

CAUSATIVE VERBS IN ENGLISH AND ARMENIAN  
(A GENERAL REVIEW)

Almost every language is characterized by the notion of causativity. However, in spite of great advances that have been made in this field, it still contains some problematic features in the system of the verb.

Our task is to analyze causative verbs which present rather a substantial class both in the English and Armenian languages.

To begin with, causativity is not acknowledged as a regular voice type in these languages but treated rather as a semantic category, ranking among transitivity and intransitivity. As we know, these notions are interconnected and interdependent of one another.

The traditional notional view of transitivity suggests that the effects of the action expressed by the verb pass over from the agent to the object (patient). As a result, we have two-place constructions (Lyons, John "Introduction to Theoretical Linguistics" Cambridge, 1971): He is reading a book. (the agentive subject (he)+the object (a book)).

Unlike transitivity, intransitivity implies only the subject; hence we have one-place constructions:

He works.

As far as causativity is concerned, it suggests that the action is performed by another objective agent through the inducement of the agentive subject. Here we have three-place constructions: One makes sb. do sth.

In our research we have tried to compare causative verbs in English and Armenian and point out similarities and differences concerning their status and formation.

In Armenian there is a productive grammatical rule for the formation of causative verbs: this is the morphological element - the infix *ցմ* (ացմ, եցմ), which converts both transitive and intransitive verb nuclei into causative verbs.

transitive-causative

խմել-խմեցնել

հազնել-հազցնել

սովորել-սովորեցնել

intransitive-causative

բարձրանալ-բարձրացնել

մոտենալ-մոտեցնել

նստել-նստեցնել

Besides the synthetic means Armenian causative verbs have an analytic form: the verb տալ (give) which is used after transitive verbs: գրել-գրել տալ, բերել-բերել տալ, տանել-տանել տալ

Some Armenian causatives may contain both the forms: synthetic and analytic: as Barseghian puts it, the co-called իսկական պատճառականներ (genuine proper causatives) (*Բարսեղյան Հ.Կ. «Արդի հայերենի բայի եւ խոնարհման տեսություն» Երևան, 1953*):

մոտեցնել-մոտեցնել տալ, հասցնել- հասցնել տալ

In English the formation of causative verbs is somewhat of sporadic nature. First of all we will point out lexical causatives or paradigmatic causatives, i.e. those verbs whose nuclei contain causativity as one of its semantic components (cause, make). We have chosen these verbs by means of componential analysis: to feed-make sb. eat sth; to remind-make sb. remember sth.

Here also belong transitive verbs such as **walk, march, sink, move** etc. which may be described as being derived from the corresponding intransitive verbs by means of a morphological process of zero morpheme (modification):

I am walking.

I am walking my dog. (I make my dog walk)

The second group of causatives in English is represented by morphological derivation i.e. by means of affixation; therefore they are usually called morphological causatives. Here we want to introduce some explanation. The point is that affixation is usually placed within the domain of lexicology (See Арнольд И.В. "Лексикология современного английского языка" Москва, 1973; Карацук П. М. "Словообразование английского языка" Москва, 1977).

In this research we are guided by the approach of foreign linguists, John Lyons, in particular. According to this linguist, morphology includes not only inflection, but also derivation. J. Lyons does not see much difference between the inflectional form singing, which is made up of two morphemes sing and -ing and the derivation form singer which is made up of the morphemes sing and -er. Furthermore, we find that in case of causative verbs the role of derivation is very strong functioning rather as a grammatical process than a lexical one affecting subject-object-action relations in the sentence.

So morphological causatives in English are those verbs which are formed by means of the following affixes, all having "cause" or "make" as their semantic component.

prefixes: en-, be- (added to adjectives or nouns) enlarge: make large; enslave: make a slave; belittle: cause to seem unimportant

suffixes: -en: blacken, sadden, darken (make black, sad, dark)

-ify: (added to a noun) purify, solidify, glorify (make pure, solid, glorious)

-ize: popularize: to make a lot of people know about sth; americanize: to make sb(sth) look American in character or manners (appearance)

So we see that morphological indicators of English causative verbs are greater in number than it is in case of Armenian causatives which have only one morpheme (ա,ե)ցն. But the stock of proper causatives in English are formed syntactically, by means of the verbs **cause to, make, get to, have etc. sb do sth**. Here too we must point out the difference between English and Armenian, the latter having only one verb տալ (գրել տալ).

One more divergent feature must also be mentioned: the English constructions with **make, cause**, etc commonly introduce an implication of force or coercion, whereas the corresponding Armenian constructions do not imply it (at least not so strongly).

The general survey that we have carried out shows that causative verbs in Armenian are distinguished for their regularity in reference to both their synthetic and analytic forms. This gave ground to some Armenian linguists to refer this class of verbs to a special voice type causative voice (acad.G. Jahukian, prof. H. Petrossian).

Taking the notions of transitivity and intransitivity as basis for his classification, acad. Jahukian introduces the following sets of voice types in Armenian:

1) transitivity: active- neutral- passive (ներգործական-չեզոք-կրավորական):  
մաշել-մաշեցվել

2) intransitivity: neutral-causative-passive (չեզոք-պատճառական-կրավորական):  
մոտենալ-մոտեցնել-մոտեցվել (Գ. Ջահուկյան «Ժամանակակից հայերենի տեությունը  
և իմունքները» Երևան, 1974)

Hrant Petrossian, in his "The Armenological Dictionary" singles out causative voice as a separate voice type alongside of active and passive voices (Հ.Ջ. Պետրոսյան Հայերենագիտական բառարան, Երևան, 1987). All this gives rise to considering the problem of causativity more profoundly and thoroughly not only in the Armenian, but also in the English language.

Here we would like to quote Svartvik's saying: "If we were now starting for the first time to construct a grammar of Modern English without knowledge of a reference to the classics, it might never occur to us to postulate a

passive voice at all" (Lyons, John "Introduction to theoretical Linguistics" Cambridge 1971, p. 372-373).

This was said in reference to the notion of passivity and we think it may be equally applicable to causativity.

So we see that the interpretation of voice is a matter of controversy in different languages. We all hope the comparative analysis of causative verbs in English and Armenian that we have undertaken will cast new light on the problem and help us view it more adequately and clearly.

## References

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7. Lyons, John "Introduction to Theoretical Linguistics" (p 372-373) Cambridge, 1971