

The Semantics of English Causative Constructions in a Universal-Typological Perspective

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1. INTRODUCTION¹

The approach to linguistic description illustrated in this chapter—the so-called “NSM” (from “Natural Semantic Metalanguage”)—approach is based on two fundamental assumptions: that every language has an irreducible core in terms of which the speakers can understand all complex thoughts and utterances, and that the irreducible cores of all natural languages match, so that we can speak, effectively, of the irreducible core of all languages, reflecting the irreducible core of human thought.

To someone unfamiliar with the work carried out within this framework over the last 30 years, both of these assumptions, but especially the second one, may seem unconvincing. For even if it can be shown that any language investigated in depth can be “reduced” to an irreducible core in terms of which everything else in this language can be explained and made sense of, why should the cores of all languages coincide—given the tremendous diversity of human languages revealed by modern linguistics?

The empirical and conceptual work done within the NSM approach seeks to demonstrate the validity of the two assumptions stated earlier, and their fruitfulness in the practical work of describing and comparing languages in their lexicons, grammars, and pragmatics. The justification for the approach used in this chapter lies, therefore, in the large body of work of which this chapter is only one example. (See references listed in Goddard, 1997a, 1997b, 1998; Goddard & Wierzbicka, 1994; Wierzbicka, 1991,

1992, 1996, 1997.) A few basic ideas, however, need to be explained here, too.

One such basic idea is that (as Leibniz, 1704/1961, eloquently argued) not everything can be explained: at some point, all explanations must come to an end, for a regressus ad infinitum explains nothing. Some things must be self-explanatory (intuitively clear), or we could never understand anything. The explanatory power of any explanation depends therefore on the intuitive clarity of the indefinable conceptual primitives that constitute its ultimate foundation.

A natural language is a powerful system in which very complex and diverse meanings can be formulated and conveyed to other people. But the intelligibility of all such meanings depends on the existence of a basic set of conceptual primitives that do not require any explanations for they are innate and intuitively clear to us.

In the NSM theory of language, it is assumed that such a set of conceptual primitives does indeed exist and that it can be found through in-depth analysis of any natural language. This is, then, the irreducible core of any language, on which all complex meanings are founded. If this core is innate (as my colleagues and I think it must be), it is hardly surprising that it is essentially the same in all languages. Words differ of course from language to language, but the fundamental innate elementary meanings are the same. For example, all languages have a word (or bound morpheme) that means NO (negation), as in "I did not do it"—in Russian, *ne*, in German, *nicht*, in Mangap-Mbula, *som* (cf. Bugenhagen, 1994, p. 96), and so on.

Cross-linguistic empirical work undertaken within the NSM framework suggests that there are close to 60 universal conceptual primitives such as NO. Using their English exponents, we can present them as follows (cf. Goddard & Wierzbicka, 1994; Wierzbicka, 1996):

Proposed universal semantic primes (1996)

Substantives	I, YOU, SOMEONE(PERSON), SOMETHING(THING), PEOPLE, BODY
Determiners	THIS, THE SAME, OTHER
Quantifiers	ONE, TWO, SOME, MANY/MUCH, ALL
Attributes	GOOD, BAD, BIG, SMALL
Mental predicates	THINK, KNOW, WANT, FEEL, SEE, HEAR
Speech	SAY, WORD, TRUE
Actions, events, movements	DO, HAPPEN, MOVE
Existence and possession	THERE IS, HAVE
Life and death	LIVE, DIE

Logical concepts

NOT, MAYBE, CAN, BECAUSE,
IF

Time
WHEN(TIME), NOW, AFTER,
BEFORE, A LONG TIME,
A SHORT TIME, FOR SOME
TIME

Space
WHERE(PLACE), HERE, ABOVE,
BELOW,
FAR, NEAR; SIDE, INSIDE

Intensifier, Augmentor
Taxonomy, partonomy
Similarity
VERY, MORE
KIND OF, PART OF
LIKE

The first hypothesis is, then, that in all languages, lexical exponents for each of the 60 or so elements (conceptual primitives) can be found: The second, concomitant, hypothesis is that in all languages, conceptual primitives can enter into the same combinations. For example, it can be expected not only that in any language, lexical exponents for the basic notions PEOPLE, THING, THIS, TWO, ALL, BIG, BAD, DO, SEE, MOVE, HAPPEN, and CAN, can be found, but also that in any language, these elements can be put together to create meaningful combinations such as the following:

ALL PEOPLE DO THIS

I SEE TWO BIG THINGS

IF YOU DO THIS, SOMETHING BAD CAN HAPPEN TO YOU

Of course, the word order and the morphological "trappings" may differ from language to language, but the hypothesis is that the elements, their combinations, and their meaning will be the same. This means that just as we can have a rudimentary universal lexicon of indefinable concepts, we can also have a rudimentary universal grammar of such concepts, and if we have a mini-lexicon and a mini-grammar, then we can have a mini-language—a mini-language that is carved out of natural languages and that can be used for the description and comparisons of languages, both in their lexicon and in their grammar.

The great majority of words in any language are language specific in their meaning and cannot be matched exactly across languages. For example, the English word *fate* doesn't mean the same as the Russian word *sud'ba*, and the English word *freedom* doesn't mean the same as the Russian word *svoboda* (cf. Wierzbicka, 1992, 1997). But evidence suggests that the 60 or so words listed as conceptual primitives do match in meaning across languages. Similarly, the great majority of grammatical constructions are

language specific, but evidence suggests that there are also some constructions that do match in meaning. For example, if we compare the English sentence *all these people do this* with its Russian counterpart *vse éti ljudi éto delajut*, we can say that these sentences have exactly the same meaning because not only the individual words but also their combinations can be matched in meaning (e.g., “all these people” = “vse éti ljudi”).

Thus, what applies to the lexicon applies to grammar, too: not everything can be explained, all explanations must come to an end. There is no point in trying to “explain” the meaning of simple and intuitively clear words such as THIS in terms of complex and obscure words like “referentiality,” “deicticity,” or “ostensiveness.” Similarly, there is no point in trying to explain the meaning of a combination of primitives like GOOD PEOPLE or BIG THINGS in terms of complex and obscure words or phrases such as “attributive relation.” On the contrary, a complex notion like “attributive relation” should be explained with reference to simple and universal exemplars such as GOOD PEOPLE and BIG THINGS (cf. Wierzbicka, 1998).

Most words and most grammatical constructions in any language have a complex meaning that can be explained—but it can only be explained in terms of something else: some other words and some other constructions. All analysis comes to an end when the indefinable concepts (like GOOD or BIG, THING or PEOPLE) and indefinable combinations of concepts (like GOOD PEOPLE, BIG THINGS) are reached. To try to go further than that would mean trying to “explain” something simple with something complex, something clear with something obscure, and—last but not least—something universal with something language specific. The natural semantic metalanguage (NSM) employed in this chapter and in other NSM works mentioned earlier leads in the opposite direction: from complex to simple, from obscure to clear, and from language specific to universal.²

Because this metalanguage is carved out of natural language (any natural language), the semantic explications constructed in it are intuitively meaningful and have psychological reality. Consequently, unlike semantic formulae based on various artificial formalisms, NSM formulae are open to verification (they can be tested against native speakers intuitions).

2. THE MEANING OF CAUSATIVES IN A CROSS-LINGUISTIC PERSPECTIVE

The literature on the syntax of causative constructions in different languages is huge; the literature on their semantics is relatively modest. But the use of such constructions is largely determined by their meaning. Because little is known about their meaning, a language learner looking for some guidelines to the actual use of such constructions can seldom

find any statements anywhere that are clear, precise, and reliable. But it is not just the language learner who would be disappointed by the literature on causatives. The area of causation has an enormous inherent interest from the point of view of the “philosophy of grammar” and the psychology of language: after all, the causative constructions a language has show how the speakers of this language draw distinctions between different kinds of causal relations, how they perceive and interpret causal links between events and human actions. And yet our knowledge and understanding of “ethnocausology” is incomparably far behind that of ethnozoology, ethnobotany, or ethnogeology.

Of course the folk interpretations of causal links are less accessible to direct observation than those of more tangible, concrete phenomena, but they are not inaccessible to empirical study. The syntax of a language provides a wealth of evidence in this regard—if we can find ways of analyzing this evidence in an illuminating and nonarbitrary way.

I believe that here as elsewhere—and perhaps even more in this case—the key to such analysis lies in the choice of a suitable semantic metalanguage. In the existing literature on causatives, the semantics of different constructions is usually discussed in terms of ready-made labels such as *direct* vs. *indirect causation*, *contactive* vs. *distant causation*, *strong coercion* vs. *weak coercion*, *authority* vs. *absence of authority*, *factive* vs. *permissive causation*, or *manipulative* vs. *directive causation* (cf., for example, Comrie, 1974, 1985; Givón, 1975; Kachru, 1976; Ruwet, 1973/1976; Shibatani, 1973, 1976; Song, 1996; Talmy, 1976; Xolodovič, 1969). But labels of this kind are often more misleading than helpful and they don’t have much explanatory or predictive power, for the meaning of the constructions to which they are applied differs from language to language.

Generally speaking, the common use of ready-made labels such as *direct/indirect causation*, *contactive/distant causation*, or *strongly coercive/weakly coercive causatives* is based on the mistaken (in my view) assumption that there are certain types of causation that can first be described *a priori*, and then identified in individual languages. But detailed semantic analysis shows that the actual causative constructions are usually rather unique in the meaning they encapsulate. What is called *direct causation* or *strongly coercive causation* in one language is usually different from what is called *direct causation* or *strongly coercive causation* in another. This is not to say that there are no recurring motives, no cross-linguistic similarities in the area of causation. Far from it. The point is that usually causative constructions encapsulate a unique combination of components. The individual components—such as, for example, “Y wanted it” or “Y didn’t want it”—frequently recur in the world’s languages. But the configurations of such components tend to be unique, and cannot be adequately captured in global labels such as *indirect*, *manipulative*, *distant*, and the like.

From the point of view advocated here, finding out the configuration of universal concepts encoded in a given causative construction is not seen as a final touch that can be added to the presentation of the results once the main analysis has already been completed. Rather, finding out (by trial and error) what this hidden configuration of universal concepts is is the essence of the analysis. Assigning to a construction a label such as *coercion*, *authority*, or *contact* does not bring us any closer to the understanding of its meaning; it only creates an illusion that progress has been made.

As another example, consider the German periphrastic causative construction with the auxiliary verb *lassen* (combined with an action verb). In different contexts, this construction is best translated into English with different constructions, based on the verbs *make*, *have*, *get*, *cause*, or *let*, but as this very fact shows, it cannot be semantically equated with any one of these constructions. Yet, the meaning of this German construction can be represented in English quite accurately by means of a set of components phrased in universal human concepts. An example from Speer, 1975:

Ich habe mir Bleistift und neues Papier geben lassen. (p. 19)
 I have to-me pencil and new paper to-give let/have
 I have asked for a pencil and new paper [and got it].

The verb *lassen* does not mean "ask for," but how else can one render in English the meaning of the phrase *geben lassen* when it refers (as in this case) to a request from a prisoner to the prison authorities? Clearly, the prisoner can neither "make" the guards give him new writing paper nor "have" them give it to him. He could perhaps "get" them to do it, but by translating *lassen* as *get*, we would significantly distort the meaning of the original sentence, for "getting someone to do something" implies something like overcoming some actual or potential unwillingness on the part of the causee, and there is no trace of this in the German sentence.

In this example, then, and also in the following one, the best translation might be one relying on speech act verbs such as *ask for* or *request* rather than on any general causatives:

Vom Doktor eine Schlaftablette geben lassen. (Speer, 1975, p. 44)
 from doctor one sleeping tablet to give let/have/make/get
 [to ask] the doctor for a sleeping tablet (and get one). [A note in a diary.]

But a translation based on the verb *ask for* or *request* is not accurate either, for it doesn't convey the idea that the request was effective. Furthermore, consider the following sentence from Speer (1975):

Im Anschluß an seinen Monolog drückte Hitler auf den Klingelknopf und ließ Borman kommen. (p. 101)

Having completed his monologue Hitler pressed the bell and [thus] summoned Borman.

In this case, the speech act verbs *ask for* and *request* are clearly inappropriate, and *summon* is much more suitable; but clearly *summon* brings with it presuppositions that are absent from the earlier two examples.

In the following example from Speer (1975), where the causee is the causer's personal assistant, the English *have* construction seems to fit the context best:

Im Jahre 1938 hatte er [Streicher] ihm durch seinen persönlichen Adjutanten zum Geburtstag demonstrativ einen großen Distelstrauß überreichen lassen. (p. 173)

In 1938, Streicher [a Gauleiter of Nuremberg] had his personal assistant deliver to him (Leibel, mayor of Nuremberg) on his birthday, demonstratively, a large bunch of thistles.

As we have seen, the range of the *lassen* causative (of the type discussed here) is so broad that it can accommodate requests from a prisoner to the prison authorities, instructions from a district chief to his assistant, and orders from a dictator to his underlings. There is no causative verb or construction in English that would fit a range of relations as broad as that. Yet the meaning of the *lassen* causative can be accurately portrayed in the following formula:

Person X ließ (let/made/had/asked etc.) person Y to do Z =

- a. X wanted Y to do Z
- b. because of this X did something
- c. because of this Y knew that X wanted this
- d. because of this Y did Z

What applies to the cross-linguistic comparison of causative constructions applies also to the comparison of different causative constructions within one language. For example, in English, "interpersonal causation" can be described by means of several different causative constructions:

1. Mary had John return the money.
2. Mary made John return the money.
3. Mary got John to return the money.

4. Mary forced John to return the money.
5. Mary talked John into returning the money.

Each of the sentences above means something different, and no labels such as direct, indirect, strong, weak, coercive, manipulative, or contactive can clarify the nature of these differences (as they could not clarify the differences between any of these constructions and the German *lassen* construction).

In what follows, I will first discuss fairly briefly three of the English constructions listed earlier (1, 3, and 5), and then I will examine more extensively a whole family of English causative constructions based on the verb *make*, including the one illustrated in (2). In the course of this extensive discussion of *make* causatives, I will also compare the meaning of the *make* causative illustrated in (2) with that of the *force* causative illustrated in (4).

3. THREE ENGLISH CAUSATIVES: "HAVE," "GET," AND "INTO"

3.1. Having Someone Do Something

The following sentence from a novel nicely illustrates the contrast between *make* and *have* causatives:

She had the girls clean his bicycle and made Anand pump the tyres every morning. (Naipaul, 1969, p. 481)

In the story, the wife, Shama, is trying to please and appease her husband in various ways, and in particular, by getting the children to do things for him. The girls are expected to be compliant and willing to do what their mother wants them to do, whereas the boy, Anand, has to be "made" to pump the tyres every morning.

Person X had Person Y do Z =

- a. X wanted Z to happen (to W)
- b. because of this X wanted Y to do Z (to W)
- c. because of this, X said something to someone
- d. because of this Y did Z
- e. X could think that when X says something like this (about something like this) Y can't say: "I don't want to do this"

The *have* construction does not imply that the causee didn't want to perform the action. Nor does it imply that the causee HAD TO perform the action. It does imply, however, something like a hierarchical relationship, within which the causer can say that he or she wants the causee to do something, and the causee can't say in response "I don't want to do it."

This does not mean that the causer has power over the causee and that the causee has to do whatever the causer wants. The compliance may well be limited to some particular sphere (such as the professional duties of a secretary to whom her boss can give directions). Within this sphere, however, the causer does not have to exert any special pressure to achieve the desired effect: simply saying what he or she wants is enough. In fact, the causer's will does not even have to be expressed directly to the causee; it can be conveyed through another person. Because the causee does not really have to do what the causer wants, it might seem that it would be better to phrase component (e) as "... Y wouldn't say: 'I don't want to do it'" rather than "... Y can't say: 'I don't want to do it.'" This alternative formulation, however, could apply also to situations where the causer is counting on the causee's good heart ("when I ask her to do something she will not say no"); it is therefore inappropriate in the case of the *have* construction. In a hierarchical relationship, a person CAN think that someone in a subordinate position "can't" refuse to take directions.

Thus, in the *have* causative, the causer assumes the causee's "readiness to take directions"; the causee is treated here as a cooperative performer of the causer's will, as someone to whom the causer's will can be communicated (either directly or by an intermediary) and who will be neither unable to understand it nor unwilling to perform it. This explains why, as pointed out by Talmy (1976, p. 107) the causee of the *have* causative normally has to be human:

*I had the squirrel leave its tree.³

The trainer made/?had the lion dance.

One could say, vaguely, that both the *make* causative and the *have* causative imply some sort of "power" relation between the causer and the causee. But clearly, the nature of this relation is in each case perceived differently. The *make* causative implies that the causee is acting unwillingly (what exactly this means will be discussed later). The *have* causative doesn't imply that; here, the causee is expected to comply with the causer's will, and there is no assumption, or expectation, of unwillingness on his or her part. Nonetheless, the expected compliance of the causee is not seen as due entirely to good will: there is also an assumption of dependence reflected in the component "Y can't say: 'I don't want to do this.'"

Finally, the *have* construction does not imply that the causer is seeking to control the causee's actions and it is not compatible with a situation

when someone is seeking to impose their will on another person just to enjoy arbitrary power. Rather, the *have* construction implies a goal that transcends the causee's actions: from the causer's point of view, the causee is like an instrument in achieving some objective (as signaled in the component "X wanted something to happen") rather than as the target of the causee's will. Presumably, this is the reason why the *have* causatives normally occur with transitive rather than intransitive verbs:

X made Y wait (sit still).

?X had Y wait (sit still).

Furthermore, the transitive verbs in the *have* construction usually take definite rather than indefinite objects:

A. X made Y eat fish.

B. ?X had Y eat fish.

C. X had Y return the fish to the shop.

The *have* construction implies that the causer wants something to happen to some object (in this case, the fish), rather than to the causee as such. The *make* construction, however, is quite compatible with exercises in arbitrary power, deliberate cruelty, malice, punishment, and so on:

[She] used to make us kneel on grates for a thing like that. (Naipaul, 1969, p. 236)

?She used to have us kneel on grates for a thing like that.

It is also interesting to note that in contrast to the *make* construction, the *have* construction does not allow the passive:

A. He was made to pump the tyres every morning.

B. *He was had to pump the tyres every morning.

The causee of a *make* construction can be topicalized (by means of a passive) because the causee is the target of the causer's action, and so is potentially worthy of interest; but the causee of the *have* construction is not the target of the causer's action but a mere "instrument."

This is also consistent with the fact that in one of its variants, the *have* construction readily takes subjectless complements, as in the following sentences:

I had my shoes mended.

I had my calculations checked by my assistant.

Again, this is in stark contrast to the *make* construction:

*She made her shoes mended (calculations checked).

Of course, the *have* construction used in sentences like "I had my shoes mended" is not exactly the same as the one with a named causee and an active form of the verb in the complement, and the meaning is not the same either, but it is very close:

X had Z done [to W]. =

- a. X wanted Z to happen to W
- b. because of this X wanted someone to do Z to W
- c. because of this, X said something
- d. because of this someone did Z
- e. X could think that when X says something like this (about something like this) this person can't say: "I don't want to do this"

In both cases, X wants something to happen (component a), and because of this, X wants someone to do something (component b), but in the variant with a subjectless and passive complement, the identity of the causee is not relevant (no "Y" is specified) and the "affected object" (W) has to be identified.

3.2. Getting Someone to Do Something

The interpersonal causative construction based on the auxiliary verb *get* can be illustrated with the following sentence:

... Anand got Shama to bring a coloured print of the goddess Lakshmi from Hanuman House. (Naipaul, 1969, p. 383)

The boy Anand has no authority over his mother and he cannot "have" or "make" her do anything. Nevertheless, he can "get" her to do something for him.

The *get* construction illustrated by this sentence is not the only *get* causative available in English. Causative *get* sentences with an inanimate causee are also possible (for example, "she got the sauce to thicken"), but as we shall see later, the semantic conditions on such sentences are different from those on the interpersonal sentences presently under discussion, with both key noun phrases human and a verb of action, that is of the type

NP¹_{Human} got NP²_{Human (or human-like)} to VERB_{D0}

The *get* causative of the type discussed here implies that the causee does something not because he or she wants to do it, but because somebody else wants them to do it. At the same time, the action is not imposed on the causee by virtue of the causer's power or authority. The causer realizes that the causee may not want to comply, and unlike in the case of *have*, the causer has no power or authority over the addressee to overcome his or her possible reluctance or unwillingness to do what the causer wants. Because of this, the causer does (typically, says) something to the causee in the expectation that this might influence the causee's will and that as a result, the causee will do the desired action willingly, and indeed, this happens: the causee does what is wanted by the causer and does it willingly. And what does the causer get out of it? Often—but not always—what the causee does can be seen as good for the causer. In all cases, however, the causer can think that what he or she wanted to happen, happened (component f).

How does one get another person to do something that we want them to do? Usually, by SAYING something, as in the case of the *have* construction, but not necessarily so. For example, one can get a dog to do something (say, swallow a pill) by putting it in a piece of meat, or by smearing it with jam. One can also use the *get* construction when speaking of machines that appear to have "a will of their own," for example,

How did you get the washing machine to go? I couldn't.

The *have* construction, which relies on a speech act, and on conscious acceptance of somebody else's authority, cannot be used like that.

?She had the dog swallow the pill.

?She had the washing machine go.

Thus, the overall semantic conditions on the *get* construction (with a human or human-like causee) can be summarized as follows:

Person X got person Y to do Z =

- a. X wanted Y to do Z
- b. X knew that if Y didn't want to do it Y would not do it
- c. X thought that if Y wanted to do it Y would do it
- d. because of this X did (said) something to Y
- e. because of this after this Y wanted to do Z
- f. because of this Y did Z
- g. because of this X could think:

"I wanted something to happen
it happened"

Although the action is done willingly (component (e)), the strategy used by the causer smacks a little of manipulation, for the causee's action is brought about by the causer's, rather than the causee's, own will. Nonetheless, getting someone to do something cannot be seen as real manipulation, for the causer does not conceal his or her goal and the causee is not acting AGAINST his or her will (there is no assumption that the causee doesn't want to do what the causer wants, although it is assumed that if the causee didn't want to do it, he or she would not do it). In both these respects, "getting" people to do something differs from the truly "manipulative" scenario discussed in the next section and linked with yet another—semantically more complex—causative construction.

3.3. Manipulating Someone "Into Doing Something"

The construction discussed in this section is identified not in terms of an auxiliary verb (such as *make*, *have*, or *get*), but rather in terms of a preposition: *into*. But the set of main verbs that can be used in this construction is quite limited and gives a clear clue to this construction's meaning. Thus, one can not only "talk" someone "into" doing something, but also "trick" them, "manoeuvre" them, or "push" them. On the other hand, one cannot "encourage" or "induce" someone "into" doing anything. Roughly speaking, the generalization seems to be as follows: the *into* construction takes verbs that either imply or at least are compatible with, the idea of manipulation (tricking, manoeuvring, and the like). More precisely, the meaning of the *into* construction can be portrayed as follows:

Person X "Verbed" person Y into doing Z =

- a. X wanted Y to do Z
- b. Y didn't want to do Z
- c. X didn't say to Y: "I want you to do Z"
- d. X thought that if X said this Y wouldn't do Z
- e. because of this X did something else
- f. because of this after this Y did Z
- g. Y didn't do it because Y wanted to do it
- h. Y did it because X wanted Y to do it
- i. Y wouldn't have done it if X had not done this

There are some clear similarities, as well as some clear differences, between the *into* construction and the *get* construction. The main differences are: first, in the case of the *into* construction, the causee originally didn't want to do what he or she did, whereas in the case of the *get* construction, there is no such assumption; second, in the *into* construction,

the causee's action is "triggered" by the causer's will, not by the causee's own will, whereas in the *get* construction, the causee is acting in accordance with both his or her own will and the causer's will; third, in the *into* construction, the causee is unaware of what is happening (namely, that his or her action is "triggered" by the causer's will), whereas in the *get* construction, there is no such assumption.

Given these differences, it is not surprising that one can use the *get* causative, but not an *into* causative, performatively (as a request), for example:

I'll get you to sign this.

*I'll talk you into signing this.

The speaker of a *get* sentence does not seek to conceal his or her wish for the causee to do something, although he or she does not regard the mere expression of their wish as a sufficient "trigger" for the causee's action. For this reason, a performative *get* sentence may even be used in the service of politeness, for it sounds less presumptuous than would a bare expression of the causer's will: "I want you to sign this." Using a sentence like "I'll get you to sign this" rather than simply "I want you to sign this," the speaker signals that he or she does not regard their want as a sufficient reason for the causee to act, and also that he or she expects the causee to act willingly (in accordance with the speaker's wishes, but "freely").

4. MAKING SOMETHING HAPPEN OR SOMEONE DO SOMETHING

4.1. Introduction

English has many different *make* constructions. The meaning of each of these constructions constitutes a unique configuration of components. It appears, however, that two components may be shared: one causal component and one counterfactual. Roughly, the overall semantic "theme" of *make* constructions can be represented as follows:

A happened
because of this B happened
B wouldn't have happened if A had not happened

I do not claim, however, that this overall theme can be seen as either a full meaning or even a shared semantic core, in the strict sense, for, as we shall see, there may be other necessary components depending on the

nature of the events labeled here as A and B, and also because the causal and counterfactual links may hold between predicates other than those specified in the formula above. The precise meaning of a *make* construction depends, I suggest, on the following factors:

1. is the causer different from the causee?
2. is the causer a person? a thing? an event?
3. is the causee a person? a thing? an event?
4. does the causer DO something?
5. does the causee DO something?
6. if the causee does something, is this something that can only be done intentionally (e.g., *write*, *read*) or is it something that doesn't have to be done intentionally (e.g., *cry*, *laugh*)?
7. does something HAPPEN to the causee?
8. does the causee THINK something?

The simplest variant of the *make* construction can be illustrated with sentences of the following type: "it made me think that X," that is, sentences meeting the following formula:

$NP^1_{Abstract} \text{ made } NP^2_{Human} \text{ VERB}_{\text{Think}} [+ \text{complement}]$

For example:

It made me realize how lucky I was.

This made me think of Mary.

What you said made me think of something my sister said (...)

The meaning conveyed in such sentences can be represented as follows:

It (X) made Y think W. =

- a. X happened
- b. because of this person Y thought something (W)
- c. Y wouldn't have thought this (W) if X had not happened

This type of *make* sentence is particularly simple, because the outcome referred to is not presented as *bad*, *unwanted*, *involuntary*, *unexpected*, or (*seen as*) *necessary*. No restrictions on what the causee thinks are implied. As we will see, in most other types of *make* sentences this is not the case.

In the survey of *make* constructions that follows, I first discuss sentences of the "interpersonal" type, that is, sentences where both the causer and the causee are human and where they are different persons. Sentence types where either the causer or the causee is not human (or where neither of them is human) are discussed later (except of course for the "it made me think" type, with which we have started).

There appear to be six interpersonal (causative) *make* constructions in English. They can be illustrated with the following sentences:

1. Person X made person Y fall.
2. Person X made person Y feel guilty.
3. Person X made person Y think about Z.
4. Person X made person Y want something.
5. Person X made person Y cry (laugh).
6. Person X made person Y apologize.

In type 1, something *happens* to the causee and the causee does not have to feel anything or do anything. In type 2, nothing happens to the causee (apart from what the causer does or says), and the causee does not do anything but he or she *feels* something. In type 3, nothing happens to the causee, and the causee neither does nor feels anything, but he or she has to *think* something. In type 4, nothing happens to the causee and the causee does not have to do, feel, or think anything, but he or she has to *want* something. In type 5, the causee *feels* something and because of this, *does* something, but something that he or she *does not want* to do, that is to say something that is done involuntarily (and that, presumably, is triggered by something happening in the person's body). Finally, in type 6, the causee *does* something that can only be done *intentionally* (even if it is done unwillingly—a distinction that is discussed in some detail later). Let us examine the semantic conditions on each of these types.

4.2. Making Something Happen to Someone

Make sentences can be used for accusations, as in the sentence "You made me fall over!" What the speaker appears to be implying by his or her choice of this construction type can be spelled out as follows:

person X did something
because of this something bad (Z) happened to person Y
Z wouldn't have happened to person Y if X had not done this

In order to see that the event referred to has to be really perceived as "bad" it is useful to compare sentences A and B in the following pairs:

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1. A. You bastard, you made me lose my job!
B. ?I'm so grateful to you, you made me get a job!
2. A. He made her lose her temper.
B. ?He made her recover her composure.
3. A. You made me get worse.
B. ?You made me get better.

In each pair, sentence B sounds worse than sentence A and in fact, is often perceived as unacceptable. The difference seems clear: in A, something bad happens to the causee, and in B, something good. This is not to say that a sentence such as "He made her get a job" must always imply that getting a job is seen as something bad. Far from it. It can be seen as something good, but only on the condition that the causer acted intentionally—a condition that does not apply if the event is seen as "bad." To account for these facts, we need to postulate separate interpersonal *make happen* constructions: (1) causer's action not (necessarily) intentional, the effect on the causee "bad"; (2) causer's action intentional, the effect on the causee not (necessarily) "bad." Because the conditions on the two types of sentences (those when the causer is acting intentionally and those where this is not the case) are different, these two types cannot be accommodated by one semantic formula (not without a loss of predictive power).

It could be suggested that the event referred to in the *make something happen* construction should be seen as "unwanted" rather than as "bad." The question of which of the two hypotheses ("bad" or "unwanted") is a better one is difficult to test, for in the world of human affairs, "unwanted" usually tends to be interpreted as "bad." On balance, however, in this case, facts seem to be better explained by the "bad" rather than the "unwanted" version. Let us consider a sentence such as "You made me fall!" against the following hypothetical formula:

- a. you did something
- b. because of this something happened to me
- c. I did not want it to happen
- d. it wouldn't have happened if you had not done this

What seems unsatisfactory about this formula is that it fails to account for the impression of blame and accusation; and in any case, what would be the point in denying that I wanted to fall? Of course I did not want to fall, people normally don't, and it is hardly necessary to say so. The hypothesis that what happened to the causee is seen as something "bad" (rather than as something "not wanted" or "unwanted") does not run into any such difficulties.

What is particularly telling is the contrast between the *make happen (to)* constructions and various other *make* constructions that have no negative implications whatsoever. For example, one can say "She made it happen" with reference to something good and desirable: "happen," but not "happen TO someone." One can also say "She made him happy," and of course this is fine too—but *happy* is an adjective, not a verb, and it is *make+Verb* constructions that we are now looking at. Furthermore, one can say "She made me see (realize) . . . , again, without any negative implications, but here, we are dealing with a verb of thinking (a category to be discussed below), not with a verb of happening. Finally, let us compare the following two sentences:

- A. Eat your spinach—spinach will make you grow big and strong!
- B. ?She made him grow big and strong by giving him spinach every day.

The *make* construction used in sentence A (with an inanimate causer and a human causee) is perfectly consistent with a positive result, but the interpersonal *make* construction used in sentence B (with a human causer as well as a human causee) is not consistent with a positive outcome, and as a result, sentence B sounds odd.

I conclude, then, (though only tentatively) that the *make* construction under discussion (person X made something happen to person Y) does imply that what happened to the causer is seen as "bad" (for the causee), and I propose the following explication for this type:

Person X made Z happen to person Y. =

- a. X did something
- b. because of this something bad (Z) happened to Y
- c. Z wouldn't have happened to Y if X had not done this

4.3. Making Someone Feel Something

Sentences about feelings may seem to contradict the formula proposed in the proceeding section. For example, one can say to someone, "You made me feel a lot better," and surely, "feeling better" is not seen as something bad that happens to the causee.

In fact, however, "feeling" does not have to be seen as something that "happens" to a person at all. There are indeed different conditions on "making something HAPPEN to someone" and "making someone FEEL something." To account for this fact, we need to posit two separate semantic formulae for the two types of sentences rather than trying to accommodate them in one formula. If we were to posit a single formula for both of these

types, we might seem to gain in economy of description but we would lose in predictive power, for a unitary formula could not preserve the link between "happen" and "bad."

In the case of *feel (make feel)*, the feeling brought about by the causer can be either good or bad:

- She made him feel needed.
- He made her feel guilty.
- He made her feel proud of her background.
- He made her feel ashamed of her background.

To account for these facts, we could posit (as a first approximation) the following formula (to be revised later):

- person X did something
- because of this person Y felt something (Z)
- Y wouldn't have felt this (Z) if X had not done this

One reason why this formula may need revision is that it allows for physical feelings (sensations) as well as for mental feelings (emotions), whereas in fact *make feel* (with a human causer) is only compatible with the latter kind:

- A. He made me feel miserable/happy.
- B. ?He made me feel cold/hot.

The mental feelings in question do not have to be emotions such as "happy" or "miserable." For example, one can also say:

- You make me feel special.
- He makes me feel stupid.
- You make me feel sick (i.e., disgusted).

The feeling cannot be purely physical, it has to imply some thought. Even if the causer is placing pieces of ice, or hot compresses, on the causee's body, sentence B would still sound odd. This suggests that in the semantic structure, the causative *make* combines with the element *FEEL* not directly but rather via the element *THINK*: apparently *making someone feel something* presupposes *making them think something*.

On the other hand, in impersonal *make feel* sentences, such as "The whisky made me feel sick," a physical feeling is quite possible. The condi-

tions on the two types are therefore different. The explication that follows refers only to the interpersonal *make feel* type:

$NP^1_{Human} \text{ made } NP^2_{Human} \text{ VERB}_{Feel} \text{ [Complement]}$

Person X made person Y feel something (Z). =

- a. X did something
- b. because of this Y thought something
- c. because of this Y felt something (Z)
- d. Y wouldn't have felt this (Z) if X had not done this

Rather than multiply various *make* constructions beyond necessity, I will say here that the *make feel* construction has some extensions that seem to fit the same basic explication. These extensions can be illustrated with the following two sentences from *Alice in Wonderland*:

... she pictured to herself ... how she would gather about her other little children, and make *their* eyes bright and eager with many a strange tale ...

The Queen's argument was that if something wasn't done about it in less than no time, she'd have everybody executed, all round. (It was this last remark that had made the whole party look so grave and anxious).

In the first of these sentences, a person is said to make someone else's eyes bright and eager; what is meant, however, is that the causer is making the causee "feel interested" (with a further implication that the interest will be reflected in the causee's eyes). In the second sentence, one person's remark is said to make other people look grave and anxious; what is meant, however, is that one person said something and that other people felt anxious because of this (again, with a further implication that the feeling of anxiety is reflected in these people's faces).

4.4. Making Someone Think Something

Closely related to the *make feel* type is the *make think* type, which can be illustrated with common sentences such as the following ones:

You made me realize that Z.

He made her forget her troubles.

She made him think of other matters (other people).

He made me see that I was on the wrong path.

Here, too, there is no implication that what happened as a result of the causer's action is seen as "bad." Nor are there any other implications about the nature of Z: It may be good or not good, wanted or not wanted, wise or foolish, and so on. In this case, too, therefore, a neutral formula is in order:

Person X made person Y think something (Z). =

- a. X did something
- b. because of this Y thought something (Z)
- c. Y wouldn't have thought this (Z) if X had not done this

It is worth noting that the interpersonal *make think* construction discussed here, too, corresponds closely to its counterpart with an impersonal causer discussed earlier (e.g., "it made me think of other matters" vs. "she made me think of other matters"). The differences between the two types consist only in the contrast between "someone" and "something" and "do" and "happen."

4.5. Making Someone Want Something

As one can "make someone feel something" and "make someone think something," one can also "make someone want something." For example, one can say "You made me want to try again!" This further application of the *make feel* and *make think* pattern may seem trivial and hardly worth mentioning, for it parallels exactly the other two patterns. Yet, each pattern needs to be listed, if only to exclude the nonexistent ones, such as for example "make know"; for one cannot say in English "he made me know this," although the closest equivalents of *make* in, say, Italian, can be used in the corresponding phrase:

Maria mi ha fatto sapere questo.

'Mary "made" me know this.'

(One can of course say in English "let know," but not "make know.")

For the sake of completeness, then, I will also write an explication for the *make want* type (note that Z stands here for a complement clause, cf. Wierzbicka, 1996):

Person X made person Y want something (Z). =

- a. X did something
- b. because of this Y thought something
- c. because of this Y wanted Z

- d. Y wouldn't have wanted this (Z) if X had not done this

One point worth noting is that in this case, as in the case of *make feel*, the causal link holds between the causee's wanting something and the causee's thinking something, whereas the counterfactual link holds between the causee's wanting something and the causer's doing something. Another point worth noting is that wanting does not have to refer in this case to wanting to do something, for one can also say, for example, "You made me want to be good." For this reason, the relevant component is formulated simply as "Y wanted Z."

Finally, it should be noted that the interpersonal *make want* type, too, has its counterpart with an impersonal causer, e.g. "it made me want to try again."

4.6. Making Someone Cry (an Involuntary Emotional Response)

A person can make another person cry or laugh.

- A. John made Mary cry.
- B. Mary made John laugh.

To account for such sentences, I propose another *make* construction, which can be called "*make* of involuntary emotional response." The conditions of this construction can be spelled out as follows:

Person X made person Y cry/laugh. =

- a. X did something
- b. because of this Y thought something
- c. because of this Y felt something
- d. because of this Y did something (Z)
- e. Y didn't do Z because Y wanted to do it
- f. Y wouldn't have done it if X had not done this

Consider, for example, the following sentence from the diary of a dying man, referring to his wife (Brodkey, 1996):

I can make her cry by saying: "Don't ask me about the attic fan: do it the way you want it." With the implication, of course, that I won't be here.

The sentence does not make it clear whether the dying man wants his wife to cry or not; but it is clear that he does something (he says something),

that because of this, his wife thinks something, that the thought induces in her a feeling, that this feeling leads to some bodily processes, and that these in turn lead to her crying—presumably, involuntary crying. Clearly, a sentence of this kind does not mean the same as its counterpart with *because*, that is, A and B in the following pair do not mean the same:

- A. X made Y cry by saying Z.
- B. X said Z; because of this, Y cried.

Variant A suggests a stronger link between X's words and Y's crying: There is a stronger implication that Y's crying was involuntary and induced by some internal processes (triggered by the feeling), and also that Y would not have cried were it not for X's action. All this is consistent with the proposed explication.

It could be objected that the analysis proposed for by the *make cry* type, which has been posited here as a separate category of *make* causatives, is too specific, because one could also use a *make* causative with reference to nonexpressive bodily behavior, as in the following example: "John made Mary sneeze by putting smelling salts under her nose." Clearly, in this case, neither thinking nor feeling is involved, and yet the sentence is not unacceptable.

But in fact a *make sneeze* sentence fits another type of *make* causative; the *make happen* discussed earlier. Whereas crying or laughing can be seen as "doing" something, sneezing is more likely to be seen (in English) as something that happens to a person rather than something that a person does:

All she did was cry.
?All she did was sneeze.

"Making someone sneeze" can be seen, then, as analogous to "making someone fall." But "making someone cry (or laugh)" cannot be seen in this way, for crying or laughing is something that one does (albeit often involuntarily), not something that happens to one. In any case, this is how the verb *sneeze* is treated by the English lexicon, whereas the verbs *cry* and *laugh* are treated differently.

Once again, if this type were to be collapsed in one formula with one of the previously discussed types, both formulae would lose a great deal of predictive power. First, the counterfactual link holds in the present case between an action of the causer and the action (rather than a thought or a feeling) of the causee; and second, the sentences of the *make cry* type imply that the action of the causee is involuntary, and this information

would be lost if component (e) was regarded as optional rather than as part of the invariant of a separate subconstruction (the *make cry* type).

4.7. Making Someone Do Something ("Make of Coercion")

When we were small Mai used to make us kneel on graters for a thing like that. (Naipaul, 1969, p. 236)

... He . . . made her learn the quotations hanging on the walls, and made her sit still while he unsuccessfully tried to sketch her. She was dispirited and submissive. (Naipaul, 1969, p. 222)

Granny is making me eat fish. I hate it. (Naipaul, 1969, p. 186)

As these examples suggest, being made to do something implies doing something that one does not want to do under pressure from somebody else. Formulaically, this can be spelled out as follows:

Person X made person Y do Z. =

- a. X wanted Y to do Z
- b. Y knew this
- c. X knew that if X didn't do something to Y, Y wouldn't do it
- d. because of this X did (said) something to Y
- e. because of this, Y thought "I have to do it"
- f. because of this Y did Z
- g. Y wouldn't have done Z (at that time) if Y had not thought this

The action that the causee is made to perform does not have to be inherently unpleasant (as in the case of kneeling on graters), and the causer can in fact be solicitous and concerned about the causee's welfare, as in the case of the grandmother making a child eat fish, but even then, the construction itself implies that the action was not performed willingly.

Consider, for example, the following passage:

He was tired; she made him rest. He was hungry; she gave him food. He had nowhere to go: she welcomed him. (Naipaul, 1969, p. 484)

In this case, rather atypically, the causee appreciates the causer's pressure. Yet here, too, given the situation described in the book, it is quite plausible that he would not have rested had his mother not urged him do so, and that he gave in to his mother's solicitous pressure recognizing that, given her attitude, he had to let her take care of him.

How does one make another person do something that this person is apparently unwilling to do? Presumably, by "doing something to this person" (usually, verbally): by threatening them, pressurizing them, nagging them, or perhaps cajoling them. Typically, the causer's words are directed at the causee and typically, they refer to some possible consequences of the causee's action (or inaction). For example, although one can make a person cry by saying something (e.g., cruel jokes at the causee's expense) to a third person, one cannot make a person apologize, or wash the dishes, by saying something to a third person. Nor can one make a person apologize or wash the dishes by saying something to this person about somebody else or something else:

?She made me apologize by pointing out that Harry had already done so.

?She made me wash the dishes by complaining about her headache.

What does it mean, however, that the action is not performed willingly? Does it mean that the causee doesn't want to do what he or she is doing? At first sight, a component along these lines ("Y didn't want to do it") seems to be fitting, but when one examines a wide range of *make* sentences (with an intentional verb complement), it emerges that not all of them seem entirely consistent with such a component. Sometimes the implication seems to be that the causee had no choice in the matter, rather than that the causee actually didn't want to do it, as in the following sentence:

My wife made me go to the doctor. I was planning to go anyway, but I kept putting it off, so she rang and made an appointment for me.

The component "Y didn't want to do Z" would be too strong to account for such sentences.

The solution that I would like to propose is this: We cannot say that the causee "didn't want to do what he(she) did," but we can say that the causee thought, at some point: "I have to do it," and did it because of this, and further, that the causee would not have done it had he(she) not thought "I have to do it." If we formulated the counterfactual component in terms of the causer's action ("Y wouldn't have done Z if X had not done it"), this would not be sufficient to account for the unwillingness implied by the construction. If, however, we phrase the counterfactual component in terms of the causee's thought ("Y wouldn't have done it if Y had not thought 'I have to do it'"), this does allow us to account for the implied unwillingness, and to do so without saying that the causee "didn't want to do" what he or she intentionally did.

If this analysis is correct, then there is an interesting difference between the counterfactual component in *make* sentences referring to intentional action (as in "X made Y apologize") and those referring to involuntary action (as in "X made Y cry"). A sentence such as "John made Mary cry" implies that Mary wouldn't have cried if John had not done something that upset her. By contrast, a sentence such as "Mary made John apologize" implies that John wouldn't have apologized if he had not thought that he had to do it (rather than that John wouldn't have apologized if Mary had not done something). The latter may hold, too, by implication (John wouldn't have apologized if Mary had not done something), but what we need to spell out to account for the causee's implied unwillingness is the former, i.e. the causee's thought "I have to do it."

4.8. Make of Subjective Necessity

Mutatis mutandis, what applies to *make* sentences describing interpersonal "coercion" applies also to *make* sentences with a nonpersonal causer, such as "The rain made him go inside." In this case, no one is putting pressure on the causee, but the event (the rain) leads the causee to a realization that an action is necessary ("I have to do something"):

Something (X) made person Y do Z =

- a. person Y was in place P
- b. something (X) happened in this place (e.g. it started to rain)
- c. because of this Y thought: "I have to do something"
- d. because of this Y did Z (go inside)
- e. Y wouldn't have done Z if X had not happened

Let us test this formula against a further example: "The arrival of the police made me run for my life." To begin with, I was in a place (P). Then the police arrived at that place. Because of this, I thought: "I have to run"; and so I did. I wouldn't have done it had I not thought that I had to do it.

Usually, when an event makes a person do something, it is understood that this event occurred in the place where the person was (e.g., if the rain makes a person go inside, it is understood that it rained in the place where this person was at the time). It is debatable whether or not the identity of place is a necessary condition for this type. Some informants accept sentences such as the following one, where the causing event can take place far away from the action of the causee:

The bush fires in Victoria made them work all night editing the footage.

Other informants, however, are not quite happy with such sentences and prefer versions without *make*, for example:

The bush fires in Victoria kept them working all night.

In the formula proposed earlier, I formulated components (a) and (b) in a way that assumes identity of place, but the matter requires further investigation. On the other hand, some reference to place does seem necessary in the type under discussion, as the following contrasts illustrate:

- A. The death of his father made him reassess his plans
(think—, realize—, reevaluate—, decide—, etc.).
- B. ?The death of his father made him resign from his job.

Sentence A is acceptable because the *make think* type discussed earlier (section 3.1) places no conditions on the nature of the event that makes someone think (realize, etc.) something. But sentence B sounds odd, for the *make do* type discussed here is more constrained: Apparently, for the sentence to be fully acceptable, the event that makes a person *do* something has to be presented (or interpretable) as a "local" event (e.g., rain or the arrival of the police on the scene). Consider also the following contrast:

- A. He resigned from his job because his father died.
- B. ?The death of his father made him resign from his job.

Here again, sentence A is perfectly normal, but sentence B, close in meaning as it may seem to be, is not equally acceptable. The hypothesis that the *make do* type with an inanimate cause requires a reference to a place accounts for such contrasts in acceptability. It should be added, however, that the event that *makes* a person *do* something may stem from something that this person sees on television, or in a newspaper, or something else of this nature, as in the following example:

Rupert Murdoch was annoyed. Not with the expansion of . . . Not with the development of . . . What made him reach for the phone at around midday Sydney time on September 5 were four paragraphs on page 2 of The Daily Telegraph's business Section. . . . (The Australian Magazine, December 14–15, 1996, p. 11)

What is particularly interesting about this example is that in a sense, there is clearly no external compulsion or coercion here: In a sense, the act of reaching for the phone can be seen as due to a completely free decision. Yet, the formula "Y thought: 'I have to do something'" fits the situation,

as described, particularly well: The implication is not that Murdoch "didn't want" to reach for the phone, but rather that he wouldn't have done it at that particular moment had he not thought something along the lines "I have to do something." In essence, the same applies of course to the examples discussed earlier, but perhaps not quite so clearly: The people who are running away because the police have arrived *want* to run away, and the person whom the rain makes go inside *wants* to go inside (because of the rain).

Thus, the construction called here "the *make* of subjective necessity" parallels in one important respect that called "the *make* of coercion": In both cases, the causee does something because he(she) thinks: "I have to do it" (or "I have to do something"). Yet, even here, there is some difference. In the case of the *make* of coercion, the thought attributed to the causee is "I have to do it," whereas in the case of the *make* of necessity, the thought attributed to the causee must take the form of "I have to do something," for it is not always clear what exactly the causee has to do. This last point is highlighted by the following examples from *Alice in Wonderland*, where there was hardly any time for the causee to decide what exactly she had to do:

... [A] sharp hiss made her draw back in a hurry: A large pigeon had flown into her face. (p. 63)

... [A] little sharp bark just over her head made her look up in a great hurry. (p. 50)

It might be objected to that in sentences like these, the action of the causee is thought of as "automatic" rather than as "deliberate." I think, however, that they are not inconsistent with an interpretation that posits a sudden thought flashing through the causee's mind: "I have to do something (now)."

4.9. Make Versus Force

Before we proceed with our survey of various English *make* constructions, it is worth stopping for a moment to compare the *make* of coercion with the lexical verb *force*. What is the difference, for example, between "making someone apologize" and "forcing someone to apologize"?

I believe that comparing "make" and "force" is particularly useful insofar as it throws light on the nature of the unwillingness implied by *make*. For clearly, *forcing* does imply that the causee did not want to do whatever he or she ultimately did, and because *force* is, intuitively, more coercive than *make*, comparing the two helps us to see that it would not be wise to attribute the same component ("Y didn't want to do it") to the *make* of

coercion construction as well. I submit that both the differences and the similarities between *force* and *make* of coercion can be accounted for if we propose the following explication for *force*:

- Person X forced person Y to do Z (e.g. to apologize).* =
- a. X wanted Y to do Z
 - b. X knew that Y didn't want to do this
 - c. X thought that if X did something to Y
Y would have to do Z
 - d. because of this X did something to Y
 - e. because of this Y had to do Z
 - f. because of this Y did Z
 - g. Y wouldn't have done Z if X had not done this to Z
 - h. when Y was doing Z Y thought: "I don't want to do this"

Finally, let us examine the difference between *make* of subjective necessity and *force* (of real necessity), as in the sentences A and B:

- A. The rain made Mary go inside.
B. The rain forced Mary to go inside.

Mutatis mutandis, what applies to coercion applies also to necessity. Sentence A implies that when it started to rain, Mary thought: "I have to go inside," whereas sentence B implies more: that Mary really "had to" go inside. Furthermore, B implies that Mary would not have gone inside had it not started to rain, whereas A suggests, rather, that Mary would not have gone inside if she had not thought "I have to do it." Finally, sentence B clearly implies that Mary did not want to go inside and that as she was doing it, she thought "I don't want to do it," whereas sentence A implies that Mary thought "I have to do it," rather than "I don't want to do it."

4.10. A Mishap Blamed on an Object or Event

Moving now to sentences where an event (rather than a person) makes something happen to someone, we will note, first of all, a type that appears to be parallel to the "making-something-happen-to-someone" type discussed earlier: Just as one can say "He made me fall over," one can also say "It made me fall over," where "it" can refer to an event involving the causee, or to a thing whose presence in a place is linked with an event involving the causee. Typically, what happens to the causee is seen as due either to a local event (as in sentence 1) or to a "bodily" event (as in sentence 2):

1. The box falling off the shelf hit my head and made me fall off the ladder.
2. The sudden drop of the sugar level in her blood made her faint.

In sentences of this kind, the causal link holds between something that happened to a person (usually, to this person's body) and something else that happened to the same person. The second event always appears to be not only unexpected but also undesirable (bad). I propose, then, the following explication for this type of sentence:

- Something (X) made Z happen to person Y.* =
- a. something (X) happened to person Y
 - b. because of this something bad (Z) happened to Y
 - c. Z wouldn't have happened to Y
if X had not happened to Y

As in the case discussed earlier, when the responsibility for a mishap was blamed on a person (e.g., "You made me fall"), the same question also arises here: Was the event really bad (for the person involved) or was it merely unwanted? But the same considerations that point to "bad" rather than "unwanted" in the "personal blame" sentences apply to the type we are discussing now. For example, if the rug made me trip over it, it is hardly necessary to point out that I did NOT want to trip over it (in fact, the very meaning of the verb *trip over* excludes the possibility of the event being "wanted"). The interpretation that says that "something bad" happened to the causee does not run into any such difficulties; and of course something bad does not have to be interpreted as "something tragic": It can refer to a minor mishap, or to a minor misfortune, too.

For the time being at least, then, I stand by the explications sketched earlier. Apparent counterexamples do come to mind, but, as I discuss in the next section, they may be more apparent than real.

4.11. If I Do Something, It Will Make Me VERB ADJ

The claim, or hypothesis, that *make happen* sentences imply some negative consequences for the causee appears to run into difficulties in the case of sentences such as "Spinach will make you grow big and strong," where no negative consequences are envisaged and yet, the same structural pattern appears to be met. Similarly, in Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland*, Alice often encounters various magical objects that make her grow large or small, by no means always to her disadvantage. Two examples are:

I do hope it'll make me grow large again, for really I'm quite tired of being such a tiny little thing. (pp. 40–41)

. . . [I]f it makes me grow larger, I can reach the key; and if it makes me grow smaller, I can creep under the door; so either way I'll get into the garden, and I don't care which happens! (p. 12)

In these sentences, what happens to Alice is not only not seen as bad but can in fact be seen as good. So how can such sentences be reconciled with the claim that *make happen* sentences with an inanimate causee always imply some negative consequences? The solution would seem to be straightforward: Why not simply abandon the element "bad" in the proposed explication?

For sentences such as those referring to Alice, this would work; but are these sentences really of the same type as sentences such as "It made me fall"? I suggest they are not. The crucial difference is that in Alice's case, what happens to the causee happens because she herself had done something (eaten a magic cake; drunk from a magic bottle), whereas in the case of "It made me fall" sentences, what happens to the causee happens because of something that has happened in the place where the causee was, not because of something that the causee has done.

It would not help, therefore, to simply remove the element "bad" in the explication proposed for *make happen* sentences, along the following lines:

- a. something (X) happened (in place P? to person Y?)
- b. because of this something (Z) happened to person Y
- c. Z wouldn't have happened to Y if X had not happened

As it stands, the formula is unsatisfactory, for if component (a) is formulated simply as "something happened in this place," then the formula doesn't fit sentences referring to Alice, which do not refer to any local event but to something that Alice herself does. If it is formulated as "something happened to person Y," this doesn't fit sentences about Alice either, for the same reason. If, on the other hand, this component were to be formulated as "person Y did something," this would fit the sentences about Alice but would exclude sentences such as "It made me fall."

As far as I can see, the only solution to such difficulties is to treat the two types separately and to phrase the first component as "something happened in this place" for the "it made me fall" type, and as "person Y did something" for the Alice type sentences. Once we have made this move, however, the question of implied negative consequences solves itself too: A reference to bad consequences is appropriate for the first type but not for the second type. For the Alice type sentences, then, we can propose (as a first approximation) the following explication:

person Y did something to thing X (a cake, some drink)
because of this something (Z) happened to this person
Z wouldn't have happened to Y if Y had not done this

Here, too, a thing (X) is presented, so to speak, as a cause of the event involving the causee, but in this case, the causal link includes an action of the causee (an action that also involves the causer).

In support of this distinction between the two types, I would point out that the *do happen* sentences also have a formal characteristic of their own: Almost invariably, they include a predicative adjective, which specifies the result of the caused event. For example, of the following two sentences A and B, A is generally judged to sound better than B:

- A. Spinach will make you grow big and strong!
- B. ?Spinach will make you grow!

In the sentences about Alice, too, magical objects are said to make her "grow taller" or "grow large" rather than simply "grow."

In fact, there seems to be a close semantic, as well as a formal, relation between the *do happen* sentences under discussion and purely adjectival *make* sentences such as the following ones: "Spinach will make you big and strong!"

Formally, sentences of this type can be represented as follows:

$NP^1_{Nonhuman} \text{ made } NP^2_{Human} \text{ ADJ}$

Two more examples (from *Alice in Wonderland*) include:

They looked so good, that it made Alice quite hungry to look at them. (p. 148)

Maybe it's always pepper that makes people hot-tempered . . . , and vinegar that makes them sour—and camomile that makes them bitter—and—barley sugar and such things that make children sweet-tempered. (pp. 119–120)

On the face of it, a verb referring to the causee's action may be either present (as in 1) or absent (as in 2), but semantically it is always there. For example, sentence 2 makes sense on the assumption that people eat and drink the substances mentioned as causes of the resulting states. In fact, in this case, no separate explication appears to be needed and the "make grow big and strong" type can indeed be collapsed with the "make big and strong" type in a single formula:

$NP^1_{Nonhuman} \text{ made } NP^2_{Human} (\text{VERB}) \text{ ADJ}$

Whether a verb is present or absent, the same explication (proposed earlier) seems to apply. But because sentences of this kind normally specify a resulting state, one further component (d) appears to be in order:

Something (X) made person Y be like this [ADJ]. =

- a. person Y did something to thing X
- b. because of this something (Z) happened to this person
- c. Z wouldn't have happened to Y if Y had not done this
- d. after this Y was like this [ADJ]

4.12. Local Events With Unexpected Outcomes

Let us also consider briefly sentences referring to various local phenomena such as the following ones (A and B from Chappell, 1978):

- A. The storm made all the flowers fall.
- B. The wind made the door blow open.
- C. The tremor made the tower collapse.

From a formal point of view, the pattern under discussion can be described as follows:

$NP^1_{Nonhuman} \text{ made } NP^2_{Human} \text{ VERB}_{Happen}$

The question is what exactly are the semantic implications of this construction.

To start with a cautious explication that would include only more secure components, we could propose the following:

- a. something (X) happened in place P
- b. because of this something (Z) happened to some things (Y) in this place
- c. Z wouldn't have happened to Y if X had not happened in this place

There are reasons to think, however, that such a broad explication would not be sufficient to account correctly for the construction's range of use. In particular, compare the following two sentences:

- A. The wind made the door blow open.
- B. The wind made the door blow shut.

All my respondents agree that of the two, sentence A sounds better; and the reason seems to be that for doors, being shut is seen as a normal state, whether the *make* construction implies that something unusual and probably undesirable has happened.

To account for this widely shared intuition, we need to add a component to the explication. The question is: How should this missing component be phrased?

One possibility is to say that what is missing is a reference to "something BAD happening": if a storm makes all the flowers fall, or if a tremor makes a tower collapse, then surely this can be seen as bad; and even if a wind makes a door blow open, this, too, can be seen as bad (for normally, the desired state of a door is to be shut).

But some difficulties remain. In particular, my respondents tend to agree that the following sentence is quite acceptable: "The recent rains have made everything bloom." If we want to accommodate this sentence in the same explication as the earlier ones, we would have to abandon the putative reference to something bad happening, and perhaps try to pursue a different lead: The event in question has to be seen as unexpected. This leads us to the following tentative explication:

Something (X) made something (Z) happen in a place. =

- a. something (X) happened in place P
- b. because of this something (Z) happened
to some things (Y) in this place
- c. Z wouldn't have happened to Y if X had not happened in this place
- d. before it happened, people could think that this would not happen

Another possibility would be to consider positing two distinct types, one referring to local events causing "bad things to happen to some things in this place," and another, to local events causing the whole place to look different (as in the sentence "The recent rains have made everything bloom"). At the moment, however, I favor the possibility that allows us not to split the type under discussion into two types, and that presents the outcome as simply unusual or unexpected ("before this happened, people could think that this would not happen"). If, after heavy rains, everything blooms and the whole place looks different, this is unusual, unexpected—more so than if, say, a storm "kills" a single rosebush or lemon tree. It is the unexpectedness, then, rather than anything else that seems to be the crucial factor in this type of *make* sentence.

4.13. Making Something Happen to Various Things

One can "break" a dish and one can also "make it break"; and although normally one "opens" a door, in the case of an automatic door one can also "make it open":

- A. John opened the door.
- B. John made the library door open by standing in front of it and thus activating the photo-mechanism.

What is the difference? Or what are the differences? One difference, I suggest, has to do with the nature of the link between the causer and the causee: Lexical causatives imply that the causer does something TO the causee and that because of this, at the same time something happens to the causee, and that there is a describable outcome:

person X did something to thing Y
because of this at the same time something happened to Y
because of this after this Y was Z

Make causatives (of the type under discussion) imply that the causer does something but not TO the causee. The action may be intentional (as in the case of a person who makes the library door open by deliberately standing in front of it) or accidental (as in the case of a dog who makes an alarm system go off by jumping in front of a sensor). In either case, however, the result can be seen as unexpected—presumably because the agent does not do anything TO the object in question. This leads us to the following explication:

Person X made Z happen to thing Y (e.g., open, go off)

- a. X did something
- b. because of this something (Z) happened to thing Y
- c. Z wouldn't have happened to Y if X had not done this
- d. X didn't do anything to Y
- e. because of this people could think that Z would not happen to Y

The kind of situation described in the formula is unusual, for normally if something happens to an object because a person has done something (and only for this reason), it can be assumed that the person has done something TO that object. For this reason, sentences like the following one are usually regarded as odd:

?John made the dish break (by placing it on a hotplate)

For if John placed the dish on a hotplate, it can hardly be said that John didn't do anything TO the dish; and if the clause in parentheses is omitted, the sentence is still odd, because it is unclear how John could bear total responsibility for the fact that the dish broke if he has not done anything to it. I say "total responsibility" advisedly, for the *make* construction implies not only a causal link but also a counterfactual link: If John forgets to put a dish away, and then the dish breaks, John could still be held responsible, but one could not say that John made the dish break.

In the case of automatic or semiautomatic devices, however, the formula is applicable: Even if John doesn't do anything to the library door, he can still make it open because his standing in front of it, which activates a photo-mechanism, can be seen as the only reason why the door opens.

5. CAUSATION IN GRAMMAR: TOWARD A SEMANTIC TYPOLOGY OF GRAMMATICAL SYSTEMS

It is generally recognized that languages differ in the amount—and kind—of attention they give to different aspects of reality through their lexical systems: Arabic has numerous words for sand, Southeast Asian languages for rice, and so on. But the idea that languages differ in the amount—and kind—of attention they give to abstract ideas and relations such as causation, time, or human emotions, has seldom been seriously explored. Yet it seems obvious that although cross-linguistic divergences in this latter respect are harder to investigate, their significance is probably far greater than that of more visible differences in the area of concrete lexicon (and in particular, of the vocabulary concerned with environmental features).

In the area of causation, divergencies between different languages are very considerable and very intriguing. At the one extreme, there appear to be languages with hardly any causative constructions at all (apart from purely purposive constructions). Evans (1986) argued that the Australian Aboriginal language Kayardild may be a case in point. At the other extreme, there are languages such as English, with a wide range of causative constructions, especially in the area of human interaction: various *make* causatives, *have* causatives, *get* causatives, *let* causatives, and so on. Between these two poles, there is a wide range of variation—both in the amount of attention given to causal relations and in the kind of qualitative distinctions drawn by different languages.

The observation that among the European languages, English shows the greatest differentiation in the area of causation—more so than French, Italian, or Russian—is entirely in line with Bally's (1920) semantic typology

of European languages, advanced in his pioneering early study, "*Impressionisme et Grammaire*." Bally contrasted two "psychological tendencies" manifested in the syntax of different languages: an "impressionistic" one, focusing on phenomena as they present themselves to human beings, and an analytical one, focusing on the presumed relations between causes and effects. He argued that the impressionistic, phenomenological orientation is more in evidence in Russian than it is in German, more in German than it is in French, and more in French than it is in English, and that conversely, the analytical, causal orientation is more in evidence in English than it is in French, more in French than in German, and more in German than in Russian.

In my earlier work (cf. Wierzbicka, 1988, 1992, 1995), I tried to complement Bally's observations by showing that Russian syntax pays more attention to accidental, inexplicable causation, to the interplay between human life and the forces of nature, and to the interplay between volition and emotion than does English syntax (with German, Italian, and French occupying intermediate positions in this regard); and that the high degree of attention that the English language gives to causal relations focuses in particular on kinds and shades of human interaction.

But to be able to compare meanings encoded in both the lexicon and the grammar of different languages, we need a suitable methodology, and this includes a coherent semantic theory. Otherwise, the study of syntax degenerates into a domain where people play more or less ingenious games with formalisms and remain oblivious to meanings that motivate formal differences in the first place and that make meaningful comparisons of syntactic constructions in different languages possible.

Let me present one (quite typical) example. A recent study of causatives, included in the prestigious volume *Syntax: An International Handbook of Contemporary Research* (Saebø, 1993, pp. 935–936) discusses the two English sentences:

1. The band caused Max to leave the concert.
2. The guard forced Max to leave the concert.

Having duly assigned to these sentences two different trees and two different logical formulae, the author offers the following astonishing comment:

In terms of pure meaning, the sole difference between *cause* and *force* is that the latter adds a relation between the two NPs (*the band/guard* and *Max*), i.e., the second (*Max*) enters into the cause proposition as an argument of a predicate not entirely indeterminate. (p. 935)

I agree that the syntactic structure of these two sentences is different, and that the two trees drawn by Saebø are one way of representing this differ-

ence. Whether the two added “meaning postulates,” that according to Saebø satisfactorily capture the difference between the two sentences are helpful and necessary, is perhaps a matter of opinion. They look as follows (p. 936):

- (iii) $\wedge x \wedge y \wedge P\Box[\delta(P)(y)(x) \leftrightarrow \alpha(P(y))(x)]$ (a. c. i)
- (iv) $\wedge x \wedge y \wedge P\Box[\delta(P)(y)(x) \rightarrow \alpha(P(y))(y)(x) \wedge \beta(y)]$ (control)

But how can anyone claim that the sole difference in meaning between *cause* and *force* is that the latter “adds a relation between the two NPs (*the band/guard* and *Max*)”?

Doesn’t sentence 2 imply that Max *didn’t want* to leave the concert, that the guard *wanted* Max to leave the concert, that the guard *did something to Max because of this*, and that Max *had to* leave the concert *because of this*? Doesn’t sentence 1 imply that the band *didn’t do anything to Max*? And doesn’t the fact that there is a syntactic relation between *the guard* and *Max* in sentence 2 have anything to do with the fact that the guard *DID SOMETHING TO Max* (whereas the band *didn’t*)?

A syntactic analysis that pays as little attention to meaning as Saebø’s is not only semantically, but also syntactically weak and has little predictive power. For example, it fails to account for the fact that in the two pairs of sentences that follow, the A sentences are acceptable whereas the B sentences are not:

- 3. A. The guard caused Max to die.
B. ?The guard forced Max to die.
- 4. A. The noise caused the crystal chandelier to shatter.
B. ?The noise forced the crystal chandelier to shatter.

To be able to account for such differences in acceptability, we must pay attention to distinctions like those between “human” and “inanimate” nouns, or “action verbs” and “event verbs.” We must also pay attention to the differences in meaning between different causative verbs like *to cause*, *to force*, *to make*, *to get*, *to let*, and so on—and to the complex interplay between different relevant factors (the category to which the causer belongs, the category to which the causee belongs, the category to which the predicate of the complement clause belongs, the causative verb chosen in a given sentence, and so on).

As the present chapter illustrates, all this can be done, and if it is done the resulting formulae can have full predictive power. To achieve such predictive power, we do not need any formidable technical formalisms.

Nor do we need to endlessly concern ourselves with the “perennially contested issue [of] how (or even if) syntax can be combined with semantics” (Goddard, 1997b, p. 197). Rather, as Goddard argues forcefully, what we need is an analytical framework in which syntax and lexical semantics are integrated from the very beginning.

The overall picture produced by an analysis that pays attention to all the relevant factors is, admittedly, complex and intricate—much more so than one that operates only with tree diagrams and other similar formalisms; but it is, I believe, the only kind of analysis that can achieve descriptive adequacy and explanatory power. It is language itself that is immensely complex. At the same time, if we allow that all languages may have a relatively simple irreducible core, we can use this irreducible core of all languages as a basis for an understanding of the immensely complex and diverse systems that all human languages are.

Syntactic typology that deliberately closes its eyes to the semantic dimensions of formal diversity of languages is, ultimately, sterile and unilluminating. Opening typology to semantics may involve difficulties, but rather than avoiding them, it is surely more fruitful to sharpen our analytical tools and to develop safeguards of various kinds. Above all, we need a semantic metalanguage for a cross-cultural comparison of meanings, whether they are encoded in the lexicon or in grammar. As, I hope, this chapter illustrates, the “Natural Semantic Metalanguage” based on empirically established universal concepts can meet this need.

NOTES

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2. A spectacular recent example of an analysis which seeks to “explain” something simple and clear with something complex and obscure is provided by Bouchard (1995, p. 123), who analyses the French sentence *Max vient de Paris* (Max comes from Paris) as “Max is oriented towards his being of the deictic center, with the tail end of the orientation being in Paris” (for discussion, see Peeters, 1997).
3. The symbols “*” and “?” preceding examples are linguistic conventions which indicate that the example is either unacceptable (“*”) or questionable (“?”).

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