

Anticausativization is not Reflexivization
(Florian Schäfer; joint work with Margot Vivanco)

According to the standard semantics of the causative alternation, a causative verb (1a) entails its anticausative counterpart (1b); cf. (2a, b):

- (1) a. Juan aumentó los precios
Juan increased the prices
b. Los precios aumentaron (UAC)
the prices increased
- (2) a. $\lambda x \lambda y [(y) \text{ CAUSE } [\text{BECOME } [(x) \text{ higher}]]]$
b. $\lambda x [\text{BECOME } [(x) \text{ higher}]]$

While (1b) is an unmarked anticausative (UAC), many languages also have a set of reflexively marked anticausatives (RAC) (e.g. Spanish 3b). The SE-morpheme in (3b) is often assumed to reflect the absence of a causer argument (e.g. Grimshaw 1981, Reinhart 2000, Doron 2003, Schäfer 2008, though the technical aspects of these accounts differ lot). This general idea leaves open, however, the question why the same morpheme that normally produces canonically reflexive verbs (CRV) as in (4) can serve this purpose?

- (3) a. Juan rompió el vaso
Juan broke the glass
b. El vaso se rompió (RAC)
the glass REFL broke
- (4) El niño se lavó (CRV)
the boy REFL washed

Koontz-Garboden (2009) (following Chierchia 1989/2004) defends the idea that the morphological identity between RACs in (3b) and CRVs in (4) reflects semantic identity (the *Reflexivization Analysis* of the causative alternation). In both cases, the clitic *se* acts as a reflexivizer as in (5) that takes a transitive relation \mathfrak{R} such as (6a) or (7a) as its argument and identifies the two arguments of the relation as in (6b)/(7b). The only difference between CRVs and RACs concerns the external argument θ -role: only verbs like *romper* select an underspecified effector (cf. 7a) lacking any agent entailments, so that the non-human theme can also be assigned this effector role: (3b/7b), under this analysis, means that 'the glass caused its own breaking'.

(5) $[se] = \lambda \mathfrak{R} \lambda x [\mathfrak{R}(x, x)]$

- (6) a. $[lavar] = \lambda x \lambda y \lambda e [\text{wash}(e) \wedge \text{AGENT}(e, y) \wedge \text{PATIENT}(e, x)]$
b. $[se]([lavar]) = \lambda x \lambda e [\text{wash}(e) \wedge \text{AGENT}(e, x) \wedge \text{PATIENT}(e, x)]$

(7) a. $[romper] =$

$\lambda x \lambda y \lambda s \lambda e [\exists v [CAUSE(v,e) \wedge EFFECTOR(v,y) \wedge BECOME(e,s) \wedge$
THEME(s,x) \wedge broken(s)]]

b. [se]([romper]) =

$\lambda x \lambda s \lambda e [\exists v [CAUSE(v,e) \wedge EFFECTOR(v,x) \wedge BECOME(e,s) \wedge$
THEME(s,x) \wedge broken(s)]]

We argue that RACs do not have the causative-reflexive meaning in (7b) but an inchoative one along the lines in (2b), just as UACs and other inchoative structures. Our evidence comes from the (non-)licensing of Spanish and German (meta-linguistic) negation (and can be broadened to other downward entailing contexts). It follows that the SE-morpheme does not always act as a reflexivizer. We also show, however, that nothing, except world knowledge, blocks semantic reflexivization of (7a) as in (7b). The Reflexivization Analysis of the causative alternation, on the other hand, wrongly predicts meaning (2b) to be generally unavailable for RACs.

References:

- Chierchia, Gennaro. 2004. A semantics for unaccusatives and its syntactic consequences. In Artemis Alexiadou et al. (eds.), *The unaccusativity puzzle*, 22-59. Oxford: OUP.
- Grimshaw, Jane. 1981. On the lexical representation of Romance reflexive clitics. In *The Mental Representation of Grammatical Relations*, ed. Joan Bresnan, 87-148. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Koontz-Garboden, Andrew. 2009. Anticausativization. *Natural Language and Linguistic Theory* 27, 77-138.
- Reinhart, Tanya. 2002. The Theta System – An Overview. *Theoretical Linguistics* 28, 229-290.
- Schäfer, Florian. 2008. *The Syntax of (Anti-)Causatives. External arguments in change-of-state contexts*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.