CAUSATIVITY IN BULGARIAN

Herein I propose to discuss the grammatical means of which Bulgarian disposes for the expression of causative relations\(^1\). Owing to the lexicalization of morphological causatives, which contributed from an historical viewpoint to the inventory of lexically distinct transitive verbs in Slavic as in the western Indo-European languages generally, I will not discuss so-called "lexical causatives"\(^2\). While Bulgarian poja etymologically represents the causative-forming *o*-grade Ablaut of pija 'I drink' (cf. Bielfeldt 1961, 200), poja does not signify 'I have/make (someone) drink.' Instead it is a distinct lexical item signifying 'to water (an animal),' 'to irrigate (a field),' or colloquially 'to wine (one's guests),' as in the expression gostili gi, poiš gi 'they were wined and dined' (Atanasova 1983, 698). I will, however, discuss productive (Shibatani 1976, 3) and contextual causatives.

Indeed, Bulgarian, like all Slavic, Germanic, and Romance languages, has no productive causative morphology. In order to express a causative relation, these languages have recourse to analytic or periphrastic causative constructions. A basic causative situation consists of two agents: a causer, or indirect agent, and a direct agent. In a periphrastic causative construction, the indirect agent is expressed as the subject of a verb that signifies the causation of another action, which in turn is expressed by a second verb, the agent of which is syntactically an object of the first. This is illustrated by an English sentence like *I had the workers*...
build a house, where the subject I is the agent of the causing action expressed by had, and the direct object$^3$ of had, namely the workers, is semantically the direct agent of the infinitive build. The verb build concomitantly signifies the action caused or indirectly brought about by the subject of the sentence.

Causative relations in Bulgarian find similar syntactic expression, with two notable exceptions: first, Bulgarian of course has no auxiliary + infinitive construction; a productive causative verb is used in conjunction with a da-clause instead. Secondly, it is possible in Bulgarian, as in Russian, Serbo-Croatian, Czech, Slovak, possibly other Slavic languages, and Lithuanian, to express the indirect agent of a caused action syntactically as the subject of the verb expressing that action, without the “intermediary” of a causative verb. This method of expressing a causative relation occurs only marginally in English, as, for example, in the case of We’re building ourselves a house in the country, whereby what is implied is actually We’re having ourselves a house built in the country. I refer to such causative constructions as “contextual causatives” and will discuss them in more detail below.

On the basis of languages possessing causative verbal morphemes, three types of causativity are generally recognized: factitive, permissive, and assistive (Nedjalkov & Sil’nickij 1969, 28–32). These are exemplified, respectively, by the following three Bulgarian sentences and their English translations:

(1) **Nakarach rabotnicite da postrojat kâšta**
   ‘I made the workers build a house’

(2) **Dadoch na rabotnicite da postrojat kâšta**
   ‘I let the workers build a house’

(3) **Pomognach na rabotnicite da postrojat kâšta**
   ‘I helped the workers build a house’

While the syntactic parallelism of these sentences is evident (ignoring, of course, the dative versus accusative object governance of the causative verbs), the question arises: what do these sentences have in common semantically, and what criteria allow their being classified as causative relations? Semantically, the occurrence of the verbs nakarach, da-

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$^3$ I use the term “direct object” in the strictly grammatical sense of its syntactic function. I leave open the question of its semantic function in relation to the verb have as well as the question of the transitive/intransitive nature of the verb have.
doch, and pomognach in conjunction with the da-clause cited logically entails (Kemp 1975, 48; Weischedel 1979, 170–9), or commits the recipient of the message to the assumption (Shibatani 1975, 2), that a house was in fact built; built, moreover, entirely or (in the case of the assistive causative) partly by the object of the causing actions, namely rabotnicite ‘the workers.’ For this reason, sentences like

(4) *Nakarach rabotnicite da postrojat kâšta, no te ja postroicha
    *‘I made the workers build a house, but they didn’t build it’
are inherently contradictory (cf. Nedjalkov & Nikitina 1965, 190). It is also for this reason that syntactically parallel constructions like

(5) Pomolich rabotnicite da postrojat kâšta
    ‘I asked the workers to build a house’
are not causative (cf. Shibatani 1975, 2): they do not impel the recipient of the message to infer that a house was in fact built. Thus, sentence (6), unlike sentence (4), is not self-contradictory (cf. Wojcik 1976, 171):

(6) Pomolich rabotnicite da postrojat kâšta, no te ne ja postroicha
    ‘I asked the workers to build a house, but they didn’t build it.’

Because assistive causativity is generally expressed by means of a verb denoting ‘help’ in languages lacking causative morphemes, this type of causativity is of little interest to the linguist. I will therefore limit myself to a discussion of factitive and permissive causativity.

Bulgarian has basically four permissive causative verbs: two auxiliary causatives, puskam(puštam)/pusna and davam/dam, both of which translate into English as ‘let,’ though the occurrence of the former is limited primarily to da-clauses containing a verb of motion (Korytkowska 1977, 60); and two so-called)pâlnoznačni kauzativi, or “pleosemantic” causatives, pozvoljavam/позвоља ‘allow’ and rasrešavam/разреша

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4 I pattern the term “pleosemantic” after the Russian and English terms POLNOгласie ‘pleophony’ and mnogoZNACNYJ ‘polysemantic.’

5 The verb ostavjam/ostavja seems to behave like a causative auxiliary in certain contexts, but I am not convinced that it really is one. It behaves rather much like the English verb to leave: ostavjam njakogo da umre ‘leave someone to die’ (rather than ‘let someone die’), ostavjam njakogo da pravi kakvoto šte ‘leave someone to do what he will/pleases.’ The Българско-английски реčnik (1983, 587) translates Te se ostavicha da gizmamjat as ‘They let themselves be swindled,’ but the problem here is that the agent of izmamjat is not coreferential with the patient (object) of the causative, as is typically the case in reflexive causative constructions. The English translation derives perhaps from the idea that “they left themselves (in a position where someone could) swindle them.”
'permit'. A fifth verb, dopuskam(dopuštam)/dopusna is also defined occasionally in Bulgarian-English dictionaries as 'let, allow,' but this appears to be simply a question of translation when the verb takes a da-clause as its object. Thus the Българско-английски реценк (Atanasova 1983, 175) translates “Заство допуска да ти се подиргават?” as ‘Why do you let them make fun of you?’ What the Bulgarian actually signifies is ‘Why do you tolerate/put up with their making fun of you?’ and cannot be construed as a causative relation, inasmuch as the action expressed by the verb podigravat se is already in progress. The subject of допуска cannot therefore be construed as an indirect agent of the action expressed in the da-clause, since the subject plays no active rôle in causing people to make fun. However, where the da-clause contains a verb of motion, dopuskam is occasionally synonymous with пускам:

(7) Ne me pusnachadopusnacha da vljaza
   ‘They did not let me enter.’

The term пълнознач ен каузатив is borrowed here from works on causativity published by the Лениградское отделение of the Soviet Academy of Sciences (cf. Nedjalkov, Nikitina & Chrakovskij 1965). A causative auxiliary is distinguished from a pleosemantic causative on syntactically conditioned semantic grounds. For example, the primary meaning of давам/dam is ‘give,’ but when the direct object of the verb is a da-clause, the verb давам functions as a causative copula. Pleosemantic causatives, however, exhibit no syntactically conditioned semantic changes; or, to put it another way, their lexical meaning is not altered (or ‘grammaticalized’) by the various syntactic environments in which they may occur. M. Korytkowska (1977, 55–7) proposes as a distinguishing criterion the intersubstitutability of the da-clause with a deverbative noun. Thus, sentence

(8) Tuk pozvoljavat/razrešavat da se puši
   ‘Here they allow/permit [one] to smoke’

may be re-expressed as

(9) Tuk pozvoljavat/ razrešavat pušeneto
   ‘Here they allow/permit smoking.’

However, sentence

(10) Tuk davat da se puši
    ‘Here they let [one] smoke’
cannot be re-expressed by substituting the da-clause with a nominal:

(11) *Tuk davat pušeneto

The English translation, *‘Here they let smoking,’ is likewise ungrammatical.

Given an animate indirect agent and a non-negated verb of motion in the da-clause, we may observe the co-occurrence of all four permissive causatives in identical syntactic environments:

(12) (a) Dadocha mi da otida na kino
    ‘They let me go to the movies’
(b) Pusnacha me da otida na kino
    ‘They let me go to the movies’
(c) Pozvolicha mi da otida na kino
    ‘They allowed me to go to the movies’
(d) Razrešicha mi da otida na kino
    ‘They permitted me to go to the movies’

Here only (a) and (b) express causative relations in the strict sense of the term, inasmuch as only they commit the recipient of the message to the ineluctable logical inference that ‘I did (in fact) go to the movies.’ The use of a permissive causative, in contradistinction to a factitive, is predicated on the presumption of the direct agent’s will or tendency to perform a given action, and signifies the removal of any physical, psychological or other barrier to that action, which, in turn, is consequently performed. The use of pozvoljavam and razrešavam, on the other hand, does not necessarily rest on the presumption of any will or tendency to perform a given action. That is to say, a person given allowance or permission to perform a particular act may have no will or tendency to perform it in the first place. Nevertheless, pozvoljavam and razrešavam

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6 Z. Guentchéva (personal correspondence) takes issue with my description of pusnacha in (12)(b), and offers the following context:

− Ne te pusnacha da otideš na kino, nali?

Pusnacha me, kak da ne me pusnacha, no az predpočetoch da si ostana v kăšti.

A possible argument against using such a context as a counter-example to what I have stated regarding entailment would be that pusnacha in the second sentence is used in its primary, lexical meaning ‘to let go, release, give leave, admition,’ and is therefore not functioning as a causative auxiliary as it does in conjunction with a da-clause. It is a curious feature of Bulgarian that puskam(puštam)/pusna is redundantly used with da-clauses containing verbs of motion. For example, both puskam njakogo v otpusk and the causatively formulated puskam njakogo da izleze v otpusk equally signify ‘let someone go on leave.’
are still to be considered causative verbs for the following reasons. First, the use of these verbs, given an animate subject, usually implies the subject's presumption that the direct agent has a will to perform the act which the subject sanctions. Secondly, various syntactic constrains on the use of the causative auxiliaries davam and puskam place them in certain complementary relations with the pleosemantic causatives pozvoljavam and razrešavam.

As previously mentioned, the occurrence of puskam as a causative auxiliary is primarily limited to da-clauses containing a verb of motion. Of marginal acceptance, however, are da-clauses without verbs of motion, but with a prepositional phrase specifying the location to which the direct agent is allowed access in order to perform a given act. Thus, Let him sleep cannot be expressed as

(13) *Pusni go da spi,

while

(14) Pusni go vatre da spi

is acceptable, in the sense of 'Let him come sleep indoors.' The agent of puskam is usually animate (or, in agentless passive constructions, implied to be animate). However, inanimate agents are also possible, as in the following example cited by Korytkowska (1977, 61):

(15) Edno specialno ustrojstvo prichvasta vâlnite, izlăčvani ot korabnata radiostancija, ne gi pušta da oletjat v efira.

'A special device receives the transmissions of the on-board radio station [and] does not let them get on the air.'

The agent of davam is also usually animate, though, again, need not necessarily be so. Z. Genadieva-Mutafčieva (1970, 53) cites the following example, with inanimate agent (the sun), from a poem by P. K. Javorov:

(16) Če ne dava, ne ostavja
    slânce da ja vižda

In general, however, Bulgarian prefers as a stylistically "neutral" causative with inanimate agents the verb pozvoljavam. Thus, whereas Russian freely uses davat' as in sentence (17), Bulgarian, in an almost identical context (sentence [18]), uses pozvoljavam:

(17) Matovye stékla ne davali videt' ničego proischodjaščego na dvore

'The frosted panes of glass did not let one see anything going on outside' (Akad. Nauk 4: 523)
(18) *Visokata ograda ne ni pozvoljavaše da vidim kakvo stava v dvora*
   ‘The high wall did not allow us to see what was going on in the yard’ (Korytkowska 1977, 59).

*Pozvoljavam* is likewise preferred in Bulgarian where the indirect and the direct agents are coreferential. Thus, sentence

(19) *Pozvoljavam si da napravja tova*
   ‘I allow myself to do that’

is preferred to

(20) *Davam si da napravja tova,*

which, if acceptable to Bulgarian speakers at all, is considered substandard or colloquial.

Neither *puskam* nor *davam* may occur with a *da*-clause containing a negated verb (Korytkowska 1977, 61). Just as the English *His parents let him not go to school* is ungrammatical and must be expressed with pleosemantic causatives, so, too, in Bulgarian:

(21) *Negovite roditeli mu pozvoljavat/razrešavat da ne otiva na učilište*
   ‘His parents allow/permit him not to go to school.’

As was seen in sentence (10), *Tuk davat da se puši* ‘Here they let [one] smoke,’ the direct agent of the caused action is omissible when, as R. Râžička (1973) has noted, it is understood to be an anonymous, indefinite human being (or beings). The surface-level omission of the direct agent in Bulgarian involves, for lack of an infinitive in the language, the use of an impersonal-reflexive construction like *da se puši* in our example. In English, omission of the direct agent in causative constructions (as in “heterosubjective” infinitive constructions generally) is impossible, as our translation with the mandatory insertion of a word like *one* or *people* shows: ‘Here they let people smoke.’ However, the direct agent is omissible in English where the verb expressing the caused action governs a direct object. This is achieved by means of a passive-like paraphrase and promotion of that direct object to the syntactic “slot” previously occupied by the omitted direct agent (i.e., direct object of the causative verb). Thus, given a sentence like *Here they let people read,* it is possible to omit the direct agent *people* by adding a direct object like *books* and formulating a (semantically) “elliptical” causative construction (Nedjalkov & Sil’nickij 1969, 7) on the order of *Here they let books be read.*
In Bulgarian, as in English, the caused action can govern no direct object if the direct agent is omitted. Thus sentence

(22) *Davam da se čete knigata
    'I let the book be read'

would appear to be inadmissible, if we were to interpret knigata as the direct object of čete. In actual fact, however, sentence (22) is an acceptable stylistic (phonosyntactic) variant of

(23) Davam knigata da se čete (ot njakogo),

where knigata is the subject of čete (se), now interpretable in its passive-reflexive rather than the homophonous impersonal-reflexive function noted previously. Interestingly, while knigata is the subject of the verb in the da-clause, it does not assume the syntactic rôle of object of the causative, as one might expect from the viewpoint of English. Otherwise we would derive the following (inadmissible) sentence:

(24) *Davam na knigata da se čete / da bāde pročetena.

Ambiguity with regard to the semantic function of davam may arise in certain sentences containing both a direct agent and a direct object of the caused action. Because certain elements of the da-clause may precede the conjunction da (cf. Lempp 1981, 88–90), their syntactic function may be open to dual interpretation. Thus, sentence

(25) Dadoch knigata na studentite da ja pročetat

is ambiguous: it may be a causative construction signifying 'I let the students read the book' (being an alternative formulation of the unambiguous Dadoch na studentite da pročetat knigata, cf. [2] above), or it may denote a non-causative situation, 'I gave the students the book to read' (where da, in its "finalna funkcija" [Genadieva-Mutafčieva 1970, 148–58], is synonymous with the strictly purposive za da)7.

Because of the purposive meaning which the da-clause expresses when used with davam in its primary, lexical meaning ‘to give,’ it is possible, in my opinion, to understand how the verb davam, not only in

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7 In a sentence like Dadoch kāštata na rabotnicite da ja postrojit, kāštata can, by logical elimination, be interpreted only as the direct object of postrojit, not dadoch. The sentence is thus an alternative formulation of Dadoch na rabotnicite da postrojit kāštata 'I let the workers build the house.' Obviously, a house that has yet to be built cannot be "given" to someone for purposes of being built.
Bulgarian, but also in Polish and Russian, has come to express factitive rather than permissive causativity in certain constructions. Thus, Bulgarian has a construction, with factitive causative meaning, consisting of the verb *davam* and the preposition *na* governing a deverbal noun. For example:

(26) *Davam nešto na popravka*
    ‘I have something repaired’

(27) *Davam kostjum na chimičesko čistene*
    ‘I’m having a suit dry-cleaned’

Similar constructions exist in Polish and Russian: Polish *dawać buty do szewca* ‘have shoes repaired,’ *dawać papiery do podpisania* ‘have papers signed’; Russian *otdavat’ kostjum v stirku* ‘have a suit cleaned,’ *otdavat’ kreslo v peretjažku* ‘have an armchair re-upholstered,’ and many others. According to Ju. D. Apresjan (1974, 209), such constructions are “absolutely unambiguous” in their expression of factitive causativity.

With respect to true factitive causative verbs that occur in conjunction with a *da*-clause, Bulgarian has one factitive auxiliary, *karam/nakaram/nakarvam,* and, like other Indo-European languages, about a dozen pleosemantic factitives, the semantics of which are bound up with the expression of varying degrees or forms of force or suasion. These include:

(28) (a) *nalagam/naloža (njakomu da se podčini)*
    ‘force’

(b) *nasilvam(nasiljam)/nasilja (njakogo da napravi nešto)*
    ‘force, coerce’

(c) *podstorvam/podstorja (njakogo da ubie čovek)*
    ‘prompt, incite’

(d) *predumvam/preduma (njakogo da prieme)*
    ‘talk into, persuade’

(e) *prinuždavam/prinudja (njakogo da se sãglaši)*
    ‘compel, constrain’

(f) *sãblaznjavam/sãblaznja (njakogo da napravi nešto)*
    ‘entice, lure’

(g) *sklanjam/sklonja (njakogo da kупi nešto)*
    ‘persuade, prevail upon’

(h) *ubeždavam/ubedja (njakogo da napravi nešto)*
    ‘convince, persuade’