Causational Interpretation based on Immediate and General Common Ground Frames

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Austronesian languages like Tagalog exhibit explicit morphological means like the prefixes *pa*- and *ika*- for marking different kinds of causation.

(1) a. Nag-kain ako   ng   isda.   b. Nag-pa-kain   ako   ng   isda sa   mga bata.
       AV. eat 1sNOM GEN fish   AV-CAUS-eat 1sNOM GEN fish DAT PL   child
       'I ate fish.'   'I made/let the children eat fish.'
(2) a. Na-galit siya   sa   akin. b. I-k<in>a-galit   niya   ako.
       ST-anger 3sNom DAT 1s   CAUS<UV>anger   3sGEN 1sNOM
       'He is angry at me.'   'I made him angry.'

Still, our preliminary fieldwork study shows that these are not used as often as one would expect. Very often speakers choose verbs unmarked for causation. The calculation of the exact causal relation between two events is then left to the hearer. It has been claimed that in addition to frames that provide the lexical-conceptual meaning of linguistic elements and structures, interlocutors seem to make extensive use of situational prototype frames (Barsalou 1992), in which events are connected via constraints mirroring different causal relations ('x requires y', x enables y' etc.). How exactly events are construed as connected is therefore also influenced by discourse coherence relations (like explanation, elaboration, parallelism etc.) and what is 'at issue' (=focal) in a short, given discourse, i.e. whether the result or the process is at-issue and central in a series of events. In this talk, we will give an outline of a current frame semantic approach (cf. Petersen 2007, Löbner 2014) to the calculation and representation of the information- and discourse-structural interpretation of event descriptions based on immediate and general common ground frames (cf. Berio et al. 2017), whereby the immediate common ground frames represent the linguistic knowledge and cues given in the immediate discourse context, while the general common ground frames consist of general world knowledge and, more specifically, about prototypical scenarios. Time permitting, we will, furthermore, discuss when explicit lexical causatives are used.

References
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