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LINGUISTICS

CAUSATIVES AND INCHOATIVES IN ENGLISH AND THEIR TREATMENT IN RECENT LEXICOGRAPHIC PRACTICE*

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1. *General Problems*

1.0. The latest edition of the *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English* defines *inchoative*¹ as "expressing the beginning of an action or state". As an advanced learner, let me begin the action of reading this paper by saying that it has been caused by a letter from Prof. Quirk, who is therefore the "instigator of the action" and also "typically animate". He thus fits Fillmore's definition of the *Agentive* case, and is consequently the *prime mover* behind my attempts to deal with causatives and inchoatives in English.

1.1. So much has been written in the last fifteen years on causatives that reading a list of the most important publications alone would take up the time available for my paper. It would be hopeless to try to review the literature, so let me only refer you to Kastovsky (1973) and Farber (1976) for causatives, to Shibatani (1976) for arguments for and against Generative Semantics, and to Lipka (1976) for complementary aspects of Case Grammar and Generative Semantics.

* I would like to thank Y. Ikegami, D. Kastovsky and J. Monaghan for very helpful comments on an earlier version of this paper which was read at the 11th Triennial Conference of the International Association of University Professors of English at Aberdeen on 25 August 1980.

¹ Y. Ikegami (personal communication) has pointed out to me that the notion 'inchoative' is far from being well-defined and contains heterogeneous types of aspect, such as e.g. the resultative or "egressive" *become rich* as opposed to the ingressive *catch fire* 'begin to burn', that might be captured by metalinguistic constructs such as COME TO vs. GO TO. The situation is similar with 'causatives', which must not be considered as in binary opposition to 'non-causatives'. This is true. However, the intention of the present paper is not to set up a detailed sub-classification, but to stress the connection of inchoatives and causatives, their discussion in linguistic theory, and the practice followed by dictionary-writers. Cf. Lipka (1972:61–72, 1979) for the semantic components BECOME and CAUSE.

In the following I shall discuss various types of causatives and inchoatives in English, in particular those which can be considered as deadjectival and denominal derived verbs. Basically, my approach will be analytic, and I therefore adopt the listener's or reader's point of view.

I will compare morphologically complex verbs with the lexical decomposition of simple items carried out in Generative Semantics with a view to how these two analyses correspond to the practice of lexicographers. A number of problems concerning evidence from morphology for semantic analysis are then taken up. After this, contextual approaches to causatives and inchoatives are reviewed in connection with possible generalizations and innovative uses of language. Throughout the paper I will draw mainly on material from two recent dictionaries: the *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English* (LDCE) and the revised and updated impression of the *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English* (1980) (OALD). These dictionaries have been chosen because they are widely used, and especially since their relatively compact format allows the reflection of actual present-day usage. We will see that dictionaries often do not draw a line between linguistic knowledge and explanation and extralinguistic encyclopedic information.

I hope to be able to show that the dictionaries, nevertheless, reflect the fact that there is some generalization possible in the lexicon of English, despite its irregularity, and that the lexicon must be distinguished from creative uses of language in context, which allow non-lexicalized nonce-formations.

1.2. When discussing the "aspect of the verb". Otto Jespersen in his *Philosophy of Grammar* (1924 : 287f). argues that, amongst others, a "distinction between stability and change" must be made, which may be expressed by a pair of verbs such as *have* and *get*, or *be* and *become* (and its synonyms *get*, *turn*, *grow*). He points out that there is a difference between *be married* and *get married* — which will not surprise even the non-linguists — and that certain intransitive and transitive verbs can be derived from adjectives. Thus *ripen* and *slow (down)* denote change of becoming, while *flatten*, *weaken* etc. are causatives. Many formations may be used both transitively and intransitively. Jespersen further remarks that similar changes can be expressed by other means, such as *fall asleep*, *go to sleep*, *get to know* and *begin to look*. For Jespersen, inchoatives and causatives are consequently taken together, since they both denote a change as opposed to non-change.

2. *Inchoatives and causatives: a classification*

2. Causative and inchoative change-of-state verbs and parallel syntactic groups may be classified in the following way (cf. Dirven and Radden 1977 : 151, 153, 162. Kastovsky 1973 : 266—73):

1. *diachronically related pairs:*

- (1) fall — fell

sit — set
 lie — lay
 full — fill²

There is an etymological connection, but no synchronic derivational relationship.

2. *synchronically related pairs:*

(2) hard — hard/en
 solid — solid/ify
 legal — legal/ize
 dry — dry/Ø
 hyphen — hyphen/ate
 atom — atom/ize
 butter — butter/Ø
 cash — cash/Ø.

The verbs in this group can be considered to be derived from adjectives or nouns. The inchoative or causative meaning is represented on the surface by morphological means, i.e. suffixes. I have here disregarded prefixes, such as *en-* in *encage*, or *be-* in *belittle*. The problem of zero-derivation, as instanced by the verbs *to dry*, *to butter*, and *to cash*, but also possibly by the transitive causative verbs *to open*, *to break*, and *to march* will be taken up later.

3. *explicit constructions with an inchoative or causative auxiliary:*

(3) *get, go, grow, turn* pale,
become warm, mad;
make legal, drunk, known,
cause to go, collapse, die.

Semantic distinctions between the various inchoative auxiliaries and their collocations are investigated in Bald (1972 : 95—106). In Leech (1969 : 20f.) two different “systems of causation” are distinguished: “weak causation” (expressed by *let, allow* etc.) and “strong causation” (expressed by *make, compel* etc.) (cf. Lipka 1972 : 63). In all these cases syntactic means, i.e. analytical constructions, are used to express inchoative or causative meaning, instead of morphological or synthetic means.

4. *explicit collocations:*

(4) *begin* to look, *start* to burn,
fall asleep, ill,
catch fire, sight of, cold;

² As was pointed out in the discussion by A. Fill, *fill* and *full* may also be seen as synchronically related. However, this is certainly not a productive word-formative pattern.

put to sleep,
set fire to, on fire/
 sleep sober, push open;
 chop down, knock up.

This group is only gradually distinct from the previous one. For example, Bald counts *fall* in *fall ill* amongst the copulative verbs in English belonging to the sub-class *become*. I consider verbs in this group as not being auxiliaries. One might object, it is true, that *become* and *cause* are also not auxiliaries properly speaking, but rather a sort of pro-verb. Very often such explicit collocations are idiomatic. Verb-adjective constructions and deverbal verb-particle constructions constitute a special group which cannot be discussed here (cf. Lipka 1972 116–20).

The LDCE defines *catch fire* as ‘to begin to burn’ and *set on fire* or *set fire to* as ‘to light (something not really meant to burn)’. In one of its useful USAGE-notes (s.v. *fire*) and the explanation for them (xxviii) it points out that people *set fire* to things (either by accident or on purpose) and that things *catch fire*. The intentional or unintentional causative collocation *set fire to* is thus paraphrased by the simple lexical item *to light*, which is defined in the first of its senses as ‘to (cause to) start to burn’, with the auxiliary *cause* in parentheses or round brackets. The superficially simple verb *light* can thus be either inchoative or causative. Paraphrasing simple lexical items, in order to carry out a semantic analysis and establish their so-called ‘atomic predicates’ is at the basis of the classical procedure of ‘lexical decomposition’ in the theory of Generative Semantics (cf. Lipka 1976). We will return presently to this subject.

What is relevant at the moment is to ascertain that morphologically simple verbs, such as *to light*, may also be inchoatives or causatives. This is further demonstrated by the fact that the verbs *ignite* and *kindle* both receive the same paraphrase as *to light* in the LDCE, viz. ‘to (cause to) start to burn’. In the OALD *to light* is defined as ‘cause to begin burning’, with *begin* replacing *start* in the LDCE. In COD⁶ *kindle* is paraphrased as either ‘catch fire’ or ‘set on fire’, and *ignite* as ‘set fire to, cause to burn’ or ‘take fire’. Thus the paraphrasing circle is closed.

In case you begin or start to wonder whether you have to do with a pyromaniac, let me now turn to another nice subject, viz. *to die, kill, murder, drown, assassinate, and put down*. *Die* is inchoative, the others are mostly causative verbs. The blame for discussing them should not be put on me, but rather on such Generative Semanticists as George Lakoff and James McCawley. They have concerned themselves with *die*, and its relationship *to kill* in many scholarly articles. Before broaching this topic, let me now introduce a fifth group of causatives, morphologically unrelated pairs of

simple verbs, whose second member is causative and whose first may be inchoative:

5. *unrelated simple pairs*:

- (5) die — kill
 eat — feed
 learn — teach³
 see — show
 know — tell
 have — give.

Instances of this kind have sometimes been termed 'suppletion', since they are similar to grammatical suppletion as in *go* and *went* or *be*, *are*, and *is*. The parallelism between semantic description and analysis of complex lexical items and the lexical decomposition of morphologically simple verbs has been discussed in Kastovsky (1973, 1981) and Lipka (1976, 1979, 1981). One may argue that the discipline of word-formation, which is concerned with morphologically structured verbs, may provide evidence for specific semantic analyses of lexemes. In the theory of Generative Semantics, to which we will now turn, besides syntactic and logical arguments, paraphrasing has mainly been used for performing the decomposition of simple lexemes into so-called 'atomic predicates'.

3. *The Generative Semantics approach*

3.1. In his dissertation of 1965, published under the title *Irregularity in Syntax* in 1970, George Lakoff (1970 : 33f.) argued that inchoative sentences such as (6b) and (6c) and (7b) and (7c) are synonymous and should therefore be derived from "very similar" deep structures, and transformationally related to the sentences (6a) and (7a):

- (6a) The sauce is *thick* + inchoative pro-verb ⇒
 (6b) The sauce *thickened*
 (6c) The sauce *became thick* + causative pro-verb ⇒
 (6d) John *thickened* the sauce
 (7a) The iron is *liquid* + inchoative pro-verb ⇒
 (7b) The iron *liquefied*
 (7c) The iron *became liquid*.

³ As Y. Ikegami has mentioned, one can certainly *teach* someone something without necessarily causing him to *learn*, and the notion of activity is perhaps more important in such pairs than that of causativity. However, it is also useful to draw attention to the semantic relationship in such pairs, which Fillmore (1968:30f.) was the first to do (cf. also Kastovsky 1973:258f. and 273 for the "double causative" *teach*). Cf. the discussion of the notion of transitivity and causativity in connection with two-place verbs such as *eat* in Lipka (1972:61—6 and 48—51).

An "inchoative pro-verb" is postulated to be contained in such verbs as *thicken* and *liquefy*, parallel to the overt inchoative auxiliary *become* in (6c) and (7c).

Similarly, a "causative pro-verb" is assumed to be present in the transitive verb *thicken* (1970 : 42f.) in the sentence (6d), and it is claimed that the same relationship exists between *the sauce* and *thick* in all three sentences (6a), (6b), and (6d), but obviously also in (6c). A causative transformation is said to operate on inchoative verbs, which in turn are the product of an inchoative rule. The underlying structure for the sentence (6d) is consequently claimed to contain both the inchoative and the causative pro-verb.

Lakoff (1970 : 98ff.) already carried over these theoretical proposals to such pleasant examples as *kill*, *die*, and *dead*. He analyses *kill* as meaning 'to cause (someone) to die' and considers it as "having the same lexical meaning as *die*" (cf. also Fillmore 1968 : 30). It is irregular, however, in being "an absolute exception to the causative transformation". *Die*, in turn, which is paraphrased as 'to come to be dead', is said to have the same meaning as *dead* but to be an exception to the inchoative transformation. Note that in German the transitive verb *töten*, which is the equivalent of *kill*, is obviously derived from the adjective *tot*, the equivalent of *dead*, while the inchoative verb *sterben* is unrelated to either. Such cross-linguistic observations, in my opinion, lend further support to the position of the Generative Semanticists.

In the OALD *kill* is defined as 'put to death, cause the death of', while the LDCE gives the classical paraphrase of Generative Semantics 'to cause to die'. Other items from this area, viz. causative and inchoative *drown* and the purely causative *murder* and *assassinate* cannot be decomposed without residue into atomic predicates and require additional semantic features. In the OALD *drown* is defined as '(cause sb to) die in water because unable to breathe' while LDCE gives two entries: 1. die by being under water for a long time', and 2.' kill by holding under water for a long time'. This does not include the case of e.g. drowning cats by throwing them into the water. Both dictionaries, clearly, give extensive encyclopedic information, besides providing a linguistic explanation.

For *murder*, as another hyponym of *kill*, they both mention the same additional semantic elements, viz. 'unlawfully' and 'on purpose', which are obviously not atomic predicates. *Assassinate* requires a particular object, specified as a 'politician' or 'ruler' in both dictionaries, and the further component 'for political reasons' also mentioned by both. The LDCE in its paraphrase

⁴ Both 'unlawfully' and 'on purpose', as well as Lakoff's COME ABOUT, are clearly morphologically complex and therefore already superficially decomposable and non-atomic. As mentioned in the discussion, the atomicity of 'atomic predicates' is notoriously problematical. Cf. Lipka (1976) and especially (1979) for surface structure evidence for semantic components.

gives the alternative 'for political reasons or reward' and uses the hyponym *murder* instead of *kill*. Still another specific object is required for *put down*, marked in the LDCE as euphemistic and defined as 'to kill (an animal), esp. because of old age or illness'. From all this it should be clear that a simple decomposition into 'atomic predicates'⁴, in the manner of Generative Semantics, is not sufficient for an adequate description of these causatives and inchoatives, as it is to be found in the dictionaries. It is therefore not surprising that the Generative Semantics should have restricted themselves to the simple cases of *kill* and *die* (and never mention *deaden*).

3.2. Lakoff's proposals have been widely publicized, or made public, in several later articles of his, but especially in many publications by James McCawley. The inchoative and causative pro-verbs have become the so-called atomic predicates BECOME and CAUSE, as in the analyses of *die* as BECOME NOT ALIVE and *kill* as CAUSE BECOME NOT ALIVE. They must be considered elements of the metalanguage, not identical with the object-language verbs *become* and *cause* of English, which turn up in paraphrases used for the postulation of lexical decomposition.

The analysis of *kill* and *die*, which is the stock example of Generative Semantics, has been revised in more recent articles by McCawley, where a new atomic predicate DO is introduced. I have argued in Lipka (1976) that there are a number of correspondences between Generative Semantics and Fillmore's Case Grammar and that the presence of the metalinguistic unit DO in the verb is equivalent to the addition of an *Agentive* case in its context in Fillmore's framework. Both theories are therefore to some extent complementary.

If the intransitive verb *break* in (8a) is analysed as containing the atomic predicates BECOME NOT WHOLE, then the transitive verb *break* in (8b) can either be interpreted as containing the additional predicates CAUSE, or DO and CAUSE, or being the same verb in a different context (cf. Lipka 1976 : 120f., 126f.).

(8a) The window *broke* BECOME NOT WHOLE

(8b) John *broke* the window + *Agentive* = + (DO) CAUSE

Fillmore in (1968) and other articles explains such identity of meaning in various contexts with the notion of different 'case frames', in which such verbs may be inserted.

A third possibility of analysing the transitive causative verb *break* would be to consider it as derived from the intransitive inchoative verb by means of a zero-morpheme. This proposal is based on its different meaning and its parallelism with overt derivatives such as *atom/ize* 'cause to become atoms, convert into atoms' and *legal/ize* 'cause to become legal, make legal' (cf. Lipka 1976: 129).

4. *Morphological evidence for semantic analysis*

4.1. Superficially simple lexemes — whether analysable as zero-derivatives or not — and their semantic analysis have been the main concern of Generative Semantics. Overt derivatives, which are clearly morphologically structured, on the other hand, appear to provide surface structure evidence for similar lexical decomposition. However, there are not only exceptions to derivative patterns — as Lakoff had noticed — but also other irregularities, partly due to the process of lexicalization, which must be considered, if word-formation is adduced as morphological evidence for semantic analysis. There exist several problems and difficulties for such an approach which, nevertheless, do not constitute true counter-arguments in my opinion.

4.2.1. Firstly, there is ambiguity. A superficially identical suffix may be used to derive inchoatives as well as causatives. Thus, e.g. Anderson (1971 : 67) points out that *-en* derives both inchoatives and causatives from adjectives as seen in the following:

(9a) The rope was *slack*

(9b) The rope *slackened*

(9c) Egbert *slackened* the rope.

This, according to the LDCE, also holds for *blacken*, *harden*, *redde*n, *soften*, *weaken*, Lakoff's *thicken*, and others. Ambiguity as to inchoative or causative sense is also to be found with zero-derivatives, which Anderson does not discuss.

For the lexicographer such ambiguity is no problem and the two possible economical solutions may be illustrated with the entries for *blacken* in the OALD and LDCE:

(10) *blacken*:

OALD... *vt, vi...* make or become black...

LDCE... *v ...* to (cause to) become black or dark...

The same procedure is followed in both dictionaries in the case of *solidify*, defined as 'make or become solid' in the OALD and 'to (cause to) become solid, hard, or firm' in the LDCE.

4.2.2. The second difficulty for morphological evidence is the opposite case, viz. that several suffixes may derive inchoatives or causatives from the same basis. Thus besides *blacken* — and verb-particle constructions like *black out* and *black up* (cf. Lipka 1972 : 90, esp. fn. 17) — there is also a transitive verb *to black*, interpretable as a zero-derivative, which has the more specific meaning 'make black (of boots or eyes)' and 'declare black' in the sense of 'not to be handled' as in the example *the strikers blacked the ship/cargo*.

Alongside causative and inchoative *liquefy*, there is also a more specialized transitive *liquidize*, paraphrased as 'crush, e.g. fruit, vegetables, to a liquid pulp' in the OALD, and more accurately as 'to crush (esp. fruit or vegetables)

into a liquid-like form or juice' in the LDCE. Here again, the specification of the process *crush*, by which the change of state is caused, represents a piece of encyclopedic information.

There seems to be a wide-spread belief that *liquefy* is rather technical and scientific, as with most derivatives in *-ify*. But if one trusts the following entry in the LDCE, this must be called in doubt:

- (11) LDCE: *liquefy*... to (cause to) become liquid:
Butter liquefies in heat.

The COD⁶ defines the verb thus:

- (12) COD⁶: bring (solid or gas) or come into liquid condition.

A former colleague of mine, Dr. James Monaghan, has carried out a test with twelve native speakers, which shows that there is far from complete agreement as regards the acceptability of collocations with *liquefy*, *liquidize*, and *melt*. Although there is a general feeling that *liquefy* denotes a change from gas to liquid (which contradicts Lakoff and the LDCE) and *melt* a change from solid to liquid, due to heat, a number of persons queried the collocation of *liquefy* and *steam*, and three accepted that of *liquidize* and *iron*. In the case of *equalize* vs. *to equal* the distinction seems to be quite clear-cut. The former is apparently only causative, while the latter, interpretable as a zero-derivative, is neither causative nor inchoative, but stative with the meaning 'be equal to' and therefore transitive, as a relational predicator.

With *quieten* vs. *to quiet* there is still another complementary distribution, since the former, which is both causative and inchoative, seems to occur mainly in British English, while the latter is restricted to American English. Similar but inverse distribution is found with the non-causative *burglarize* vs. *to burgle* where the overt derivative is chiefly American English.

4.2.3. As the previous examples show, systematically possible derivatives may be restricted to specific speech communities, may have a fixed interpretation, or occur only in particular registers. This phenomenon may be captured by the concept of 'norm', as introduced into linguistics by Eugenio Coseriu. According to him, the norm of a language can be seen both as a social convention and as a third level of abstraction, in between de Saussure's *langue* and *parole*. The 'norm' accounts for the irregular deviations from the system of a language on the morphological and syntactic plane, as well as for specific fixations and the acceptability of unsystematic collocations.

I think that this concept is also useful for explaining the third problem tied up with morphological evidence for semantic analysis, viz. that certain suffixes only occur in one interpretation in particular derivatives. Thus, although *-ize* is almost exclusively used for deriving causatives from adjectives and nouns, *materialize* may have an inchoative meaning, which, besides

others, is paraphrased in the OALD as 'take material form'. *Sympathize* is defined in the LDCE as 'feel or show sympathy' where the underlying predicate is not really CAUSE but rather HAVE. Used as an intransitive verb, *symbolize* is paraphrased in both dictionaries as 'be a symbol of' which results in the underlying stative predicate BE. *Socialize* also, besides having two causative senses, must be assigned an underlying predicate BE in the meaning given as 'spend time with others in a friendly way' in the LDCE. In this sense it is derived from the adjective *social* as in *man is a social animal*. This adjective is also the basis, in the technical sociological causative meaning 'to cause to fit into society'. The second causative reading given as 'bring into public ownership' in the LDCE, may be derived from *social* (property), but one might also establish a relationship with the noun *socialism*. Consequently a number of separate derivatives fall together in the surface form *socialize*.

4.2.4. A further problem in the use of morphological evidence is the influence of context, both in the sense of linguistic environment and extralinguistic knowledge.

The verb *atomize* is defined in the OALD as 'reduce to atoms' while the noun *atomizer* is characterized as 'device for producing a fine spray, e.g. of perfume'. The link with this instrument is at the basis of the only definition of *atomize* given in the LDCE, viz. 'to break a liquid into a mist of spray of very little drops by forcing it through an instrument (*atomizer*) and out through a very small hole'. Obviously, in this definition, the nominal base *atom* of the verb is no longer motivated, and the single possible process, denoted by the verb, is described by the definition as the only meaning in use. This loss of motivation may be interpreted as the result of lexicalization.

However, if the sentence *the bomb atomized the city* is judged acceptable (cf. Kastovsky 1973:267), and *atom* is defined in one of its meanings as 'very small bit', (as it is in fact in the OALD), then the causative verb *atomize* must be considered perfectly regular, with the paraphrase 'convert into atoms' and the lexical decomposition 'CAUSE BECOME atoms'. This example shows that the nominal co-text of verbs, such as *atomize* — viz. *bomb* and *city* — has to be taken into account for an adequate semantic analysis. It further demonstrates that derivation in principle does not proceed from the global meaning of a word, such as *social* or *atom*, but only from part of its meaning, in this case from definition 2 in the OALD.

I will briefly discuss two possibilities of capturing the relationship between verbs and their subjects and objects, or participants in a sentence, viz. Fillmore's Case Grammar and the approach to nouns used as verbs in Clark and Clark (1979). Both are contextual theories, but only the latter one is a model of interpretation which takes extralinguistic knowledge and innovative uses of words in context as a starting point.

5. Contextual approaches

5.1. In various publications Fillmore argues (cf. Kastovsky 1973:257f., Lipka 1976:126) that such transitive and intransitive verbs as *open*, *break* and *cook* represent one and the same lexical item, whose inchoative or causative meaning is contextually determined. Thus, for example, it is not necessary to distinguish two different verbs *break*, as in the sentences (8a) and (8b) if one recognizes that precisely the noun phrases which appear as subject of the inchoative *break* can occur as the direct object of the causative *break*.

The addition of a noun phrase in the Agentive case, as in (8b), produces the causative variant, which is therefore contextually determined. This, according to Fillmore, also holds in principle for the second number of the pairs in (5), such as *kill*, *show*, *tell*, *teach*, *give*, although in these cases the first member is not formally identical, but completely unrelated (cf. Kastovsky 1973:258f.).

There are many verbs in English which can be used in various syntactic frames in the same form, either intransitively or transitively, often with inchoative and causative meaning, such as *break*, *open*, *cook*, *fail*; *dry*, *spoil*, *melt*, *freeze*, *burn*; *fly*, *roll*, *walk*, *march* (as in *John marched the prisoners*), and generally *move* and *change*. They have been labelled the 'Move and Change-class' by Jespersen, and 'ergative verbs' by Lyons (cf. Lipka 1972:63 fn.72). Basically their possible causative meaning can be explained in two ways: either as inherent in the verb itself, represented by atomic predicates such as CAUSE and DO, or as a function of the nominal environment as in Fillmore's Case Grammar.

5.2.1. The contextual approach in Clark and Clark (1979) is very different from Fillmore's. The authors are concerned with what one may call zero-derived denominal verbs. However, they do not subscribe to the concept of derivation, but rather attempt to determine "the meaning and acceptability of innovative verbs in various contexts" (1979:767). A large part of the examples they discuss are instrumental verbs, but many others can be analysed as causatives. They develop a "theory of interpretation" which accounts for the fact that people can readily create and understand innovative denominal verbs as e.g. in *to porch a newspaper* or *to Houndini one's way out of a closet*. In their opinion, such verbs, which would traditionally be called "nonreformations", constitute a new category, which they call "contextuals". These are characterized by having "a shifting sense and denotation" (1979:782). According to Clark and Clark (1979:773) 'contextuals' have "an indefinitely large number of potential senses, and their interpretation depends on the context... (and on) the cooperation of the speaker and the listener".

At the heart of their theory is a convention (1979:767, 787) that the speaker, cooperating with the listener, on the basis of their mutual knowledge, means to denote a state, event, or process that he believes the hearer can

work out on this occasion. This is done in such a way, that the nominal basis of the derived verb, which they call "parent noun" (e.g. *porch* or *Houdini*), denotes one role in the state, event, or process, and the remaining surface arguments of the verb denote other of its roles. Thus, e.g. with the class traditionally labelled 'ornative verbs', as in the expression *to gas the car*, the listener knows that the gas goes in the car (and is therefore an 'Objective' deep case). But he can also work out the identical relationship in the "innovation" *to blanket the bed*. The same holds in expressions where the 'parent noun' is in the 'Locative' case, both with established verbs as in *to kennel the dog* (where the dog goes in the kennel) and the innovation *to rack the plates*.

In the following complaint by a demonstrator

(13) *We were stoned and bottled by the spectators* (1979:785)

It is not very difficult to compute the role of the 'parent noun' of the innovative verb *bottle*. It is not the normal function of bottles, which is reflected in expressions such as *to bottle the beer*, but it is perfectly interpretable.

Clark and Clark argue (1979:798) that people categorize objects, e.g. according to their physical characteristics, their ontogeny or their potential roles, and that what they call "predominant features" are very important in this respect. An example of such features which they do not mention, would be the object denoted by the noun *mushroom*. This can be said to have as predominant features its shape and its rapid growth. The LDCE mentions three different zero-derived verbs, which belong to the norm of English and are therefore not innovations, viz.

- (14) LDCE:*to mushroom*: 1. 'to form and spread in the shape of a MUSHROOM'
 2. 'to grow and develop fast'
 3. 'to gather MUSHROOMS'.

As the lack of corresponding German derivatives shows, such predominant features are not universally exploited in the same way.

Clark and Clark point out (1979:793) that such features may lead to remarkable ambiguity. Thus, the substance denoted by the noun *milk* is said to have two features: one based on its ontogeny or origin, the other on its potential roles. Milk comes from mammary glands and is put into certain foods. This explains the fact that there are two possible causative verbs, traditionally labelled 'privative' and 'ornative'. In *milk the cow* the verb means 'take milk out', while in the innovation *milk the tea* it means 'put milk in'. Other verbs with such contradictory senses would be *cork the bottle/oaks*, *seed the lawn/grapes*, *fin the boat/fish*.

5.2.2. Including 'innovations' in the analysis and description of causatives and inchoatives means that we do not restrict our selves to the verbs which have been actually coined once, and have then entered the lexicon, as the

list of verbs which belong to the 'norm' of the language, and are included in dictionaries. Such established lexemes are affected to a lesser or larger extent by idiomatization and other effects of lexicalization. The productivity of innovations is, however, not unrestricted. I will only give one example from what Clark and Clark (1979:799) call "entrenchement". The fact that the causative verb *hospitalize* is "entrenched" in English prevents, or "pre-empts", the formation of an innovative verb *to hospital*, meaning 'put into hospital'.

6. Conclusions

6.1. From the examples we have discussed we see that lexicographers attempt to capture the various types of causatives and inchoatives that we have distinguished. They do not include 'contextuals' or other innovative uses of language because the task of the dictionary-makers is to record as adequately and economically as possible the 'norm' of the language as it exists at a certain time. Also, they do not give a consistent and systematic linguistic analysis, and the incorporation of encyclopedic information often counteracts the attempt to be economical.

Information as to the acceptable and habitual collocations of the verbs under review is found to some extent in both recent dictionaries that I have drawn upon. Besides quoting typical co-texts, in the form of syntactic frames and lexical environments, extralinguistic context is also referred to in a number of definitions, as e.g. in *atomize*.

The generalization that many verbs in English — whether derived or simple — can be used equally well as inchoatives and causatives is reflected in both dictionaries by paraphrases such as '(cause to) become...' — with *cause* so to speak "parenthesized" — or 'make or become...'. The former procedure corresponds to the classical approach of Generative Semantics and is more often found in the LDCE, as can be seen from example (10) *blacken*. However, in some instances it is used in the OALD only. The loss of motivation, as one result of the lexicalization of established items, is reflected more often and more precisely in the LDCE in such entries as *liquidize* 'crush into liquid-like form', *blacken* '(cause to) become black or dark', *solidify* '(cause to) become solid, hard or firm'. However, as we have also seen in such examples as *drown*, *liquidize*, *atomize* the LDCE sometimes tends to overstress encyclopedic information at the expense of possible generalizations, and to split up words into different lemmas.

6.2. Generally speaking, morphological evidence for semantic analysis is used profitably in the dictionaries, despite the problems that we have investigated. Firstly, this is done by using explicit inchoative or causative constructions, such as those in (3), in the definitions. Secondly, in the case of derived verbs, this is made use of by including the basis of the derivation in the paraphrase, in case the relationship is still motivated. Clearly, there is no

one-to-one correspondence between specific suffixes, and an inchoative or causative meaning. Also, as we have seen, in many cases a suffix is missing altogether. Nevertheless, morphological surface structure can contribute to the justification of semantic analyses, not only in the case of causatives and inchoatives, but also in other areas of the lexicon of English, such as prefixal derivatives, compounds, adjectivalizations, and nominalizations. Used with discretion, morphological evidence may benefit both the professional linguist and the contemporary advanced learner.

DICTIONARIES

- LDCE Longman dictionary of contemporary English, ed. by P. Proctor (London, 1978)
- OALD Oxford advanced learner's dictionary of current English, ed. by A. S. Hornby and A. P. Cowie (Oxford/Berlin, 1980³, 11th revised printing)
- COD The concise Oxford dictionary of current English, ed. by J. B. Sykes (Oxford, 1976⁶)

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