

On indirect causativisation in Hungarian and the indispensability of an active lexicon

The aim of this talk is to highlight a number of similarities between Hindi/Urdu and Hungarian with respect to (especially indirect) causativisation, and show that a strong case can be made against Ramchand's account of this phenomenon, as well as her first phase syntax in general, based on these similarities taken together with a number of significant differences between the two languages.

1. Properties of Hindi/Urdu causatives

Ramchand (2008, ch. 6) presents a detailed case study of Hindi/Urdu morphological causativisation in the context of her theory of first phase syntax. She distinguishes two major productive causativisation processes in that language (in addition to a non-productive set of base transitive verbs). Both can derive a transitive verb from an intransitive or from a transitive base:

1. The first type employs the suffix *-aa*, e.g. *sar-* 'rot (intr.)' vs. *sar-aa-* 'rot (tr.)', *ur-* 'fly (intr.)' vs. *ur-aa-* 'fly (tr.)'; *samajh-* 'understand (tr.)' vs. *samajh-aa-* 'explain (ditr.)'.
2. Derived verbs of the second type are formed by the suffix *-vaa*, e.g. *ban-* 'be made (intr.)' vs. *ban-vaa-* 'have sth. made', *hās-* 'laugh' vs. *hās-vaa-* 'have so. laugh'.

Both suffixes can attach to the same base, i.e. pairs such as the following are common: *parh-aa-* 'teach' vs. *parh-vaa-* 'have so. study' (both derived from *parh* 'read'); *kaat-aa-* vs. *kaat-vaa-* 'have so. cut sth.' (from *kaat-* 'cut (intr.)'); *ubal-aa-* vs. *ubal-vaa-* 'boil (tr.)' (from *ubal-* 'boil (intr.)'). Although there are cases where the verbs making up such pairs have very similar meanings, there is generally an important semantic difference between the first type (and base transitives) on the one hand, and type 2 on the other. The former forms express direct causation (a process leading to the result state or process expressed by the root), whereas the latter express what Ramchand terms 'indirect causation': a situation in which an animate and sentient entity *x* compels a second entity *y* (the so-called 'intermediate agent') to actively carry out some action *P*, or in other words, *x* makes *y* do *P*.¹ Hindi/Urdu indirect causation shares some conspicuous features with Hungarian *műveltetés* (cf. Komlósy, 2000) not only in terms of its semantic interpretation and its productivity, but also in other respects: the intermediate agent is not an obligatory argument in either language, but it can be systematically expressed by an adjunct carrying instrumental case; the causer must be animate and can never be some abstract or inanimate cause, unlike the subject of direct causatives; and, as opposed to Japanese for instance, indirect causation is monoclausal in both languages, i.e. it does not introduce a subordinating syntactic structure (as shown by Horvath and Siloni, 2009).

2. Ramchand's analysis

Ramchand challenges the position that indirect causation in Hindi/Urdu involves a second (outer) level of causation that is added to a base causative semantic structure. She assumes that recursion of the causative head is impossible in the decomposition structure she posits for verb phrases (i.e. there can be only one instance of initiator phrase) in case the causativisation phenomenon in question is lexical (monoclausal). Furthermore, she notes that there is no morphological or syntactic evidence in this language for such recursion. Accordingly, both types of causative can be described using a single "first phase" syntactic structure.

Her analysis of *-aa* and *-vaa* causatives can be summarised, in a nutshell, as follows. What was traditionally seen as the VP is split up by Ramchand into three functional projections: *initP* (the projection of the causative head, akin to *vP*), *procP* (the projection of the process head, which houses the dynamic subevent expressed by the verb) and *resP* (the projection of the result head). The lexical entry of a verb can be associated with any or all of these heads. On the other hand, these heads can also be instantiated by words that are combined with the verb (e.g. verbal prefixes or particles can be heads of a *resP* added to an otherwise non-resultative verb root) or by derivational affixes. Ramchand's assumption is that the *-aa* suffix is merged as an *init* head, whereas the verb root remains associated with the process and the result head. The subject of the causative verb is merged as the specifier of *initP*, whereas the specifier of *procP* (i.e. the subject of the base verb) and that of *resP* (the underlying object) appear as objects of the derived verb. As for *-vaa*, Ramchand regards its *-aa* element as identical to the suffix appearing in direct causatives, i.e. an *init* head. The *-v* element, in turn, is analysed as a *proc* head, which means that the verb root can only be associated with the *res* head (regardless of whether the verb is telic or not). The subject (causer) occupies the specifier positions of both *initP* and *procP*, this dual character giving rise to the animate agent requirement mentioned above. The surface direct object of the

¹ A note on terminology: The terms direct vs. indirect causative refer to the subject's relation to the change of state that is caused. In case of direct causation, the subject directly causes that change, whereas in indirect causation the subject directly affects an intermediate agent who, in turn, does something that causes the change. Thus in the latter case the relation between the causative verb's subject and the change of state is indirect in the sense that it is mediated by the intermediate agent. Importantly, the term 'indirect causative' as such does not entail any commitment with respect to the direct or indirect nature of the relation between the subject and the intermediate agent, or of the intermediate agent's action and the change of state.

causative verb is the specifier of resP, i.e. the argument about which the verb root predicates some result state. The *-vaa* verb is interpreted as expressing indirect causation because all three functional heads of the first phase are associated with different lexical items, which implies that the subevents in question are temporally independent of each other. The intermediate agent adjunct carrying instrumental case does not occupy an argument position in the first phase, but is instead licensed by the underassociated proc feature of the verb root. Ramchand's theory posits rather strong restrictions with respect to the maximum possible complexity of the split VP. She only allows for 3 predicate positions (the init, proc and res heads) and at most 4 argument positions (the specifiers of the respective projections plus a single rheme/complement). This already poses a problem for Ramchand in connection with the analysis of Hindi/Urdu indirect causation. Since she can only distinguish between the two causative suffixes by claiming that *-vaa* occupies both the init and the proc head, she is forced to propose a hypothesis that is at the very least superficially unappealing: She has to associate the verb root with the only position remaining, the res head, which she also claims (elsewhere) to be the locus of resultative secondary predicates and inherently telic verb roots in English. Since some of the verbs that can serve as the base of *-vaa* causativisation are atelic, this constitutes a serious contradiction that must be dealt with.

3. Some problems posed by indirect causativisation in Hungarian

We will argue that very similar problems arise for Ramchand's system in connection with Hungarian indirect causatives, but in this case the system is fundamentally unable to account for the data.

1. Let us assume with Ramchand that the indirect causativising suffix *-(t)at/-(t)et* has to occupy init and proc at the same time. This is necessary for two reasons: to account for the difference between direct and indirect causation (the former is just init, the latter init and proc) and to account for the animate agent requirement (the difference between a general cause and an animate agent is accounted for by attributing the latter interpretation to an argument that is spec of init and spec of proc at the same time). This only leaves res for the Hungarian verb root. However, this conclusion collides with several further assumptions of Ramchand's theory. Firstly, indirect causatives in Hungarian can be combined with a perfectivising preverb or a resultative secondary predicate, e.g. *le-mázoltatja a falat* 'have the wall painted-resultative', *a tanár rongyossá olvastatta a gyerekekkel a könyvet* 'the teacher made the children read the book to scraps'. Since such morphemes or phrases (or an empty dummy predicate they modify as complement) are also located in the res head according to Ramchand (2008, chs. 5.3, 5.5), this leaves two morphemes for the same position, i.e. the theory incorrectly rules out such structures. Secondly, indirect causatives can be modified by directional PPs (e.g. *Józsi a garázs felé tolatta az autót Zolival* 'Józsi made Zoli push the car towards the garage'), although these can supposedly only be combined with a proc head (cf. op. cit. ch. 5.1). Accordingly, *tol* should be analysed as a proc head instead of a res head.

Thus we show indirectly that the causative morpheme cannot be init and proc in Hungarian. Since Ramchand's analysis was primarily based on semantic arguments that should equally apply to Hungarian, but lead to patently incorrect predictions for this language, the analysis can be assumed to be inadequate for Hindi/Urdu as well.

2. The number of available head positions turns out to be too small at the other end of the split VP as well: Hungarian allows combination of the indirect causative morpheme with a base verb containing a direct causative morpheme, e.g. *Miklós megjav-ít-tat-ta a szerelővel a kocsit* 'Miklós had (indir. caus.) the car repaired (dir. caus.) by the mechanic', as well as recursion of the indirect causative morpheme, e.g. *az igazgató kítakarít-tat-tat-ta (? a tanárok által) (a gyerekekkel) az iskolát* 'the director had someone (? the teachers) have (the children) clean the school'. Assuming with Ramchand that the causativising morphemes merge at init, or init and proc, respectively, two instances of causativising morphemes of any kind should never co-occur (since they are associated to the same position), unless they do in a biclausal (or even multiclausal) structure, which is quite clearly not the case in Hungarian. Crucially, the verbs in question are morphologically and semantically complex but possess argument structures that are no more complex than those of morphologically simple transitive verbs. We conclude that, whereas Ramchand's tripartite split VP structure seems to capture the mapping between event and argument structure correctly, we have to reject her position that all apparently lexical processes bearing on event and argument structure are in fact syntactic in nature and can be accounted for in a distributed morphology-based first phase syntax. What is called for instead is a pre-syntactic (i.e. lexicon-internal) process of causativisation, the result of which is mapped onto a split VP structure, either on the basis of syntactic features as assumed by Ramchand, or of the verb's lexical meaning in the spirit of Borer.

References

- Horvath, Julia and Tal Siloni. 2009. Causatives across Components. Ms., Tel Aviv University.
 Komlósy, András. 2000. A műveltetés. In *Strukturális magyar nyelvtan 3. Morfológia*, ed. by Kiefer Ferenc. Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 215–292.
 Ramchand, Gillian Catriona. 2008. *Verb Meaning and the Lexicon. A First-Phase Syntax*. Cambridge: CUP.