

Argument linking in some Altaic causative constructions

Valeria Generalova

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Outline

1 Introduction

- Background
- Data
- Task

2 A closer look

- ABL (INS) strategy
- DAT strategy
- Double ACC strategy

3 Discussion

Linking algorithm in a nutshell

- operates both ways: syntax to semantics and semantics to syntax
- outputs assigned macroroles and cases
- can be formalized using constraints
 - constraints on tree structure
 - constraints on frame structure
 - constraints on argument linking

Argument ranking for linking purposes

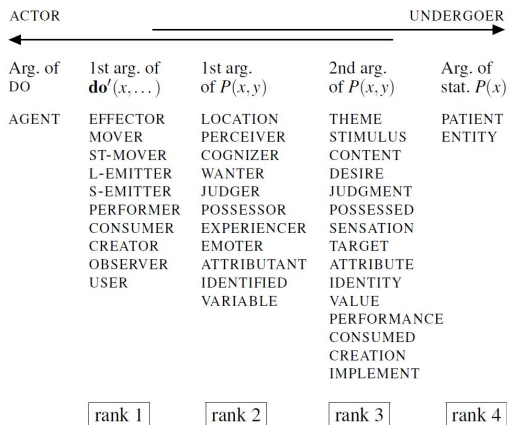


Figure: Actor-undergoer hierarchy with semantic roles [2]

Altaic languages

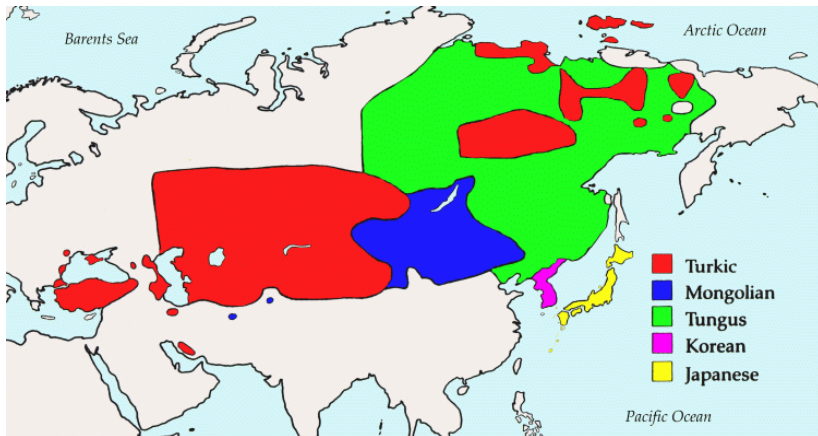


Figure: Map of Altaic languages

Languages studied

Turkic

- Bashkir
- Mishar Tatar
- Khakas
- Tuvinian

Mongolian

- Kalmyk
- Buryat

Tungus

- Nanai
- Udege

Causative constructions

Narrowing the scope

The present talk deals only with morphological causative constructions derived from transitive verbs

These constructions must include

- a transitive verb with a specific CAUS marker
- the Causer – a participant that intends the situation to happen
- the Causee – a participant that is caused to act
- the Theme – a participant that is influenced by the action

Predicted strategy

Comrie's rule

The Causee occupies the highest syntactic position according to the hierarchy:

SUBJECT > DIRECT OBJECT > INDIRECT OBJECT > OBLIQUE OBJECT

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(1) TURKISH

Dişçi mektub-u müdür-e imzala-t-tı
dentist letter-ACC boss-DAT sign-CAUS-PST
'The dentist made the boss sign the letter.' [1]

Research goals

Syntax to semantics

- infer semantic structure
- assign macroroles and thematic roles
- explain case marking

Semantics to syntax

- compose semantic frames
- assign macroroles and semantic roles
- select case marking

Examples

(2) BASHKIR

Ataj bala-lar-ǎan jeläk jəj-ǎar-a

father child-PL-**ABL** berry pick_up-CAUS-IPFV

‘Children are picking up berries because the orders of the father.’

(3) KALMYK

ezə-n ködəlməšč-är xö al-ulə-v

master-EXT servant-**INS** ram kill-CAUS-PST

‘The master made the servant kill the ram.’

Semantic structure

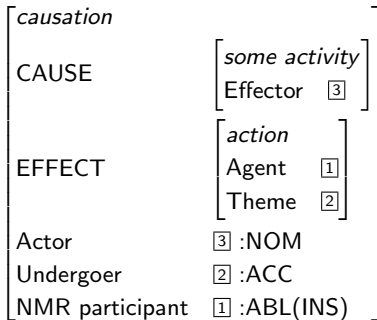


Figure: Default strategy

Examples 1

(4) a. BASHKIR

Bala besäj-gä höt-tö es-er-ä
child cat-**DAT** milk-ACC drink-CAUS-IPFV
'The child feeds the cat with the milk.'

b. KALMYK

ekə ürə-n-d-än xašə id-ül-žä-nä
mother child-EXT-**DAT**-P.REFL porridge eat-CAUS-PROG-PRS
'The mother feeds the child with porridge'.

Semantic structure

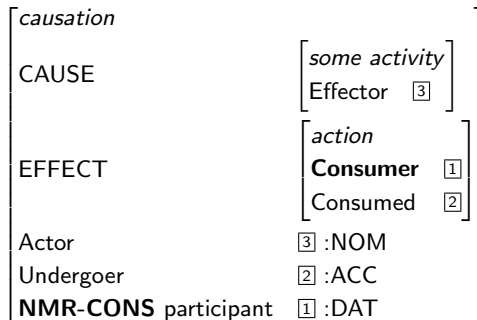


Figure: Strategy with Recipient as causee

Examples 2

(5) a. BASHKIR

Dilä beđ-gä üđ-e-nej kejäw jeget-e-nej foto-hə-n
 Dila we-**DAT** he-P.3-GEN mate boy-P.3-GEN photo-P.3-ACC
kür-hät-te
 see-CAUS-PST

'Dila showed us the photo of her boyfriend.'

b. KALMYK

Badma gerg-n-ännj zurəg nan-də üz-ülə-v
 Badma wife-EXT-GEN.P.3 image me-**DAT** see-CAUS-PST

'Badma showed me a photo of his wife'.

Semantic structure

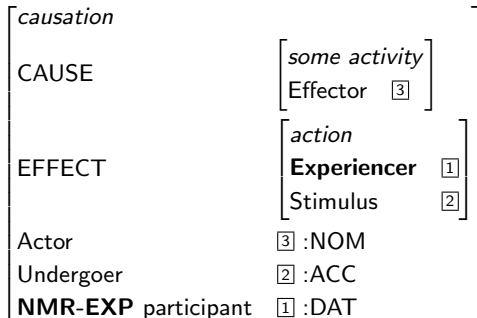


Figure: Strategy with Experiencer as causee

Another challenge

(6) KHAKAS

Maša Vas'a-ny sok iz-irt-če.

Masha **Vasja-ACC** juice drink-CAUS-PRS

'Masha gives Vasja juice to drink.'

(7) KALMYK

bagšə madn-igə škol-də kögžmə soŋs-ul-na

teacher **we-ACC** school-DAT music listen-CAUS-PRS

'At school, the teacher made us listen to music.'

(8) TUVINIAN

Ašak Bayir-ni inek oorla-t-kan.

old.man **Bayir-ACC** cow steal-CAUS-PST

'The old man made Bayir steal a cow.'

Possible explanations

Why so many possibilities to code causees?

- The distinction between Indirect object and Oblique object is not relevant for these languages [6]
- According to their semantic properties, causees may be more similar to patients than to agents [4]
- Semantic and pragmatic properties of arguments count [4, 3]

Why these particular cases?

- DAT: transfer and experience verbs [5, 6]
- UNM.ACC: weak argument properties [6], non referential object [4, 3]





Claims

- 1 Morphological causative behaves as a construction, being determined not only by the verb, but also by various properties of arguments.
- 2 It is possible to consistently link syntactic arguments to semantic macroroles.
- 3 This linking does not contradict the existing Actor-Undergoer Hierarchy.
- 4 The role structure of causative constructions is twofold: macroroles are assigned to participants of the three-argument construction, the semantic role of the causee is inferred from the inner frame.
- 5 It seems that the cases are assigned to causees with respect to their semantic roles and referential properties.

Further steps

- Take more languages into consideration to get more data about the double ACC strategy.
- Test the sustainability of macrorole assignment with advanced syntactic tests on alternations.
- Update the ranking?

Thank you!

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