

Iraqi ELL Performance of Causative Verbs

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Most of Iraqi university students of English language face difficulties in using causative verbs. First, in the syntactic level, they are not aware of what appropriate constituents should follow these verbs, i.e. bare infinitive, to-infinitive or past participle. Second, semantically they do not understand the exact meanings behind using such causative constructions.

The study is limited to only three causative verbs (*have*, *get* and *make*). A sample of the fourth year students from the Department of English is randomly chosen, as they are the most qualified undergraduate learners at the university level to diagnose what is hypothesized.

It is hoped that the study will be useful theoretically for researchers and learners and practically for teachers and syllabus designers.

Causative verbs (CV henceforth) express the meaning of cause and result, that is someone or something causing something to happen or to change. They show that somebody/something is indirectly responsible for an action doesn't perform the action itself i.e., responsible for the action being performed, but causes someone/something else to do it instead.

Yesterday I had my hair cut-1
I did not cut my own hair, but I made someone else do it for me instead.
(Leech, 2001:78)

She had her car serviced last week-2
In (2) she did not service the car herself, but the car was serviced because of her, she took it to a garage and asked them to do it. CV are used to refer to actions which are done for the subject rather by the subject.

Quirk et al. (1985:417) states that some verbs have a causative meaning.

He pulled his belt tight-3
Sentence (3) can be paraphrased to
He caused his belt to be tight by pulling it-4

CVs demonstrate one action happening to another person /thing. The doer causes something to happen to the agent.

The devil made me do it-5
Radford (2004:71) shows that a CV is followed by another verb which describes the resulting action or state.

Peter made her do her homework-6
Biber et al. (1999:303) mention that verbs of facilitation or causation such as *allow*, *cause*, *enable*, *force*, *help*, *let*, *require* and *permit* indicate that some person or inanimate entity brings about a new state of affairs and these verbs occur with a nominalized direct object.

This information enables the formulation of precise questions-7
Or complement clause following the verb phrase, which reports the action that was facilitated.

?What caused you be ill-8
.Police and council leaders agreed to let a court decide the fate of the trees-9

Certain CVs can be used to express a causal relationship between subject and object in a sentence. Some of them (*ask, tell, remind, require* and *urge*) require a to-infinitive verb others do not.

(I allowed him to clean up the mess. (S+V+O+(O)to infinitive-10)

Modals may be used with causatives structure to offer a suggestion.

The online magazine should encourage all readers to submit suggestions for-11

future issues.

Bosses should permit employees to take flex time-12

A causative form, expressed by using verbs such as *redde*, *freeze*, *move*, *roll* and *break* alone, denotes an action which causes something to happen.

Someone has moved my desk-13

(We will freeze the strawberries for Christmas.(James and Heasley,1996:210-14)

Other verbs such as *let*, *have* and *make* require a bare infinitive.

((I let him clean the mess. (S+V+O+O (bare infinitive-15)

The verb *help* can be used with *to infinitive* or *bare infinitive*.

I help him (to) clean the mess-16

Some CVs use the pattern (S+V that S+V) such as *insist*, *suggest*, *recommend*, *ask*, *require* and *demand*.

The professor insists that Lora do her homework-17

HAVE

The following causative constructions can be used with *have*.

have +Od+N or pronoun+ past participle+by+Agent usually not as pronoun) is used when one carry out an action oneself but rather has the action done by someone else.

We'll have a monument elected on this site-18

The professor had the work done by his lab assistants-19

(.Have +Od agent N or Pro.+Bare infinitive noun or pro)

The professor had his students write an essay-20

In spoken English *get* often replaces *have* in which case *to* is added to the infinitive ,this construction also suggest that may be (or have been) difficult to produce a certain reaction on the part of the agent.

The CV *have* is often used with negative experiences.

(I had my wallet stolen .(I did not actually cause my wallet to be stolen-21

Sometimes “*get someone to do something*” is interchangeable with “*have someone do something*”, but these expressions do not mean exactly the same thing.

I had the mechanic check my brakes.(I asked the mechanic to check the-22

(.brakes

Perfect Versus Causative/Experiential Have

Radford(2004:119) states that *perfect have* is an auxiliary, and it can undergo inversion.

(?she has gone to Paris.(Has she gone to Paris-23

- . And *causative/experienced have* is a main verb and it cannot undergo inversion
 - . The doctor had an eye-specialist examine the patient-24
 - .(They have their car serviced regularly).(causative-25
 - .(They have students walk out on them sometimes).(experiential-26

Make

- Make* can be used to express the idea that X causes Y to do something .The
 - , meaning of *have* and *get* are similar but not identical
 - (.I made my brother carry my suitcase .(My brother had no choice-27
- Make* is followed by the simple form of a verb that must follow the object, it
 - .(gives the idea that X forces Y to do something (Azar, 2003:339
 - . Swan (2009:14) illustrates that in passive the to-infinitive is used
 - . She was made to repeat the whole story-28
- In a few cases *make* can be followed by myself,yourself,etc...,and a past
 - , participle .The structure is common with *understood* and *heard*
 - I do not speak good French ,but I can make myself understood.(Not-29
 - .(understand
 - (She had to shout to make herself heard.(ibid-30
- Leech et al.(2001:78) mention that *make* (like get and have) is followed by
 - . another verb which describes the resulting action or state
 - . His awful jokes made us all laugh-31

Get

- Causative *get* is followed by an infinitive .*Get* gives the idea that X persuades Y
 - .to do something
 - .The students got the teacher to dismiss class early-32
 - .He got his friend to play soccer with him after school-33
 - I got the mechanic to check my brakes.(At first the mechanic didn't think it-34
 - .(was necessary, but I convinced him to check the brakes
- The past participle is used after *get* and *have* to give a passive meaning. In this
 - .case , there is usually little or no difference in meaning between *have* and *got*
 - I had (or got) my watch repaired (by someone).(I caused my watch to be-35
 - .(repaired by someone).(Azar,2003:339
- Swan(2005:200) states that *get* could be followed by (object + -ing) which
 - . means make somebody/something start
 - . Once we got the heater going the car started to warm up-36
 - .Do not get him talking about his illness-37
- The construction (**get +object + past participle**) has a passive meaning and can
 - , sometimes be used in the sense of experience
 - .(I must get my watch repaired .(Passive-38
 - .(We got our roof blown down off in the storm last week.(Experience-39
 - (The idea in 39 is more often expressed with *have*.(ibid
- The construction (**get +person + to-infinitive**) usually means to convince to do
 - . something or to trick someone into doing something
 - ? How can parents get their children to read more-40
 - .She got her son to take medicine even though it tasted terrible-41

Quirk et al. (1985:161) show that **get** tends to be limited to constructions without
an expressed animate agent
.James got beaten last night-42
Get with an inanimate agent is not, however, unknown
(James got caught (by the police-43
Get is formally avoided, and even in informal English, and less frequent than the
be passive. **Get** is much more common as a resulting copular
My mother is getting old-44
A verb is said to have copular complementation when it is followed by a subject
complement, or a predication adjunct (SVC, SVA). It is important to draw a
distinction between passive *get* and copular **get**
(The house is getting rebuilt. (Passive-45
(I have to get dressed before eight o'clock. (Dress)(Copular-46
Get passive puts the emphasis on the subject rather than the agent, and on what
happens to the subject as a result of the event
(He was/got taught a lesson on the subjunctive (by our new teacher-47

Causative and Factitive Verbs

Factitive verbs refer to a construction or a form, usually a verb, denoting an
action in which a cause produces a result such as **make, kill, choose, build** and
(*elect*) (Crystal, 2003:175) and (Trask, 1993:101
Lyons(1977:488) states that factitive verbs express an effect by the action on the
object to make it in another state where an agentive subject causes a change in the
patient object. A factitive verb usually needs some more complement in addition
to its direct object
In early case grammar, the term has special status, where it refers to the semantic
case of the entity resulting from the verb's action, or understood as part of the
(verb's meaning, and is constructed with agentive, dative, etc....(ibid
The peculiarity of factitive verbs lay in that they are sometimes described as
incomplete verbs themselves since their following phrases are incomplete. Kelke
(2009:175) and Gunther (2010:236) agree that transitive verbs which take one
object only, but still require some other words to make the predication complete,
are called factitive. Gibbs (2009:69) states that the type of word or words that
follow the factitive verbs have two relations with the factitive verb called the
factitive relations, the first is a species of the complementary objective relation
(He makes his tent a place. (Objective relation-47
The second kind is the adjective relation in which the factitive object is followed
by an adjective to show the effect of the factitive verb
(Avarice makes men hard-hearted. (Adjective relation-48
Some factitive verbs need not only an object to the transitive verbs, but
something further to describe that thing or that state into which the object is made
or converted
It dove me frantic-49
The word *frantic* is not mere an object to the transitive verb in 49, but their
presence is obligatory to complete the meaning or to convey its intended message
, and rightly described as object complement to the factitive verb. Factitives are

given this name for their unique grammatical behavior ,their common attribute is
 . the power of attaching a complement to the object if they are active

.Many do call me fool-50

.Or to any noun if they are passive

(The people made rich by him.(Gunter, 2010:17) and (Fowler, 1994:60-51
 Whitney(1998:166) mentions that there is clearly a sense of making, causing or
 bringing about something by means of the action which the verb
 signifies.However,an object along with a predicate word qualifying it is taken
 .especially often by a verb that is used in a factitive sense

The distinction between the causative and factitive verbs can be shown on two
 levels, on the lexical meaning of the verb and its grammatical feature.Avants and
 Benahnia (2003:68) differentiate between a causative verb which usually reflects
 a clear causative situation , and the two elements which a causative situation
 consists of are the external agent and the basic non-causative situation .The agent
 is typically an individual participant, often human, who may have ,to a certain
 . extent ,a control over the action which is denoted by the verb

Have something done and *Get something done* are both used to refer to actions
 which are done for the subject rather than by the subject. Causative verbs are
 used instead of passive verbs to show that the subject causes the action to be
 .done

I don't know how to repair cars, so I'm **having mine repaired** at the garage-52
 .(round the corner.(*Have something done*

I really must **get my eyes tested**. *I'm sure I need glasses*.(*Get something*-53
 .(done

The differences between *have* and *get something done* are that *have* is slightly
 more formal than *get*, and that *get* is more frequent than *have* in the imperative
 .form

Have and *get* are also used to refer to events which happened to someone, but
 .were outside their control

.After being late for work every day for two weeks, Billy had his pay reduced-54

I stood so close to the fire that I got my legs burnt-55

The Test and Data Analysis

Allen and Davies (1977:3-9) believe that tests are parts of experiments and
 instruments of research as well .Heaton (1975:1) states that tests may be
 constructed primarily as a means of assessing the student's performance in the
 language .Davies (1990 :29) assumes that language testing seeks to provide
 information .Oller (1979:4-5) says that scores in the test are treated as summary
 statistics which can help individual performance to diagnose some specific
 aspects in language learning. Davies (2000:171) asserts that the purpose behind

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English language tests is to gather reliable evidence of what learners can do in . English

The test consists of four questions, the first two questions(1 and 2) are designed to be the data needs for finding out the students' performance in the recognition level. The last two questions(3 and 4) are designed for the production level (see appendix a).The population of the present test is sixty four year students from the .Department of English, University of Babylon in the academic year 2010-2011

Recognition Level					
Q1			Q2		
No. of Item	No. of correct Answers	Percentage	No. of Item	No. of correct Answers	Percentage
1	30	% 50	1	45	% 75
2	29	48.34	2	40	66.67
3	25	41.76	3	30	50
4	30	50	4	15	25
5	29	48.34	5	38	63.34
6	34	56.67	6	39	65
7	20	33.34	7	10	16.67
8	30	50	8	20	33.34
% Total 49.3			% Total 49.38		
% Total Q1 and Q2 49.16					
Production Level					
Q3			Q4		
No. of Item	No. of correct Answers	Percentage	No. of Item	No. of correct Answers	Percentage
1	15	% 25	1	17	28.34%
2	22	36.76	2	25	41.67
3	13	21.67	3	20	33.55
4	29	48.34	4	29	48.34
5	31	51.67	5	15	25
% Total 36.67			% Total 39.73		
% Total Q3 and Q4 38.33					

It cannot be claimed that the items contained in the test are conclusive .The test is of two types recognition (Q1 and Q2) and production (Q3 and Q4).In questions 1 (the number of the correct answers is 353 the percentage is 49.3 %) and 2 (the number of the correct answers is 237 the percentage is 49.38 %).The total percentage in the recognition is 49.16 % . The students have precedence over their achievement in the last two questions, the third question (the number of the correct answers is 110 the percentage is 36.67 %) and the last one (the number of the correct answers is 143 the percentage is 39.73 %).The total percentage in the production level is 38.33 % . The total percentage in both levels is 45.32 % as it is stated in the table below

The chosen sample's bad performance may be due to intralingual errors attributed to various causes , first overgeneralization as they made in items(11 from Q1 and 7 from Q2). Second ignorance of rule restrictions i.e., some constructions need specific word form and word order to be meaningful , expressive and adequate to carry an identified message as their performance in almost all items of Q2 and Q3.Third, incomplete application of rules; their answers approximately to all items of the last two questions are good examples to their unsatisfactory performance .Fourth and finally false concepts hypothesized can be also a reason for their erroneous responses. It is possible that all the previous types of errors come together in a single item .They achieve some good results in items (1,4,6,8,9,12 in Q1 and 1,2,3,5,6 in Q2) ,this may be due to guessing specially in the recognition questions (Q1and Q2), or they might expose and try to get enough practice in such constructions as in item (5) in Q3 To sum up ,the results support the conviction that the chosen sample's proficiency in using causative verbs is poor because the majority of them fails to give the right responses. This suggests that they have not fully understood causative verbs and they are not competent in using them

Appendix A

Q1/Write C after sentences expressing causative state and NOT after sentences that do not express causative state

- .His awful jokes made us all laugh-1
- .I've never had anyone send me flowers-2
- .I can't get that child to go to bed-3
- ?Who is making her cry-4
- .We had a gipsy come to the door yesterday-5
- ?How can parents get their children to read more-6
- ?Did you have your computer fixed-7
- .I got him clean the mess-8
- .My teacher made me apologize for what I had said-9
- . He is nice when you get to know him-10

.He had played a trick-11

. She made up her mind-12

.Q2/Write T after correct sentences and F after incorrect sentences

.The teacher had three students walk out on her-1

.I am going to get my hair cut this afternoon-2

.Se had to shout to make herself heard-3

.They had John arrive early-4

?Did somebody make you wear that ugly hat-5

.The government TV commercials are trying to get people to stop smoking-6

.He made his brother repays the loan-7

.He has name his new boat Belle-8

:Q3/Build Causative sentences as in the example below

.He went to the market.----His father had him go to the market

.He stayed in bed-1

.She will apologize to you-2

.He admitted that he was wrong-3

.The students gave an oral presentation-4

.He did the crime-5

Q4/Change causative verbs in the sentences below not to express causative

.states

.She had her car serviced last week-1

.The manger had everybody fill out a form-2

.The teacher made the students stay after class-3

.He got his friends to play soccer with him after school-4

.I made my brother carry my suitcase-5

.I had my watch repaired-6

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