THE REALISATION OF CAUSATIVES

Monocausal ‘lexical’ causativisation

A construction in which the base verb may include the sense of causation as a part of its semantic content (see e.g. Kroeger 2004:193).

I propose that examples of productive (even though restricted) lexical causativisation involve transitive verbs (in the narrow sense of Lettschitzky 2009) which participate in alternation such as:

The horse jumped over the fence. – Sylvia jumped the horse over the fence. (Levin 1993:31-32)

The dog walked. – Peter walked the dog.
The baby burped. – I burped the baby.

Note that in English the causative – inchoative alternation is also lexical and it is possible to analyse it in the same way as lexical causativisation, rather than as anti-causativisation.

Semantic valency change:

non-causativised causativised
\[< \times \times \times \times > \rightarrow < \times \times \times \times >\]

Syntactic valency change:

non-causativised causativised
\[< \times \times \times \times > \rightarrow < \times \times \times \times >\]

The first argument compatible with the SUBJ function is mapped to SUBJ.

In causative constructions, the base verb can be modelled as a +o semantic participant which can map on the (specific, formal):

Causation may include different concepts (direct vs indirect/mediated causation; coercion vs permission; volition or manipulation vs verbal direction), and a language may have distinct causative strategies to express these different distinctions (e.g. Malayalam).

Regarding grammatical function assignment: (i) a language may use a different grammatical function for the cause depending on the type of causation; and (ii) in South Asian languages morphological causatives from transitive roots of ingestion and perception likewise follow the casemarking of intransitive roots (i.e. the cause is, or may be, an ACC direct object). These observations point to the possibility of alternations in the assignment of grammatical functions to the arguments, with some change in meaning.

A model of a Malayalam alternation (example):

\[< \times \times \times \times > \rightarrow < \times \times \times \times >\]