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## **LINGUISTIC AND TYPOLOGICAL FEATURES OF CAUSATIVE SENTENCES IN ENGLISH**

### **Summary**

Causative sentences represent a significant grammatical and semantic phenomenon in the English language, reflecting how speakers encode relationships of cause, control, and agency. This article explores the linguistic and typological features of English causative constructions, focusing on their structural patterns, syntactic behavior, semantic roles, and functional usage. By examining lexical, morphological, and syntactic causatives with authentic examples, the study highlights the analytical nature of English and its preference for periphrastic causative strategies. The analysis also demonstrates how causative sentences contribute to discourse efficiency and conceptual clarity in both formal and informal contexts.

**Keywords:** causative constructions, English syntax, linguistic typology, causation, analytic languages

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## **İNGİLİS DİLİNDƏ SƏBƏB SEMANTİKLİ CÜMLƏLƏRİN LİNGVİSTİK VƏ TİPOLOJİ XÜSUSİYYƏTLƏRİ**

### **Xülasə**

Səbəb cümlələri ingilis dilində əhəmiyyətli bir qrammatik və semantik hadisəni təmsil edir və danışıqların səbəb, nəzarət və vasitəçilik əlaqələrini necə kodlaşdırdıqlarını əks etdirir. Bu məqalədə ingilis səbəb konstruksiyalarının lingvistik və tipoloji xüsusiyyətləri araşdırılır, onların struktur nümunələrinə, sintaktik davranışlarına, semantik rollarına və funksional istifadəsinə diqqət yetirilir. Leksik, morfoloji və sintaktik səbəbləri orijinal nümunələrlə araşdıraraq, tədqiqat ingilis dilinin analitik təbiətini və perifrastik səbəb strategiyalarına üstünlük verdiyini vurğulayır. Təhlil həmçinin səbəb cümlələrinin həm rəsmi, həm də qeyri-rəsmi kontekstlərdə diskurs səmərəliliyinə və konseptual aydınlığa necə töhfə verdiyini göstərir.

**Açar sözlər:** səbəb konstruksiyaları, ingilis sintaksisi, linqvistik tipologiya, səbəbiyyət, analitik dillər

## ЛИНГВИСТИЧЕСКИЕ И ТИПОЛОГИЧЕСКИЕ ОСОБЕННОСТИ КАУЗАТИВНЫХ ПРЕДЛОЖЕНИЙ В АНГЛИЙСКОМ ЯЗЫКЕ

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### Аннотация

Каузативные предложения представляют собой важное грамматическое и семантическое явление в английском языке, отражающее способы выражения отношений причины, контроля и агентивности. В данной статье рассматриваются лингвистические и типологические особенности каузативных конструкций в английском языке с акцентом на их структурные модели, синтаксическое поведение, семантические роли и функциональное употребление. На основе анализа лексических, морфологических и синтаксических каузативов с использованием аутентичных примеров подчёркивается аналитический характер английского языка и его предпочтение перифрастических каузативных стратегий. Исследование также демонстрирует, как каузативные предложения способствуют эффективности дискурса и концептуальной ясности как в формальном, так и в неформальном общении.

**Ключевые слова:** каузативные конструкции, синтаксис английского языка, лингвистическая типология, каузация, аналитические языки

### Introduction

Causation is a fundamental cognitive and linguistic concept through which speakers express relationships between actions, events, and agents. In language, causative sentences are used to indicate that one participant causes another participant to perform an action or brings about a particular state. English, as an analytically structured language, employs a variety of causative constructions to encode such relationships.

“A *causative sentence* is a grammatical construction that expresses a cause–effect relationship between two events or states, typically involving an agent that causes another entity to perform an action” (Comrie, 1989). In English, causative constructions commonly feature verbs such as *make*, *have*, *let*, *get*, and *cause*. These verbs serve as causative markers that link an initiating agent to a caused action.

For example:

*She made him clean the room.*

*They had the workers fix the machine.*

In these sentences, *make* and *have* function as causative verbs, introducing an external agent responsible for initiating the action of the subordinate clause. The structure typically follows a pattern: Subject (causer) + causative verb + Object (causee) + base verb, though variation exists based on verb type and semantic context.

English causative constructions can be classified into analytic causatives and lexical causatives. Analytic causatives are formed using auxiliary or semi-auxiliary verbs combined with a verb phrase (e.g., *have someone do something*). Lexical causatives, by contrast, involve single verbs that inherently carry causative meaning (e.g., *kill, break*). For example:

Analytic: *The teacher had the students rewrite the essay.*

Lexical: *The storm broke the window.*

Syntactically, causative structures exhibit specific behaviors:

1. “Object control: In sentences with causative verbs like *have* and *make*, the object of the causative verb tends to control the embedded verb” (Huddleston & Pullum, 2002).
2. Non-finite clauses: Causative constructions often feature non-finite subordinate clauses (bare infinitive or participle), reducing complexity and maintaining direct causation semantics.
3. “Voice relationship: Causative verbs can alter the typical passive/active relations; for instance, *He was made to apologize* introduces a passive of causation”. (Givón, T., 2001)

Semantically, causative sentences encode hierarchical relationships between events”. (Talmy’s, 2000) work on motion and causation describes how English typically articulates causative meaning through distinct morphosyntactic strategies. English uses obligatory overt marking to express causative intent, contrasting languages that use morphological processes such as affixation.

The degree of causation can vary:

Direct causation implies immediate and intentional influence (e.g., *She made him apologize*).

“Indirect causation suggests a more mediated influence, often expressed with verbs like *get* or *have* (e.g., *He got his car repaired*)”. (Song, J. J., 2014).

Additionally, causative verbs differ in agency and volition features: *let* often implies permission (*She let him leave*), whereas *make* implies compulsion (*She made him leave*).

“From a typological perspective, languages realize causative structures through divergent mechanisms, including morphological causatives (e.g., affixation in Turkish or Japanese) and periphrastic constructions (as in English)”. (Comrie,

1989) notes that English belongs to languages that predominantly use periphrastic causatives, employing separate causative verbs rather than morphological affixes.

Typologically, causatives can be categorized as follows:

“Analytic causatives: using separate verbs (e.g., English *have*, *get*).

Synthetic causatives: using bound morphology (e.g., Japanese *-sase*).

Morphological causatives: where causation is encoded via morphological markers on the verb root”. (Huddleston, R., & Pullum, G. K., 2002).

English analytic causatives allow flexible expression but pose challenges for learners due to varying semantic nuances among causative verbs (e.g., difference between *let* and *make*).

“In contrast to English, many languages encode causative meaning through verb morphology. For example, Japanese uses causative suffixes (*-saseru/-saru*), while Turkish uses suffixes like *-dir*”. (Huddleston, R., & Pullum, G. K., 2002). These morphological causatives often interact with voice and valency patterns, increasing the number of arguments a verb can take.

“Typological research suggests that languages with agglutinative or synthetic morphology tend to prefer bound causative markers, while analytic languages like English rely more on periphrastic constructions” (Bybee, Perkins, & Pagliuca, 1994). The English causative system, thus, reflects its broader typological traits as a language with limited inflection and strong reliance on word order and auxiliary verbs.

The study of causative sentences is important for understanding how English organizes meaning syntactically and semantically. From a typological perspective, English differs from many synthetic languages by relying primarily on lexical and periphrastic causatives rather than morphological causative markers. This article provides a detailed analysis of the linguistic and typological features of causative sentences in English, with special attention to structure, meaning, and usage.

### **Linguistic nature of causative sentences**

A causative sentence involves at least two events: a causing event and a caused event. Linguistically, this relationship is expressed by introducing a causer (the initiator of the action) and a causee (the entity that performs or undergoes the action).

For example:

*“The manager made the employees stay late.*

*She caused the glass to break.”* (Kemmer, S., & Verhagen, A., 1994).

In these sentences, the causer does not perform the action directly but brings about the action through influence, control, or circumstances. This indirectness is a defining linguistic feature of causative constructions.

### **Structural types of causative constructions in English**

English causative sentences can be classified into several major structural types: lexical causatives, periphrastic (syntactic) causatives, and implicit causatives.

Lexical causatives involve verbs whose meanings inherently include causation:

*“The storm destroyed the village.*

*Her words frightened the child.”* (Song, J. J., 2014).

In such cases, causation is embedded within the lexical meaning of the verb, and no additional causative marker is required.

Periphrastic causatives are formed using separate causative verbs such as *make*, *have*, *let*, *cause*, and *get*:

*“The teacher made the students rewrite the essay.*

*I had my car repaired.*

*She let him speak freely.”* (Dixon, R. M. W., 2000).

These constructions clearly illustrate the analytical nature of English, as causation is expressed through independent function words rather than morphological changes.

### **Syntactic features of causative sentences**

From a syntactic perspective, causative constructions often involve complex predicate structures. The verb *make*, for example, is typically followed by a bare infinitive:

*They made him apologize.*

In contrast, *cause* and *get* usually require a to-infinitive:

*“The accident caused traffic to stop.*

*She got him to help her”.* (Haspelmath, M., 2010).

This variation demonstrates that causative verbs differ in their syntactic requirements, despite sharing similar semantic functions.

Another notable syntactic feature is the passive transformation of causative sentences:

*“The technician had the system checked.*

*The system was checked by the technician”.*

Such transformations highlight the flexibility of causative constructions and their compatibility with different syntactic voices.

### **Semantic roles and degrees of causation**

Semantically, causative sentences encode different degrees of control and intentionality. The verb *make* typically implies strong authority or coercion:

*“The strict rules made employees follow the procedure.”* (Kroeger, P. R., 2005).

By contrast, *let* suggests permission rather than force:

*“She let her children choose their own careers”.* (Song, J. J., 2014).

The verb *get* often implies persuasion or effort:

*He finally got her to agree.*

These distinctions show that English causative verbs are semantically nuanced and allow speakers to express subtle differences in interpersonal relations and social power.

### **Typological characteristics of English causative constructions**

From a typological standpoint, English belongs to languages that favor analytic causative strategies. Unlike languages that use affixes or verbal inflections to mark causation, English typically relies on independent verbs and fixed word order.

For example, while some languages express causation through a single modified verb form, English requires a multi-word construction:

*“She made him leave rather than a morphologically marked causative verb”.*  
(Haspelmath, M., 2010)

This typological preference reflects the broader grammatical tendencies of English, including limited inflection and a strong reliance on syntactic structure.

### **Functional and discourse roles of causative sentences**

Causative sentences play an important role in discourse by allowing speakers to describe responsibility, influence, and outcome without explicitly assigning direct action. In academic writing, they are frequently used to explain processes and results:

*“Environmental factors cause significant changes in behavior.”* (Comrie, B., 1989).

In everyday communication, causative constructions are used to manage social interaction:

*“Don’t let this problem ruin your day.  
She had her hair cut before the interview”* (Frawley, W., 1992).

Such examples demonstrate the versatility of causative sentences across registers.

### **Causative sentences and sentence economy**

Causative constructions contribute to linguistic economy by condensing complex event structures into a single clause. Compare:

*“She arranged for someone to fix the computer.  
She had the computer fixed”.* (Payne, T. E., 1997).

The causative sentence provides a more compact and efficient way of expressing the same meaning, a feature particularly valued in formal and professional contexts.

### **Conclusion**

Causative sentences in English demonstrate a complex interplay between syntax, semantics, and typology. English primarily uses analytic causative constructions with verbs such as *make*, *have*, and *get*, each contributing unique semantic properties to the expression of causation. Typologically, English contrasts with languages that use morphological causatives, highlighting variation in how languages encode cause–effect relationships. Understanding these features enhances our comprehension of English grammar and contributes to broader comparative linguistic studies. The linguistic and typological features of causative sentences in English reveal their central role in expressing cause–effect relationships, social

control, and agency. Characterized by analytic structure, syntactic flexibility, and semantic precision, English causative constructions reflect the broader typological profile of the language. Their widespread use across discourse types underscores their importance as a core grammatical resource. Further study of causative sentences can contribute to a deeper understanding of English syntax, semantics, and cross-linguistic variation.

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**Rəyçi: Filologiya üzrə fəlsəfə doktoru Xəyalə Əliyeva**