SBORNÍK PRACÍ FILOZOFICKÉ FAKULTY BRNĚNSKÉ UNIVERZITY
STUDIA MINORA FACULTATIS PHILOSOPHICAE UNIVERSITATIS BRUNENSIS
K 13 (1991) — BRNO STUDIES IN ENGLISH 19

COMPONENTIAL ANALYSIS IN ENGLISH VERB COMPLEMENTATION

Jaroslav Macháček

In our previous paper the following components have been suggested as playing an important role in what kind of complementation the verb will favour: either simple statements in the form of a subordinate clause (C2) or a nominalized clause (Snom) with condensers, infinitives or gerunds (C3). They are:

(1) The component "communication" (COM) expressly stating that the subject of the verb (NP1) communicates some fact or event. It can be modified in the sense that NP1 evaluates (EVAL), not just communicates.

(2) The HAVE relation between some event and NP1. This relation we defined as reference of the complement of the verb HAVE to the sphere of things and events introduced by NP1.

(3) The fact that NP1 can take some attitude towards this kind of HAVE reference. It can be the initiator (I) of this relation either (a) by showing his or her will (VOL), or (b) by exerting pressure (CAUS) in creating such a relation. The CAUS component can be pure, involuntary, or combined with VOL.

These general features are of different importance for the occurrence of the single types of complementation.

The COM component seems to favour the C2 pattern. That is to say, if NP1 is to communicate some event in English, it does so by means of a C2 clause. This COM component easily combines with others, thus giving rise to mixed types of C2 and C3 structures treated in language in relation to style and period. EVAL tends to the NP1 *consider* Snom type, where Snom=NP2 (to be) Adjective or Noun (a variant of C3). This could account for the difference between *They declared that the house was unfit for habitation* (COM), *They declared the house to be unfit for habitation* (COM EVAL), and *They declared the house unfit for habitation* (EVAL CAUS = by their evaluation they made it officially unfit; in Czech *prohlásili, že je* and *prohlásili* za).

As EVAL obviously stresses the subjective validity of what is being communicated, the main clause, though syntactically the primary structure, declines in its information value so much that it turns into something like a signal of subjectivity. In these terms, it can hardly be said to be complemented by C2 at all. It becomes instead a kind of modal signal. This is reflected in its potential shifting and in its attracting the negation from the subordinate clause *(I think it was a good thing to do; It was a good thing to do, I think; I don't think it was a good thing to do,* cf. *He was thought, said to be . . .).*

The HAVE component likewise tends to C3, i.e. if a HAVE relation between an event and some NP1 is to be expressed in English, the pattern is NP1 HAVE Snom (C3) — *I had him open the door* = He did so without my urging him. The same can be said about the components CAUS *(I made him open the door)* and VOL *(I want him to open the door).*

Each of the given components can be further modified, which gives rise to groups of verbs centred around some basic expressions.

Let us illustrate some of the possible types:

(1) COM (*say that* or *say to sb. that*)
(2) EVAL (*consider sth.* or *sb. to be*)
(3) COM EVAL (*declare that* or *sth./sb. to be*)
(4) HAVE (*I had him come,* without my urging him to do so)
(5) HAVE NP1 = I VOL (*I want sb. to do sth.*)
(6) HAVE NP1 = I CAUS (VOL) DIR (directed) (*make sb. do sth., cause sth.* or *sb. to do sth.*)
(7) COM HAVE NP1 = I VOL (*demand to do* = say that one wishes to)
(8) COM HAVE NP1 = I CAUS (VOL) DIR (*order sb. to do sth.*)

Let us now analyse some of the more interesting cases in more detail. For a full account of these verbs see Quirk.[1]

(6) HAVE NP1 = I CAUS (VOL) DIR — construction Snom (C3)

The meaning of the verbs is "to refer the fact expressed in Snom to the sphere of NP1 (HAVE relation)", stressing at the same time that NP1 exerts some pressure directed at some person (less commonly a thing) to create the eventual HAVE relation. When no volition, which is the optional element here, is present, we get the verb *cause: Iron causes the magnet to move.* This verb, however, gives way to the more frequent *make* and *It made the flowers die* is preferred to *It caused them to die. Make,* unlike *cause,* often adds the volitional component to this meaning and it is the context that decides if it is present or not: *What made you say so?* (no volition). *He made John stop* (on purpose, by chance or maybe even against his will). A similar case is *lead* in *What led you to think so?*

---

[1] R. Quirk, S. Greenbaum, G. Leech, and J. Svartvik (1985). *A comprehensive grammar of the English language* (London).

With the next group of verbs the VOL component becomes very prominent. Verbs of this group want to influence the attitude of the person or the state of the thing the pressure including volition is directed at, and differ in specifying the manner of the pressure (see *Webster's Dictionary of Synonyms* under *force:* "make a person or thing yield to the will of a person or to the strength or power of a thing").

There are two larger subgroups:

(1) Verbs of direct pressure
(2) Verbs of indirect pressure

VERBS OF DIRECT PRESSURE

The basic expression here is *force,* which has its variants modifying the intensity and the manner of the pressure, what the pressure is directed at, etc. Most of the definitions are taken from Webster.

compel	differs from force in requiring personal object implying the exercise of authority implying the exertion of great effort or driving force implying the impossibility for one reason or other of doing anything else
coerce	differs from compel in suggesting more severity in methods employed in connoting the exertion of violence or duress, or the use of such means as threats, intimidation
constrain	differs from compel in suggesting more the force exerted by that which presses or binds, stressing it in fact in suggesting the influence of restrictions self-imposed or placed upon one by force, by nature, by necessity, by circumstance
oblige	besides usually implying the constraint of necessity, sometimes physical, it equally often implies moral or intellectual necessity also used with reference to any person or thing which is regarded as authoritative or as having the right to determine one's course of acts
charge	a bookish verb stressing not only enjoining but the imposition of a task as a duty
press	use force
impel	drive, force

Modification of the pressure

tease	break down one's resistance by successive appeals, importunities
worry	incessant attacking or goading and an intention (sometimes an effect) of driving the victim to desperation or defeat: *She was always worrying her husband to give her more money*

Modification of what is affected

trouble	cause one to be uneasy or upset disturbance of any sort that interferes with one's convenience, comfort, health of body, peace of mind

VERBS OF INDIRECT PRESSURE

Either by rousing into doing or feeling or calling something into existence by so rousing a person. They are the verbs of provoking and tempting.

Provoking

provoke	*They provoked him to answer*
incite	stresses stirring and urging on *The soldier was shot for inciting his comrades to rise against their officers*
instigate	unequivocally implies prompting and responsibility for the initiation of the action commonly underhandedness and evil intention *Instigate workers to lay down tools*
encourage	*encourage a man to work harder*
inspirit	*embolden: My sympathy inspirited/emboldened them to ask me for help*

Tempting

Implies drawing into danger, evil, by exerting an attracting influence or by practising deception

entice	artfully and adroitly: *Entice a young girl to leave home*
tempt	exert an attraction so strong that one is inclined to act in defiance of one's conscience or better judgment: *Bad companions tempted him to drink heavily*
bind	hold by legal agreement, a promise, or under penalty to a certain course of action: *Bind sb. to pay debts*

Here we must add verbs modifying the CAUS component. They do not mean "to exert pressure" but "to make possible by not resisting, refraining from preventing". The basic verb here is *let*. The other members of the group are *allow* (with its negative counterpart *forbid*), *admit, leave, authorize, permit, suffer, empower*. While *allow* means "make possible by not preventing", *enable* "make possible by removing obstacles".

(8) COM HAVE NP1 = I CAUS (VOL) DIR construction C2 or C3

This group of verbs adds to the preceding type the component communication, which alone is responsible for C2 complements (verbal clause). This is why the verbs here hesitate between C2 and C3. In Modern English we can see a distinct shift towards C3 and thus a gradual loss of the relevance of COM in grammar. Today C2 seems to be high style, formal. It is worth noticing that the competition between both structures has its restrictions. The subject of the embedded clause (NP2) must be the same as the person the pressure is directed at — *I ordered the men to come earlier. I ordered the men that they should come earlier.* But not **I ordered the men that John should come earlier.* The person the pressure is directed at may be left unexpressed in C2, if it is clear from the context. The clause is usually in the passive then: *The judge ordered that the prisoner should be remanded.* In English there is nothing like

the Czech *Poručil přinést víc piva (*He ordered to fetch more beer);* the person the pressure is directed at must be either present or excluded (negative presence in the passive).

The basic verb of this group is *tell.* It does not take into account the attitude of the person the pressure is directed at. His or her response is not considered and in this sense the verb is unmarked. *Tell* can have an embedded sentence with a different subject, but in that case it loses the components HAVE CAUS VOL and belongs to the COM group: *He told the men that John should come/came earlier.*

Both the following verbs do think of the person the pressure is directed at, but do not leave any open choice of reacting:

command	adds stress on authority: ***The officers commanded their men to fire. The pirate chief commanded that his prisoners should be shot.***
order	adds stress on authority and implies greater intensity

Further modifications of *tell* are *instruct, teach, whisper, signal.* Cf. *Remind me to post the letters* = tell me to.

The next group of verbs is the type *ask.* It consists of verbs leaving the decision (choice) of responding to the person the communication (and pressure) are directed at. It is then a reported request wanting to influence the alternative decision (*ask* = seek to obtain pressure) by making one's wants and desires (volition) known (communication)).

Ask is the unmarked member of the group in the sense that it does not say anything about the way the wished choice is influenced. When it has the meaning "ask for permission" it lacks the DIR component and its complements are either C2 or infinitive *(He asked to get up).* Other verbs of this group specify the way the pressure is exerted, the growing intensity due to fear that the decision of the person in question might differ from what is desired, etc.

adjure	ask earnestly or solemnly, stressing peremptoriness
beg	earnestness and insistence: *I begged him to stay* or *that he would or might stay*
beseech	a still added and more humble intensity great eagerness, often anxiety or solicitude *The prisoner beseeched the judge to be merciful*
pray	(lit. and rhet.) humility and fervour in asking *We pray you to show mercy. We pray you that the prisoner may be set free* Like *tell, pray* changes its meaning when the person addressed is dropped: *We pray that...*
supplicate	fervent prayer adding courtesy and anxiety
request	greater courtesy and formality in asking, preferable to *ask* when one's wants may not be granted: *I requested him to use* (or *that he should use*) *his influence on my behalf*
advise	adds the notion of profit (or in the case of warning the opposite) and leaves the decision (choice) to the person addressed: *I advised them (not) to go.*

counsel	weightier occasions or more authority or closer personal relation to the one that counsels.

The anxiety felt on the part of NP1 brings some of the *ask* verbs closer to what is fundamentally expressed by *persuade*. *Persuade*, like *ask*, takes the attitude of the person the communication and pressure are directed at into account, but presupposes a change of his or her originally negative or indifferent standpoint. In the past tense (so always with C3) it indicates that the person who is to realize the desired action has done so, and it thus forms a link between this group and mere causation. The element of pressure becoming more and more pregnant in these verbs weakens the grammatical relevance of the COM component, shifting it to lexicon. Even with *persuade* itself, as with all the other verbs of this group, the frequency count shows C3 gaining ground: *persuade him that* 38 %, *persuade him to* 58 % (West). These cases then form a link between types (8) and (6).

induce	Webster: "influencing the reason or judgment of one who is temperamentally opposed or who is convinced that another course of act is better; leaving the object of causation to decide: the term usually suggests that the decision is outwardly at least made by the one induced rather than forced upon him by the one that induces". *We could induce the old lady to travel by air*
urge	press by request and arguments
importune	repeated attempts to break down resistance and often as a result annoying pertinacity *She importuned her husband to give her more money*
implore	greater urgency in the plea or more manifest anguish with the added force of tears
invite	encourage to sth. presumably agreeable: *The cool water of the lake invited us to swim*
challenge	invite to contest, game, etc.
caution	make sb. not do sth.
summon	implies the exercise of authority or of power
call upon	appeal: *I called upon him to keep his promise*
prevail (up)on	stronger implication of opposition

Verbs modifying the technical aspect of the pressure: direct by a gesture or movement: *beckon, motion (He motioned me to enter).*

KOMPONENTOVÁ ANALÝZA DOPLNĚNÍ ANGLICKÉHO SLOVESA

Práce pojednává o úloze významových složek při volbě doplnění anglického slovesa.