

## Transitive anticausatives: a new argument for expletive Voice

Florian Schäfer (HU Berlin)

Verbs undergoing the causative alternation often fall into two morphological classes. Many Romance and Germanic languages have unmarked anticausatives and anticausative marked with a reflexive pronoun/clitic. Greek marks a subset of its anticausatives with non-active (NACT) morphology.

- |     |   |  |  |
|-----|---|--|--|
| (1) | a. Peter öffnete die Tür.<br>Peter opened the door<br>b. Peter verbrannte den Brief.<br>Peter burnt the letter            |  | a'. Die Tür öffnete sich.<br>the door opened SE<br>b'. Der Brief verbrannte.<br>the letter burnt |
| (2) | a. O Janis ekapse ti supa.<br>the John burnt.ACT the soup<br>b. O Janis adiase ti sakula.<br>the John emptied.ACT the bag |  | a'. I supa kaike.<br>the soup burnt.NACT<br>b'. I sakula adiase.<br>the bag emptied.ACT          |

Two observations about anticausative morphology: First, the very same morphology is typically used to mark other diatheses such as semantically reflexive verbs, generic middles, or passives, all of which clearly come with external argument entailments. Second, marked and unmarked anticausatives are both semantically inchoative one-place predicates that lack any external argument entailment. That is, even though (1a') is formally identical with semantically reflexive verbs, it is not semantically reflexive. And even though (2a') is formally identical with passives, it does not involve an implicit external argument (Schäfer 2008, Martin & Schäfer 2014, Schäfer & Vivanco 2016, Alexiadou et al. 2015).

To resolve this morpho-syntax/semantics mismatch (inchoative semantics in the presence of syntactic formatives that, canonically, introduce an external argument (NACT) or even instantiates a second DP (SE), the concept of expletive Voice was proposed. Voice is characterized by a syntactic and a semantic feature or a subset of them. Expletive Voice is a syntactic formative that makes no semantic contribution but, in the case of (4a) c-selects for a DP in its specifier. Only DPs that do not need a thematic role can check this D-feature. It is argued that SE-reflexive pronouns that lack a c-commanding antecedent lack any meaning and, thus, could not saturate a theta role: they denote the identity function in (5) and act as 'argument expletives' in the specifier of 'active' expletive Voice (4a).

- |     |   |  |
|-----|---|--|
| (3) | a. active Voice: $[[\text{Voice}\{\text{agent}, D\}]] = \lambda x \lambda e. [\text{agent}(e, x)]$<br>b. passive Voice: $[[\text{Voice}\{\text{agent}, \emptyset\}]] = \lambda e \exists x. [\text{agent}(e, x)]$ |  |
| (4) | a. "active" expletive Voice: $[[\text{Voice}\{\emptyset, D\}]] = \lambda P \lambda e. P(e)$<br>b. "passive" expletive Voice: $[[\text{Voice}\{\emptyset, \emptyset\}]] = \lambda P \lambda e. P(e)$               |  |
| (5) | $[[\text{SE}_{\text{expletive}}]] = \lambda P \lambda e. P(e)$  |  |

In this talk, I argue 'transitive anticausatives' as in (6a)/(7a) use the formative in (4a) even though a full DP is merged in the specifier of VoiceP. 'Transitive anticausatives' are syntactically transitive but semantically inchoative as they are truth-conditionally identical to their canonical anticausative counterparts in (6b)/(7b). 'Transitive anticausatives' are possible only with a specific type of verbs undergoing the causative alternation. These verbs leave their dimension of change lexically underspecified and a 'dimensional noun' (temperature, speed, volume, ...) in the internal argument position specifies the actual dimension. The dimensional

noun itself takes the theme of change as its argument. Note that (6a,b)/(7a,b) are truth-conditionally identical with (6c)/(7c). I propose that the referential DP (planet, soup) in (6a)/(7a) can survive in the specifier of expletive Voice (where it does not receive a theta role) because it receives its theta-role via (obligatory) binding of the pronominal theme slot inside of the dimensional noun. (An analysis involving possessor raising would bring about the same result, but I think possessor raising is not the correct analysis).

- (6) a. [The gaseous planet] raised [ [its] temperature].  
b. [The temperature [of the gaseous planet] rose.  
c. The gaseous planet warmed.
- (7) a. [Die Suppe] erhöhte [[ihre] Temperatur].  
b. [Die Temperatur [der Suppe]] erhöhte sich.  
c. [Die Suppe] erwärmte sich.

- Alexiadou, A., E. Anagnostopoulou, and F. Schäfer. 2015. *External arguments in transitivity alternations: a layering approach*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Martin, F., and F. Schäfer. 2014. Anticausatives compete but do not differ in meaning: a French case study. *4<sup>e</sup> Congrès Mondial de Linguistique Française*. EDP Sciences.
- Schäfer, F. 2008. *The Syntax of (Anti-)Causatives. External arguments in change-of-state contexts*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Schäfer, F., and M. Vivanco. 2016. Anticausatives are weak scalar expressions, not reflexive expressions. *Glossa: a journal of general linguistics* 1(1). 18. 1–36.