Causativization and Event Structure

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Problem. An event-based approach to causativization recently advocated by Pylkkänen 2002 whereby the causative morpheme is analyzed along the lines of (1) assumes crucially that the semantic contribution of the causative is a causing event. While successful in accounting for the meaning and distribution of causatives in a variety of genetically unrelated languages, this approach seems to require further refinement in order to explain where the difference between what we call monoeventive vs. bieventive causatives comes from.

Data and discussion. In Karachay-Balkar (Altaic, Turkic), the causative can be formed from unaccusatives (2), unergatives (3), and transitives (4). Standard tests on adverbial modification show that causatives from unaccusatives are unambiguous (see (5a-b)), hence **monoeventive**, whereas causatives from unergatives and transitives are ambiguous, hence **bieventive** (see (6)-(7)). The difference between two types of causatives (which is referred to in the literature as manipulative vs. directive (Shibatani 1976), contact vs. distant, immediate vs. mediated (Kulikov 2001), causer-controlled vs. causee-controlled (Wierzbicka 1988, Shibatani 2000), lexical vs. syntactic (Harley 1996), L-syntactic vs. S-syntactic (Travis 2000)) is problematic for Pylkkänen, since she assumes, crucially, that the causative morpheme must be either root-selecting, verb-selecting or phase-selecting (Pylkkänen 2002:77, see (8)). As a result, we have to postulate for languages like Karachay-Balkar two different causative morphemes with the same phonological spell-out, one of which has to be root-selecting to yield a monoeventive structure, and another one to be phase-selecting to yield a bieventive structure with the Causee originating in the external argument position. An obvious complication is that there is no independent motivation for two different causative morphemes. Secondly, such an account misses a significant generalization that the event structure of the causative is fully predictable from syntactic and semantic characteristics of the non-derived structure.

Analysis. The above complications disappear if we assume that what happens in languages like Karachay-Balkar is exactly the opposite: there is a single causative morpheme with no tight selectional restrictions; this morpheme can embed either VP or vP.

Following (Travis 2000) and (Ramchand 2003, 2005), we assume a syntactic notion of event. More specifically, we take an event to be minimally a VP and maximally a vP, assuming a Larsonian-style VP-shell structure. Syntactic events, then, are sensitive to lexical information, so that unaccusatives only project VP whereas the transitives and unergatives project VP embedded under vP. Semantically, both v and V (as well as the head of Resultative Phrase, embedded under VP, which is not relevant for the present discussion) contribute subevental structure that combines to yield the semantic representation of the whole event. Each subevental component introduces a corresponding participant of the event that bears a particular thematic relation to the event argument of a verb. In particular, v is associated with the causing subevent and the Initiator of the whole event, sitting in Spec, vP, whereas Spec, VP introduces the Undergoer of the whole event (=a participant of the process subevent associated with V), as represented in (9).

Following many current proposals (e.g. Folli, Harley 2003, Ramchand 2003), we suggest that the causative morpheme is a v head. When this morpheme attaches to the stem which projects a vP itself, the resulting structure contains two vPs, as in (11a)-(12a) while its interpretation in (11b)-(12b) involves two events (in (12b) the embedded event consists of two subevents itself). Note that semantically DPs sitting in Spec, vP positions bear the same thematic relation to the corresponding events. This explains why such structures are necessarily bieventive — otherwise violation of the Uniqueness of Participants (e.g., Krifka 1998) would happen. Projecting a single vP yields a mono-eventive structure in, and that is the reason why causatives from unaccusatives are monoeventive (see(10a)), despite the fact they are composed by two subevents (see (10b)).

Examples

(1) $\lambda P \lambda e \exists e'[\text{CAUSE}(e')(e) \wedge P(e')]$

(2) a. butaq sɨn-dɨ.
branch break-PST.3SG
'A/the branch broke.'

b. alim butaq-nɨ sɨn-dɨr-dɨ.
A. branch-ACC break-CAUS-PST.3SG
'Alim broke a/the branch.'

(3) a. zascɨk cap-tɨ.
boy run-PST.3SG
'The boy ran.'

b. alim zascɨk-nɨ cap-tɨr-dɨ.
A. boy-ACC run-CAUS-PST.3SG
'Alim made the boy run.'

(4) alim ešik-ni ac-tɨ.
A. door-ACC open-PST.3SG
'Alim opened the door.'

b. kerim alim-ge ešik-ni ac-tɨr-dɨ.
K. A.-DAT door-ACC open-CAUS-PST.3SG
'Kerim made Alim open the door.'

(5) a. alim fatima-ʁa acuuʁa butaq-nɨ sɨn-dɨr-dɨ.
A. F.-DAT to.spite branch-ACC break-CAUS-PST.3SG
'Alim broke a/the branch to spite Fatima.' (unambiguous)

b. alim eki sekunt-xa butaq-nɨ sɨn-dɨr-dɨ.
A. two second-DAT to.spite branch-ACC break-CAUS-PST.3SG
'Alim broke a/the branch in two seconds.' (unambiguous)

(6) a. alim terk zascɨk-nɨ cap-tɨr-dɨ.
A. quickly boy-ACC run-CAUS-PST.3SG
1. 'What Alim did quckly was make a boy run.'
2. 'What Alim did was make a boy run quickly.'

b. alim fatima-ʁa acuuʁa zascɨk-nɨ cap-tɨr-dɨ.
A. F.-DAT to.spite boy-ACC run-CAUS-PST.3SG
1. 'What Alim did to spite Fatima was make a boy run.
2. 'What Alim did was make a boy run to spite Fatima.

(7) a. kerim biš minut-xa alim-ge ešik-ni ac-tɨr-dɨ.
K. five minute-DAT A.-DAT door-ACC open-CAUS-PST.3SG
1. 'What Kerim did was make Alim open the door in five minutes.'
2. 'What Kerim did in five minutes was make Alim open the door.'

b. kerim alim-ge fatima-ʁa acuuʁa ešik-ni ac-tɨr-dɨ.
K. A.-DAT F.-DAT to.spite door-ACC open-CAUS-PST.3SG
1. 'What Kerim did was make Alim open the door to spite Fatima.'
2. 'What Kerim to spite Fatima was make Ali open the door.'

(8) Root-selecting causative: [CAUSE Root]
Verb-selecting causative: [CAUSE [*v* Root]]
Phase-selecting causative: [CAUSE [θ_{ext} [*v* Root]]]

(9) [$_{vP}$ INITIATOR v [$_{VP}$ UNDERGOER V [$_{RP}$ RESULTEE R XP]]] (Ramchand 2003)

(10) a. [$_{vP}$ alim dɨr [$_{VP}$ butaq-nɨsɨn-]].
b. λe∃e′[Agent(Alim)(e) ∧ CAUSE(e′)(e) ∧ break(e′) ∧ Undergoer(branch)(e′)]

(11) a [$_{vP}$ alim tɨr [$_{vP}$ zascɨk-nɨcap-]].
b. λe∃e′[Agent(Alim)(e) ∧ CAUSE(e′)(e) ∧ run(e′) ∧ Agent(boy)(e′)]

(12) a. [$_{vP}$ kerim tɨr [$_{vP}$ alim-ge [$_{VP}$ ešik-ni ac-]]].
b. λe∃e′∃e″[Agent(Kerim)(e) ∧ CAUSE(e′)(e) ∧ Agent(Alim)(e′) ∧ cause(e″)(e′) ∧
open(e″) ∧ Undergoer(door)(e)]

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