

110. Periphrastic Causative Constructions

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1. Defining periphrastic causative constructions

The causative construction is a linguistic expression which denotes a complex situation consisting of two component events (Comrie 1989: 165–166; Song 2001: 256–259): (i) the **causing event**, in which the **causer** does or initiates something; and (ii) the **caused event**, in which the **causee** carries out an action, or undergoes a change of condition or state as a result of the causer's action. The following sentence in Kinyarwanda (Bantu; Central East Africa) is such a linguistic expression.

- (1) Kinyarwanda (Kimenyi 1980: 162)
- | | | |
|--------------------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| <i>umukoôbwa</i> | <i>y-a-tum-ye</i> | <i>n-á-andik-a</i> |
| girl | she-PST-cause-ASP | I-PST-write-ASP |
| <i>amábárúwa meênshi</i> | | |
| letters | many | |
- 'The girl caused me to write many letters.'

In (1), the causer (*the girl*) did something, and as a result of that action the causee (*me*) in turn carried out the action of writing many letters. Map 110 shows the geographical distribution of periphrastic causative constructions (also known as syntactic or analytic causative constructions in the literature).

Periphrastic causative constructions are causative expressions with the following three properties. First, the expression of the causer's action (or the **predicate of cause**) and the expression of the causee's action or change of condition or state (or the **predicate of effect**) must be in different clauses, as in (1). To put it differently, causative expressions, for the purposes of the map, must be **biclausal**. (The notion of

biclausality being a continuum, however, the causative construction in one language (as in (5)) may be less biclausal than in another language (as in (1)); for further discussion, see Song 1996.) Second, the causer noun phrase and the predicate of cause (e.g. *umukoôbwa y-a-tum-ye* in (1)) must be “foregrounded”, with the causee noun phrase and the predicate of effect (e.g. *n-á-andik-a* in (1)) “backgrounded”. In (1), this is achieved by placing the clause expressing the causing event before the clause expressing the caused event. If one of the two clauses is embedded in the other, the foregrounding of the causer noun phrase and the predicate of cause is achieved by putting these two expressions in grammatically more “prominent” positions in the sentence than the causee noun phrase and the predicate of effect, as in (7) below. In (7), the causer noun phrase is the subject of the whole causative sentence, and the predicate of cause appears in the main clause of that sentence. In contrast, the causee noun phrase appears in a non-subject position, and the predicate of effect is included in the nominalized (subordinate) clause. Third, the expression of the causer’s action should be without specific meaning. In (1), for example, the predicate of cause *-tum-*, as opposed to the predicate of effect *-andik-*, lacks specific meaning; all that is expressed by the predicate of cause, *-tum-*, is the pure notion of causation.

Causative expressions such as (2), taken from Turkish, thus fall outside the purview of this map (but are the topic of chapter 111).

(2) Turkish

Ali-Ø Hasan-ı öl-dür-dü.
 Ali-SUBJ Hasan-DOBJ die-CAUS-PST
 ‘Ali killed Hasan.’

In (2), the causer noun phrase, as opposed to the causee noun phrase, occupies the subject position; moreover, the expression

of the causer's action — the causative suffix *-dür* — is without specific meaning. However, the question as to whether the predicate of cause is foregrounded in (2) does not arise at all, because there is only one predicate. In (2), the expression of the causer's action and the expression of the causee's change of state are both contained in one and the same predicate (or one and the same verb in this case). In other words, (2) is a **monoclausal** causative expression.

Biclausal causative expressions such as (3), taken from Spanish, are also not considered for the purposes of the present map.

(3) Spanish

<i>Pedro</i>	<i>lo</i>	<i>hizo</i>	<i>porque</i>	<i>Carmen</i>	<i>vino</i>
Pedro	it	do.3SG.PST	because	Carmen	came
<i>a</i>	<i>la</i>	<i>clase.</i>			
to	the	class			

'Pedro did it because Carmen came to the class.'

In (3), the causer noun phrase — if Carmen is regarded as the causer — is part of the subordinate clause, whereas the causee noun phrase — again, if Pedro is regarded as the causee — is part of the main clause. Moreover, the predicate of cause appears in the subordinate clause, while the predicate of effect appears in the main clause. To put it differently, the causer noun phrase and the predicate of cause are both placed in grammatically less prominent positions, with the causee noun phrase and the predicate of effect appearing in grammatically more prominent positions. Also note that the expression of the causer's action *vino* has a specific lexical content.

2. Defining the values

As indicated in the feature–value box, there are two types of periphrastic causative construction: the sequential type and the

purposive type. The logically possible value of “no sequential type or purposive type” (i.e. lack of periphrastic causative constructions) is not listed in the feature–value box, because all languages seem to have some periphrastic means of expressing causation, and no languages have been satisfactorily described as completely lacking periphrastic causative constructions (see also below). Thus only three values are represented on the map:

@ 1. Sequential type but no purposive type	35
@ 2. Purposive type but no sequential type	68
@ 3. Both sequential type and purposive type	15
total	118

As has already been noted, the periphrastic causative construction is biclausal in that the predicate of cause and the predicate of effect occur in different clauses. In the **sequential type**, the clause of cause and that of effect are juxtaposed strictly in that order, with or without a linking element between them. In other words, the first clause denotes the causing event and the second clause the caused event (hence the term sequential).

The Kinyarwanda causative in (1) is an example of the sequential type, without use of a linking element. Kobon (Madang, Trans–New Guinea; Papua New Guinea) is another good example of this type.

(4) Kobon (Davies 1981: 165)

nipe g-aj-ip yad mab rɨb-pin
 3SG do-DUR-PST.3SG 1SG tree cut-PFV.1SG
 ‘He made me cut the tree.’

The sequential type with use of a linking element is exemplified by Amele (Madang; Papua New Guinea). Note that the linking element used in (5) is a so-called switch reference affix *-ce-*

(see Song 1996: 35–49 for further exemplification of the sequential type).

- (5) Amele (Roberts 1987: 222)

ija od-ude-ce-min na qete-i-a
 1SG do-3SG-SR-1SG tree cut-3SG-TOD.PST
 ‘I made him cut the tree.’

The **purposive type** also involves two clauses, one representing an event carried out for the purpose of realizing another event denoted by the other clause (hence the term purposive). The sense of purpose or goal present in this subtype can be signaled by (i) verbal markings such as future tense, irrealis, subjunctive mood, incompletive aspect, etc., (ii) dative, allative, or purposive case markers or (iii) purposive particles.

Swahili (Niger–Congo) is an example of the purposive type. In the causative sentence in (6), the predicate of effect, which must appear in subjunctive mood, stands in contrast with the predicate of cause in the past tense. In other words, the subjunctive mood marking is utilized here to engender the sense of purpose or goal.

- (6) Swahili (Vitale 1981: 153)

Ahmed a-li-m-fanya mbwa a-l-e
 Ahmed he-PST-him-make dog he-eat-SBJV
samaki mkubwa
 fish large
 ‘Ahmed made the dog eat a large fish.’

In other languages of the purposive type, case markers such as dative, allative, purposive and the like may be utilized to signal the sense of purpose or goal. Basque is such a language.

- (7) Basque (Saltarelli et al. 1988: 221)

Mikel-ek Jon Edurne-ri liburu-a
 Mikel-ERG Jon(ABS) Edurne-DAT book-SG.ABS
eros-te-ra behar-tu z-u-en
 buy-NMLZ-ALL make-PFV 3SG.ERG-AUX-PST
 ‘Mikel made Jon buy a book for Edurne.’

Note that in (7) the nominalized (subordinate) clause of effect as a whole is “flagged” by the allative case marker *-ra* (cf. *parke-ra* ‘to the park’). The purposive type of causative construction in Modern Greek relies on a subjunctive particle (i.e. *na*) to signal the sense of purpose or goal, as in (8) (see Song 1996: 49–67 for further exemplification of the purposive type).

- (8) Modern Greek (Joseph and Philippaki-Warburton 1987: 171)

ékan-a ton jáni na fíj-i
 made-1SG.ACTIVE the John.ACC SBJV leave-3SG
 ‘I made John leave.’

When reading Map 110 in conjunction with Map 111, readers will notice that many of the languages appearing on the latter are not represented on the former. As mentioned also in the companion chapter, this is largely because the primary sources for these languages discuss only the nonperiphrastic causative construction without even indicating whether or not a periphrastic causative construction is in use as well. (This explains why Map 111 displays more languages than Map 110 does.) Moreover, it is well known that the morphological process involved in the nonperiphrastic causative is rarely completely productive (e.g. Nedjalkov and Silnitsky 1973; Song 1996: 170–172). In view of this, it is very likely that most of the languages shown as employing only the nonperiphrastic causative may also have other means of expressing causation, i.e. the periphrastic causative construction. These points are worth bearing in mind when interpreting the two maps together. Still, a good number

of languages are identified on the maps as making use of either the sequential type or the purposive type (or even both) in addition to the nonperiphrastic causative.

3. Geographical distribution

As noted in section 2, there are gaps in the database concerning use of the periphrastic causative construction. Thus it may seem somewhat premature to make comments on geographical patterns of the sequential and purposive types. Nonetheless, a few tentative observations can be made.

In the eastern part of Africa stretching from Ethiopia to South Africa (including Afro-Asiatic, Nilo-Saharan, and Niger-Congo languages), the purposive type is much more common than the sequential type. In the western part of Africa (again including Afro-Asiatic, Nilo-Saharan and Niger-Congo languages), on the other hand, the sequential type seems to be the dominant type, although there are exceptions, namely Koyraboro Senni, Supyire, Vai and Yoruba. Three of these exceptions also make use of the sequential type, however.

In a vast area covering Europe, the Caucasus and the Middle East, and extending almost into Central Asia, the purposive type predominates over the sequential type. The dominance of the purposive type in this area may possibly link with the predominance seen in the eastern part of Africa.

In India and Southeast Asia taken together, the purposive type is the predominant type in the west, with the sequential type being more common in the east. What remains to be determined — once more data become available — is whether the western half of this combined area may ultimately meet the vast area alluded to earlier, that is, Europe, the Caucasus, the Middle East, and the eastern part of Africa, all of which display a strong preference for the purposive type over the sequential type.

In Australia, the purposive type is clearly the dominant type, the only exponent of the sequential type being Diyari, spoken in South Australia. In New Guinea, on the other hand, the sequential type seems to prevail over the purposive type, although there are many gaps in the data. The sequential type in New Guinea also seems to extend eastwards and westwards, although Oceania has its own share of the purposive type.

There are too many gaps in the data to be able to make suggestions about the geographical distribution of the sequential and purposive types in North and South America, although one may venture to say that there is a concentration of purposive-type languages from the bottom of North America to the top of South America.

There are a small number of languages with both the sequential type and the purposive type. Indo-China (Khmer, Thai and Vietnamese) and the western part of Africa (Koyraboro Senni, Supyire and Yoruba) may contain potential clusters of such languages, but more data are required to confirm these clusters.

4. Theoretical issues

For the past three decades or so, the causative construction has been a recurrent research topic in linguistics. Most research has focused on the nonperiphrastic causative construction with respect to the grammatical relation of the causee noun phrase, and on the causative as a valency or grammatical relation-changing operation (Comrie 1976b and Dixon 2000; also see Song 1996: ch. 6). Thus it is not inaccurate to say that previous theories of causative constructions have dealt mainly with the nonperiphrastic causative construction, as a result of which the variety of the periphrastic causative construction has been understated. Song (1996) can be regarded as an attempt to redress the balance, as it were, by highlighting and documenting

the rich crosslinguistic variation of the periphrastic causative construction.