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ABSTRACT

In this paper, an attempt is made to explicate the notion "equivalence" in contrastive analysis. It has been suggested that a learner formulates successive hypotheses about the nature of the target language at least partially on the basis of his knowledge of the native language. A deep contrastive study of the two language systems will reveal the areas which need to be focused on in a teaching situation in order to discourage the learner from setting up "false" equivalences between the two systems, or rather, to lead him to set up valid equivalences. The paper advocates a view of contrastive analysis which is based on meaning rather than structure, and also takes into account areas such as pragmatics and conversational implicature in establishing equivalences. The method of such an analysis is illustrated by a detailed discussion of some of the properties of the causative constructions in English and selected South Asian languages. (Author)

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THE SEMANTICS AND SYNTAX OF THE CAUSATIVE CONSTRUCTION IN ENGLISH AND SOUTH ASIAN LANGUAGES: IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHING ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

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1.0. This paper has two aims: one, to advocate a view of contrastive analysis which differs from the current view of this area of linguistic research, and two, to argue that contrastive analysis, in the proposed sense, is crucial for the successful teaching of English as a second language. I shall attempt to achieve these aims by focussing on the causative construction in English and South Asian languages. But, before I proceed to a discussion of the causative constructions, a few remarks on the current status of contrastive analysis may not be out of place.

2.0. In the history of contrastive analysis, there have been mainly three positions taken by linguists and language teachers. One well-known view is that contrastive analysis results in a prediction of problem areas in second/foreign language learning, therefore results of contrastive analysis must be taken into consideration in the preparation of teaching materials and training of teachers (Lado 1957, 1966; Di Pietro 1971, among others).[1] A second view is that contrastive analysis has no predictive role, but the results of error analysis may be explained in terms of contrastive analysis, hence contrastive analysis has an explanatory role in language teaching (e.g. Catford 1968). A third view is that contrastive analysis fails in accurately predicting all areas of difficulty in a language learning situation, and it cannot explain all errors, hence it has at best a marginal role in language teaching (e.g., Lee 1968).[2]

It is a fact that contrastive analysis cannot predict accurately and exhaustively what errors will be made by a language learner. It is also a fact that all errors are not made because of interference from the native language system. A better explanation seems to be that certain kinds of systematic errors are made because of the learners' attempt at constructing a hypothesis about the target language. In current literature on second language teaching, the word error has almost become a tabooed word, instead, one talks of the learners' inter-language (Corder 1967). Nevertheless, what

part the learners' native language system plays in his construction of successive hypotheses about the target language is still a moot point. To the extent that notions such as transfer and interference have any validity in psychology, it is reasonable to assume that both the following play crucial roles in a learner's successive hypotheses about the target language: the limited data from the target language he is exposed to, and his knowledge of his first language. It is also reasonable to assume that the most plausible way in which this knowledge is used is in attempting to form hypotheses about equivalences between the native and the target language systems. Of course, this is an empirical question and can be resolved by experimentation. Such experimentation, however, is not possible unless we have a fairly clear notion of what we mean by equivalence.

In a sense, the concept equivalence is central to contrastive analysis. Several bases for setting up cross-linguistic equivalences have been discussed in the current literature (Fillmore 1965, Krzeszowski 1971, and others) and have been found to be equally deficient. This failure to characterize what is meant by equivalence is no doubt partly due to a lack of a viable linguistic theory. To the extent that no linguistic theory has yet been successful in characterizing a universal base for human languages, contrastive analysis cannot refer to this base to characterize equivalences between languages. More seriously, though, contrastive analysis so far has been unwilling to face the fact that one-to-one correspondence between languages is virtually impossible to come by. There are few, if any, congruent structures (Krzeszowski 1971) between languages. Yet, whatever can be said in one language can be said equally well in any other language. This means that the picture that emerges is one of asymmetric equivalence between languages, i.e., an utterance of language A may be equivalent to a number of utterances in language B or vice-versa. Such

equivalence relationships cannot be characterized in terms of deep structure relationships of the kind that contrastive analysts have worked with (e.g. Chomsky 1965, Fillmore 1968). Maybe what is needed is that instead of waiting for theoretical linguists to come up with a more adequate notion of deep structure, contrastive analysts push towards a set of universal criteria to characterize equivalence. Of course, they have to draw upon the theoretical concepts of linguistics to do so. But, they also have to keep in view the equivalence patterns that emerge in translation between languages. This is the kind of scientific activity that will make contrastive analysis relevant not only to language teaching and translation, but also to theoretical and developmental linguistics (Ferguson 1968).

3.0. With these preliminary remarks out of the way, let us consider the causative constructions in English and South Asian languages. Since South Asia is a multi-lingual region, for the purposes of this paper, I shall choose examples from one major Indo-Aryan language of the area, namely, Hindi-Urdu, and one Dravidian language, namely, Kannada.[3] These represent the two major language families of the area for our purposes.[4]

3.1. The causative construction in English may be characterized as a device to link propositions, usually a cause proposition (henceforth, Pc) and an effect proposition (henceforth, Pe).[5] Consider the following sentences

1. Martha screamed loudly and as a result Sally dropped the pot of stew.

2. Martha's loud screaming caused Sally to drop the pot of stew.

In Sentence (1), the two propositions are linked with the sentential conjunction as a result. In (2), Pc is nominalized [Martha's loud screaming] and has become the subject of the verb caused to which Pe is subordinated as an infinitival clause. Compare sentences (1) and (2) with (3):

3. Martha caused Sally to drop the pot of stew by screaming loudly.

In 3, the agent of Pc (Martha) functions as the subject of the verb (caused),

and the rest of the Pc functions as a causal adverbial. A detailed examination of the causative constructions in English reveals the following about its semantics. First, English makes a distinction between Accidental vs. Deliberate causation. Consider the following sentences:

4. Mary accidentally caused Sue to drop the dishes.

5. Mary caused Sue to drop the dishes by accidentally dashing into her.

6. *Harry accidentally made Sue drop the dishes.

7. ?Harry made Sue drop the dishes by accidentally dashing into her.

8. *Harry had Sue drop the dishes.

9. *Harry had Sue drop the dishes by accidentally dashing into her.

10. *Sally deliberately caused Mary to do the dishes.

11. Sally deliberately made Mary do the dishes.

12. Sally deliberately had Mary do the dishes.

The above sentences (4-12) make it clear that of the three periphrastic causative verbs in English, cause is an incidental causative, whereas make and have are intended causatives. Make and have, furthermore, have dual status. Make is an incidental causative if the Pe expresses a state or an event, have is an incidental causative if the Pe expresses a transitory state. Consider (13) and (14) which exemplify this:

13. Mary made Martha feel good.

14. Harry had Mary in tears.

Second, linked to the notion of incidental vs. intended causation is the notion of control. Note that in incidental causation, the agent of Pe retains control, whereas in intended causation, the agent of Pc is in control:

15. I caused the mirror to break by accidentally dropping it.

16. *I made the mirror break by accidentally dropping it.

17. *Bill made John drink wine by accidentally offering it to him.

18. *Bill had John wash the car by accidentally driving to John's garage.

Third, linked with the above two notions are the notions of direct vs. mediated causation. In English, have is a mediated control causative verb, make is a direct-control causative verb, whereas cause is a non-control causative verb. This can be seen from the following sentences:

19. Bill caused Mary to clean the house herself by falling asleep on the sofa.

20. Bill made Mary clean the house herself by threatening her with a whip.

21. Bill had Mary clean the house herself by sending John over to threaten her with a whip.

3.2. These concepts are relevant for the syntax of the periphrastic causative predicates. Note the following syntactic consequences: One, the mediated control causative have allows for a passive embedding, the others do not:

22. Joe had Sam killed by his buddy.

23. *Joe made/caused Sam killed by his buddy.

Note that this is a natural consequence of the notion mediated-control. A mediated control causative needs a mediary agent to control, which is readily supplied by the passive agent. Two, the coercive manipulative verbs of English (e.g. force, order, prevent, etc.) do not allow stative Pe's Consider the following:

24. *Harry forced Mary to be healthy.

25. *Joe prevented Sam from being delighted.

The coercive-manipulative verbs of English are direct control causative verbs. They require an agent of Pe to control, stative predicates do not

provide such agents. Three, cause, make and have differ with respect to manipulation of non-agentive subjects of Pe (which function as their objects).

26. I caused the door to open.

27. *I made the door open.

28. *I had the door open.

Four, make and have require an agentive subject of Pe (which function as their objects) to manipulate.

29. I caused the meeting to break up.

30. *I made/had the meeting break up.

31. I had the meeting dispersed by the Chairman.

Five, often the subject of the Pc functions as the surface subject of the causative sentence and the subject of the Pe as its surface object. It is interesting to see what kinds of subjects and objects are allowed with the periphrastic causative predicates.

	Subj.	Obj.
32. cause	(wh-s)	(wh-NP)
	(that-s)	------
	(poss np)	------
	Nom-NP	------
	Nom-NP (abstract)	Nom Np (abstract)
	Raised agent	Raised agent
33. make		
	wh-s	------
	that-s	------
	Poss-NP	------
	Nom-NP	------
	Raised agent	Raised agent
34. have		
	Raised agent	Raised agent

The lexical causatives of English (e.g. break, kill, open, etc.) do not involve manipulation of humans by humans. They do involve notions such as incidental vs. intended causation, e.g., compare pairs such as break - smash,

kill - murder, cut - slash, etc.

4.0. Now, I shall contrast this situation with the semantics and syntax of causatives in the South Asian languages such as Hindi-Urdu and Kannada. Take the notion of incidental vs. intended causation. Consider the following sentences:

35. a. mã a gəĩ jisse bəcce xuš ho gəe
mother came from which children happy became
bəcce xuš ho gəe.
children happy became.

b. taye bandalu emba kāraṇadinda makkaḷu khuśiyādaru.
mother came that reason by children happy became.
Mother came back and as a result the children became happy.

36. a. mã ke a jame se bəcce xuš ho gəe.
mother of coming by children happy became

b. tayi bandiddarinda makkaḷu khuśiyādaru
mother coming therefore children happy became
The children became happy as a result of their mother's coming (back).

Notice that a Pc and Pe may either be joined by a sentence conjunction (a. jisse, b. emba kāraṇadinda or the Pc may be nominalized and function as a causal adverbial of the Pe. In the above sentence, the predicate of the Pe is stative. The same holds for active predicates, too.

37. a. tumhare besura gane se log bhag gəe.
your tuneless singing by people ran away.

b. ninna apasvarada hāḍugārikeyinda jana ōḍihōdaru
your tuneless singing by people ran away
People ran away because of your tuneless singing.

Notice that the above sentences do not involve any causative verbs. The verbs in Pc as well as Pe are non-causal. These are the normal devices by which incidental causation is expressed in South Asian languages. Intended causation, on the other hand is expressed by causative verbs. Consider the following:

38. a. tumne (besura ga kər) logõ ko bhəga diya
you ag.m. tuneless having sung people obj.m. run+cause+perf.

b. nīnu apasvaradalli hāḍi janarannu ōḍisi biṭṭe
you tunelessness in having sung people acc. make run away
You made the people run away (by (deliberately) singing tunelessly).

(38) is an example of accusation, it cannot be interpreted as incidental causation. Notice that there are no periphrastic causative verbs in Hindi (Kachru 1974); causative verbs are derived from non-causal verbs by morphological processes e.g., bhagna 'to run', bhəgana 'CAUSE to run'. There are some coercive-manipulative verbs such as məjbūr kərna 'to force', məna kərna 'to forbid', etc. which are not derived from non-causal verbs by morphological processes.

The morphological processes in most South Asian languages result in two levels of causativization, e.g. khana 'to eat', khilana 'CAUSE X to eat', khilvana 'CAUSE X to eat THROUGH THE AGENCY OF Y'.[6] As is evident from the translation of the Hindi-Urdu forms, the first level of causativization expresses direct causation, the second, indirect or mediated causation. The following sentences exemplify this:

39. a. raju ne seb khaye
Raju ag.m. apples ate

b. raju sēbannu tindanu
Raju apple acc.m. ate
Raju ate apples.

40. a. lakšmī ne rajū ko seb khilae

Lakshmi ag.m. Raju I.obj.m. apples eat+CAUSE$_1$+Perf.

b. lakšmī rajuvige sēbannu tinnisidaḷu

Lakshmi Raju apple eat+CAUSE+perf.

Lakshmi CAUSEd Raju to eat apples.

41. a. bhanū ne lakšmī se rajū ko seb khilvae

Bhanu ag.m. Lakshmi by Raju I.obj.m. apples. eat+CAUSE$_2$+perf.

b. bhānuvu lakšmiya mūlaka raju sebu tinnuvante māḍidaḷu

Bhanu Lakshmi's through Raju apple eat-thus made

Bhanu had Raju CAUSEd to eat apples by Lakshmi.

Notice that as a consequence of morphological process of causativization in Hindi-Urdu, raising of the agent of the Pc to function as the agent of the causative verb is obligatory. Also, the agent of the Pe is raised to become either a mediary agent (marked by se 'by'), or an indirect object (marked by ko 'to') of the causative verbs. There are thus no possibilities of varieties of surface subjects and objects in sentences with causative predicates in Hindi-Urdu (cf. 32-34 in English).

The control principle is not relevant for causativization in South Asian languages. Most intransitive and transitive verbs are related through the morphological process of causativization (e.g. Hindi-Urdu girna 'fall': girana 'CAUSE fall'; ṭuṭna 'break (intransitive)': toṛna 'break (transitive)'; khulna 'open (intransitive)': kholna 'open (transitive)' etc.). Most intransitive verbs (process, event) typically take a non-agentive, inanimate subject whereas most transitive verbs typically take an animate subject. Compare:

42. gilas rajū se ṭūṭ gəya

glass Raju by broke

Raju (accidentally) broke the glass.

43. rajū ne gilas toṛ diya

Raju ag.m. glass broke

Raju (deliberately) broke the glass.

The second level causative of transitive verbs implies the agent of the transitive verb to be in some degree of control, e.g.,

44. a. mɛ̃ ne mədhu se (zəbərdəstī) dərvaza khulvaya

I ag.m. Madhu by forcibly door open+CAUSE$_2$+Perf.

b. nānu madhuvininda (balavantra māḍī) bāgilu tegeside

I Madhu by forcibly door made(it)open

45. a. mɛ̃ ne mədhu se (minnət kərke) dərvaza khulvaya

I aj.m. Madhu (pleadings having done) door open+CAUSE+Per.

b. nānu (kāḍi-bēḍi) madhuvininda bāgilu tegeside

I having pestered-pleaded Madhu by door made (it) open

I caused Madhu to open the door by pleading to her.

Notice further that since all causative verbs in Hindi-Urdu and Kannada have the semantic property of the IF-verbs (Karttunen 1971), therefore it is not possible to demonstrate clearly that the agent of Pe in fact retains control in sentences such as (44) and (45). There are two pieces of evidence that confirm my claim. One, the following is an <u>appropriate</u> sentence in Hindi-Urdu and Kannada:

46. a. (Boss to secretary)

kəl mujhse əpnī chuṭṭī kī mənjurī likhva lena

tomorrow by me self's leave of acceptance write+CAUSE$_2$ take

CAUSE$_2$ me to write a note sanctioning your leave tomorrow.

b. nāḷe nanna kaili ninna rajāda manjūriyannu baresikō

tomorrow in my hand through me your leave's sanction-acc. get written

Note that the following renderings of (46) in English are all inappropriate:

47. * cause me to write a note
make write
have

sanctioning your leave tomorrow.

The second piece of evidence comes from an exercise in translation from English into a South Asian language. Consider the following English sentences:

48. He taught his wife to speak in Russian deliberately.

This could mean either (49) or (50), but not (51):

49. He deliberately taught his wife to speak in Russian

50. He taught his wife to deliberately speak in Russian.

51. *He made his wife deliberately learn to speak in Russian.

The Hindi-Urdu sentence (52), on the other hand, implies (51):

52. usne əpnī pətnī ko rūsī bolna sikhaya

He ag.m. self's wife I.objm. Russian to speak $CAUSE_1$ + learn

If the wife didn't intend to learn Russian, (52) is inappropriate. If causation is intended, but the effect accidental, this cannot be expressed by a sentence containing a causative predicate in South Asian languages. The notion 'agentive subject of transitive verb' necessarily implies the notion volition in South Asian languages. Therefore, intended Pc + incidental Pe is expressed by two separate clauses linked with sentential conjunction.

5.0. The semantic facts and their syntactic consequences discussed in this paper are clearly relevant for establishing equivalences between English and South Asian languages. To the extent that the semantic facts are not the same, it is hard to imagine, at this stage, a universal Base that would provide the necessary criteria for establishing equivalences of this kind. Notice that semantic notions such as control have important pragmatic consequences (appropriateness of (46) in Hindi-Urdu vs.

inappropriateness of (47) in English). Notice also that a semantic notion such as volition may result in a situation in which optimal equivalence in meaning is in conflict with optimal equivalence in terms of structure. The conclusion is unescapable that in order to establish cross-linguistic equivalences, serious research in the areas of what have come to be known as conversational postulates and pragmatics are as important as deep structures and transformational rules.

6.0. The implication of this kind of contrastive analysis for the teaching of English as a second language in South Asia is clear. Notice that the results of such comparisons are extremely valuable for building advanced level competence in English. Unfortunately, this is the level that is most neglected in all discussion of the problems of teaching English, or any other language. Not much research has been done in areas of even English syntax and semantics, let alone contrastive work on South Asian languages and English, which can be used for preparing texts and other teaching materials. The students are somehow expected to manage to learn very abstract facts, such as the facts about the causative constructions in English, on the basis of mostly haphazardly selected texts they may be exposed to. No wonder certain extremely important semantic and syntactic facts of English remain elusive to most South Asian learners of English. For instance, very few South Asian learners of English achieve competence in noun phrase complement constructions of English.

The task of teaching English at an advanced level in South Asia could be made more exciting, more challenging and more rewarding by making the results of the kind of contrastive analysis discussed in this paper available to those interested in the field.

Notes

1. I shall use second language learning/teaching in this paper to indicate both second and foreign language learning/teaching henceforth.

2. For a more extremist view, namely, that contrastive analysis may be a liability rather than a help in language teaching, see Newmark and Reibel 1968.

3. Both Hindi and Urdu share a common core grammar and lexicon, and as such can be hyphonated in this way. The major differences between the two show up in specific registers, e.g. literary criticism, politics, religion, etc., where Hindi looks to Sanskrit sources for its need for technical vocabulary, and Urdu to Persian and Arabic sources.

4. I am grateful to Mr. S.N. Sridhar for all Kannada examples and discussions about their syntactic and semantic properties.

5. The entire discussion of the causative constructions in English is based upon Givón 1974.

6. Some South Asian languages of the Indo-Aryan and the Dravidian families have only one level of causativization, e.g. Bengali and Kannada. Kannada uses a periphrastic causative construction to express mediated causation.

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