CAUSATIVIZATION AND EVENT STRUCTURE

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Problem. It is commonly assumed that the function of the causative morpheme is introducing a new argument into the argument structure of a verb. In this paper, we discuss novel data from Karachay-Balkar that are problematic for this view. To account for these data we propose that the causative introduces a causing subevent into the event structure of verb.

Causatives in Karachay-Balkar fall into two classes corresponding roughly to what is captured traditionally in terms of direct and indirect causation (a.k.a manipulative vs. directive [1], contact vs. distant, immediate vs. mediated [2], causer-controlled vs. causee-controlled [3, 4]. These causatives are exemplified in (1)–(2).

(1) ustaz madina-“a ata-s”-n es-i-nde tut-tur-du.
   teacher m.-DAT father-ACC memory-3-LOC hold-CAUS-PST.3SG
   ‘The teacher reminded Madina about her father (lit. made M. hold her father in her memory).’

(2) ustaz madina-“a ata-s”-n mahta-t-ty.
   teacher m.-DAT father-3-ACC praise-CAUS-PST.3SG
   ‘The teacher made Madina praise her father’

Member of these classes exhibit a bulk of syntactic and semantic differences. Time-span adverbials like ‘in two hours’, measure adverbials like ‘for two hours’, rate adverbials like ‘quickly’ yield ambiguity with ‘praise-CAUS’, but not with ‘remember-CAUS’. Secondly, the negation produces a scope ambiguity with ‘praise-CAUS’, but not with ‘remember-CAUS’. Thirdly, whereas ‘remember-CAUS’ exhibits lexical integrity with respect to ellipsis, ‘praise-CAUS’ does not.

Discussion and analysis. If the function of the causative morpheme is introducing a new Causer argument, differences between ‘praise-CAUS’ and ‘remember-CAUS’ cannot be predicted, since a new argument occurs in all of these sentences. We propose that apparently diverse phenomena mentioned above can be best accounted for in terms of event structure underlying causatives in ‘remember-CAUS’ and ‘praise-CAUS’. The crucial intuition about differences between these causatives is that whereas ‘remind’ involves a single event, ‘make praise’ involves two. Eventness is an enabling condition for adverbial modification (we must have a well-established event to be able to say, e.g., how much time it lasts), as well as for ability to fall under the scope of negation and pass the ellipsis test. Subeventual structure is not available for morphosyntactic operations, so expressions that denote less than one event are opaque for adverbials and negation, nor they allow for ellipsis. If this intuition is on the right track, we can make it explicit in the following way.

First, we determine what a grammatically relevant event is:

(3) The grammatically relevant event cannot contain more than one subevents of the same aspectual type.
(3) says, specifically, that a grammatically relevant event cannot contain two change of state subevents or two activity subevents. If an event structure happens to consist of two activity subevents, this means that we are dealing with two events.

Secondly, we hypothesize, following, e.g., [5], that the causative marker does not merely introduce a new argument, but denotes an activity subevent. After the causative marker is attached to a verbal stem, this subevent enters a causative relation with the event structure referred to by the stem.

Thirdly, stems es-i-nde tut ‘remember’ and mahta ‘praise’ differ crucially in that the latter but not the former possesses an activity subevent in its lexical representation:

(4) ‘remember’: $\lambda y \lambda x \lambda e. \text{remember}(e) \& \text{state}(e) \& \text{Holder}(x,e) \& \text{Theme}(y,e)$

‘praise’: $\lambda y \lambda x \lambda e. \text{praise}(e) \& \text{activity}(e) \& \text{Agent}(x,e) \& \text{Patient}(y,e)$

As a result, for ‘remember-CAUS’, attaching the causative morpheme yields an event structure in which there is a single activity (sub)event, while ‘praise-CAUS’ contains two activity subevents, one lexically specified, another contributed by the causative. Therefore, ‘remember-CAUS’ involves a single event, while ‘praise-CAUS’ refers to two events, and this is how differences between two types of causatives emerge.

In the rest of this paper, we show that a general distinction between direct and indirect causation can be reduced to the proposed event structure distinction and hence accounted for.

Abbreviations: ACC = accusative, CAUS = causative, DAT = dative, PST = past, SG = singular.

REFERENCES


