Causative, *v* and Voice in Buryat

Overview This talk is devoted to the syntactic representation of the argument structure of agentive transitive verbs like 'open' or 'break' in Buryat (Mongolic). Buryat might provide an argument in favor of splitting off both the causative and agentive semantics from the stem of the verb and putting them into two separate functional projections: *v* (introducing a causing subevent, cf. Ramchand's (2008) *init*) and Voice (introducing Agent, cf. Kratzer's (1996) Voice). This is the account introduced by Pylkkänen (2002).

Morpho-syntactic evidence for distinguishing Voice from *v* has been provided before by Harley (2013). The argument from Buryat comes from the syntactic and semantic behavior of causative derivatives of agentive transitive verbs with an omitted Causee. These causatives are similar to the French *faire par* construction (Folli & Harley 2007). Unlike *faire par*, however, they seem to embed a structure bigger than a VP, though still devoid from the Agent argument position. The split Voice>*v*>V system provides the right candidate for this kind of structure, namely, [$_{vP}$ *v* VP] with no Voice.

Background Neo-Davidsonian semantic theories have argued for splitting off the Agent argument from an agentive transitive verb, see Kratzer (1996), Pylkkänen (2002) and others. The Agent is believed to be introduced by a separate functional head Voice. Parallel to neo-Davidsonian approaches to argument structure, various theories of complex event structure have been developed, building on the early work in generative semantics, particularly Dowty (1979). Theories like Ramchand (2008) have argued for decomposing the transitive event like 'break' into the causing (cf. Dowty's (1979) DO+CAUSE) and the caused subcomponents. Usually the work of introducing the Agent and the causing subevent is put into the same functional projection, e.g. *init* in Ramchand's work. This talk tries to argue that these two semantic components should be split between two functional projections. In what follows I am going to call them *v* and Voice:

(1) a. || *v* || = λP$_{<vt>}$. λe. ∃e': Cause(e)(e') & P(e).
     b. || Voice || = λP$_{<vt>}$. λx. λe. P(e) & Agent(x)(e).

The complement of Buryat causative Buryat has a productive causative morpheme *-u:l*. It may attach to both transitive and intransitive verbs. In this talk we will mostly be interested in agentive transitive verbs. Their causatives allow for the Causee (the Agent of the base verb) to bear accusative, dative or instrumental case (2a) or to be omitted altogether (2b).

(2) a. badma   darim-i:jə/-da/-a:r   bəʃəg bəʃ-ʉ:l-ə:
        Badma.NOM Darima-ACC/DAT/INSTR letter write-CAUS-PRT
        Badma made Darima write a letter.
     b. badma   bəʃəg bəʃ-ʉ:l-ə:
        Badma.NOM   letter write-CAUS-PRT
        Badma made someone write a letter.

In the latter case the understood Causee does not seem to be present in the syntactic structure. It is not an empty pronoun *pro*. Buryat allows for *pro* drop in general. However, the antecedent of *pro* must be salient in the discourse. B's answer in (3) is only felicitous if the previous discourse establishes an antecedent for the object of *tan'i* 'know'.

(3) A: A Badma?   B: $^{(\#)}$ Badma   (*pro*) tan'-a:
        What about Badma?   Badma.NOM pro   know-PRT
                                     Badma recognized them.

The understood, but omitted Causee in a causative construction does not require a discourse salient antecedent:

(4) A: Badma ju: xənə? B: Badma   xarʃa ʃərd-ʉ:l-nə
     What is Badma doing?   Badma.NOM fence paint-CAUS-PRS
                          Badma is making someone to paint the fence.

An overt Causee blocks passivization of the base direct object (5a). Meanwhile the understood, but omitted Causee does not (5b).

(5) a. * ʉmdən$_i$ sajan-a:r   badm-i:je   t$_i$ xaxal-u:l-agd-a:
          pants.NOM Sajana-INSTR Badma-ACC   tear-CAUS-PASS-PRT
        Sajana made Badma tear these pants.

     b. ʉmdən$_i$ sajan-a:r   t$_i$ xaxal-u:l-agd-a:
        pants.NOM Sajana-INSTR   tear-CAUS-PASS-PRT
        Sajana made someone tear these pants.

Even though the Agent argument of the base transitive verb (the Causee) does not seem to project into the syntactic structure in these cases, the causative subevent of the base transitive verb is still there. Thus, temporal adverbials (like 'for five minutes' or 'yesterday'), locative adverbials (like 'indoors'), manner adverbials (like 'quickly') and agent-oriented adverbials (like 'in a hurry' and purpose clauses) may modify either the causative subevent associated with the overt Causer or the causative subevent associated with the base transitive verb. Furthermore, a causative construction with an omitted Causee creates a legitimate agentive transitive antecedent for the VP pronoun *ti:* 'do.so':

(6) xərbə: ojuna   ənə nom unʃ-u:l-a:-ha:-n'
     if   Ojuna.NOM this book read-CAUS-PRT-ABL-3SG

     If Ojuna makes someone to read this book,
     narana   baha ti:-xe
     Narana.NOM also do.so-FUT
     1. *...then Narana will make someone to read this book too.*
     2. *...then Narana will read this book too.*

These data point towards an analysis where the causative morpheme *-u:l* takes a verb phrase that does not project an Agent, but still has agentive causative semantics. Within a split Voice>v>VP approach this corresponds to a [$_{vP}$ v VP] with no Voice, see (1a).

Obviously, additional evidence is required for separating the causative subevent (v) from the base transitive verb. One piece of evidence may come from the semantics of passive derivatives in Buryat. The behavior of the Buryat passive morpheme *-gda* in the context of agentive transitive verbs as well as unaccusatives makes one to believe that the lexical semantics of an agentive transitive stem like *xaxal* 'tear' does not involve causation and that in the unmarked case causation comes from an implicit functional head, aka *v*.

Selected references Dowty, D. (1979) Word Meaning and Montague Grammar: The Semantics of Verbs and Times; In: *Generative Semantics and in Montague's PTQ*; Dordrecht; Reidel; Harley, H. (2013) External Arguments and the Mirror Principle: On the Distinctness of Voice and v; In: *Lingua* 125; ed. by Peter Hallman and Dalina Kallulli; 34-57; Kratzer, A. (1996) Severing the External Argument from its Verb; In: *Phrase Structure and the Lexicon*; ed. by Rooryck, J., Zaring, L.; Dodrecht; Kluwer Academic Publishers; Ramchand, G. (2008) Verb Meaning and the Lexicon: A First Phase Syntax; University of Tromsø; CASTL