

CONTEXTUAL MEANS OF EXPRESSING INGRESSIVE ACTION IN MODERN ENGLISH

D. TEKORIENĖ

Linguistic means, used to express ingressive action in English, as recorded in grammars and lexicologies, usually include verbal phrases, such as:

begin	+inf.	(I began to understand)
begin	+gerund	(He began digging)
come	+inf.	(I came to believe)
get	+gerund	(She got thinking)
get	+pr. +gerund	(She got to thinking)
get	+inf.	(She got to think)
go	+pr. +gerund	(She went to dancing)
grow	+inf.	(I grew to believe)
fall	+pr. +gerund	(She fell to thinking)
set	+inf.	(I set to work again)
set	+about +gerund	(I set about writing)
start	+inf.	(We started to climb the stairs)
start	+gerund	(She started doing her hair again)
take	+pr. +gerund	(She took to thinking). ¹

But the meaning of ingression appears in the verb much more frequently than the afore-said phrases occur in the text. What are, then, the other linguistic means which help to convey the meaning of ingression in the English verb?

It has been found and now is generally accepted that in many languages, even in those which possess the grammatical category of aspect, syntactic and aspective context plays an important part in the formation and expression of various aspective meanings². In the Germanic languages the role of syntactic and aspective context is especially great since very frequently it is not an auxiliary means but the main and sole factor which determines the aspective meaning of the verb.

¹ А. С. Хорнби, Конструкции и обороты современного английского языка, Москва, 1960, стр. 162—168; N. Rауеvска, Modern English Grammar, Kiev State University Publishing House, 1967, p. 147.

² А. В. Бондарко, Вид и время русского глагола, Москва, 1971, стр. 176—235.

Russian and German aspectologists have worked out several types of syntactic and aspective contexts that help to form and express aspect in the verb. One of such main types of context is called a "chain of successive completed actions". In such a context the tense and aspect of the first verb usually determines the tense and aspect of the subsequent verb. It is in this particular context that the meaning of ingression is formed in the English verb without any other special lexical means of expression. The rule is: if a non-terminative verb is used at the end of a chain of completed successive actions, it acquires the meaning of ingressive action³.

Most often such a context is limited to one sentence, containing two or more homogeneous predicates.

Hallward got up from the seat, and *walked* up and down the garden (O. Wilde, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, 32).

He put his paper down on his knees and *gazed* idly out of the window (Th. Dreiser, *Sister Carrie*, 248).

The actions of the principle clause and the subordinate clause of time can also form a chain of successive actions and thus condition the ingressive meaning of the last non-terminative verb.

I think your tired soul sought rest in a woman's arms, and when you found no rest there you *hated* her (S. Maugham, *The Moon and Sixpence*, 158).

She *gazed* into the lighted street when Minnie brought her into the front room, and wondered at the sounds, the movement, the murmur of the vast city which stretched for miles and miles in every direction (Th. Dreiser, *Sister Carrie*, 33).

The chain can even go beyond the limits of a single sentence, provided the logical sequence of action is not broken. The sequence of actions in the chain can additionally be indicated by some other lexical means: such words and phrases like "then, again, as before", etc.

"Mayhew won't open the safe till nine", he thought. "They can't get on my track before noon".

Then he *thought* of Carrie (Th. Dreiser, *Sister Carrie*, 300).

Money was handed him, and for each twelve cents he singled out a man and put him in the other line. Then he *walked* up and down as before, looking at the ground (Th. Dreiser, *Sister Carrie*, 516).

³ A similar phenomenon is noted in the German language, see З. С. Башкирцева, Акциональное значение начинательности, выявляемое у неопределённого немецкого глагола в ряду последовательных действий, Вопросы романо-германского языкознания, вып. 3, Челябинск, 1969, стр. 134–137.

The power of the chain of successive actions to condition the ingressive meaning of the last non-terminative verb, however, has certain limitations: not every non-terminative verb used in this context can express ingressive action by itself. There are some verbs which even in a chain of successive actions require additional lexical means to help them express ingressive action.

The contextual means of expressing ingressive meaning is sufficient only to the following semantic groups of non-terminative verbs:

a) Verbs of motion.

Francis climbed the mimosa tree, came down, put his hands in his pockets and *strolled* around the yard (H. Lee, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, 90).

A bee flew in, and *buzzed* round the blue-dragon bowl that, filled with sulphur-yellow roses, stood before him (O. Wilde, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, 122).

b) Verbs of visual perception: look, gaze, watch, etc.

Lord Henry flung himself into a large wicker armchair, and *watched* him (O. Wilde, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, 46).

c) Verbs of speech.

Then Wisdom altered its method and *spoke* of espial and discovery (O. Wilde, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, 87).

He sent Drouet after a programme, and then *discoursed* to Carrie concerning Jefferson as he had heard of him (Th. Dreiser, *Sister Carrie*, 137).

d) A few other verbs of miscellaneous semantics.

They sat down at a vacant table and *waited* for the omelette which was the first article on the bill of fare (S. Maugham, *Of Human Bondage*, 245).

Back in the dining-room she sat down in her chair and *rocked* (Th. Dreiser, *Sister Carrie*, 363).

The lad muttered something to himself, and *drummed* on the window-sill with his coarse fingers (O. Wilde, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, 90).

Other semantic classes of non-terminative verbs and especially verbs of dual aspective nature require some additional means which help them indicate ingressive meaning, even in the context of a chain. Mostly combinations of the verbs "begin" and "start" with the infinitive or the gerund are employed.

When he had ordered our dinner, I propped it against a bottle of St Galmier and *began to read* (S. Maugham, *The Moon and Sixpence*, 88).

As soon as he was alone, he lit a cigarette, and *began sketching* upon a piece of paper (O. Wilde, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, 198).

Jem ran to the back yard, produced the garden hoe and *began digging* quickly behind the woopile, placing any worms he found to one side (H. Lee, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, 72).

It must be pointed out that the usage of the verbs “begin” and “start” with the non-terminative verbs which in the context of a chain can acquire the ingressive meaning by themselves is not altogether excluded, though it may be superfluous.

The boy with fair hair lowered himself down the last feet of rock and *began to pick his way* toward the lagoon (W. Golding, *Lord of the Flies*, 5).

He sat down and *began to think* (O. Wilde, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, 195).

The ingressive meaning of the verbs would not disappear in these sentences even if the verb “begin” were omitted:

The boy with fair hair lowered himself down the last feet of rock and *picked his way* toward the lagoon.

He sat down and *thought*.

Still such a superfluous usage of the verbs “begin” and “start” in the context of a chain is not very frequent. It can often be employed as a stylistic means to express poor, primitive style, as is done by J. Salinger in his book “*The Catcher in the Rye*” where the author makes frequent use of the combinations “start+inf.” and “start+gerund” in order to convey the poor style of his protagonist’s speech.

Then she *started getting* very funny. Crude and all (p. 111).

When I said that, he got up from his chair and *started walking* toward me and all (p. 115).

About halfway to the bathroom, I sort of *started pretending* I had a bullet in my guts (p. 116).

The ingressive action of a terminative verb is always expressed by its combination with the verbs “begin” and “start”. Otherwise as part of the chain the terminative verb expresses a completed action.

He put it up and *began to undress* (Th. Dreiser, *Sister Carrie*, 406).

In desperation Philip clenched his fist and hit the boy who tormented him, but he was at a disadvantage, and the boy seized his arm. He *began to turn* it (S. Maugham, *Of Human Bondage*, 48).

Note the change of the aspective meaning in the following sentences used without the verb “begin”.

He put it up and *undressed*.

In desperation Philip clenched his fist and hit the boy who tormented him, but he was at a disadvantage, and the boy seized his arm. He *turned* it violently.

It is only on rare occasions that a terminative verb in the context of a chain can express ingressive action without any additional lexical means. Usually this is accounted for by the situation or additional contextual elements which exclude the realization of the action as completed.

He went very pink, bowed his head and *cleaned* his glasses again (W. Golding, *Lord of the Flies*, 18).

Dorian Gray went over and *poured out* the tea (O. Wilde, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, 51).

The phrases came back to his memory, and *repeated* them over and over again (O. Wilde, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, 261).

The role of aspective context in the expression of ingressive action in English can be summed up in the following way:

With the majority of non-terminative verbs the context of a chain is sufficient for the formation of ingressive meaning. The usage of the verbs "begin" and "start" is superfluous in this case, though possible.

With verbs of dual aspective nature and terminative verbs the meaning of ingression is always expressed by special lexical means.

Vilniaus V. Kapsuko
universitetas
Anglų filologijos katedra

Įteikta
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KONTEKSTINĖS VEIKSMO PRADŽIOS REIŠKIMO PRIEMONĖS DABARTINĖJE ANGLŲ KALBOJE

D. TEKORIENĖ

Reziumė

Anglų kalbos neperfektinis veiksmožodis, pavartotas užbaigtą veiksmą reiškiančių veiksmožodžių grandinėje, įgauna pradžios veiksmo reikšmę. Šitoks kontekstinis pradžios veiksmo reiškinio būdas ypatingai ryškus slinkties, regėjimo, šnekos ir kai kurių kitų veiksmožodžių tarpe.