

Two of the possible semantic relations between verbs V and V-*sja* are considered: causativity and conversivity.

The verb V is a causative of the verb V-*sja* if and only if ‘V’ = ‘[to] cause V-*sja*’ (e.g., KATIT’ ‘roll [trans.]’ is a causative of KATIT’SJA ‘roll [intrans.]’: *Mjač katitsja po dorožke* ‘The ball is rolling along the path’ ~ *Asja katit mjač po dorožke* ‘Asya is rolling the ball along the path’). The causative V has one actant more than V-*sja* — the actant that expresses the Cause or the Causer. The causativity relation is of course anti-symmetrical.

The verb V is a conversive of the verb V-*sja* if and only if: 1) V and V-*sja* have (almost) identical propositional meanings, that is, their lexicographic definitions differ (almost) only by communicative organization: ‘V’ \approx ‘V-*sja*’; 2) at least one of the Deep-Syntactic actants of the verb V is permuted with respect to the corresponding DSynt-actant of the verb V-*sja* (e.g., SODERŽAT’ ‘contain’ is a conversive₂₁ of the verb SODERŽAT’SJA: *Kniga_I soderžit 200 stranic_{II}* ‘The book contains 200 pages’ \equiv *V knige_{II} soderžitsja 200 stranic_I* lit. ‘In the book are contained 200 pages’). The conversivity relation is symmetrical. Two mutual conversives₂₁ have identical semantic actants ‘X’ and ‘Y’ (which play, however, different communicative roles); with V these ‘X’ and ‘Y’ correspond to the DSynt-actant II and I, but with V-*sja*—to the DSynt-actant I and II.

Distinguishing causativity vs. conversivity in a pair V ~ V-*sja* can be problematic, if it is not immediately obvious whether the lexicographic definition of V-*sja* includes the meaning ‘[to] cause’ (e.g., as in pairs of the type VOSXIŠČAT’ ‘make delighted’ ~ VOSXIŠČAT’SJA ‘be delighted’, ISTOŠČAT’ ‘[to] empty’ ~ ISTOŠČAT’SJA ‘become emptied’). Such pairs require the researcher to decide whether the meaning of Cause is an actant of V-*sja* (in which case V is a conversive₂₁ of V-*sja*: VOSXIŠČAT’ ~ VOSXIŠČAT’SJA) or its circumstantial (then V is a causative of V-*sja*: RAZRUŠAT’ ‘destroy’ ~ RAZRUŠAT’SJA ‘become destroyed’). The following criterion is proposed:

|| Semantic constraints on the type of the Cause make necessary mentioning the Cause in the lexicographic definition of V-*sja* as a semantic actant.

Since with RAZRUŠAT’SJA ‘become destroyed’ the Cause can be anything (and can even be “linguistically” absent altogether: *razrušil’sja sam soboj* ‘[it] became destroyed by itself’), it is not an actant; therefore, RAZRUŠAT’ is a causative of RAZRUŠAT’SJA. On the contrary, with ISTOŠČAT’SJA (*Kazna istoščilas’ ot dlitel’nyx vojn* ‘The treasure became emptied because of protracted wars’) the Cause is semantically constrained: it can be only spending by the persons having the power over the treasury (but not, for instance, theft: **Kazna istoščilas’ ot vorovstva činovni-*

kov ‘The treasure became emptied because of thefts by officials’); therefore, here the Cause is an actant, so that ISTOŠČAT’ and ISTOŠČAT’SJA are coversives₂₁. The criterion proposed can be useful for establishing the actantial status of not only causal, but also other “suspicious” adverbials.