

A Semantic Approach to Examining English Causative Constructions

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ABSTRACT: *This phraseological study argues that the causative construction [make Object to Verb] ([make O to V]) derived from [make O V] is acceptable when a semantic approach is adopted, and clarifies that: (i) the essence of communication is to convey meaning, which is reflected in syntactic patterns and (ii) semantics takes priority over syntactic patterns. The semantic and syntactic features of [make O to V] were semantically examined and the extended constructions in other causative constructions, such as [get O to V], [have O V], and [let O V], were assessed. Because these are generally low-frequency, age-old contemporary English constructions, the derived constructions with causative usages, such as [make O to V], [get O V], [have O to V], and [let O to V], were found to be hindered by prescriptive grammar. As this study was focused on meaning, examining usages considered incorrect can reveal new unobserved language aspects.*

KEYWORDS: phraseology, corpus-based, causative constructions, corpus-based, age-old usage, semantics over syntax

INTRODUCTION

The essence of language is to convey meaning, which is generally achieved through syntactic patterns. Meaning generally reflects social conditions; however, because there are limited syntactic patterns, deviations from conventional usage are often seen as unacceptable or incorrect, even when found in corpora. Further, as grammar texts prioritize syntactic patterns, linguistic deviations that are seen as unacceptable are often overlooked, that is, grammar books do not always represent the true nature of a language. However, when the meaning is prioritized, linguistic deviations, which tend to occur in phrases consisting of at least two or more words (phraseological units [PUs]), can be explained as new linguistic structures.

Inoue (2018: 5, 257–259) adopted a corpus-based semantic approach and argued that not all word combinations could be explained by grammatical rules or linguistic theories and proposed several formation methods, processes, and criteria that could explain how these word combinations became PUs and the particular stress patterns of

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these PUs, the details for which are given in Section 2.4.1. Inoue (2018) demonstrated that a semantic-oriented approach could account for these irregularities.

Therefore, a semantic-oriented approach is taken in this paper to explain the [make O to V] syntactic pattern and its causative usage deviations from the original [make O V] construction shown in (1). The differences and similarities between [make O V] and [make O to V] and the historical transition to [make O to V] are also examined.

- (1) a. He finally chose the third option because the first option would *make him* lose his pension.
(Corpus of Contemporary American (COCA) 2006, ACAD, italics by the author.)
b. But I know sometimes if he is drinking too much it may *make him* change his mind.
(COCA 2018, Fiction)

This study also examines the linguistic deviations in the semantically similar constructions [get O to V], [let O V], and [have O V]. The remainder of this paper is structured as follows. Section 1 overviews the study; Section 2 presents possible theories that reveal the actual manner of [make O to V] and similar constructions, explains the phraseology, elucidates the problems to be fixed, outlines the linguistic concepts providing background to the study, and examines previous causative usage research on *make*, *get*, *let*, and *have*; Section 3 introduces the research questions, data, and research methods; Section 4 uses corpora data to examine the diachronic and synchronic perspectives of the [make O to V] construction and other peripheral phenomena; Section 5 discusses the study implications; and Section 6 concludes the study.

LITERATURE REVIEW

As shown in (2), the reality of [make O to V] can be examined from four possible perspectives. While this study adopts the (2d) phraseological position, it also examines the relationships between phraseology and three other analytical perspectives. This section presents the meaning-based concepts used in this study and summarizes previous causative usage research.

- (2) a. Construction grammar (CxG)
b. Pattern grammar
c. Corpus pattern analysis (CPA)
d. Phraseology

Construction grammar is associated with cognitive linguistics, and pattern grammar and corpus pattern analyses are associated with corpus linguistics; however, phraseology has been associated with various empirical avenues, such as linguistics and education, and has continued to evolve in various forms.

(2a) Construction grammar (CxG)

Construction grammar, which is the primary focus of cognitive linguistics, deals with structures comprising grammatical categories and relationships, both of which focus on elucidating links between language forms and the associated semantic functions. Conventional syntax divides vocabulary into two parts at a time and is therefore unable to express the syntax whole. Construction grammar focuses on existing constructions, such as *way*-constructions and constructions that can be explained using grammatical categories, that is regularities, but overlooks newly observed irregular constructions.

Two main terms have been applied to construction grammar: Construction Grammar (CxG), which was proposed by Goldberg (2005) and Langacker (2005), and Radical Construction Grammar (RCG), which was proposed by Croft (2013). CxG deals with grammatical relationship structures, such as the subject and object, and RCG deals with grammatical category structures, such as noun phrases and verbs; however, both focus on multiword expressions that can be explained within established grammatical frameworks.

CxG research has included discussions on the *more* construction (Fillmore 1989), which revealed the semantic and syntactic features of the *more* S +V and the *more* S' + V' constructions, the *let alone* construction (Fillmore, Kay and O'Conner 1988), and the WXDY construction, such as *What's X doing?* (Kay and Fillmore 1999), all of which revealed the value of CxG analysis, as summarized in (3).

- (3) a. Self-movement to keep moving forward–*way*-construction
b. Apply force to things to change their state–resultative construction
c. Influence things to move somewhere else–caused-motion construction
d. Pass something on to someone else–double object construction

Besides the constructions in (3), many other English language constructions are difficult to explain using rules or theories. CxG analyses, therefore, are limited and do not assess diachronic language aspects because of the difficulty in obtaining data. While at first glance, CxG appears to be useful at explaining constructions, as discussed later in this study, many of these constructions seem beyond CxG, which has led to a lack of accountability for newly observed linguistic phenomena, which needs to be better accounted for in future CxG research.

(2b) Pattern grammar

As pointed out by Firth (1957:11), the pattern grammar proposed by Hunston and Francis (2000) suggests that “you shall know a word by the company it keeps,” that is, grammar patterns refer to the grammatical environment that follows a particular word in a particular sense, such as the [explain + *why*-clause] and the [V + *over* + noun group/*wh*-clause]. Herbst (2010: 191–192) claimed that pattern grammar could be equated with Schmid's (2004) valency patterns as both deal with complementation patterns associated with verbs and other valence bearers, such as [believe + N + adj.], [believe + *that*-clause], and [believe + N (+ *to*-infinitive)].

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Hunston and Francis (2000) classified patterns into (i) a word and its patterns and (ii) a pattern and its word, with the first being defined as follows: “patterns of a word can be defined as all the words and structures which are regularly associated with the word and which contribute to its meaning” (Hunston and Francis 2000: 37), such as the [explain + about], [explain + the noun group], and [explain + *why/how/ what*-clause patterns], and the second being defined as patterns associated with words coming from specific semantic classes, such as [V (= *bicker, disagree, fight, quarrel, wrangle*, etc.) + [over + noun group/ *wh*-clause]].

As seen from the above examples, pattern grammar focuses on high-frequency grammar patterns but sporadic grammatical patterns, which means that patterns such as [make O to V], which are considered low-frequency errors, are excluded. As pattern grammar also focuses on syntactics rather than semantics, it cannot be used to comprehensively account for the newly observed constructions discussed in this paper.

(2c) Corpus pattern analysis (CPA)

The CPA, which was first proposed by Hanks (2004, 2013) and Hanks and Pustejovsky (2005), is a corpus linguistics procedure that analyzes phraseological patterns and collocations to associate word meanings with word use; that is, it is a technique for mapping meaning onto words in a text (see Hanks 2004: 87ff.). Therefore, in contrast to pattern grammar, CPA patterns have a clear semantic dimension as they reflect semantic instances that contain the formulation and the meanings associated with the patterns. CPA systematically analyses patterns of meaning and use and the combinations in different categories, such as semantic types, such as human, wind, vapor, and dust, grammatical categories, such as adverbials of direction, and lexical items. For example, one pattern for the verb *file* is [[Human = Plaintiff]] file [[Procedure = Lawsuit]], the implicature for which may be expressed as *If you file a lawsuit, you are acting as the plaintiff, and you activate a procedure by which you hope to obtain redress for some wrong that you believe has been done to you.* Depending on the application, the pattern implicature can be expressed in a wide variety of ways; for example, as a translation into another language or as a synonym set, such as “file = activate, start, begin, lodge.” For example, the meaning of *blowing one’s nose* is shown in the pattern [[Human]] blow {nose}, while the meaning of *wind blows* is represented by the pattern [[Wind| Vapor| Dust]] blow [No object][adverbials of direction] (Hanks et al. 2018: 97).

Similar to pattern grammar, CPA deals mainly with the semantic aspects of existing multiword expressions; however, the distinctive semantic features treated in CPA can be adapted to the syntax of [make O to V] and other peripheral phenomena.

(2d) Phraseology

Phraseology examines multiword expressions comprising at least two or more words that are used together in a single semantic unit, which are referred to in this study as phraseological units (PUs). PUs correspond to prefabs, recurrent word combinations, phrasemes, set phrases, lexical items, formulaic language, lexical bundles, and

Publication of the European Centre for Research Training and Development -UK phraseologies, among others. As Cowie (1999:4n) pointed out, “In phraseology, as in other fields within linguistics, it is common for individual scholars to apply different terms to the same category (or the same term to different categories).”

PUs have generally been morphologically divided into continuous PUs, such as *here we go (again)* and *the way how to do*¹, and discontinuous PUs such as *from A until to B*², which are the constructions discussed in this study. Other phraseology subcategories are collocations, idioms, phrasal verbs, formulas, fixed phrases, and associated constructions. Each PU can be defined by frequency, polysemy, semantic transparency, and whether it fits within a grammatical rule framework. (4) gives PU definitions and subcategories by frequency, polysemy, semantic transparency, and whether each subcategory follows an appropriate grammar rule.

- (4) a. Idioms such as *spill the beans* and *kick the bucket* are low-frequency multiword expressions; that is, the meaning is not derived from the meaning of each element, they are not polysemous, and their composition can be explained using grammar rules.
- b. Collocations are combinations of statistically or semantically compatible words and may be infrequent or frequent; however, in neither case are they polysemous. For example, the overall meaning of a collocation such as *hand in/submit a term paper* can be determined from each word. Unlike other subcategories, collocations are register sensitive, with collocations such as *hand in/submit a term paper* and *submitting a term paper* being more academic English. These constructions adhere to grammar rules.
- c. Phrasal verbs are multiword expressions that consist of a “verb + adverb” or a “verb + (adverb) + preposition.” The overall meaning cannot always be determined from each component, such as *a look around*, *look up to*, and *put off*. The composition, however, adheres to grammar rules.
- d. Proverbs are grammatically correct multiword expressions, such as *Don't count your chickens before they hatch*, with the meanings being semantically unique and not the sum of each constituent. As proverbs are used aphoristically, they have a limited register, are low frequency, and are not polysemous.
- e. Formulas such as *I wasn't born yesterday* and *now you're talking* are used in conversation and are multiword expressions that can be grammatically explained. The overall meaning is difficult to determine from each component, they are not polysemous, and the frequency depends on each formula.
- f. Fixed phrases are multiword expressions that cannot be explained using conventional theories or grammar rules; therefore, it has been previously difficult

¹ Inoue (2018:233ff.) explained in detail how the unacceptable phrase behaves in contemporary English and was established. *The way how* has two syntactic patterns: [*the way how S + V*] and [*the way how to do*]. Inoue (ibid.) concluded that the [*way how S + V*] was established by a man antecedent + a relative adverb analogy, such as *the place where*, *the exact time when*, etc., and that the [*way how to do*] was the merging of [*way to do*] and [*how to do*].

² Inoue (2018: 29ff.) explained that *until to something* is used as a reminder of *until* and that due to linguistic economy redundancy, was blended by putting together semantically similar words *until* and *to*, that is, *until to* influenced the construction [*from A to B*] and was replaced with *to*.

Publication of the European Centre for Research Training and Development -UK to determine their features. Fixed phrases include constructions such as *from A until to B* and *though A but B*; however, since advances in corpora, there has been an increased focus on fixed phrase research. Fixed phrases, such as *you know what* and *here we go (again)*, are high frequency and polysemous. There are also multiword expressions that have a single sense, such as *until to* and *until before*, which are interpreted as constructions.

PUs have generally been studied because people tend to rely on phrases they have heard or used many times. In (5), which was a question posed to Jon Stewart, the comedy genius, when an interviewer asked him; “Which is funnier, Crossfire, the CNN debate show (1982–2005, broadcast until 2013–2014) or Hardball with Chris Matthews (1999–2020)? (broadcast from 1999 to 2020)?” The PUs are italicized in (5).

- (5) Crossfire or Hardball? Which is funnier? Which is more *soul-crushing*, do you mean? Both are. equally dispiriting in their ... *you know, the whole idea that political discourse* has degenerated into shows that have to be entitled Crossfire or Hardball. And *you know, “I’m Gonna Beat Your Ass” or whatever they’re calling them these days is mind-boggling.* Crossfire, especially, is completely an apropos name. It’s what *innocent bystanders* are caught in when gangs are fighting. And it just *boggles my mind* that that’s given *a half hour, an hour a day* to ... *I don’t understand how* issues can be dissected from the left and from the right *as though ... even cartoon characters have more than left and right.* They have *up and down.* (Goldberg 2019:53)

By using the PUs in italics, Jon Stewart’s reply was both interesting and native English speaker-like. If the PUs in (5) were rewritten with the conventional expressions shown in (6), Jon Stewart’s reply would appear somewhat tasteless.

- (6) Crossfire or Hardball? Which is funnier? Which *causes less enthusiasm*, do you intend? Both are. equally dispiriting in their ... *you are aware, the complete idea that talk of politics* has degenerated into shows that have to be entitled Crossfire or Hardball. And *you are aware, “You will be Defeated” or whichever names they are labeling them currently is upsetting.* Crossfire, especially, is completely an apropos name. It’s what *uninvolved people* are caught in when gangs are fighting. And it just *jiggles my brain* that that’s given *0.5 -1/24* to ... *I do not comprehend in what way* issues can be dissected from the left and from the right *in the manner...* even *characters in cartoons* have *things in addition to right and left.* They have *down and up.* (Goldberg 2019:53–54)

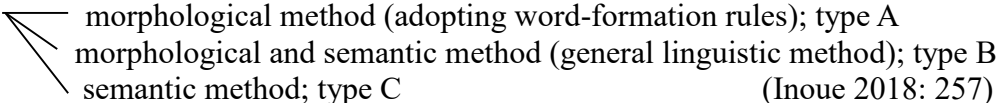
It could be surmised from the above that native English speakers may depend on PUs; therefore, to use English in the same way as native English speakers requires an understanding of native speaker language conventions and their use, that is, how words, PUs, and grammatical forms are preferably used in context, which is known as antecedent stimuli.

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Phraseological analyses deal with irregularities not covered by CxG, pattern grammar, and CPA analyses; therefore, by using phraseology in this study to assess the syntactic reality of irregularities, it is hoped that a bridge can be built between CxG, pattern grammar, CPA, and phraseology.

Formation methods, formation processes, PU criteria, and PU stress patterns

The review of phraseological research elucidated two important issues. First, because of the breadth of phraseological research, it was found that phraseology definitions vary considerably, and second, because of the first issue, judging whether a word combination is an established PU can be difficult. Inoue (2018:257) developed a systematic framework to resolve these issues that adopted a bottom-up approach to explain how the inner features of a word combination; formation, process, criteria, and stress pattern rules; can develop into a PU, examples of which are shown in (7), (8), (9), and (10) (original in Japanese).

The formation of PUs is illustrated in (7).

- (7) PUs 

Notably, as type B is an intermediary for types A and C, it could be concluded that PUs form as steric rather than linear constructions. The outcomes in (7) and (8) summarize the word combination process that leads to PU formation.

- (8) (i) Two existing words are put together by adopting either (i) a morphological method, (ii) a morphological and semantic method, or (iii) a semantic method, which then become a repeatedly used unit;
- ↓
- (ii) a PU develops meaning and function through repeated use
- ↓ ← with assistance from phrase lexicalization;
- (iii) a PU is established as an independent lexical item (ibid.)

As (8) illustrates, two existing words are first combined to form a PU, which is similar to a kenning, a multiword creation method primarily used in Old Norse and Old English poetry in which two words are combined to form a poetic expression that refers to a person or a thing. Second, the frequent use of developed PUs imbues them with individual features, which then become independent units through phrasal lexicalization, one of the word-formation rules. These processes are true for both continuous and discontinuous PUs.

The criteria to determine whether a word combination is a PU are defined in (9).

- (9) a. Frequency
b. Dispersion
c. Fixedness (i.e., no variables)

Frequency and dispersion (9a, b) are the norms that indicate PUs do not arbitrarily occur, and fixedness (9c) is the necessary condition that indicates that fixed PU forms have widespread contextual and/or situational use; therefore, PUs are both polysemic and multifunctional. As indicated in (9d), newly observed PUs form through the combination of existing words; however, if such combinations are not frequently or widely used, they are not considered PUs.

(10) shows the PU stress patterns.

- (10) a. Predicting the phrase stress patterns simply by whether a word is a function word or a content word is impossible.
- b. The stress is placed on the word the speaker considers most important to convey the PU meaning.
- c. Set phrases have stable stress patterns.
- d. A set phrase does not necessarily consist of one tonal group, and each word in the set phrases has its own tonal group. (Inoue 2018:5)

Concepts used in this study

This section explains the English linguistic concepts related to the semantic-oriented approach and the linguistic economy, which is the meta-concept that makes the concepts possible.

Analogy

An analogy is “the phenomenon in which Form A acquires the syntactic function x or meaning y (which will eventually be realized as a new syntactic function) of another Form B that was not originally used” (Yagi 1999:74, original in Japanese). For example, rob A *of* B acquires the construction rob B *from* A due to the influence of steal B *from* A. Analogy also refers to the prepositionalization of conjunctions that express a series of concessions, such as *regardless of*, *in spite of*, and *irrespective of* (see Yagi and Inoue 2004 and 2013).

Linguistic economy principal: least effort and redundancy

As language constantly evolves, empirical English language research seeks to reveal new language that cannot be found in conventional dictionaries or grammar books and revise descriptions to uncover new linguistic phenomena. Yagi and Inoue (2004, 2013) and Inoue (2018) have found that there may be a law of change underlying these various English language changes; for example, recent linguistic changes have revealed both a simplification of English and an increase in its complexity and diversity. Therefore, understanding the reasons for these changes could lead to a better understanding of modern English usage.

Based on this discussion, this study introduces the linguistic economy principle, which includes contradictory economy and redundancy principles. As explained in Inoue (2018), a linguistic phenomenon can be explained due to its economy; for example, the

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complementary structure *it looks like/ as if* ~ changes to *it looks that*, which is a clause that has been affected by the semantically similar clause construction *it seems that*. This complement structure change also gives the *it looks that* clause a definite meaning. As explained in Inoue (2018), an example of the opposite linguistic phenomenon, redundancy, is an expression that overlaps with the word *to*, which is semantically similar to *until*, as in *until to last Friday*. The major principle, effective communication, which is, of course, the essential role of language, reconciles these contradictory principles. Therefore, based on this principle, economy and redundancy could be seen to control language change and maintain the balance between them.

Causative usage–[makes O V]

(11) summarizes the semantic and syntactic features of [make O V]. (i) All previous research has claimed that [make O to V] is unacceptable (= [11b]). (ii) However, when this construction is passive, that is, [*be made to V*], it is acceptable (= [11c]). (iii) The verbs that can be used with the causative verb *make* are limited (= [11d]). Please note that as *make* is a factitive rather than a causative verb in the construction [make O C], it is beyond the scope of this study.

(11) a. To force someone to do something

(*Macmillan English Dictionary*, 2nd edition)

b. *There are several points that **made I think** so. (ibid.)

c. **Make** is only followed by a **to**-infinitive when it is used in the passive: *We are made to feel that the reversed meaning is wrong.* (ibid.)

d. Verbs frequently used in the infinitive with the causative verb **make**: *appear, feel, happen, laugh, look, realize, seem, sound, think, under, wonder. The bristling of the fur makes the animal look bigger.* (ibid.)

(12) summarizes the semantic features of [make O V] and similar constructions (original in Japanese). The subject's intention is at work, and the action is directed toward the object.

(12) a. [make O do] is used to force somebody/something to do or cause to feel something; for example, *I made them work till late at night.* (*Youth Progressive English-Japanese Dictionary*, Carter and McCarthy 2006:105, Konishi 2006: 699).

b. [let O do] be used to allow/permit somebody to do something; for example, *She let her children leave early.* (ibid.)

c. [have O do] is used to cause somebody to do something. The coercive meaning [have O do] is weaker than [make O V] and [get O to V] and is close to [let O V]; for example, *She had him go because he wanted to go.* (ibid.) This is mostly used in American English to talk about giving instructions or orders.

(Swan 2016)

d. [get O to do] is used to make somebody/something do something or persuade somebody/something to do something; for example, *She got her children to*

(17) describes [get O to V].

- (17) a. He got a specialist to examine his son.
b. He got his son to be examined by a specialist.
c. He got his son examined by a specialist.
d. (17a) and (17b) are not equivalent and *get* here clearly takes an ordinary object (as also with a gerund-participial). However, (17c) is not an alternant of (17b): *get* takes a raised object in the past-participial construction (which has no active counterpart). With *have* the analogy of (17b) is not acceptable (**He had his son to be examined by a specialist.*), and we have equivalence between *He had a specialist examine his son.* and *He had his son examined by a specialist*; this indicates a raised object, which ties in with the fact that *have* is also used with a non-causative “undergo” sense: *He had the police call round in the middle of the night to question him about his secretary’s disappearance*, where the visit was something that happened to him rather than something he arranged – and where there would seem to be no direct semantic relationship between verb and object. (Huddleston and Pullum 2002: 1236)

The *OED* notes that the earliest example of [make O V] is (18a), which has been in use since the 15th century, and that (18b) is the second oldest example.

- (18) a. 1425 (▶ ?a1400) G. CHAUCER *Romaunt Rose* (Hunterian) 1799. For to *make me o.* hym mete, The thridde arose he gan to shet, which was named Curtesie.
b. 1544 J. BALE *Epist. Exhortatorye* f. xxiii You sturdy struggelers will somewhat starkly at. this homely writinge, yet shall not that *make me* leave of.

Previous descriptions, including those in the *OED*, indicate that [make O to V] was used in English before prescriptive grammar. Therefore, previous traditional grammar studies were consulted to examine how this was described, the results of which are shown in (19) and (20). Jespersen (1954) recognized three patterns: [make O V] in (20a), [make O to V] in (20b), and both [make O V] and [make O to V] in (20c). However, no discussion was given regarding the semantic differences between these three patterns.

- (19) I made [caused] him (to) talk. (Jespersen, Ishibashi (ed.) 1966: 712)
(20) a. Mandv 169 that makethe them flee | Sh Hml III 2.29 nothing will make him work; the mere. idea of work makes him shudder (Jespersen 1954: 290)
b. Hm III 4.186 And let him ... Make you to rauell all this matter out| Bacon A 9.30 we will not. make your countenance to fall (Jespersen 1954: 291)
c. Marlowe E 2280 Your passions make your dolours to increase. This vsage makes my miserie. increase. (ibid.)

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Research questions and source materials

This section gives this study's research questions, details the data, and describes the research methods.

Research questions

This study sought the answers to the five research questions shown in (21).

- (21) a. What are the meanings, functions, and origins of [make O to V], and what are the similarities and differences with [make O V]?
b. Are there any peripheral causative constructions to [get O V], [let O to V], and [have O to V]?
c. If so, what are the semantic and functional differences between and similarities with the original construction and what are the origins?
d. When did [make O to V] and similar constructions come into use (historical aspects)?
e. Which takes priority: meaning or syntactic patterns?

DATA AND RESEARCH METHOD

Open data sources were used for the empirical research: the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA), the British National Corpus (BNC, using the Shogakukan Corpus Network), and WordBanksOnline (WB, using the Shogakukan Corpus Network), with the Corpus of Historical American English (COHA) consulted for the diachronic investigation. To answer the research questions in (21), the corpora data were examined using CPA. A lemma search was conducted in the corpora so that [make] as make/made/makes/making/maketh and the O; me/her/his/you/them/us; in [make O to V] were revealed.

DISCUSSION

This section examines the manners for [make O to V] and other similar causative constructions: [get O to V], [have O V], and [let O V].

Manners for [make O to V]

[Make O to V] was found to be used in contexts in which God appears and in ordinal contexts, examples for which are given in (22) and (23). When used in the God context, the syntactic pattern *maketh* (= the old 3rd person form of *make*) *me to lie down in green pastures/grass* was used, as in (22c).

- (22) a. It says, in Genesis 2:18, right at the beginning of the Bible we both God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him." He was talking about me. The Lord God *made me to help you*. But so many days, it is you helping me. (COCA, 2012, Blog)
b. It's amazing that Jesus can and does heal Bartimaeus -- Jesus somehow *makes him to see again*, and then instead of sitting and begging, Bartimaeus can decide

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to follow Jesus. (COCA, 2012, Blog)

- c. If he is on board, then Joe Piney would join you. He will take care of the old timers. And Gallo will go along. “The Lord is my shepherd.” He *maketh me to lie down in the green grass...* (COCA, 2018, Movie)
- (23) a. In this article, I want to share what in my pedagogical experience *made me to* build this hypothesis and how it emerged as “a grounded theory” (Glaser and Strauss 1967) from it. (COCA, 2018, ACAD)
- b. He studied art, antiques, architecture. He traveled to Palermo and explored Plants and flowers perfect artarketyper. Jeez what I have traveled. I am Father Karl and you are Davide. Yes, I’m Davide. Yes, but it’s you who *made me to* understand why I’m here. I have an internal problem, I have to solve. (COCA, 2012, Movie)
- c. This seemingly innocent question will *make her to* rethink her answers so that she come across. to you as a spontaneous, fun-loving person. (COCA, 2012, Web)

As in the Bible (22), [make O to V] also appeared in English before prescriptive grammar and in lines from old movies or plays, as illustrated in (24). (24a) is a line from the movie Ben-Hur (winner of numerous Academy Awards), which was set in the Roman Empire, and (24b) is a line from William Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*.

- (24) a. Thank you, My Lord. There’s freedom elsewhere. Excuse me? Love your enemies. “Love your enemies.” Well, that’s very progressive. JESUS: It’s the truth. (BLOWS) God is love. He *made us to* share that love. (COCA, 2017, Movie)
- b. Let the bloat king tempt you again to bed, pinch wanton on your cheek, call you his mouse. And let him, for a pair of reechy kisses, *make you to* ravel all this matter out that I essentially am not in madness but made in craft. (COCA, 2000, Movie)

The above examples of [make O to V] illustrate that the construction is “a remnant of an old construction used before prescriptive grammar and in the Bible” and was established by analogy with [get O to V] and from the original meaning for [make O V], that is, to force somebody to V. [Make O to V] is noticeably distinguishable from [make O V] when used in contexts related to God, such as (22), in which God has absolute power, which increases the *coercive force*, which is a distinctive feature of [make O V]. When [make O to V] is observed in normal contexts, such as (23a and b), the coercive force increases only when it is used in sentences in which the syntactic patterns *I want to ~* and *It is you who ~* are observed.

Therefore, the features of [make O to V] are related to its function as a coercive force, which increases in contexts in which the subject, that is, the causer, is divine, and there are more emphatic syntactic patterns. However, the difference between [make O V] and [make O to V] appears to have been lost through attrition because, in general contexts, there is no prominent syntactic feature that indicates a change in the coercive force.

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This deterioration has most probably occurred due to institutionalization, that is, the linguistic economy of the *least effort*, which is when constructions with similar functions converge toward a single syntactic pattern. The coercive force is weaker in the syntactic pattern [show + adj. it make (s) O to V] because of the surrounding syntactic features.

As the *OED* examples (=18) and the above examples indicate that [make O to V] has been used for a long time, COHA was then used to examine the frequency transitions for the use of [make O to V], the results from which are shown in Figure 1.

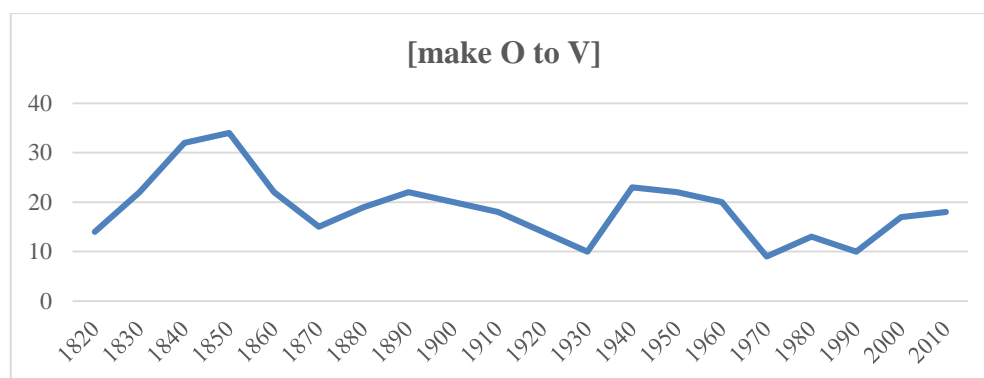


Figure 1. Frequency transition for the use of [make O to V] in COHA.

Figure 1 indicates that [make O to V] remained almost unchanged until 2010, and along with the previous examples, further indicates that because it was used in prescriptive grammar and the Bible, [make O to V] is a low-frequency construction that has been used for a long time. This linguistic phenomenon is similar to the function of *those that imply people* discussed in Inoue (2015). Empirically, *those* and *that* were used to denote people before prescriptive grammar and in present-day English are used because of the least effort. Similarly, a movement back to the [make O to V] construction has been occurring in contemporary English.

The answers to the research questions in (21) are shown in (25), and the answers to (25 b, c, d) are answered in Section 4.3.

- (25) a. The meaning, function, and origins of [make O to V] and its similarities and differences. with [make O V]
 -> [Make O to V] has a causative function. The distinctive feature, compulsion, increases in contexts in which God is observed. [Make O to V] was used at low frequencies in English before prescriptive grammar and in the Bible. The difference between [make O V] and [make O to V] has diminished over time as there was no change in the coercive force.
- b. Are there peripheral causative constructions [get O V], [let O to V], [have O to V]?
- c. If so, what are semantic and functional differences and similarities with the original construction?

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d. When did [make O to V] and similar constructions come into use (historical aspects)?

-> [Make O to V] was used at a time before prescriptive grammar. The other constructions are discussed in Section 4.2.

e. Which takes priority: semantics or syntax?

-> Semantic interpretation comes first. If syntactic patterns came first, [make O to V] would simply be seen as a misuse or typo. However, when meaning takes priority, a causative usage of [make O to V] is acceptable, and it is easy to understand the complete picture from both semantic and syntactic perspectives.

Semantically similar constructions— [get O to V], [have O V], and [let O V]

This section examines whether the causative constructions [get O to V], [have O V], and [let O V] change to a bare infinitive, that is, [get O V] and a *to*-infinitive, that is, [have O to V] and [let O to V]), and explains the associated semantic and syntactic features, after which the answers to the research questions in (21) are given.

[get O to V] -> [get O V]

The construction [gets O V] was observed in the corpora, as shown in (26). However, the verbs associated with the V in [get O V] were found to be limited to *set (up for)*, *take on*, *put in/on*, and *help*. Therefore, as no syntactic features indicating an increase or decrease in the coercive force of the subject or causer were found, the coercive force in [get O V] is the same as in [get O to V]. Further, [get O V] is formed by an analogy with [make O V] and the meaning [get O V] has, that is, to make somebody do something.

- (26) a. “There’s no lack of work on Mars if you have a good brain,” Bill said. “We’ll *get you set up. with* something. How about you, Mari? I understand you sent thirty-some gifts our way. They made quite a splash. (COCA, 2018, Fiction)
- b. So while I know my Transformers, she knows her cute bears, and I knew I needed to *get her. take on* these Build-a-Bear Transformers. (COCA, 2017, Magazine)
- c. Making concrete suggestions about this could *get me put in* jail these days, so I can’t be too specific. But each of us has gifts for resistance, and I think we should use them to toss monkey wrenches into the works. (COCA, 2012, Blog)
- d. This is something that I have done for years. I don’t want a maid to wake me up at the crack of dawn. If I refuse cleaning service will that *get me put on* a list somewhere? (COCA, 2012, Web)

Figure 2 shows the historical usage transition for [get O V] in COHA. Unlike the [make O to V] construction, (26) and Figure 2 shows that [get O V] has rarely been used in God or Bible contexts and began to be used more frequently in the modern era. This may have been because this construction in contemporary English tends to be used to mean “persuade O to V,” that is, it has a weak coercive force. Figure 2 suggests that while [get O V] has existed for a long time, the boundary between [get O to V] and [get O V] is disappearing because of the use frequency of [get O V]. The construction [gets

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 O V] implies persuading O to V, which is more civil and ensures smooth communication.

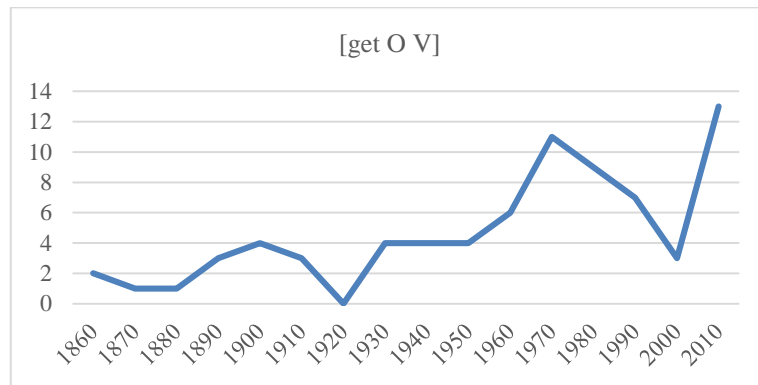


Figure 2. Frequency transition for the use of [get O V] in COHA.

[have O V] -> [have O to V]

(27) shows that the construction [have O to V] has a causative usage. Compared to the [make O to V] and [get O V] constructions, [have O to V] is less coercive and is used to imply “talking about giving somebody instructions or orders,” as observed in the Bible, and has existed for a long time. The construction is analogous to [get O to V] and although it has unique features, is considered functionally or semantically the same as the original construction [have O V].

- (27) a. He was on the way to work and turned his car around and came back to help me figure out how to claw my way out of that ugly, lying pit of depression. I am fortunate that I *had him to* help me. (COCA, 2012, Blog)
- b. But if you don’t look after Miss Margaret, you’ll *have me to* answer to. Are we clear? (COCA, 2019, Fiction)
- c. But until he gets here, you will *have me to* deal with. (COCA, 2013, Movie)
- d. “You are quite a slob,” she says as she pushes the broom across the floor with a rhythmic. swish- swish. “And so lucky to *have me to* clean up your messes. (COCA, 2012, Fiction)
- e. Dad, I was well aware of my intellectual weaknesses. I *had you to* remind me every day. (COCA, 2019, TV)

Figure 3 shows the usage transition for [have O to V], the frequency for which has been declining over time, unlike [get O V].

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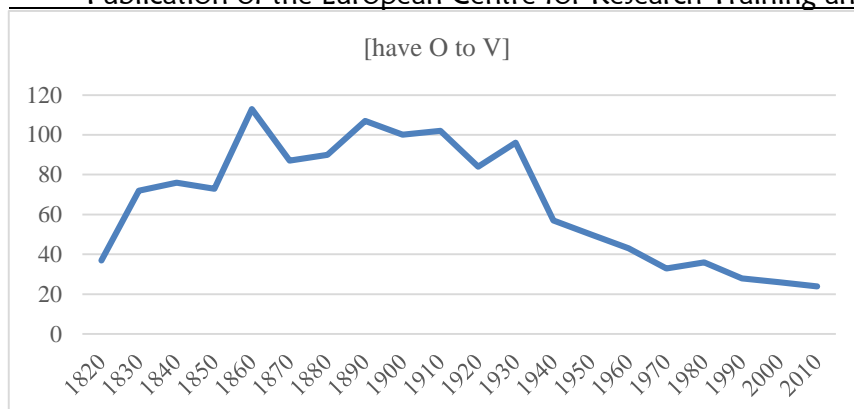


Figure 3. Usage transition of [have O to V] in COHA.

[let O V] -> [let O to V]

[Let O to V] in (28) generally refers to *allowing somebody to do something*, has little semantic difference from [let O V], and has a changing coercive force. [Let O to V] is analogous to both [get O to V] and [allow O to do], is low frequency, and existed before prescriptive grammar, as shown in Figure 4; however, the use of [let O to V] has gradually increased over time.

- (28) a. And I'm also pretty. I've been told that I'm pretty. You're beautiful. You *let me* to think we, we actually had a chance. I wanna break up. I completely understand. (COCA,2019, Fiction)
- b.... I found the number of a woman on the board of directors who lives in Osage City, so I called her one night, and she ended up offering to *let me* to stay at her place. (COCA, 2012, Blog)
- c. KING All right, *let me* to get a break, Mike. Hold on I have got to get a break. (COCA, 2012, Spoken)
- d. All right. Good luck, Roy. Now *let me* to explain something about this screen: This screen, across the bottom of the section that I am, will represent one mile on your camera. (COCA, 1995, Movie)
- e. If you want to stay, will you *let me* to assign your work? Yes. Alright, you go to the garden to carry the fertilizer. (COCA, 2013, Movie)

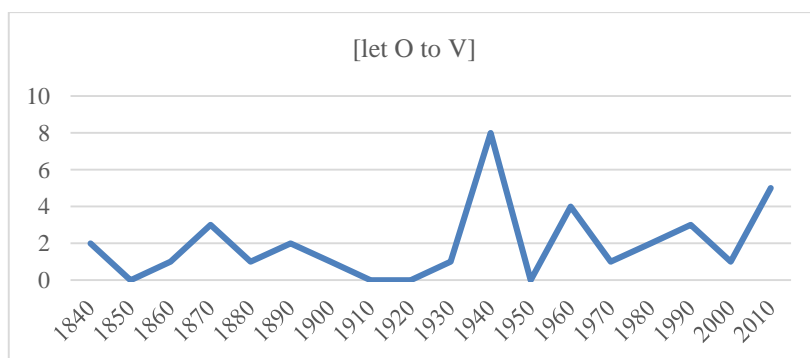


Figure 4. Frequency transition for the use of [let O to V] in COHA.

Features of causative constructions

The answers to the research questions in (21) are shown in (29).

- (29) a. The meaning, function, and origins of [make O to V] and its similarities and differences with [make O V] -> refer to (21a).
- b. Are there peripheral causative constructions [get O V], [let O to V], [have O to V]? -> Yes.
- c. If so, are there semantic and functional differences and similarities with the original construction and the origins -> None of the derived constructions; [get O V], [have O to V], and [let O to V]; have semantic or functional differences from the original constructions. The distinctive *coercive force* feature has also remained unchanged as the analogy of least effort has generated the derived constructions.
- d. When did [make O to V] and similar constructions come into use (historical aspects)? -> Refer to (21d). [Get O V], [have O to V], and [let O to V] have been in use for a long time and have been unacceptable under prescriptive grammar; however, they are still being used at a low frequency to this day. However, some causative constructions; [make O to V], [get O V], and [let O to V]; have come back into use.
- e. Which takes priority: semantics or syntax? -> Refer to (21e).

Following the processes described in (8), the constructions examined in this paper were established using the semantic method, that is type c in (7c), and fulfilled the frequency and phonetic feature conditions in (9a) and (10c). As awareness of these constructions increases, they are likely to become more common.

Implications for research

The results of this study can be applied to empirical English linguistic studies, pedagogy, and English lexicography. This study revealed that the causative construction [make O to V], which has been considered incorrect in previous studies, is not always unacceptable when semantics is prioritized over syntax. Therefore, linguistic phenomena that are considered erroneous can be accounted for when examined from a meaning-first position. This study contributes to empirical linguistic research on the unique features of English Learner dictionaries and on the need to recognize language as it is spoken. Linguistic phenomena that are considered *mistaken* could be described in dictionaries, which would make them more user-friendly.

CONCLUSION AND FUTURE RESEARCH

This study took a semantic approach to clarify the behavior of causative constructions deemed unacceptable or misused because of the constraints of prescriptive grammar. It was shown that such constructions have existed for a long time and are still being used. The examination of the linguistic phenomena indicated that there has been a movement back to the construction [make O to V] in the same way as *those* was used to describe

_____ Publication of the European Centre for Research Training and Development -UK people before prescriptive grammar. This study showed that if language is observed beyond the framework of prescriptive grammar and from different perspectives, it is possible to explain interesting linguistic phenomena outside prescriptive grammar rules.

Acknowledgments

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Corpora:

BNC: British National Corpus (BNC, queried through Shogakukan Corpus Network)

COCA: The Corpus of Contemporary American English

COHA: The Corpus of Historical American English

WB: WordBanksOnline (WB, queried through Shogakukan Corpus Network)

Dictionaries:

*MED*²: Macmillan English Dictionary for Advanced Learners, New edition. London: Macmillan Education.

OED: Oxford English Dictionary Online.

Youth-Progressive English-Japanese Dictionary. 2004. Tokyo: Shogakukan.

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