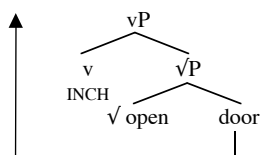


## Idiomatic Evidence for the syntax of English 'lexical' causatives

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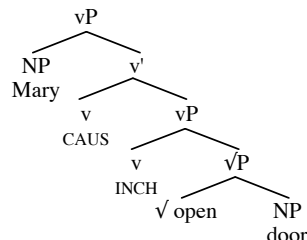
Inchoative and causative counterparts of a verb overlap in meaning:

- (1) a. The door opened. / Mary opened the door.  
b. The balloon popped. / Tim popped the balloon.  
c. The tomatoes grew. / Alex grew the tomatoes.
- (2) Let's assume this syntactic representation of the inchoative (Harley 1995):

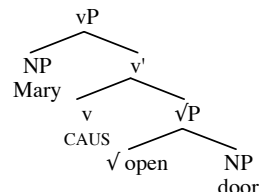


- (3) Two possible representations of the causative:

a. *Dependent Theory*



b. *Independent Theory*



Lexicalist theory treats Causativization as affixation of a causative morpheme to the inchoative, analogous to (3a):

- (4)  $V_{intr} + CAUS = V_{tr}$

Arguments have been made for (3b) (Harley 1995, Nishiyama 1998):

- |        |            |                           |          |                         |              |
|--------|------------|---------------------------|----------|-------------------------|--------------|
| (5) a. | ag-a-ru    | 'rise'                    | ag-e-ru  | 'raise'                 | *ag-a-e-ru   |
| b.     | hazu-re-ru | 'come off'                | hazu-s-u | 'take off'              | *hazu-re-s-u |
| c.     | ta-ri-ru   | 'suffice'                 | ta-s-u   | 'supplement'            | *ta-ri-s-u   |
| d.     | kog-er-u   | 'scorch <sub>intr</sub> ' | kog-as-u | 'scorch <sub>tr</sub> ' | *kog-er-as-u |
| e.     | ok-i-ru    | 'get up <sub>intr</sub> ' | ok-os-u  | 'get up <sub>tr</sub> ' | *ok-i-os-u   |

Jacobsen 1992

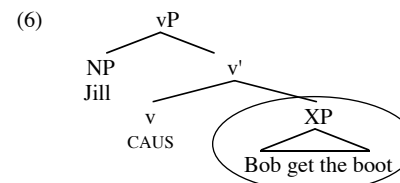
## 1. Idiomatic evidence for a separate causative component

The special meaning of an idiom is maintained when more structure is added to it:

- (4) a. Bill spilled the beans.  
"Bill told the secret."  
b. I think that Bill spilled the beans.  
"I think that Bill told the secret."

Richards (2001) exploits this observation to argue that ditransitive verbs like *give* include a separate causative component in the syntax:

- (5) a. Bob got the boot (from Jill). / Jill gave Bob the boot.  
b. Susan took a lot of flak (from Tim). / Tim gave Susan a lot of flak.  
c. I get the creeps (from Harry). / Harry gives me the creeps.



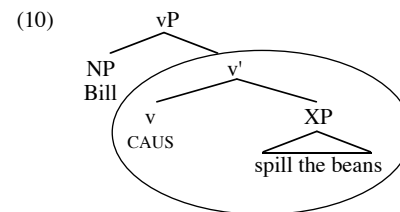
By contrast, the special meaning of an idiom is lost when part of it is removed:

- (7) a. Bill spilled the beans.  
"Bill told the secret."  
b. Bill held onto the beans.  
\* "Bill kept the secret."

Levin and Rappaport-Hovav 1995 (L&R) note that certain idiomatic usages allow the causative, but not the inchoative counterpart. The passive is fine, however.

- |        |   |        |   |
|--------|---|--------|---|
| (8) a. | Bill <u>spilled the beans</u> .                 | (9) a. | Bill <u>broke</u> the record.           |
| b.     | * <u>The beans</u> spilled.                     | b.     | * The record <u>broke</u> .             |
| c.     | <u>The beans</u> were <u>spilled</u> (by Bill). | c.     | The record was <u>broken</u> (by Bill). |

If the causative component is part of the idiom, the inchoative is not idiomatic.



## 2. More Obligatory Idiom Parts

The same kinds of restrictions can apply to other functional categories, such as clausal aspect:

- (11) a. I have been to France.  
b. \* I {was / am being / want to be} to France.

A similar case arises in French with the stative-passive voice (Ruwet 1991, Marantz 1997, Philippe Schlenker, p.c., and Yvan Rose, p.c.)

- (12) a. Cet argument est tiré par les cheveux.  
'This argument is far-fetched.' (lit., is pulled by the hairs)  
b. Il l'a tiré par les cheveux.  
\* 'He/it made it far-fetched.'

These idioms include the perfect aspect and the stative-passive voice, respectively.

## 3. Against a Lexicalist Analysis

For L&R, complex verbs are derived in the Lexicon. A derived item inherits semantic restrictions on the base (p. 86). A base verb cannot be more restrictive than the derived form.

- (13) a. base item [X]  $\rightarrow$  derived item [X,Y]  
b. \* base item [X,Y]  $\rightarrow$  derived item [X]

L&R claim that inchoatives are more restrictive: all inchoative idioms have causative counterparts, but not vice versa. They conclude that inchoatives are derived from causatives:

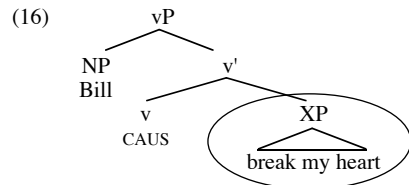
- (14)  $V_{tr} + INCH = V_{intr}$

By parity of reasoning, the past, present, progressive, and infinitival should be derived from the past participle (11), and the active from the stative passive (12). This seems undesirable.

## 4. Idiomatic Evidence for the Independent Theory

If the Dependent Theory is correct, any inchoative idioms should automatically extend to the causative counterpart, since it states that the causative simply adds extra structure.

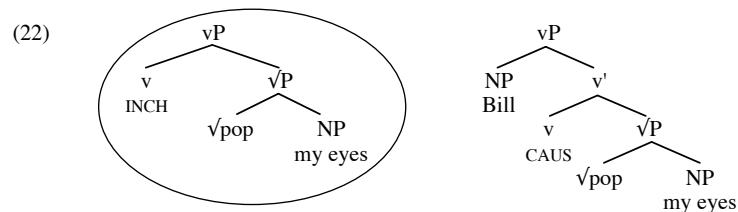
- (15) a. My heart broke.  
b. Bill / The news broke my heart.



However, the Independent Theory predicts that some inchoative idioms should not extend to the causative counterpart, since it states that the causative lacks the inchoative structural component.

This prediction is confirmed (see Dowty 1979 for a similar point about *hard* and *harden*):

- (17) a. My eyes popped.  
b. \* {Bill / The news} popped my eyes.  
(18) a. I snapped. (=lost my composure/sanity)  
b. \* {Bill / The news} snapped me.  
(19) a. The sun rose.  
b. \* {God/The earth's rotation} raised the sun.  
(20) a. My heart sank.  
b. \* {Bill/The news} sank my heart.  
(21) a. The penny dropped.  
b. \* {Bill/The news} dropped the penny.



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