

THE CAUSAL GRID FOR SPANISH DE-MARKED CAUSERS

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In this presentation we propose a 'causal grid' that decomposed the predicate CAUSE in terms of a feature structure. Distinct value activation patterns in the 'causal grid' are associated with the various causative meanings encoded in different Spanish forms, respectively. In particular, the different morphosyntactic realizations of the Causer and/or the Causee are linked systematically to different meanings in a way that follows the RRG linking algorithm. In particular, we shall concentrate here on the value activation pattern that corresponds to the causative meaning of the Spanish preposition *de* "from/of". Concurrently, our proposal suggests a novel decomposition of the meaning of prepositions.

The motivation for positing a semantic schema such as the 'causal grid' is that the causative meanings encoded in different Spanish expressions is slightly different in each of them. This suggests that these forms are closely interrelated: they work together and each plays a distinct role in a semantic spectrum intended to account for every possible type of causal relation. In Spanish, the formal expression of causation may come in different guises, especially in terms of how the causer is syntactically linked, as shown in (1).

- (1) a. *Daniel rompió la ventana.* 'Daniel broke the window.'
b. *José me hizolavar el auto.* 'José made me wash his car.'
c. *Pedro se murió de covid.* 'Pedro died of covid.'

In (1a) *romper* encodes causation lexically and links its causer (Daniel) to subject role; (1b) deploys the periphrasis *hacer + verb*, and links the main causer (José) to subject role and the secondary causer (*me* 'me,' corresponding to *lavar* 'wash') to direct object role; in (1c) the causer (*covid*, as evinced by *El covidhizo que Pedro muriera* 'Covid made Pedro die') is linked to an oblique role headed by the preposition *de* 'of, from' (*de-PP*).

Linking theories (Van Valin 2005; Van Valin&LaPolla 1997; Croft 2012; Rappaport Hovav& Levin 2005) have long made reference to event structure in order to (partially) account for facts like these. While core grammatical relations have attracted the most attention, obliques like the one in (1c) have been little studied (e.g., Croft & Vigus 2020; DeLancey 1984). Strikingly, a well-defined set of causers can be identified as admissible for *de-PPs*:

- (2) a. *Elena tembló de frío.* 'Elena shivered from the cold.'
b. *Carla saltó de alegría.* 'Carla jumpedwithjoy.'
c. *Leo se rió de sus ocurrencias.* 'Leo laughed at his wisecracks.'

De-marked oblique causers can be diseases (1c), bodily sensations (2a), emotions (2b), and ideas/memories (2c). Note that they all refer to entities or phenomena internal to the causee (here, the subjects), motivating the feature {internal} alluded to above. This is corroborated by the unacceptability of external causers such as agents, instruments, or natural forces: *Carla saltó *de Juan/ *de la alarma/ *deltrueno* 'Carla jumped *of Juan/ *of the alarm/ *of the thunder.' By contrast, note that the preposition *con* 'with' allows for a different range of causers: *Carla saltó *con la alegría/ con la alarma/ con el trueno/ *con Juan* (comitative

reading ruled out); here external {unintentional}, {non sentient} seem to be the criterial feature.

The above facts suggest that features such as {+/-internal} or {+/-intentionality} require to be factored into the event structure describing the situations where the causer is linked to an oblique role. Thus, in this paper we intend to model the structure of a causal grid that can potentially accommodate the full spectrum of causation focusing on the case of *de*-marked oblique causers.

References

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