THE USE OF PARALLEL CORPORA TO INVESTIGATE CAUSATION IN RUSSIAN

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The paper deals with the expression of causation in Russian. In particular, it aims at testing the usefulness of parallel corpora in investigating what we could call ‘elliptic causation’. During a contrastive corpus-based analysis of Russian and Italian causative verbs, it was observed that when translating the Italian construction *fare* + infinitive (make + infinitive / to have something done) a valency reduction often occurs in Russian, so that a sentence like *mi hai fatto chiamare?* (did you have me called?) can be rendered as *ty zval menja?* A similar phenomenon had been previously observed in examples such as *ja sšila sebe novoe plat’e*, which can have both a causative (I had a new dress sewn) and noncausative interpretation (I sewed a new dress). In this case, the causative interpretation is related to the semantics of the verb, which denotes a service usually performed by a professional. However, the examples found in two Italian-Russian parallel corpora showed that this phenomenon can occur with different types of verbs. Such examples are analyzed with the aim of understanding the nature and the extension of this type of causation. From a methodological point of view, some observations will be made regarding the use of parallel corpora in this study.

Keywords: parallel corpora, contrastive analysis, causative verbs, ellipsis

УПОТРЕБЛЕНИЕ ПАРАЛЛЕЛЬНЫХ КОРПУСОВ ДЛЯ ИССЛЕДОВАНИЯ КАУЗАЦИИ В РУССКОМ ЯЗЫКЕ

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**1. Introduction**

The aims of this paper are to present the results of a contrastive corpus-based analysis of Russian and Italian causative verbs and to test whether parallel corpora can be used to investigate what we might call Russian ‘elliptic causation’. It has been demonstrated in several studies that parallel corpora can be used not only to compare two languages, but also to draw some conclusions about the behavior of one of them, especially if the language under examination is analyzed in target texts [Noël 2003, Šmelev 2015, Zaliznjak 2015, Zaliznjak et al. 2018][[1]](#footnote-1). In particular, the initial comparison between Russian and Italian served as a starting point to further analyze, with the use of parallel corpora, the above-mentioned phenomenon.

**2. Russian and Italian causatives**

A causative situation can be linguistically expressed by a subordinate clause in a complex sentence (e.g.: *I made a mistake, because Sarah distracted me*), or by a causative element (a single part of speech) within a simple sentence[[2]](#footnote-2). In this paper, we are dealing with causative situations expressed by a causative verb[[3]](#footnote-3). Verbal causatives, according to Comrie [1989: 166], are the most interesting way to express a causative relation, since “their study involves the interaction of formal syntax and semantic analysis”.

Linguists generally agree on dividing causative verbs into three groups: i) morphological (causation is expressed by a suffix, as in ancient Greek, where *kai-omai* means *to be on fire*, while *kai-ō* means *to set fire*); ii) lexical (causation is conveyed through the lexical meaning of the verb and, partly, through its syntactic relations, as normally only a transitive verb can be causative[[4]](#footnote-4)); iii) analytical (expressed by a semi-auxiliary verb plus an infinitive)[[5]](#footnote-5).

Despite this general consensus on causative verbs classification, different traditions may approach the issue from different points of view. Italian (such as other European languages, like French, Spanish or English) very often conveys causation through an analytical construction[[6]](#footnote-6). Probably for this reason Italian linguists do not take into account lexical causatives, such as *kill* (*uccidere*), or *break* (*rompere*), but only the phrase *fare + infinitive* (F+inf) (make someone do something) or, alternatively, *lasciare + infinitive* (let someone do something)[[7]](#footnote-7). Consequently, they suggest a rather formal definition of causative verb, as a verb which is able to add a grammatical function to a sentence [La Fauci – Mirto 2003: 20-22][[8]](#footnote-8). Here is an example to demonstrate this phenomenon:

(1) ***Farò venire*** *anche zio Giulio* (…) (D. Buzzati 1942)

*make come also uncle Giulio*

[*I will make uncle Giulio come too*]

In (1), the causer (i.e. the grammatical subject of this kind of sentences) remains untold, corresponding to the personal pronoun *io* (I). *Zio Giulio* [uncle Giulio] is the direct object of the verb phrase *farò venire* [will make come], but thanks to the additional function conferred to him by *farò* [will make], it becomes also subject of the infinitive *venire* [to come], namely the causee. We shall also notice that the Italian verb *venire* [to come], usually intransitive, thanks to the semi-auxiliary *fare*, presents here an additional valency, which allows it to be followed by a direct object[[9]](#footnote-9).

On the other hand, Russian linguists have been mainly concerned with identifying single causative verbs and analyzing their semantics, which is mainly due to the absence in Russian of a morphological or analytical causative. Some scholars provide a very broad description of causation. According to Apresjan, for example, [1995: 256], “to cause P means, by definition, to act in a way that P took place or began to take place”. Therefore, even verbs like *to give* or *to build* could be considered causative, as the former means “to cause someone to have” [Apresjan 1967: 9] and the latter “to influence the existence of what is being built” [Steksova 2008: 332]. As stated in [Padučeva 2003: 174], a verb is to be considered causative when it describes a situation in which a participant (B) undergoes a change caused by another participant (A). According to Dadueva [2011: 76], a causative verb should comprehend the semantic trait *vozdejstvovat’* [to influence], that is to affect a subject or an object in order to make them do or feel something. Zolotova argues that a causative verb can also express an action that makes someone find themselves in a certain state (1982: 166).

All of these definitions result in different categorizations of Russian causative verbs[[10]](#footnote-10). Moreover, although in Russian there is plenty of analytic constructions similar to *fare* + infinitive – like *zastavit’* + infinitive –, these are mostly considered lexical causatives[[11]](#footnote-11), since verbs like *zastavit’* do not undergo a process of desemanticization, as the Italian *fare*[[12]](#footnote-12).

**3. Direct vs indirect causation**

In my previous analysis [Noseda, in press], conducted through the Italian-Russian parallel corpus (it-ru PC)[[13]](#footnote-13) available in the Russian National Corpus (NKRJa), the translation of the Italian phrase *fare* + infinitive was examined. It was observed that, when expressing causation, the main distinction between Russian and Italian concerns the distance between cause and effect: if F+inf expresses an indirect causation, Russian lexical causatives, on the other hand, tend to reduce the distance between the initiator of the action and the patient, who, in Russian does not take any degree of agentivity. Sentence (1), for example (see par. 2), is translated into Russian as follows:

(1b) *Я* ***позову*** *дядю Джулио*

As we can see, in (1b) the subject (*ja*) acts directly on the verb’s direct object. On the contrary, the Italian (1) presents a situation in which the uncle’s arrival is indeed caused by the subject, but his ways are unspecified. There is a certain distance between the action causing uncle Giulio’s arrival and the effect. I found that this kind of transformation, namely a sort of distant reduction between events, occurred 385 times out of 486 (79,21%) in the it-ru PC.

In example (1), however, the number of the participants remains unmodified (uncle Giulio and I)[[14]](#footnote-14). Consequently, if we converted it in a sentence like *chiamerò zio Giulio* [I will call uncle Giulio], the general meaning would not change[[15]](#footnote-15).

On the other hand, there are some cases where the difference between Russian and Italian is more eloquent. Precisely, when the Italian causative is based on a transitive infinitive and the causee is an adjunct, expressed by an oblique case introduced by the preposition *da* [by]. Guasti, using Kayne’s terminology, refers to such sentences as *faire-par* (namely “make-by”) [Guasti 1996: 295]:

(2a) *Ho bisogno di* ***farmi curare****.* (A. Camilleri)

*Need to make-me treat*

*[I need to get treatment]*

In (2a), the implied subject *io* [I] is just the initiator of the action *curare* [to treat], while its real agent (the causee, possibly, a doctor) is omitted. The complete Italian sentence might, in fact, sound as follows: *Ho bisogno di farmi curare da un dottore* [I need to have a doctor treat me]. In Russian, however, speakers often do not mark the distinction between direct and indirect causation, so that (2a) is translated as in (2b):

(2b) *Мне нужно* ***лечиться****.*

Russian readers could interpret (2b) in two different ways: either the subject needs to be treated by someone, or he needs to treat himself. The second interpretation is not admissible in (2a).

L. Babby named this phenomenon “benefactive” or “service” causation [Babby 1983, 1993], presenting the example – also mentioned in [Padučeva 1997: 64] – *ona sšila sebe novoe plat’e*[[16]](#footnote-16), which may either mean “she made a new dress” (noncausative reading) or “she had a new dress made” (causative reading) [Babby 1993: 343-344]. As he claims, similar sentences are possible in English, although their causative interpretation is highly unsystematic[[17]](#footnote-17), and even in Russian they exhibit “limited productivity” since they occur exclusively when a verb “denotes a physical action that one person regularly performs for another” [Babby 1983: 76].

Even admitting that the majority of these “ambiguous” causative verbs in Russian are related to some professional service [1987: 607], G. Toops [1987: 595] quotes a few examples that refute Babby’s statement related to a “semantic constraint”, as *rasstreljat’* [to shoot/to have someone shot], found by Lötzsch, or *kaznit’* [to execute/to have someone executed], mentioned by Ju. Apresjan[[18]](#footnote-18). That is why he prefers the label “contextual causatives”, even though he does not specify the context needed for these verbs to occur. As stated by Apresjan, in fact, it is extremely difficult to classify or even enumerate these verbs, since dictionaries do not give us any information regarding their possible causative interpretation [Toops 1987: 596-597].

Toops tries to provide a list extrapolated mainly from other authors’ research, including reflexive[[19]](#footnote-19) (3) and nonreflexive verbs (4):

(3) *Он взвесился в аптеке.*

[*He had himself weighed at the pharmacy*]

(4) *Он вставил себе зубы.*

[*He’s had dentures put in*]

The ‘service semantics’ is shared by all Toops’ examples[[20]](#footnote-20). In most of them the causative reading is encouraged by a complement (*u parichmakera*, *u portnogo, u direktora,* etc.). Some verbs, in fact, are more likely to be interpreted as noncausative without any prepositional phrase: *brit’sja* [have a shave], *odevat’sja* [get dressed], *podpisat’ bumagi* [sign some papers]. On the other hand, most sentences are causative even without any clarifying adverbial or prepositional phrase (e.g. *babuška delala operaciju* [*grandmother had an operation*]).

My analysis, nonetheless, revealed several examples based on different types of verbs, leading to the formulation of some new research questions: how widespread is this type of causation? And are parallel corpora effective in investigating this phenomenon? I will attempt to answer these questions in the following paragraphs.

**4. Corpus analysis**

To conduct the analysis, two corpora were interrogated: firstly, the it-ru PC, available in the Russian National Corpus (RNC) and, secondly, an extract from the OPUS2 Italian parallel corpus[[21]](#footnote-21), accessed through the Sketch Engine[[22]](#footnote-22). To the present day, in fact, the it-ru PC is not large enough to draw some significant conclusions (the sub-corpus considered contains 21 texts and 724.556 words). On the other hand, OPUS2 is far too large: 14.548 occurrences of *F+Inf were* found. It was therefore decided to get a random sample with 2000 entries.

There were 486 occurrences of *F+Inf* in the it-ru PC, even though only a few of them (precisely 42) presented the syntactic structure needed (*faire-par*). Among these, I selected those cases in which Russian, unlike the Italian version, exhibits direct causation instead of indirect (24 occurrences). In 18 examples out of 42, in fact, Russian translators chose the same syntactic structure as the original: causer + causative verb + infinitive. Sometimes this choice was encouraged by the explicitation of the causee in the original version, as in (5a):

(5a) ***L’ho fatto seguire*** *da due dei miei uomini* (V.M. Manfredi)

*Him-have made follow by two of my men*

[*I had him followed by two of my men*]

(5b) *Я* ***велел*** *двум моим воинам* ***проследить***

In 3 cases both the semantics and the syntactic structure of the original sentence were modified leading to the removal of the original causer (in the following example *he*):

(6a) ***Fece chiamare*** *il bibliotecario*

*Made call the librarian*

[*He had the librarian called*]

(6b) ***Вызвали*** *библиотекаря*

In 10 examples both syntactically and semantically the Russian version corresponds to the source text even if the causee is formally omitted, like in (7a) and (7b):

(7a) *Alessandro* ***fece costruire*** *due ponti di barche* (V.M. Manfredi)

*Alexander made build two bridges of boats*

[*Alexander had two bridges built with some boats*]

(7b) *Александр* ***велел построить*** *два моста из лодок.*

Here, indeed, even *postroil* [*he built*] – instead of *velel postroit’* [he ordered to build] would have led to a causative interpretation, since it is highly unlikely that a king could build a bridge himself (Toops and Babby would, in fact, classify this example among their contextual or service causatives). Thus, it is possible that the translator was influenced by the source text.

Let us now present the most significant cases in which Russian translations are syntactically different:

(8a) *Mi hai* ***fatto chiamare****?* (V.M. Manfredi)

*me have made call*

[*Did you have me called?*]

(8b) *Ты* ***звал*** *меня?*

(9a) *Lo* ***hai  fatto  avvelenare****e ora…* (V.M. Manfredi)

*Him have made poison and now*

[*you had him poisoned and now*]

(9b) *Ты его****отравил****, а теперь…*

(10a) *Non puoi* ***farmelo avere*** *domani?* (A. Camilleri)

*Not can make-me-it have tomorrow*

[*Can’t you have someone give it to me tomorrow*]

(10b) *Не можешь* ***передать*** *мне его завтра?*

(11a) (...) *e* ***fece mettere*** *in ceppi Angelo Clareno.* (U. Eco)

*and made put in chains Angelo Clareno*

[*and had Angelo Clareno put in chains*]

(11b) (...) *и тут же* ***заковал*** *в цепи Ангела Кларенского.*

(12a) *Ubertino avrebbe potuto diventare uno degli eretici*

*Ubertino have could become one of-the heretics*

*che ha contribuito a* ***fare bruciare****.* (U. Eco)

*whom have helped to make burn*

[*Ubertino could have become one of the heretics whom he helped to have burnt*]

(12b) *Убертин мог бы быть одним из тех еретиков, которых* ***сжег*** *на костре.*

(13a) (...) *non solo li* ***fa rinchiudere*** *a chiave* (...) (U. Eco)

*not only them make lock up*

[*not only does he have them locked up*]

(13b) (...) *он не только* ***запер*** *их на ключ* (...)

(14a) (...) *mi* ***fece*** *subito* ***mettere*** *in prigione*. (Collodi)

*me made immediately put in jail*

[*he had me immediately put in jail*]

(14b) (...) *он немедленно* ***посадил*** *меня в тюрьму*.

In OPUS2 about 70 occurrences of *faire-par* were found and 46 of them present the same tendency as in (8)-(14). Here are some examples:

(15a) *Ti faccio portare nella suite*

*you make take in-the suite*

[*I’ll have someone take you to the suite*]

(15b) *Я отведу тебя в номер*

(16a) *Adolf Hitler fece chiamare tutti i suoi collaboratori*

*Adolf Hitler made call all the his collaborators*

[*Adolf Hitler had all his collaborators gathered*]

(16b) *Адольф Гитлер собрал своих помощников*

Firstly, as we can see, Babby’s claim [1983: 75] – “service causatives usually have inanimate direct object” – does not apply here. In fact, most of the sentences contain animate objects, who often find themselves in an ‘unprivileged’ situation: they are either killed or imprisoned: they might, in fact, remind the verbs *kaznit’* and *rasstreljat’* mentioned by Toops (see par. 3). Among the extracts from OPUS2 there were 11 examples in which the Italian *fare uccidere* [have someone killed] (or a synonym) is translated into Russian with *ubit’* [to kill] (or a synonym), as in: *Lei lo fece uccidere* / *Она его убила*. There were also 9 examples with *fare arrestare / rinchiudere* [have someone arrested] rendered as *arestovat’* [to arrest], or a similar expression, like *brosit’ v tjurmu, zatočit’*.

However, some predicates do not relate to the sphere of killing or imprisonment (*zvat’*, *peredat’*, *sobrat’*, *otvesti*, as we have seen from the examples, but also others like *uvesti* [to take away], *zakryt’* [to close], *rasprostranit’* [to spread], *uvolit’* [to fire]). Therefore, the causative interpretation does not necessarily depend on the verb semantics.

Another trait shared by most of these examples is related to the authority of the causer, who is often someone used to giving orders or instructions: in (8) and (9) for example, the causer is a king; in (11) he is a Pope, in (14) a judge, in (16) the head of a State. This encourages an indirect causative reading even in Russian, and this can be confirmed by some examples found in the inverse sub-corpus of the it-ru PC, composed by Russian original texts translated into Italian[[23]](#footnote-23), like in (17), where the subject is Pontius Pilate talking to Jesus:

(17a) *завтра же я осужу и* ***сожгу*** *тебя на костре* (F.M. Dostoevskij)

(17b) *ma domani stesso io ti condannerò e ti* ***farò bruciare*** *sul rogo*

*But tomorrow same I you condemn and you will-make burn at-the stake*

[*but tomorrow I will condemn you and have you burned at the stake*]

Even if (17a) does not mark syntactically the intervention of a causee, the translator finds it more suitable to express it in the Italian version.

Consequently, we could borrow Toops’ expression “contextual causation”, since the context plays indeed a crucial role in these sentences, but since the semantics of the verbs used can be so different, we shall add that, given a certain context (i.e. the particular status of the causer[[24]](#footnote-24)), this type of ‘syntactically direct while semantically indirect’ causation is indeed productive.

As for the meaning conveyed by Russian translations, it seems unjustified to talk about ambiguity. We might rather state that in Russian there is no need to specify the actual agent, when it is not important who really performs the action and it is clear, given the status of the causer, that it may involve an intermediary: the focus is on the action itself and its initiator.

That is why I may attempt to call this phenomenon ‘elliptic causation’, as it seems to share some analogies with syntactic ellipsis, like in (18), where a verb of motion is missing:

(18) *Я домой хочу*

[*I want to go home*]

Elliptical sentences can be defined as a particular type of construction, whose syntactic specificity consists in the omission of a structural element – usually the predicate – which is never mentioned in the context. Lekant [2004: 232] observes that from a communicative point of view such sentences are not incomplete, as they are perfectly understandable even if taken out of context. The reason why a speaker would use a sentence like (16) lies in conciseness (typical of spoken language) and in the relevance of some elements at the expense of less significant information. Similarly, sentences (8b) - (16b) do not compromise the meaning or the communicative intention by not expressing a causative verb, while in Italian the omission of F and a different syntactic structure would lead to a non-causative reading.

**5. Using other parallel corpora**

I tried to conduct the same kind of research in the English-Russian parallel corpus (en-ru PC) available in RNC, however, I encountered some difficulties in terms of search engine interrogation.

The en-ru PC is much larger (18.988.428 words) than the it-ru PC, but it presents some difficulties when it comes to interrogating the search engine. In fact, analytical causative in English has two different forms, one similar to the Italian (make + infinitive) and another with the auxiliary *have*: *have someone do something* or *have something done by someone*. The syntactic string that we shall take into account is the latter, (i.e. *faire-par*). However, searching for ‘have + noun/pronoun + past participle’ we obtain an enormous number of unwanted examples, containing, for instance, present or past perfect. Research is, therefore, possible, but rather long and exhausting, while the aim of corpus linguistics should be to provide quite the opposite.

**6. Conclusions**

My purpose was twofold: firstly, to understand the characteristics and the extension of what I called elliptic causation; secondly, to test the efficacy of corpus linguistics, and in particular parallel corpora, in order to accomplish the first aim.

I proposed the label ‘elliptic causation’, in order to take distance from the idea of a semantic constraint related to the verbs used in such constructions. I would also prefer to avoid the term “contextual” since, so far, the examples found do not allow a precise definition of the context involved. Moreover, the term ‘elliptic’ seems to fit due to some similarities between this phenomenon and syntactic ellipsis.

As for its productivity, I am inclined to answer affirmatively, even though more examples might be examined. From what it was seen, it could be hypothesized that, as long as the causer has a particular status, any verb indicating an action which he/she initiates could have a causative interpretation.

Finally, from a methodological point of view, this investigation proves that parallel corpora are perhaps one of the most efficient instrument to detect such ellipsis, since the comparison with a language which syntactically marks causation is crucial: unlike pure elliptical sentences like (18), where it is instantly clear that a verb is missing, in sentences like (8b) – (16b) the omission of the causee would not be so evident without comparing them with the correspondent Italian source. Unfortunately, though, even if the construction with F+inf is extremely common in Italian, the frequency of passive causation (*faire-par*) is not so high. In a very large corpus such as OPUS2, the chance to find examples is greater. However, with large web corpora, some other problems may be encountered, especially in terms of annotation and metadata [Benko - Zakharov 2016]. In the case of elliptic causation, for example, it was not always possible to get all the information concerning the status of the causer.

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1. Translations can be exploited to deepen the semantics of a given word or syntactic structure of the source language, especially if the considered linguistic element is characterized by a certain degree of linguospecificity. As stated in [Noël 2003: 758], “Semantics is knowledge and, as such, not directly observable. To make it observable, says the psycholinguist, you must assign the language user some particular performative task. The idea that translation can be thought of as such a task is one that started to surface in the late 1990s, when a number of people involved with translation corpora (…) suddenly realized that these corpora could also be of use to the general linguist who is interested in providing an empirical basis for semantic claims”. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Nedjalkov and Sil’nickij [1969: 5-8] observe that a causative relation can be expressed by a preposition (e.g.: *из-за*), a noun (e.g.: твоя бестактность – *причина* его ухода), or an adjective (e.g.: ты *виноват* в его уходе). [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Therefore, we are not considering any causative construction expressed in a complex sentence and normally defined as ‘syntactic causative’. See, for example, the distinction between COMPACT, PURP and AND causatives in [Song 1996]. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Exceptions may exist, especially in Russian: [Padučeva 2003: 174] mentions the verb *grochotat’* [*to rumble*], even though its causative status is not widely accepted by linguists. Furthermore, several reflexive verbs in Russian can have a causative reading, such as *lečit’sja* [to treat oneself]. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Comrie classifies these constructions as something intermediate between analytic and morphological causative, since they occur within a simple sentence [1989: 169]. However, in the present paper, we shall consider *fare* [make] + infinitive as a pure example of analytical causative. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Namely *fare* + infinitive (in French the semi-auxiliary is *faire*, in Spanish *hacer*, in English *make* or *have*). [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Note that some linguists underline the difference between true causative (I made the vase fall) and permissive (I let the vase fall) [Comrie 1989: 171]. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. The syntactic aspect is taken into account in the works of some Russian linguists as well, in spite of their tendency to study this issue more from a semantic point of view. Jurij Apresjan, for example, states that all causative verbs have a non-causative correspondent and, compared to it, they present an additional valency. “Almost all causative verbs are trivalent” [Apresjan 1995: 47]. Zolotova also [1973: 278-297] starts from syntax, analyzing causative construction formed by a verb plus an infinitive. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. In fact, if the causee is inanimate and consequently non-agentive, this syntactic function of F seems to become primary. See the following example: era riuscito a **far discendere** un corpo lungo una scala a chiocciola (U. Eco) / (…) сумев **спустить** мертвеца по винтовой лестнице [he managed to descend a body down a spiral staircase] [Noseda, in press]. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. As an example, we briefly present a taxonomy suggested by Padučeva [1997: 73], which takes into account the degree of control of the subject (note that, according to Padučeva and Wierzbicka [1980], the causer cannot be a person, but the person’s action): a) intentional unfolding: X’s activity is leading to the result Y (*zakryvat’ dver’* [to be closing the door]; b) intentional accomplished: X’s activity has led to the result Y (*zakryt’ dver’* [to close the door]; c) intentional with non-complete control (*rešat’ problemu* [to solve a problem]); d) intentional guaranteed (*obeščat’* [to promise]); e) non-intentional happening: event X evoked consequence Y (*ogorčit’* [to make sad]); f) non-intentional unfolding: factor X caused and maintained a process in Y (*uspokaivat’* [to be quieting down]; g) non-intentional accomplished: factor X caused and maintained a process in Y that reached its inner limit (*uspokoit’* [to quiet down]). [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Although [Babby 1983: 74] talks about “analytical causation”, it has been observed that such verbs as *zastavit’* are to be considered lexical, rather than analytical causatives [Dadueva 2011: 77]. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. The Russian verb *davat’/dat’* (literally *to give*) is the only exception since it loses its main meaning in causative constructions like *daj mne posmotret’* (let me see). [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. A 4-million bilateral parallel corpus, partly enlarged by the author of this paper, and available at <http://ruscorpora.ru/search-para-it.html>. For a detailed description of the corpus, see [Noseda 2018]. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. To be really precise, (1) could show an ambiguity, related to the valency of the verb; being the verb *venire* [to come] intransitive, the sentence could be interpreted in two different ways: the subject could have called uncle Giulio (even force him to come) (direct interpretation), or he could had him called by someone else (indirect interpretation). However, the former (i.e. direct) is more likely to be the case. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. Russian translations, in fact, led us to confirming that F sometimes acquires more of a stylistic function, since the syntactic difference between source and target text would not cause a substantial change of meaning. *Far vedere* (literally “make see”), for example, in most cases seems to be nothing but a more colloquial alternative of *mostrare* (to show). In Russian both forms are translated with *pokazyvat’*-*pokazat’* [Noseda, in press]. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. To be precise in [Padučeva 1997] we have *ona sšila sebe jubku*. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. We shall note that this phenomenon occurs even in Italian, but as in English, it is rather unsystematic. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. The example can be found in [Apresjan 1995: 209], along with other verbs that might be considered typical “service verbs”: *brit’sja* [to shave], *pečatat’ knigu* [to print a book], *stroit’ dom,* etc. These are classified by Apresjan as verbs which can indicate both “действие и каузация этого действия в свою пользу”. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. Mentioning Paillard, Toops notes that while the reflexive form can exhibit a causative meaning, the reflexive pronoun *sebja* is always benefactive, i.e. noncausative: *on vzvesilsja* could mean ‘he weighed himself’ or ‘he had himself weighed’; while *on vzvesil sebja* can only mean ‘he weighed himself’ [Toops 1987: 604]. That is why Toops advances the hypothesis that what he calls “contextual causatives” are a grammatical, rather than a lexical phenomenon since they relate to the morpheme -*sja*. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. For the complete list see [Toops 1987: 598-600]. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. OPUS2 is an open source parallel corpus, with a collection of 40 languages. OPUS2 Italian counts 231.143.960 tokens (see <http://opus.nlpl.eu/>). [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. <https://www.sketchengine.eu/> [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. One of the advantages of having a bilateral parallel-corpus lies in the possibility of testing our findings both in original and translated texts. This gives us a better insight on language functioning [Johannson 1998: 6]. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. Unfortunately, it is not always possible to reveal the status of the causer from the examples extracted from OPUS2 since the source of the texts is unknown and the information is not retrievable from the context. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)