Abstract

Derivational grammarians propose that causativity comes from the syntactic structures whereas lexicalists suggest it is incorporated within the formation of the lexicon. This thesis aims to investigate Mandarin lexical and periphrastic causatives to see if their causativity varies depending on the category of causative to which they are assigned. Three frameworks are adopted here to examine causatives from diverse perspective, directness, force-dynamics and transitivity. This combined framework is utilized to examine Mandarin lexical causatives and typical periphrastic causatives including 使 *shi*, 令 *ling*, 讓 *rang*, 叫 *jiao₁*, and 教 *jiao₂* constructions. The results indicate that causativity forms a continuum in which the degree of the causativity of lexical causatives ranges from high to intermediate but that for periphrastic causatives ranges from intermediate to low. The variation in the degree of causativity proves that the derivational account is incorrect. Moreover, this study supports the lexicalist viewpoints that the causativity has variations because it is integrated in the lexical formation. In addition, more evidence, such as adverb placement and resultative compound formation, is provided to demonstrate that lexicalist accounts take the advantage

of explaining the causativity. Finally, the variation of causativity has demonstrated

that the shorter the forms are, the greater the degree of causativity is. This

observation conforms to the principle of iconicity, and is encoded in humans'

cognition and the natural language.