207) argues that the *way*-construction prototypically involves both creation of a path¹ and movement along this path. Since the path is mostly not pre-established, but created by the subject referent, the movement along the path is often perceived as difficult or hindered by obstacles. Note that there is no consensus in the literature with respect to (the classification of) the meanings expressed by the *way*-construction. Goldberg (1995, 1996) distinguishes a more basic (and hence much more frequent) **means** interpretation, in which case the verb denotes the means by which the path was created, from a derived (and hence less frequent) **manner** interpretation, with the verb denoting an action that merely accompanies the motion (without the implication that a path is being created), as in (8):

- (8) *They were clanging their way up and down the narrow streets.*
(Goldberg 1995: 209)

In his paper on the diachrony of the *way*-construction,² Israel (1996), on the other hand, distinguishes between three senses: a **means** (or path-creation) sense, in which the construction expresses the idea that the subject creates a path and moves along it, often with some difficulty; a **manner** sense, in which the verb is a motion verb that specifies aspects of the way motion occurs (see example (9), taken from Israel 1996: 222); and a so-called **incidental activity** sense, whereby the verb codes “some incidental activity that happens to accompany motion” (Israel 1996: 225). This incidental activity often involves the production of a particular sound along with the motion, as in (10) (example from Israel 1996: 225).³

¹ This is consonant with the fact that the most frequent verb in the present-day *way*-construction is *make*.

² Detailed information on the rather complex historical development of the construction can also be found in Traugott/Trousdale (2013: 76–91).

³ Somewhat confusingly, Israel’s incidental activity sense equals Goldberg’s manner sense, whereas his manner sense is subsumed in the means category in Goldberg’s account. In the remainder of this paper, we will follow Israel’s more precise classification.

What unifies the three senses is the fact that they all involve **motion along a path**. Note that both the manner and the incidental activity sense have a considerably lower token frequency than the more central means sense (see Perek 2018).

(9) *She fumbled her way down the dark stairs.*

(10) *He whistled his way to the main front door.*

Before we turn to the Dutch and German analogues of the English *way*-construction, an English ‘competitor’ of the *way*-construction should be introduced. Mondorf (2011) describes the division of labor between the English *way*-construction and an older reflexive construction, which she terms ‘resultative’, as illustrated in (11b).

(11) a. *She worked her way to the top.*

b. *She worked herself to the top.*

In fact, Mondorf (2011) argues that the reflexive resultative construction is being progressively ousted by the *way*-construction, given that the *way*-construction is about four times as frequent as the reflexive one in Mondorf’s present-day English corpus material (ibid.: 405). The reflexive construction still survives in what Mondorf describes as ‘abstract’ environments where the nouns in the directional NPs refer to abstract entities, as in (12):

(12) *Alex worked himself into a crimson-faced rage.*

Based on an analysis of the competition of both constructions in four time periods between 1470 and the present, Mondorf (ibid.: 412) concludes:

The *way*-construction consistently has a higher proportion of concrete rather than abstract uses throughout all four periods. By contrast, reflexive *self* scores consistently lower on concrete than abstract meanings. This distribution is indicative of a division of labor. Concrete uses are a domain of *way*, but abstract ones are more closely associated with *self*. The emergent substitution of *self* by *way* is more advanced in the concrete domain. In particular with abstract meanings, *self* can still to some extent stand its ground. But even here it is continually declining in use.

Unfortunately, Mondorf (2011) does not provide many examples for the abstract uses. A Google-search⁴ for combinations of *work* (one of the verbs in Mondorf’s

⁴ Google-search “works herself into” – 170 hits, first 40; Google-search “works her way into” – 180 hits, first 40, conducted on February 4th, 2018.

survey) with either (*her*)*self* or *way* in present-day English helps refine the characterization offered by Mondorf. The search reveals that what seems to be at stake is the difference between (concrete or abstract) motion along a path (in the *way*-construction) and subject-internal change (in the reflexive construction)⁵ rather than the opposition between concrete and abstract entities in the directional NP.

Table 1: *works her way into* vs. *works herself into*: Google-search

	<i>her way into</i>	<i>herself into</i>
works	<p>[motion towards concrete location]: <i>her father's library, a prison cell, the back row, a home, the nest</i></p> <p>[motion towards more abstract location]: <i>a review, a show, the picture, Criminal Girls 2;</i></p> <p>[motion in rankings, sport contexts]: <i>WNBA, Bistaff, the lead in Mumbai, starting line-up, more lineups, varsity lineup, bigger role for Buffs, into the final round</i></p> <p>[emotional, social upward movement]: <i>the hearts of her adoptive parents, his heart, the Allanson household; her neighbor's graces; the industrial segment of town, high society, Karl's circle, New York's upper echelon, prominence, increasingly powerful positions;</i></p> <p>[internal change]: <i>relaxation; an elite swimmer</i></p> <p>[other]: <i>an army marching chant, the piano's low notes</i></p>	<p>[internal change]: <i>the ground, a state, a frenzy, an orgasm, a minor frenzy, a (fine) lather, a frenzy of grief, enthusiasm, a religious ecstasy, a light daze, a fit, a state of enthusiasm, a frenzied state, some blisters, a tantrum, a panicked frenzy, exhaustion, a panic, a tizzy thinking</i></p>

The reflexive resultative construction in present-day English therefore can be said to denote resultative, internal changes of state of the grammatical subject, whereas the *way*-construction is primarily associated with motion (i.e. traversal along a path), be it concrete or abstract. We will return to this observation in section 3.

⁵ Both constructions are also compared in Christie (2011). As one of the differences between them, Christie discusses the inability of the prepositional phrase in the reflexive resultative construction to denote a path.

2.2 Dutch analogues of the *way*-construction

The Dutch analogues of the *way*-construction have been addressed by Verhagen (2002, 2003), van Egmond (2006) and Poß (2010). The main findings can be summarized as follows. First, contrary to what is claimed in Goldberg (1995), there is a formally similar Dutch analogue containing the NP *een weg* ‘a way’, as in (13).

- (13) *Ze baant zich een weg door de menigte.*
 ‘She makes her way through the crowd’

Still, this immediate analogue differs from the English *way*-construction in two respects: it contains a weak reflexive pronoun *zich* in indirect object position (instead of a possessive pronoun within the *weg*-NP as is the case in English) and it is much more strongly tied to the verb *banen* than its English pendant, i.e. the type frequency of the verb slot seems to be considerably higher for the English *way*-construction than for the Dutch *weg*-construction (compare Verhagen 2002, 2003 with Perek 2018). Let us go into these two differences in more detail.

Verhagen (2002, 2003) shows that the Dutch *weg*-construction has its origins in a ditransitive construction with the verb *banen* ‘to flatten, to level’, an NP containing the noun *weg* (either definite or indefinite) in direct object position, and a benefactive indirect object, which could, but did not need to be co-referential with the subject, see (14).

- (14) *Koomt gy my een weg tot groeter droefheid baanen?*
 cometh thou me a way to greater sorrow pave
 ‘Are you coming to pave me a way to greater sorrow?’
 (Verhagen 2002: 423)

According to Verhagen (2002), parts of this construction became entrenched over time, resulting in the formation of the highly specific schema *zich een weg banen door* ‘pave oneself a way through’, in which both the indefinite NP *een weg* ‘a way’ and the preposition *door* ‘through’ are fixed elements. However, some generalization takes place as well, resulting in the storage of the higher order schema [V *zich een weg* OBL], in which other verbs and other prepositional phrases can occupy the verb and the directional slot respectively. So the Dutch *weg*-construction became compatible, not only with *banen* and semantically similar verbs of path creation, but also with more abstract verbs denoting the **means** of creating a (metaphorical) path such as *bluffen* ‘bluff’, *vechten* ‘fight’, *vreten* ‘eat’, *zingen* ‘sing’, etc.

It is important to emphasize that in combination with verbs like *bluffen* ‘bluff’ or *zingen* ‘sing’, the reflexive pronoun can no longer be interpreted as benefactive.

This is shown by the fact that a periphrasis by means of a *voor*-phrase seems to be impossible, whereas this is still, albeit only marginally, acceptable with *zich banen*, as in (15). Poß (2010) also stresses the strong preference for the weak reflexive *zich* in the Dutch construction (instead of strong *zichzelf*, cf. (16)), a clear indication of the fact that the reflexive “is not a semantic argument of this construction, but merely a formal position that needs to be filled” (Poß 2010: 91).

- (15) *God baant voor zichzelf een weg in onze geschiedenis.*
 God makes for himself a way into our history
 (<http://opvoedkunde1av.khleuven.be/DIDACTIEK/2REFERENTIEKADER/OPVPROJ/VSKOopvproject.htm>)
 ‘God makes for himself a way into our history’
- (16) *Ze zong (*voor zichzelf)/ zich een weg naar de top.*
 She sang *for herself / herself a way to the top
 ‘She sang herself to the top’

In present-day Dutch, the preferred and most frequent verb in the construction is *banen* (Verhagen 2002: 412). This holds for both Netherlandic and Belgian Dutch, as Table 2 shows.⁶ We can also infer from Table 2 some of the characteristics of the verbs: their subjects are agents performing an intended action. (Manner of) motion verbs are also allowed (e.g. *dansen* ‘dance’, *kronkelen* ‘twist’, *wurmen* ‘wiggle’), as are verbs that clearly do not express motion (e.g. *zingen* ‘sing’, *vreten* ‘eat’).

Table 2: The verb *slot* in the Dutch *weg*-construction

[zich een weg V OBL]	Volkskrant (NL)	CONDIV (B) (newspapers)
	n: 43	n: 24
<i>banen</i> ‘make’	23	13
<i>vechten</i> ‘fight’	5	1
<i>snijden</i> ‘cut’	3	7

⁶ The Netherlandic Dutch data from the second column (Volkskrant) are from Verhagen (2002: 412), the Belgian Dutch data are based on occurrences of the *weg*-construction in the Belgian Dutch newspaper part of the written CONDIV-corpus, searched using AntConc. The search string was *zich een weg*; irrelevant examples were removed manually.

[zich een weg V OBL]	Volkskrant (NL)	CONDIV (B) (newspapers)
	n: 43	n: 24
<i>bluffen</i> 'bluff'	2	0
<i>vreten</i> 'eat'	2	1
<i>wurmen</i> 'wriggle', <i>boren</i> 'drill'	1	1
<i>beitelen</i> 'chisel', <i>graven</i> 'dig', <i>knagen</i> 'gnaw', <i>kronkelen</i> 'twist', <i>ploegen</i> 'plough', <i>slaan</i> 'hit'	1	0
<i>bijten</i> 'bite', <i>dansen</i> 'dance', <i>zingen</i> 'sing', <i>kreunen</i> 'moan', <i>ploeteren</i> 'to plug', <i>wroeten</i> 'root', <i>roefelen</i> 'poke, browse'	0	1

The other Dutch analogue of the English *weg*-construction is the so-called Transition-To-Location Construction (in the following TLC), which contains a weak reflexive pronoun and a directional phrase, but no *weg*-NP.

- (17) a. *Ze zingt zich naar de top.*
'She sings her way to the top'
- b. *De kankercel vreet zich door het lichaam.*
'The cancer cell eats its way through the body' (Poß 2010: 98)

Examples (17a–b) show that the TLC – while denoting some kind of motion – does not itself have to contain a motion verb. In fact, the verbs occurring in the TLC are similar to those in the *weg*-construction.⁷ They denote volitional action on the part of an agentive subject. Note that the verb *banen* is possible in the TLC as well, as shown in (18a–b), although *banen* occurs considerably more often in the *weg*-construction than in the TLC.

- (18) a. *Iedereen springt snel in de voertuigen en baant zich met loeiende sirenes door het drukke verkeer.*
'Everyone quickly jumps into the vehicles and, with roaring sirens, works his way through the busy traffic'
(www.bol.com/nl/serie/playmobil-brandweer/9200000045845976, last accessed: 17-7-2019)

⁷ Van Egmond (2006: 91) notes that 86% of the verbs she found in her corpus of TLCs also occur in the *weg*-construction.

- b. *De rivier baant zich door de bourgondische bossen van het natuurpark.*
 ‘The river runs through the Burgundian forests of the natural park’
 (www.raftingadventure.be/raften-morvan-bourgogne, last accessed:
 17-7-2019)

Both van Egmond (2006) and Poß (2010) compare the Dutch *weg*-construction with the TLC. Whereas van Egmond (2006) highlights the differences, Poß (2010) seems to focus more on their similarities. For van Egmond, the main difference between the Dutch *weg*-construction and the TLC is that the former describes the **incremental traversal of a path** by means of or during the action described in the verb, whereas the TLC denotes the **transition to a location**⁸ by means of the action denoted in the verb, but without motion along a path. The TLC is therefore obligatorily telic (i.e. the endpoint is reached), whereas the *weg*-construction, which focuses more on the path-traversal, is not specified for telicity (van Egmond 2006: 104). Another difference pertains to temporal structure. Both constructions evoke two temporal sub-events, i.e. the actual or metaphorical motion on the one hand, and the means of motion, as described by the verb, on the other hand. With the *weg*-construction, the sub-events occur simultaneously, whereas the TLC allows interpretations in which the action denoted by the main verb and the motion, i.e. the transition to a particular location, are consecutive (van Egmond 2006: 102). A third difference is that only the *weg*-construction expresses incremental progress along a path. The TLC, by contrast, does not evoke an incremental reading: the location in the directional phrase can be reached by a single instance of the action described in the verb (van Egmond 2006: 103).

It is clear that the expression of a path – by means of the NP *een weg* – has a considerable impact on the meaning of the construction in van Egmond’s account. Poß (2010), on the other hand, plays down the semantic contribution of the NP *een weg*: “the *weg*-element does not play a role in the [...] semantic structure of the construction [and therefore] the entire ‘creating and traversing a path’-part can be skipped” (ibid.: 99). For Poß, both constructions mainly differ with regard to their aspectual properties: whereas the *weg*-construction evokes either an iter-

⁸ Van Egmond (2006: 114f.) argues that the TLC cannot be equated with the so-called (fake) reflexive resultative construction, in spite of their strong formal resemblance or even formal identity (e.g. *Ze schreeuwde zich hees* ‘She yelled herself hoarse’, *ze zong zich in trance/aan flarden/te pletter* ‘She sang herself into a trance/to pieces’/*ze zoop zich in coma* ‘she boozed herself into a coma’). According to her, the reflexive resultative denotes a transition to a state that does not exist independently of the subject, whereas the location the subject moves to in the TLC exists without the subject. This is strongly reminiscent of the English reflexive resultative construction, which, as we argued in section 2.1, denotes a subject-internal change of state.

ative reading (with verbs denoting punctual events, e.g. *springen* ‘jump’) or a durative one, it is not specified for telicity. The TLC, on the other hand, is necessarily telic, but not specified with respect to either iterativity or durativity. When a telic reading is evoked by the directional phrase, e.g. *naar de finale* ‘into the finals’ in (19), and the situation denoted is not punctual, the actual difference between the two constructions can be quite small.

- (19) *Ze danste zich (een weg) naar de finale.*
 ‘She danced her way into the finals’

Still, there is a functional difference between the two constructions, and this is reflected in the frequency with which they code particular constellations. The inherent telicity of the TLC accounts for the fact that the construction is preferably used to express situations that are strongly goal-directed (e.g. in combination with the directional preposition *naar* ‘to’), whereas the *weg*-construction is more common to denote situations in which the subject (metaphorically) moves along a path (e.g. in combination with the path-denoting prepositions *door* ‘through’ or *over* ‘over’). Table 3 presents the results of several Google-searches involving either more strongly goal-directed (telic) or path-oriented constellations with the same verbs.

Table 3: different preferences for *weg* and the TLC⁹

V REFL	+ GOAL <i>naar</i> ‘to’	+ PATH <i>door</i> ‘through’ <i>over</i> ‘over’
danst/dansen/danste/dansten zich ‘dances/dance/danced REFL’	weg: 99 vs. <u>TLC: 143</u>	<u>weg: 92</u> vs. TLC: 61 (<i>door</i>)
bokst/ boksen/bokste/boksten zich ‘boxes/box/boxed REFL’	weg:21 vs. <u>TLC: 76</u>	weg: 10 vs. <u>TLC: 36</u> (<i>door</i>)
zwemt/zwemmen/zwom/zwommen zich ‘swims/swim/swam REFL’	weg:10 vs. <u>TLC: 147</u>	<u>weg: 9</u> vs. TLC: 6 (<i>door</i>)
zingt/zingen/zong/zongen zich ‘sings/sing/sang REFL’	weg: 62 vs. <u>TLC: 78</u>	<u>weg: 68</u> vs. TLC: 61 (<i>door</i>)
vecht/vechten/vochten zich ‘fights/fight/fought REFL’	weg: 197 vs. <u>TLC: 265</u>	<u>weg: 24</u> vs. TLC: 15 (<i>over</i>)

⁹ Google-search, conducted May 25th, 2018.

In each case, the goal-directed constellation favors the TLC, whereas the path-oriented constellation occurs more frequently in the *weg*-construction.¹⁰ These findings also account for the fact that Dutch speakers sometimes prefer the TLC in cases where English uses a *way*-construction. A nice illustration is provided by the following small-scale contrastive study based on Nicci French's novel *Sunday Morning Coming Down* (translated into Dutch as *Zondagochtend breekt aan*).¹¹ The English original contains 19 instances of the *way*-construction, five of which are translated by means of a *weg*-construction in Dutch (20a). Additionally, two instances are translated using a TLC (20b).¹²

- (20) a. *Josef munched his way through the pile of food in front of him, occasionally wiping his hand across his mouth.* (French 2017a, 61, 10)
Josef kauwde zijn weg door de berg eten voor zich en veegde zo nu en dan met zijn hand over zijn mond. (French 2017b, 61, 8)
- b. *Now he can't stop imagining a worm softly winding its way down the ear and into his head.* (French 2017a, 35–36, 1)
Nu kon hij de gedachte dat er een worm in zijn oor zit en zich langzaam naar binnen wringt niet uit zijn hoofd zetten. (French 2017b, 35–36,1)

Fully in line with the analysis presented here, four out of five *weg*-constructions in the Dutch translation contain the preposition *door*, whereas both TLCs contain goal-directed *naar*.

A third alternative rendering English *way*-constructions into Dutch is by means of a simple intransitive motion verb, as in the following three randomly selected examples from various sources. As this option (which to our knowledge has not been discussed in the literature so far) is quite straightforward, we will not further discuss it in the remainder of this paper.

10 The only exception is the preference for *boksen* 'to box' to occur in combination with the path-denoting preposition *door* in the TLC. A closer look at the hits, however, reveals that many TLC-examples involve the telic particle *heen*, which emphasizes the endpoint of the path and hence induces a telic interpretation, as in [*hij*] *bokste zich door een burn-out heen* 'he overcame a burn-out' (lit. 'he boxed REFL all the way through a burn-out').

11 Electronic versions of both the English original (French 2017a and its Dutch translation (French 2017b) were used.

12 In the remaining cases, other construction types occurred in Dutch, the majority of which involved the use of intransitive verbs.

- (21) a. *I'm sorry, Mr Feltz, they just pushed their way in* (Fargo 3, episode 2, The principle of restricted choice)
Het spijt me, Mr Feltz, ze banjerden gewoon binnen [Dutch subtitles]
- b. *The actual work starts once the sun has set. He then forces his way into the locus delicti of his choice, armed with tripod and camera.*
Het eigenlijke werk begint als de zon onder is. Dan dringt hij gewapend met statief en camera binnen bij de locus delicti [sic!] van zijn keuze.
 (<https://www.hanswilschut.com/en/blog/2012/12/07/the-miami-series-hanswilschut-edo-dijksterhuis/>, last accessed 23-1-2018 [English and Dutch version of the website])
- c. *It took longer for Karlsson to edge his way out of the car and raise himself on to his crutches.* (French 2017a, 1, 8)
Bij Karlsson duurde het langer voordat hij was uitgestapt en zich op zijn krukken had geheesen. (French 2017b, 1, 7)

To summarize, Dutch features three constructions rendering English way-constructions: (i) a *weg*-construction, which resembles English *way* in typically evoking the notion of moving along a path, (ii) the so-called Transition-To-Location Construction, which is reflexive in form but does not contain a *weg*-NP and gets a telic interpretation, and (iii) an intransitive construction with a (mostly non-reflexive) movement verb.

2.3 German analogues of the way-construction

At first sight, German seems to have only one straightforward option to render the English *way*-construction, i.e. by means of a reflexive construction containing a (normally non-reflexive) verb, a weak reflexive pronoun *sich* and a directional phrase, e.g. *durch die schmale Straße* in (22a), *ins Finale* in (22b), and *zum Sieg* in (22c).

- (22) a. *Ein riesiger Bagger gräbt sich durch die schmale Straße.*
 'A giant excavator digs its way through the narrow street'
- b. *Sie schlägt sich ins Finale.*
 'She hits her way into the final'
- c. *Er stöhnt sich zum Sieg.*
 'He moans his way into victory'

As argued by Smirnova/Mortelmans (subm.), there are no compelling reasons to assume the existence of a (schematic, non-compositional) *Weg*-construction in

German. A corpus study (*ibid.*) reveals that instances of the pattern with the noun *Weg* are indeed very rare and occur almost exclusively with the verb *bahnen* ‘to pave’. Most importantly, the pattern can be given a compositional interpretation, with the reflexive pronoun expressing a benefactive indirect object and the *Weg*-NP a straightforward direct object, as e.g. in (23):

- (23) *Ich bahne mir meinen Weg durch Smog und Baustellenlärm ...* (taz, 17-9-2009)
 ‘I pave (me.DAT) my way through the smog and the noise of the construction site ...’

In contrast to the Dutch *weg*-construction, there is still considerable variation with respect to the form of the *Weg*-NP: as shown in Table 4, we find combinations with the definite article, with the indefinite article and with possessive pronouns. The combination of *sich* with a possessive pronoun (*seinen/ihren*) seems to be the preferred one, hinting at a certain degree of entrenchment and conventionalization. This combination of a reflexive pronoun with a co-referential possessive pronoun is odd in present-day German (compare *Ich wasche mir die Hände* with ?*Ich wasche mir meine Hände*). This suggests that the reflexive pronoun is losing some of its purely reflexive meaning in the construction.

Table 4: *Weg*-modifiers in the German *Weg*-construction

DEREKO (W-öffentlich)	<i>sich seinen/ihren Weg</i> ‘REFL his/her way’	<i>sich den Weg</i> ‘REFL the way’	<i>sich einen Weg</i> ‘REFL a way’
<i>bahnt</i> (form)	<i>seinen</i> : 356; <i>ihren</i> : 181	237	151
<i>bahnen</i> (lemma)	<i>seinen</i> : 531; <i>ihren</i> : 686	530	346

As *bahnen* is the only verb occurring in this construction, the construction may be considered a fixed idiomatic expression with a high degree of entrenchment and lexicalization. This is the fundamental difference between the German *Weg*-construction and its Dutch and English counterparts: whereas the latter display a medium to high degree of schematicity and productivity and allow a variety of verbs in the verbal slot, the former is restricted to one verb only.

The German reflexive construction as exemplified in (22) above, on the other hand, may be regarded as a non-compositional, schematic, and productive construction in present-day German (cf. Smirnova/Mortelmans *subm.*). The verb slot may be filled with verbs from different semantic groups and syntactic classes, for example transitive verbs such as *graben* ‘dig’ in (22a), *schlagen* ‘hit’ in (22b) and *lesen* ‘read’ in (24a), as well as intransitive verbs such as *stöhnen* ‘groan’ in (22c)

and *spielen* ‘play’ in (24b). In each case, the construction describes the traversal of a (metaphorical) path by means of or during the action described by the verb, although the verbs do not express motion.

- (24) a. *Ich habe mich jetzt durch den kompletten Thread gelesen ...* (DECOW14)
 ‘Now I have read my way through the complete thread’
 b. *... Musik, die sich da luftig und leicht in die internationalen Top 10 spielte.*
 (DECOW14)
 ‘music which played its way into the international Top 10 lightly and softly’

The German reflexive construction may receive the same two interpretations that are typical of its English and Dutch counterparts, i.e. telic (22b, 22c; 24a, 24b) or unspecified with respect to telicity (22a). These readings are mostly dependent on the larger context of the utterance and on the preposition used in the directional phrase. The corpus study in Smirnova/Mortelmans (subm.) reveals that prepositional phrases with *durch* ‘through’ usually favor the atelic interpretation, whereas other prepositions such as *in* ‘in, into’, *zu* ‘to’ etc. are more compatible with the telic interpretation, implying that the goal has been reached. The reflexive construction in German may therefore be regarded as a counterpart to the English *way*-construction as well as to both Dutch constructions, i.e. the *weg*-construction and the TLC.

It must be noted, however, that the German reflexive construction is often difficult to delineate from reflexive patterns in which a verb is accompanied by a weak reflexive and a directional phrase, cf. e.g. (25). Some of these verbs obligatorily combine with a weak reflexive (see below) and a directional phrase, making it difficult to draw a line between a non-compositional reflexive construction as a counterpart of the English *way*-construction on the one hand, and a lexical reflexive verb with a directional phrase in its subcategorization frame on the other hand (see Smirnova/Mortelmans subm. for detailed discussion).

- (25) a. *Er stürzte sich aus Verzweiflung in das Ägäische Meer.* (DWDS-Kernkorpus, schwanit1999)
 ‘In despair, he plunged into the Aegean Sea’
 b. *Aida, die sich in die Gruft geschlichen hatte ...* (DWDS-Kernkorpus, oper1998)
 ‘Aida, who slipped her way into the tomb’

In section 2.1, we noted that manner of motion verbs frequently appear in the English *way*-construction. As typical representatives of this category, Perek (2018)

notes the following verbs, for which the Oxford Duden German dictionary provides reflexive translations: *edge* (German *sich schieben*), *thread* (German *sich schlängeln*), *trail* (German *schleifen, sich hinziehen*), *weave* (German *sich schlängeln*) and *wind* (German *sich winden, sich schlängeln*). In general, German has a much higher number of lexicalized or inherently reflexive verbs, often associated with motion, e.g. *sich begeben* ‘go’, *sich verkriechen* ‘sneak away’, *sich verkrümmeln* ‘sneak off’, *sich trauen* ‘dare to go’, *sich wagen* ‘dare to go’, etc. And indeed, as already pointed out in Pedersen (2013), the English *way*-construction is mostly translated into German using an inherently reflexive verb rather than a reflexive construction. This is demonstrated by Pedersen (2013) on the basis of a parallel corpus consisting of original English texts and their translations into Spanish, German and French. (26) shows examples from English and their German translations (ibid.: 245–246):

- (26) a. E *he barged his way past Hillary Clinton*
 G *konnte er sich an Hillary Clinton vorbeidrängeln*
 b. E *if you try to bob and weave your way ... towards an end game*
 G *wenn man versucht, sich ... auf ein Endspiel zuzuschlängeln*
 c. E *we may be able to manage our way through it*
 G *sind wir vielleicht in der Lage, uns hindurchzumanövrieren*

Above, we argued that the German reflexive construction [V *sich* OBL] may be seen as a counterpart of the English *way*-construction. In fact, the situation appears to be more complicated than that: in view of the high number of German inherently reflexive verbs, together with the fact that the English *way*-construction is often translated into German using such an inherently reflexive verb, as illustrated in (26), we can conclude that there are two different construction types in German to render the English *way*-construction. On the one hand, there is the schematic and relatively productive reflexive construction as illustrated in (22) and (24) above, which accommodates non-reflexive verbs in its verb slot. On the other hand, there are numerous lexical verbs which obligatorily feature a weak reflexive, as exemplified in (25)–(26). As both types of constructions, i.e. the schematic one and the substantial lexical ones, resemble each other in form and semantics, the boundary between them is not always clear.

In the next section, we will look more closely into the semantics of **auto-causative motion**, a conceptual domain in which the English, Dutch, and German constructions described above seem to occupy different regions.

3 Autocausative motion

3.1 Middle situations

In this section, we will focus on the conceptual semantics of middle situations, using mainly the typological distinctions introduced by Kemmer (1993). Under such an onomasiological approach, well-known from typological research on semantic maps, functionally equivalent constructions from different languages are compared as to their positions in the same semantic space. The English *way*-construction and the analogous reflexive constructions in Dutch and German encode middle situations, i.e. situations in which the initiator of the event (i.e. the subject) is also its endpoint (ibid.: 337). In contrast to straightforward agent-patient situations, the patient is therefore co-referential with the actor, or in the words of Maldonado (2009: 70), “the subject’s action cannot be distinguished from the object’s affectedness” and the event “remains in one participant” (ibid.). The *way*-construction and its analogues specifically encode middle situations within the conceptual sub-domain of motion events such that the mover (the grammatical subject) is also the participant that undergoes motion, i.e. is affected by it.

In the semantic map of middle situations proposed by Kemmer (1993: 202) it is the dimension of autocausative motion that is particularly important for our purposes, cf. Table 5:

Table 5: Reflexive – middle cline (Kemmer 1993: 224)

REFLEXIVE SITUATION	NON-TRANSLATIONAL MOTION	CHANGE IN BODY POSTURE	TRANSLATIONAL MOTION
	<i>nod, bow, turn, stretch</i>	<i>sit down, stand up</i>	<i>go, move, climb</i>
	two-participant events		one-participant events

The cline in Table 5 represents the conceptual continuum of autocausative situations. In an autocausative situation a referent (usually human or animate) performs an action and undergoes a change of state at the same time. Autocausative situations are often motion events, and Table 5 shows a continuum of motion events in the domain of autocausative situations.

The continuum covers the semantic space between reflexive situations on the left, with two distinguishable but co-referential participants, and translational motion on the right, representing ordinary intransitive situations like *go, move, climb, fly* etc., in which only one participant is involved. The domain of non-trans-

lational motion with events like *nodding*, *bowing*, *turning*, *stretching* is located near the reflexive pole; in these events, the active participant, e.g. a person, may still be distinguished from the participant on which the action is performed, which is usually the participant's own body or parts of it. Further towards the one-participant end of the cline, there is the domain of body posture change with situations like *sit down*, *stand up*, *lay down* etc. in which it is even more difficult to distinguish between active and affected participants.

From a typological point of view, languages differ in how they employ different markers along this continuum. The right part of the table is likely to be coded by simple intransitive verbs, the left part of the continuum is likely to be coded by transitive verbs with reflexive morphemes signaling the co-reference of the participant roles.

In the next two sections, we will look at reflexive markers and the analogues of the *way*-construction in Dutch and German with respect to how they cover the semantic space represented in Table 5 above.

3.2 Weak reflexives in the autocausive domain

It is well known that many languages distinguish between strong and weak forms of the reflexive morpheme (cf. Kemmer 1993; Steinbach 2002). Dutch has both, German has only one form which serves both functions, and English has only the strong form:

(27)		weak form		strong form
	E	–		<i>-self</i>
	G	<i>sich</i>	=	<i>sich</i>
	D	<i>zich</i>		<i>zichzelf</i>

In Dutch, the strong forms are used in typical reflexive situations, see (28), whereas the weak forms occur with lexicalized inherently reflexive verbs, see (29a), with verbs of grooming (29b) and in some middle situations (see below).

(28)	D	<i>ik hoor mezelf</i>	G	<i>ich höre mich</i>	
	E	<i>I hear myself</i>			
(29)	a.	D	<i>zich schamen</i>	G	<i>sich schämen</i>
		E	<i>be ashamed</i>		
	b.	D	<i>zich kammen</i>	G	<i>sich kämmen</i>
		E	<i>comb</i>		

Unlike Dutch, German is a one-form language, as it does not distinguish between weak and strong reflexive forms (cf. Steinbach 2002: 47). In German, the reflexive pronoun *sich* is thus used not only in typical reflexive situations as in (28), but also with inherently reflexive verbs in (29). English makes use of a morphologically strong reflexive (*herself* etc.) that is not in opposition with a weak one. Generally, the use of the strong reflexive form in English is restricted to typical reflexive situations, see (28) (but see Siemund 2010, 2014 for exceptions).

The West-Germanic languages differ with respect to the middle properties of the reflexive markers. For instance, the middle properties of German *sich* are considerably more pronounced than those of its English and Dutch counterparts, especially in the domain of motion events. With respect to the continuum of the middle situations introduced in the previous section (see Table 5), the German reflexive marker *sich* is used in all sub-domains, cf. (30). The verbs given in (30) are lexicalized reflexive verbs; the weak reflexive pronoun is obligatory and cannot be omitted (without a considerable change in meaning).

(30) NON-TRANSLATIONAL MOTION

sich bücken, sich (ver)beugen, sich (um)drehen, sich (aus)strecken

CHANGE IN BODY POSTURE

sich (hin)setzen, sich (hin)legen, sich erheben, sich anlehnen

TRANSLATIONAL MOTION

sich bewegen, sich begeben, sich entfernen, sich nähern

In Dutch, the situation is more complicated, cf. (31). The weak reflexive *zich* occurs in all sub-domains of autocausative motion, but its use is by no means obligatory and subject to variation. Verbs denoting non-translational motion like *bukken* ‘stoop’ or *buigen* ‘bend’ for example mostly occur with a reflexive marker, but non-reflexive uses are also found, depending on the context. In the subdomain of translational motion, on the other hand, non-reflexive intransitive uses seem to be dominant, but reflexive uses are not completely excluded (*zich bewegen, zich begeben*).

(31) NON-TRANSLATIONAL MOTION

De aarde draait rond de zon.

‘The earth revolves around the sun’

Ik kan niet meer bukken

‘I cannot bend anymore’

Hij buigt voor de koning.

‘He is bowing to the king’

Hij draait zich om in zijn graf.

‘He turns over in his grave’

Ze bukte zich om de post op te rapen.

‘She bent down to pick up the post’

Hij buigt zich naar voren.

‘He is bowing forward’

CHANGE IN BODY POSTURE

gaan zitten, gaan liggen
 ‘to sit down, to lie down’

zich neerzetten, zich neerleggen
 ‘to sit down, to lay down’

TRANSLATIONAL MOTION

Hij kon niet meer bewegen
 ‘He couldn’t move anymore’

De danser bewoog zich over het podium.
 ‘The dancer moved across the stage’
Hij begeeft zich naar huis.
 ‘He goes home’

Duinhoven (2001: 109) argues that the presence of the reflexive marker is associated with intentionality: if the subject of the sentence is conceptualized as an intentional actor (especially in the domain of translational motion), the reflexive is used. According to Oya (2003: 220), the reflexive signals that the body is somehow affected by the action denoted by the verb. We would like to propose an additional semantic component that accounts for the presence of the reflexive in the domain of autocausative motion, namely the **goal-directedness** of the coded situation. If a reflexive marker is used in situations of non-translational motion, i.e. in situations which do not necessarily involve the movement of the subject towards a fixed endpoint (e.g. *draaien* ‘turn’), the situation is interpreted as **directed** towards the **goal** or the **endpoint** of the **motion**. Instances of the lemma *draaien* ‘turn’ accompanied by the reflexive pronoun *zich*¹³ in the Corpus of Spoken Dutch (CGN¹⁴) either involve the prefix *om* (*zich omdraaien* ‘to turn around’), denoting a fully completed turn, or a directional prepositional phrase (e.g. *naar mij toe* ‘towards me’, *op zijn buik* ‘onto his belly’). Intransitive instances without *zich*, on the other hand, are perfectly compatible with situations that do not evoke an endpoint, as in the following examples, again taken from the CGN.

13 The entire CGN was searched for the lemma *draaien* ‘turn’ accompanied by *zich* (distance: from 0 to 3 words). We found 140 relevant instances, 119 of which contain the separable prefix *om* ‘around’. One instance contains the prefix *weg* ‘away’. In the remaining 21 instances, *draaien* combines with prepositional phrases introduced by *naar* ‘to(wards)’ (11 instances), *op* ‘on(to)’ (7 instances), *in* ‘in(to)’ (1 instance) and *tot* ‘towards’ (1 instance), all of them clearly indicating the goal of the movement.

14 We conducted searches in the entire CGN, also including component *o*, (/comp-o/) which contains written material read aloud. In the corpus references, /nl/ refers to Netherlandic Dutch, /vl/ to Belgian Dutch (Flemish).

- (32) a. *ja ja oh ja ja nou z ja dat zijn auto's die draaien*
 'yes yes oh yes yes well yes that are cars that are running'
 (CGN/comp-a/nl/fn000747.sea#fn000747.94)
- b. *kun je effe draaien en zoeken naar de stoel*
 'can you turn for a second and look for the chair'
 (CGN/comp-a/nl/fn008549.sea#fn008549.132)

In a similar vein, reflexive instances of non-translational *buigen* 'bend, bow' in the CGN¹⁵ typically combine with prepositional phrases indicating the movement's endpoint (this is the case in 81 out of 82 instances in the CGN, see examples (33a–d)), whereas intransitive, non-reflexive *buigen* typically evokes situations in which the subject moves his or her body without focussing the movement's endpoint or direction (see examples (34a–c)).¹⁶ This explains why reflexive *sich buigen* equals English *bend down/over (towards)*, while non-reflexive *buigen* must be translated by simple *bow* or *bend* (typically *to someone/something*).

- (33) a. *ik buig me iets naar voren.*
 'I am bending forward a little'
 (CGN/comp-o/nl/fn001200.sea#fn001200.123)
- b. *Rufus' oma links van hem boog zich naar 'm toe.*
 'Rufus' grandma on his left bent towards him'
 (CGN/comp-o/nl/fn001564.sea#fn001564.41)
- c. *m'n moeder boog zich over me heen.*
 'My mother bent over me'
 (CGN/comp-o/nl/fn001256.sea#fn001256.83)
- d. *Daniël boog zich voorover [...]*
 'Daniel bent forward'
 (CGN/comp-o/nl/fn001531.sea#fn001531.1)
- (34) a. *hij boog toen ik hem complimenten maakte.*
 'He bowed when I paid him compliments'
 (CGN/comp-o/vl/fv801022.sea#fv801022.6)

¹⁵ The verb *buigen* occurs 235 times in the CGN, of which 82 instances are reflexive and 47 intransitive and non-reflexive.

¹⁶ This does not imply that intransitive non-reflexive *buigen* cannot occur with prepositional phrases like *voorover* 'forward' or *naar voren* 'forward'. Such uses do occur, but less frequently than the reflexive use of the verb (*buigt zich naar voren* (7) vs. *buigt naar voren* (3); *buigt zich voorover* (14) vs. *buigt voorover* (9)).

- b. *in de kwartfinale van de Heineken Trophy moest de Limburger met zes drie en zes vier buigen voor de Spanjaard Tommy Robredo.*
 ‘In the quarter finals of the Heineken Trophy the Limburger lost to [lit. had to bend to] his Spanish opponent Tommy Robredo with 6-3 and 6-4’ (CGN/comp-k/nl/fn003726.sea#fn003726.2)
- c. *z’n eigen kinderen bogen voor hem en kusten z’n oude handen.*
 ‘His own children bowed to him and kissed his aged hands’ (CGN/comp-o/vl/fv800926.sea#fv800926.11)

Likewise, sentences with reflexive *bukken*¹⁷ ‘stoop, bend’ evoke situations in which the subject assumes a bent-down position in order to do something in this position. Not surprisingly, 10 out of 22 instances of *zich bukken* in the CGN are accompanied by a final clause introduced by *om* ‘in order to’, see examples (35a–b). Another typical example of *zich bukken* is (35c), in which reflexive *bukken* is accompanied by a directional prepositional phrase (*te ver over de reling* ‘too far over the guard rail’).

- (35) a. *ze bukte zich om de post op te rapen*
 ‘she stooped to pick up the mail’
 (CGN/comp-o/nl/fn001214.sea#fn001214.24)
- b. *als we naar de wei gingen dan moesten we ons bukken hé om niet aan die draad te komen.*
 ‘when we went to the meadow, then we had to stoop in order not to touch the wire’
 (CGN/comp-a/vl/fv400204.sea#fv400204.256)
- c. *daar buk je je te ver over de reling*
 ‘there you are leaning too far over the guard rail’
 (CGN/comp-a/nl/fn007993.sea#fn007993.40)

Non-reflexive *bukken*, on the other hand, is used to describe the movement *an sich*, as in (36a). Interestingly, 5 out of 13 non-reflexive *bukken*-instances occur as infinitival complements of negated modal verbs (as in (36b–c)) and thus imply that the stooping position cannot, need not or is not intended to be achieved, whereas none of the 22 reflexive instances of *bukken* contains a negator.

¹⁷ The verb *bukken* is attested 48 times in the CGN. Leaving adjectival uses aside, the verb is used 22 times in reflexive constructions, while it occurs 13 times as an intransitive non-reflexive verb.

- (36) a. [...] *ik was net aan m'n knie geopereerd en [...] ik mocht [...] niet bukken.*
 'I had just been operated on my knee and I was not allowed to stoop'
 (CGN/comp-a/nl/fn000616.sea#fn000616.230)
- b. *uh nou uh golfen is uh knikkeren voor grote jongens die niet willen bukken.*
 'uh well uh playing golf is uh (like) playing marbles for big boys who do not want to stoop'
 (CGN/comp-a/nl/fn000616.sea#fn000616.230)
- c. *nou 't was er allemaal wel maar niet echt goed uh nagedacht en zij zegt ik wil dan ook een ijskast waarbij ik niet hoef te bukken [...]*
 'well everything was there but not really well considered and she says then I also want a fridge for which I don't have to stoop'
 (CGN/comp-a/nl/fn000640.sea#fn000640.51)

We therefore argue that the function of the Dutch weak reflexive in the middle domain of motion is to mark **the goal-directedness** of an action. Since this is the core meaning of the reflexive, we suggest that the notions of intentionality, resultativity, and telicity often associated with the reflexive variants of the verbs in the domain of autocausive motion as in e.g. (31) represent possible extensions and context-induced interpretations of this core meaning.

To conclude, in Dutch the weak reflexive can be used in situations of auto-causative motion, in which it is clearly associated with the notions of goal-directedness and resultativity, i.e. the very notions that are also evoked by the TLC.

3.3 Autocausive motion in English

In English, which lacks a weak reflexive form, the strong reflexive may be used in resultative constructions which resemble middle situations involving autocausive motion to some degree, see (37) (examples are taken from Oya 2002).

- (37) a. *Joggers often run themselves sick.*
 b. *Don't expect to swim yourself sober.*
 c. *She danced herself into a frenzy.*

Usage of the English strong reflexive in this domain is extremely restricted, however. It cannot be used, for example, in contexts involving motion in which the result phrase expresses the final **location** of the subject (Oya 2002: 976). In contrast to German and Dutch, the reflexive is excluded in such cases, see (38), taken from Oya (2002).

- (38) a. *She danced/swam (*herself) free of her captors.*
*Ze danste/zwom *(zich) vrij van haar ontvoerders.*
*Sie tanzte/schwamm *(sich) frei von ihren Entführern.*
- b. *Abantam chick kicks (*itself) free from its shell.*
*Een kuiken slaat *(zich) vrij uit zijn schaal.*
*Ein Küken kickt *(sich) frei von seiner Schale.*

If a reflexive is available, as illustrated in (37a–c), some metaphorical change of state of the subject is expressed which is possibly achieved through motion. This does not seem to involve any actual change of location, however. Indeed we observed in section 2 above that the reflexive construction in English denotes resultative, internal changes of state of the grammatical subject, whereas the *way*-construction is typically associated with motion along a path.

For English, we thus conclude that the (strong) reflexive is hardly used in the domain of autocausive motion at all. In those very rare cases in which the reflexive is used, the situation described does not involve any motion along a path or towards a goal, but rather a change in the internal, emotional or mental state of the subject.

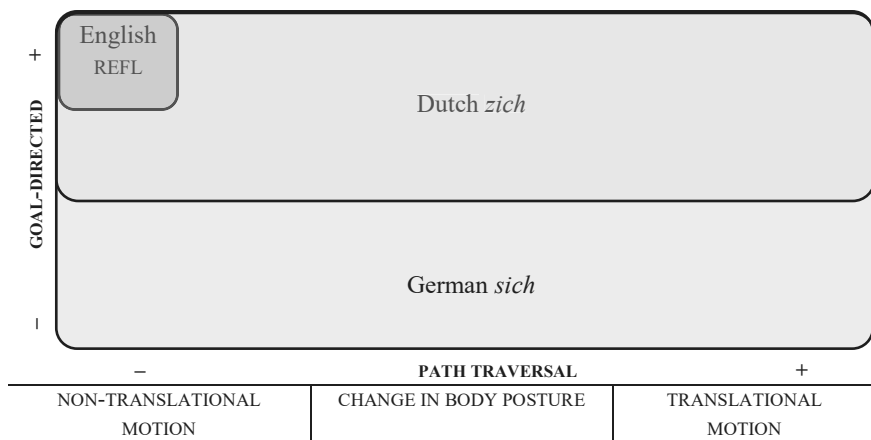


Fig. 1: English, Dutch and German reflexives in the autocausive domain

Summing up, we may now locate the reflexive markers of German, Dutch and English on the continuum of autocausive motion represented in Table 5 above. Figure 1 is a modified version of the same cline, involving two basic semantic dimensions. We have substituted the original participant dimension (one vs. two

participants) with the semantic component of movement or traversal of a path, where the domain of non-translational motion does not involve the traversal of a spatial path, whereas translational motion clearly involves the traversal of a path towards a goal or an end point. In order to integrate the distinctive function of the Dutch reflexive, we also added the semantic component of goal-directedness to the table.

In German, the weak reflexive is used in all sub-domains of autocausive motion; the whole conceptual space in Figure 1 is covered by German *sich*. In Dutch, the use of the weak reflexive is more or less restricted to contexts of goal-directed motion. The English strong reflexive *-self*, insofar as it occurs at all, is only used in contexts denoting resultative, internal changes of state of the grammatical subject without bodily motion in space towards some speaker-external goal.

3.4 The *way*-construction and its analogues in the autocausive domain

In this section, we will have a closer look at the Dutch and German analogues of the English *way*-construction. We will first relate the constructions to each other crosslinguistically and then compare the individual reflexive markers language-internally.

As introduced in section 2, the English *way*-construction is basically associated with motion along a path, either spatially or metaphorically. This motion often requires some effort on the part of the subject referent, who overcomes obstacles by creating and traversing the path. Importantly, the English *way*-construction is not specified with respect to telicity, i.e. it is compatible with the goal being achieved or not. In German, there is only one analogue to the English *way*-construction, i.e. the reflexive construction (see section 2.2). Dutch (see section 2.1) has two different analogues to the English *way*-construction, and there is a division of labour between them. The *weg*-construction is not specified with respect to telicity and goal-directedness, i.e. it is not necessarily resultative. The TLC, on the other hand, is telic and resultative, i.e. it usually implies that the goal has been reached.

The semantics of the English *way*-construction and their analogues in Dutch and German may be described in the same conceptual terms as the autocausive domain of middle situations. There is usually a human subject who intentionally creates a path along which he or she moves towards a goal. Figure 2 7 below therefore uses the same conceptual space as Table 5 and Figure 1 to compare the constructions.

The English *way*-construction and the German reflexive construction [V *sich* OBL] cover the whole conceptual space of autocausive motion, as they convey meanings compatible with both [+/- goal directedness] and [+/- path traversal] situations. The English reflexive resultative construction is shown in the top left corner of Figure 2 (see section 2 and Figure 1). It usually refers to subject-internal change and has gradually been replaced by the *way*-construction, which now occupies the whole conceptual space of autocausive motion. The only remaining area in which the resultative reflexive construction survives is the region characterized by the features [- path traversal] and [+ goal-directed].

The German reflexive construction is similar to the English *way*-construction with respect to semantics. Its productivity is more restricted, however (see section 2.2), mainly due to the fact that many lexical verbs which otherwise could have been perfect candidates for the verbal slot of this construction are in fact lexicalized reflexive verbs. Hence, the highly productive **lexical** reflexive pattern of German blocks the schematic construction [V *sich* OBL]. Both constructions are therefore in competition for the same conceptual space of autocausive motion (compare Figures 1 and 2).

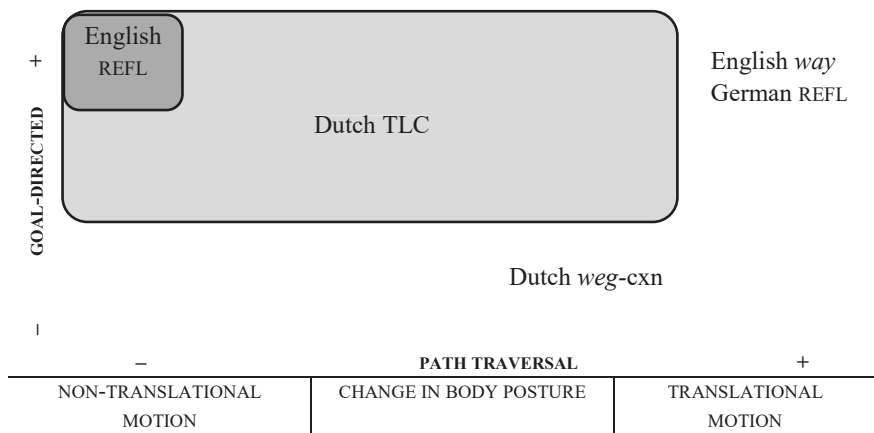


Fig. 2: Analogues of the *way*-construction in the autocausive domain

As shown in section 2.1, the Dutch TLC and the *weg*-construction differ with respect to telicity and resultativity. The *weg*-construction describes the incremental traversal of a path by means of, or during, the action described in the verb, i.e. it is not specified for telicity. The TLC, on the other hand, denotes the transition to a location and implies that the endpoint is reached. These two constructions share the conceptual space of autocausive motion; they show a basic division of

labor, but also an area of overlap. The TLC is preferred in situations that are more goal-directed and not necessarily involve a path traversal, hence it is located in the top left area of the continuum in Figure 2. The *weg*-construction, on the other hand, is located towards the less goal-directed, more path-oriented end of the continuum.

A corpus study by Smirnova/Mortelmans (subm.), however, detects some recent diachronic changes in the German reflexive construction which may be interpreted as early evidence of a (sort of) division of labour between the older lexical reflexive pattern and the more recent syntactic reflexive construction. During the 20th century, the reflexive construction seems to have developed a dominant sense of [+ path traversal] without an obligatory reference to a reached endpoint. This development manifests itself for example in the increased relative frequency of atelic verbs filling the verbal slot of the construction, and also in the increased relative frequency of the preposition *durch*, which is becoming the dominant preposition in the construction, see (39).

- (39) a. [...] *soll man sich jetzt wirklich durch 70.000 Seiten Material arbeiten*
(DECOW14)
'should one really work one's way through 70,000 pages of material'
- b. *Autofahrer [...] quälen sich bislang durch den Ort.* (DECOW14)
'drivers torture their way through the city'
- c. *Rüttgers nuschelte sich mal wieder durch hohle Phrasen* (DECOW14)
'and again Rüttgers mumbled his way through empty phrases'
- d. *Ich habe mich natürlich durch alle Sorten durchprobiert* (DECOW14)
'Needless to say I tested my way through all kinds'

This diachronic tendency is consonant with the directionality of change in English, where the older reflexive pattern was first replaced gradually by the new *way*-construction in the domain of [+ path traversal]. This tendency clearly holds across all three languages under consideration, as suggested by the continuum in Figures 1 and 2. Whereas the original (more lexical) reflexive patterns are associated with the goal-directedness of a situation (i.e. with the top left part of the continuum), the more recent constructions favor the interpretation of path traversal (i.e. the bottom right part of the continuum). This is most in evidence in English and Dutch, where the noun *way/weg* in the more recent constructions explicitly refers to a path, thus explaining the conceptual association of these constructions with the semantic notion of path traversal. It is less obviously, but still arguably, the case in German, where the newly developed reflexive construction is formally identical to the lexical reflexive patterns. Nevertheless, we observe the same tendency towards a division of labour, as the more recent construction tends to move towards the [+ path traversal] end of the continuum.

4 Conclusions and outlook

In this paper, we have shown that the English *way*-construction and its various reflexive analogues in German and Dutch cover different portions of the domain of autocausive motion, and that this variation can be described by means of two semantic dimensions, i.e. goal-directedness (telicity) on the one hand, and path-traversal, on the other.

From a more theoretical perspective, two conclusions can be drawn. First, the existence of close formal analogues in two languages (e.g. the *weg*-construction in Dutch and the *way*-construction in English) should not be taken to imply that these analogues are similar in functional terms as well. The English *way*-construction is functionally much more versatile than its Dutch counterpart, not only because of the greater variation in the verb slot, but also because the English *way*-construction has outcompeted the resultative reflexive construction and now occupies territory that in Dutch is taken up by the TLC. Whereas English speakers prefer the *way*-construction to describe the metaphorical motion event of reaching the finals, as in example (40),

(40) *He swam his way into the finals.*

Dutch speakers are more inclined to use the ‘resultative’ TLC in this context, in part because both subevents are consecutive (the swimming occurs first, reaching the finals is a later event).

(41) *Hij zwom zich naar de finale.*
‘He swam his way into the finals’

Second, we are proposing a distinction between schematic constructions (e.g. [V *sich* OBL]) in German) on the one hand, and more substantial lexical constructions (e.g. inherently reflexive verbs) on the other. Although the two may look superficially alike, instances of the latter do not necessarily instantiate the former (e.g. *Der Zug bewegte sich zum Brunnen* ‘The procession moved REFL towards the fountain’, where *sich bewegen* is inherently reflexive). Future research should focus on the interaction of the schematic reflexive construction with existing lexically reflexive verbs in German (i.e. the more substantial constructions). The latter may well have facilitated the creation of the former, as the more abstract construction schematizes over a relatively frequent formal pattern. On the other hand, it may just as well be hindering its full development, as the schematic reflexive construction constantly interacts with formally similar instances that do not actually instantiate it, but compete with it in the same conceptual domain (autocausive motion). Diachronic data in particular could shed more light on this issue.

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