

## Chapter VI

### Conclusion

This chapter first summarizes the thesis in section 6.1. Afterwards, further studies are presented in section 6.2.

#### 6.1 Summary of the thesis

The explanation of causativity is a debate between derivational view and lexicalist view. This thesis aims to investigate the causativity of Mandarin to see if they show the variation, especially between causatives and periphrastic causatives. To search the deep natural of causativity, three models—directness, force-dynamics and transitivity are combined as a tool to conduct the analysis. The reason for choosing these three models is that they stand for different levels of natural language, respectively semantics, cognition, and grammar. This combined framework is utilized to examine Mandarin lexical causatives and typical periphrastic causatives including 使 *shi*, 令 *ling*, 讓 *rang*, 叫 *jiao*<sub>1</sub>, and 教 *jiao*<sub>2</sub> constructions.

Lexical causatives are firstly examined. The result shows that the causativity of this type of causatives is ranging from high to intermediate but not low. It is typically high causativity when the causative verb is punctual, human agents and

human patients. Moreover, the agents intend to make the patients to be affected so that the directness and the force are also the strongest. Nevertheless, the causativity decreases when the verb becomes durative, or the agent becomes inanimate and non-volitional, or the patient becomes less individuated.

The causativity of periphrastic causatives also obeys the rules of lexical causatives. In other words, the causativity decreases in the conditions of losing animate agents, patients or punctual verbs. Three categories of periphrastic causatives are explored to be intermediate causativity. The first type includes the change of mental states. It is close to high transitivity but lacks physical action. Second, when the agents and patients are animate in periphrastic causatives, the causativity also approximates to high causativity except for the indirect causation. The third type presents the agents is inanimate, such as an event or a theme. In this situation, the causativity diminished comparing to the former two types. Nevertheless, among the periphrastic causatives, *shi*, *ling*, *rang<sub>1</sub>*, *jiao<sub>1</sub>*, and *jiao<sub>2</sub>* encode with stronger force. As for the *rang<sub>2</sub>* 'let' constructions, with the inanimate agents, inanimate patients, and durative verb, they demonstrate the low causativity.

The observation of the study indicates that causativity in Mandarin causatives forms a continuum. The variation of causativity proves that the

derivational account is incorrect. Furthermore, by adding an adverb, some causatives turn out to be ungrammatical or possess different meanings from the original ones. In addition, the derivational account is also less economical when it explains the two types of resultative compounds. Therefore, this study supports the view that the lexicalist approach provides a better solution to the problems arising in a discussion of causativity. Moreover, the causativity is highly correlated to the linguistic forms and conforms to the principle of iconicity. The shorter the causative forms, the greater causativity. Meanwhile, the models of directness, force-dynamics and transitivity collaborate well to help us to distinguish the causativity from high to low. Their features have something in common so that they are not supportive but also complementary.

## **6.2 Further Study**

After analyzing the causativity of lexical and periphrastic causatives, some directions for future study are provided. First, the order of the causatives of intermediate causativity remains to be arranged as the analysis for them in this study is only very general in scope. Second, a more detailed investigation for Mandarin periphrastic causatives is potentially needed. Specifically, based on isomorphism, every periphrastic causative construction should bear a different function with others. For example, it is discovered that *ling* constructions mostly

appear in the constructions involving mental state. Moreover, *jiao*<sub>1</sub> constructions also prefer animate or human agent. However, these are only preliminary observations. It is hoped that with the development of corpus, this question could be solved. Third, an issue of grammaticalization of Mandarin periphrastic causatives could be another direction for future study. The periphrastic causatives discussed in this study—使 *shi*, 令 *ling*, 讓 *rang*, 叫 *jiao*<sub>1</sub>, and 教 *jiao*<sub>2</sub> are the most typical and uncontroversial causatives. Nevertheless, it is noted that many ditransitive constructions such as 給 *gei* ‘give’, or 催 *cue* ‘urge’ may also have causative meanings. The possible reasons for this phenomenon could be the similarity of both syntactic constructions and the frequent use of both causative and ditransitive constructions.