

On the Argument Structure of Verbs with Bi- and Mono-Eventive Uses*

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1. Introduction: Restrictions on Causers

In this paper, we discuss how the choice of the external argument as either an agent or a causer influences the interpretation of a specific class of verbs, which we propose to call ‘*defeasible causatives*’, cf. Section 2.

The terms ‘agent’ and ‘causer’ are not easy to define. For our purposes, it is enough to assume that agents are (intentionally acting) humans, while causers either are natural forces (earthquake, storm), events or instruments of some type (poison, medicine). The distribution of causers is more restricted than the one of agents. Causers are typically found as subjects of ‘lexical causative verbs’, i.e. transitive verbs expressing a change of state (1a,b). Such verbs are bi-eventive/resultative (1c). (We use the decomposition of Alexiadou *et al.* 2006 for expository reasons.)

- (1) a. John / the poison killed the president
- b. John / the earthquake broke the vase
- c. [VoiceP John/the poison *Voice* [_{VP} *V*_{cause} [_{ResultP} √kill the president]]]

The recent literature has established a close link between the licensing of causers and the event structure of the verbal predicate (Folli and Harley 2005, Travis 2005, Schäfer t.a.). While agents can be subjects of bi-eventive or mono-eventive predicates, causers are available only in bi-eventive structures as illustrated in (2)–(4) for English and German.

- (2) a. The groom destroyed the wedding cake b. The sea destroyed the beach

- (3) a. The groom ate the wedding cake b. The sea ate *(away) the beach

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- (4) a. John rolled the ball (across the goal-line)
 b. The wind rolled the ball ??(across the goal-line)
 c. Der Wind rollte den Ball ??(über die Torlinie)
 The wind rolled the ball across the goal-line
 ‘The wind rolled the ball across the goal-line’

2. Verbs at Study: Defeasible Causative Verbs

The verbs at study show the ambiguity illustrated in (5). With agentive subjects, they are used to denote an act performed with the intention of triggering a certain result. But this result does not have to occur for the sentence to be true, as shown by the non-contradictory continuation in (5a). This is why we call these verbs ‘defeasible causatives’. With causers, the same verbs entail the occurrence of the result, cf. the contradictory continuation in (5b). One of the questions addressed below is whether we can relate this ambiguity to the restriction on causers discussed in the previous section, or whether ‘defeasible causatives’ illustrate a different phenomenon.

- (5) a. John insulted Mary, but she didn’t take it to heart at all
 b. Being chosen last insulted Mary, #but she didn’t take it to heart at all

Following Gropen *et al.* (1989) and Beavers (2010), we call ‘prospective component’ the subevent that does not need to obtain for the predicate to be satisfied and ‘non-prospective component’ the subevent that must obtain for the predicate to be satisfied. The reading which entails the result will be called the ‘implicative’ reading, and the other ‘non-implicative’. Verbs that display this ambiguity are found in different semantic classes listed below. For some of them, the ambiguity has already been observed in the literature (e.g. Oehrle 1976 for verbs of caused possession/perception, Martin 2006 and Mari & Martin 2007 for causative psych-verbs). In order to arrive at a (more) complete list of verbs, we automatically extracted from the searchable version of the *Lexique des verbes français* (Bédaride t.a.) all verbs which allow animate and inanimate subjects and identified manually those which alternate between an implicative and a non-implicative reading (around 60 verbs). These can be further divided into six semantic classes. We list some French verbs of each subclass. Examples are given in French or German as it turns out that the German counterparts of most French verbs identified show the same behavior.

Psych-verbs: *encourager* ‘encourage’, *flatter* ‘flatter’, *provoquer* ‘provoke’, *offenser* ‘offense’, *rassurer* ‘reassure’ (cf. Martin 2006:397f., Mari & Martin 2007).

- (6) a. Pierre l’a provoquée, mais elle n’a même pas réalisé
 Pierre her-has provoked, but she NEG-has even not realized
 b. La remarque l’a provoquée, #mais elle n’a même pas réalisé
 The remark her-has provoked, but she NEG-has even not realized
 ‘Pierre/The remark provoked her, but she did not realize it’

Verbs of communication: *annoncer* ‘predict’, *attester* ‘attest’, *contredire* ‘contradict’, *exhorter* ‘exhort, urge’, *expliquer* ‘explain’, *prédire* ‘predict’, *prévenir* ‘warn’,

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questionner ‘question’, *rappeler* ‘remind’, *suggérer* ‘suggest’.¹

- (7) a. Hans suggerierte ihnen, dass er ein Genie ist,
Hans suggested them that he a genius is,
aber sie haben es keinen Moment lang geglaubt
but they have it no moment long believed
b. Sein Verhalten suggerierte ihnen, dass er ein Genie ist,
His behavior suggested them that he a genius is,
#aber sie haben es keinen Moment lang geglaubt
but they have it no moment long believed
‘John/His behavior suggested to them that he is a genius,
but they did not believe it a single moment’

Action-inducing verbs: *admettre* ‘admit’, *appeler à* ‘call for’, *demander* ‘ask’, *exiger* ‘demand’, *inciter* ‘incite’, *inviter* ‘invite’, *permettre* ‘allow’ (cf. Hacquard 2006:41&202), *presser* ‘urge’, *réclamer* ‘urge’.

- (8) a. Pierre leur a demandé beaucoup d’argent,
Pierre them has asked a.lot of-money,
mais personne ne lui en a donné
but nobody NEG him some has given
‘Peter asked them for lots of money but no one has given him any’
b. Ce projet leur a demandé beaucoup d’argent,
This project them has asked a.lot of-money,
#mais personne n’y a consacré un centime
but nobody NEG-to.it has devoted one penny
‘The project demanded them lots of money but no one spent a penny’

Verbs of caused perception: *interpeller* ‘to shout at, to question’, *montrer* ‘to show’ (cf. Oehrle 1976:68-113).

- (9) a. Sie zeigte ihm die Schwächen der Analyse, aber er hat sie nicht gesehen
She showed him the weaknesses of.the analysis, but he has them not seen
b. Das Experiment zeigte ihm die Schwächen der Analyse,
The experiment showed him the weaknesses of.the analysis,
#aber er hat sie nicht gesehen
but he has them not seen
‘She/the experiment showed to him the shortcomings of the analysis,
but he did not see them’

¹ The (non-)licensing of the conjunctive reconfirms the judgments in German (and French):

- (i) a. Hans warnte sie, dass hinter dem Berg eine Gefahr lauert/lauere
John warned them that behind the mountain a danger lurks.IND/lurks.CONJ
b. Der Rauch warnte sie, dass hinter dem Berg eine Gefahr lauert/*lauere
The smoke warned them that behind the hill a danger lurks.IND/lurks.CONJ
‘John/the smoke warned them that a danger lurks behind the mountain’

Verbs of caused possession: *attribuer* ‘to allocate, grant’, *destiner* ‘to design to s.b., to destine’, *offrir* ‘to offer’, *enseigner* ‘to teach’ (cf. Oehrle, *ibid.*), *envoyer* ‘to send’.

- (10) a. Pierre m’a offert une nouvelle vie, mais je n’en voulais pas
 Pierre me-has offered a new life, but I NEG-of.it wanted NEG
 b. Ce livre m’a offert une nouvelle vie, #mais je n’en voulais pas
 This book me-has offered a new life, but I NEG-of.it wanted NEG
 ‘Peter/this book offered a new life to me, but I did not want it’

Epistemic verbs: *vérifier* ‘verify’, *assurer* ‘assure/ensure’, *authentifier* ‘authenticate’, cf. also Martin & Tovina (2012).

- (11) a. L’expert a vérifié le résultat, et il était incorrect
 The expert has verified the result, and it was incorrect
 b. L’expérience a vérifié le résultat, #et il était incorrect
 The experiment has verified the result, and it was incorrect
 ‘The expert/the experiment verified the result, and it was incorrect’

The difference in the continuations in (6)-(11) might suggest that these sentence pairs differ in terms of event structure. The a-examples seem to be mono-eventive, while the b-examples seem to be bi-eventive, since they describe a result besides the causing event. If this were correct, it would confirm the link presented in Section 1 between causers and bi-eventivity. Before investigating this hypothesis, we will first briefly measure the role of outer aspect in the ambiguity just presented.

3. The Role of Outer Aspect

It has been claimed that perfective morphology is required for the implicative reading (or the so-called ‘actuality entailment’) to be triggered with modal verbs like *pouvoir* ‘can’ or *permettre* ‘allow’ (cf. e.g. Bhatt 1999, Hacquard 2006). For reasons of space, we have to confine ourselves to two remarks about the role of the perfective morphology with defeasible causative verbs. First, the correlation between the implicative reading and the presence of the causer is also found with the German Simple Past, which does not entail completion or perfectivity, in contrast to the German Present Perfect (Reyle *et al.* 2007). The result implication arises with a causer no matter what reading the German Simple Past has (the contradiction arises in the German examples in (6)-(11) even if the Simple Past has its progressive reading). Second, with *some* of our French verbs, the causer forces the implicative reading in imperfective sentences, too (in this case, of course, only a partial event is entailed), as soon as the progressive reading of the imperfective is selected (and the generic or counterfactual reading is discarded), see (12).

- (12) Ce voyage lui enseignait la patience, #mais il ne l’apprenait pas
 This trip him taught.IMP the patience, but he NEG it-learned.IMP NEG
 ‘This trip was teaching him patience, but he wasn’t learning it’

Often, when no partial event is entailed with the progressive reading of the *imparfait*, it is

because the verbs at hand cannot be used to denote an incomplete event, cf. (13) (this is independently confirmed by their incompatibility with *arrêter* ‘stop’, cf. #*la carte a arrêté de me permettre d’entrer* ‘the card stopped permitting me to enter’). On this point, they are similar to so-called ‘durative achievements’, cf. Martin 2011. We thus conclude that outer aspect is at most one of several decisive factors for the interpretation of defeasible causatives. Although it is certainly true that the *imparfait* has readings which contribute to cancel the result implication, perfectivity is not required for this implication to arise.

- (13) Quand je suis arrivée, la carte lui permettait d’entrer,
When I am arrived, the card him permit.IMP to-enter,
mais heureusement je l’ai arrêté
but luckily I him-have stopped (No partial permitting event)
‘When I arrived, the card was allowing him to enter, but luckily I stopped him’

4. A First Analysis in Terms of Event Complexity

Let us return to the question of whether the two readings differ in event complexity (recall from section 1 that causers are possible only in bi-eventive structures). This would mean that the verbs under discussion productively have two event construals. Two ways of implementing this are imaginable. Either these verbs have two different lexical entries, a solution which does not look attractive to us. Alternatively, these verbs could basically be result verbs, which, however, can be coerced into mono-eventive (manner) verbs. Below, we will investigate this second hypothesis and show that this cannot explain the behavior of defeasible causatives. The conclusion will be that the verbs at hand do *not* differ in event structure under their implicative and non-implicative readings.

Oehrle (1976, section 4.2) characterizes the two prevailing senses of English *teach* as follows: ‘One corresponds to an activity associated with a goal’, while the other ‘is roughly equivalent to CAUSE Y to know/learn’. He also mentions that these two senses are correlated with three properties: (i) ‘If the activity interpretation is possible, then there is no implication that the indirect object has actually learned anything.’ ‘In every other case, some effect on the individuals represented by the object is entailed.’ (ii) ‘The activity interpretation is impossible if the subject of *teach* is [-animate].’ (iii) ‘Whenever the subject is [-animate], the indirect object is obligatory’, cf. (14).

- (14) a. Faustroll taught (the sixth grade) metaphysics
b. Lipson’s textbook taught *(me) Russian

Taken together, these three differences remind us of the distinction between ‘core’ and ‘non-core’ transitive verbs proposed by Rappaport & Levin (1998) and Levin (1999). The central diagnostic differentiating the two classes is whether a direct object can be omitted:

- (15) a. Leslie swept/scrubbed (the floor) this morning (non-core transitive)
b. Kelly broke *(the plate) tonight (core transitive)

These authors propose that the two classes differ in their event complexity (16 vs. 17).

Core transitive verbs are bi-eventive while non-core transitives are mono-eventive. The (im-)possibility of object drop follows from the condition in (18); while the object is an argument of the root/constant in (16) (i.e., it is a *constant* participant), it is an argument of the result state in (17) (i.e., it is a *structure* participant).

- (16) a. Leslie swept the floor
b. [x ACT <sweep> y]
- (17) a. John broke the vase
b. [[x ACT] CAUSE [y BECOME <broken>]]
- (18) THE STRUCTURE PARTICIPANT CONDITION: There must be an argument XP in the syntax for each structure participant in the event structure.

We could hypothesize that our defeasible causatives are mono-eventive under the non-implicative reading, and bi-eventive under their implicative reading. This would fit with the observation that causers require bi-eventive structures (S1). Besides, the contrast in (14) could then be explained once it is admitted that the indirect object *y* is a *structure* participant in the bi-eventive use of *teach* and a *constant* participant in its mono-eventive use. The same line of explanation could be applied to defeasible causatives which allow the drop of the *direct* object with agents but not with causers, as e.g. *prévenir* 'warn', cf. (19).

- (19) a. Il a prévenu du danger que représentent les autres joueurs
He has warned of.the danger that represent the other players
b. Ce match ??(les) a prévenu(s) du danger que représentent les autres joueurs
This match (them) has warned of.the danger that represent the other players
'He/This match warned them of the danger by the other plays'

Such an ambiguity between a mono-eventive (manner) and a bi-eventive (result) reading has already been proposed for potential counter-examples of what has been called the 'manner/result complementarity'. Rappaport Hovav & Levin (2010) derive this principle from the lexicalization constraint in (20):

- (20) A root can only be associated with one primitive predicate in an event schema, as either an argument or a modifier.

Manner roots modify the predicate ACT (see 16) and result roots are arguments of the BECOME predicate (see 17). Due to (20), a root cannot combine with both these predicates at the same time. This derives the manner/result complementarity.

Rappaport Hovav & Levin (2010) discuss some potential counterexamples to the manner/result complementarity, e.g. *cut* and *climb*, and conclude that despite first appearances, they do not undermine it. When the result verb *cut* is used as a manner verb, it does not entail a result anymore (21a vs. b). Similarly, when the manner verb *climb* is

used as a result verb, it loses its manner component. That is, while these verbs can enter two event construals, their roots never relate to two event predicates at the same time.

- (21) a. [x ACT<cut> (at) y]
b. [[x ACT] CAUSE [BECOME [y CUT]]]

Turning back to our defeasible causatives, one could argue that, similarly to the case of *cut*, their ambiguity involves coercion of result roots to manner modifiers. Below, we will see, however, that an analysis along the lines of (21) runs into severe problems. We will begin with a first battery of tests suggesting that with our verbs, causers and agents *can* occur in a resultative structure. We will then present arguments showing that agents *have* to occur in a resultative structure even under the non-implicative reading.

5. Event Structure Tests

The tests presented below show that not only causers but also agents can trigger a result implication with defeasible causatives and, therefore, occur in a bi-eventive structure. Firstly, not only causers but also agents can license the restitutive reading of *again* (if the result state is reversible and can hold without previous causation).

- (22) Dieses Gespräch/Hans hat mich endlich wieder ermutigt
This conversation/John has me finally again encouraged
'Finally, this conversation/John encouraged me again'

Secondly, verbs like *rassurer* 'calm/reassure' allow *in some time* adverbials to measure the change of state. Both causers and agents are compatible with these adverbials, and then the result implication is obligatory also with agents (cf. also Martin 2006:410).²

- (23) Pierre l'a rassurée en cinq minutes, #mais sans succès
Pierre her-has reassured in five minutes, but without success
'Jean reassured her in five minutes, but without success'

Thirdly, with some of our verbs, *for some time* adverbials can measure how long a reversible result state holds. Again, this works with causers and agents.

- (24) Hans ermutigte ihn für einige Minuten, aber dann verlor er seinen Mut wieder
John encouraged him for some minutes, but then lost he his courage again
'Pierre encouraged him for ten minutes, but then he lost his courage again'

Finally, most of the German defeasible causatives form *ung*-nominalisations with both agents and causers as external arguments (25). But Roßdeutscher & Kamp (2010) extensively argue that *ung*-nominalisations can only be formed from bi-eventive, i.e.

² With some verbs like *expliquer* 'explain', the adverbial does not force the result implication, which suggests that its non-prospective component is, by itself, telic (cf. *Il leur a expliqué la règle en trois minutes, mais ils ne l'ont pas comprise* 'He explained them the rule in three minutes, but they didn't understand it'). This difference is irrelevant for the general pattern observed in section 2.

resultative verbs (cf. 26a-b vs. c-d).

- (25) die Ermutig.ung der Kinder durch den Lehrer/ durch das Ereignis
the encouragement-of-the children by the teacher/by the event
‘the encouragement of the children by the teacher/by the event’
- (26) a. Sperr-ung (clos-ing) b. Warn-ung (warn-ing)
c. *Tanz-ung (danc-ing) d. *Ess-ung (eat-ing)

We conclude that not only causers but also agents *can* occur in a bi-eventive construal. But there are also arguments which point to the stronger conclusion that, in the context of defeasible causatives, agents *must* occur in a bi-eventive structure just as causers.

Firstly, German *ung*-nominalizations do not necessarily have an implicative interpretation, cf. (27). If they indeed depend on a bi-eventive event structure, the lack of a result implication cannot be explained by the absence of a result sub-event.

- (27) a. Er schickte ihnen eine Warn-ung, aber sie haben sie nicht verstanden
He send them a warn-ing, but they have it not understood
‘He send them a warning, but they did not understand it’
b. seine erfolglose Ermutig-ung
his.theme unsuccessful encouragement
‘his unsuccessful encouragement’

Secondly, many of the defeasible causatives are poly-morphemic and have the makeup of denominal (location) or deadjectival verbs or involve resultative prefixes (28a-c).

- (28) a. en-courage_{N-er} [VoiceP subj. Voice [vP v_{cause} [PP obj. enP [DP courage]]]]
b. er-mutig_{A-en} [VoiceP subj. Voice [vP v_{cause} [AdjP obj. mutig_A]]]
c. an_{PREF}-regen [VoiceP subj. Voice [vP v_{cause} [PrefP obj. an_{Pref}]]]

The non-implicative uses of these verbs show, of course, the same morphological complexity (and observe that in languages like Hebrew, overt causative morphology shows up with the non-implicative reading of defeasible causatives too, Nora Boneh, p.c.). If there is a strict mapping from form to interpretation and a meaningful composition of the meaning of the complex word from the meanings of its subparts, then even the non-implicative uses must build on a bi-eventive composition. Otherwise, we would have to assume morphologically complex roots acting as manner modifiers. But it is not clear where these complex roots should come from.

Thirdly, many of the verbs at study are ditransitives. Within the proposal that indirect objects are not lexical arguments of verbal constants but are introduced by (low) applicative heads or stative/possessive event predicates (Pylkkänen 2008, Rappaport Hovav and Levin 2008, a.o.), it is not clear how an indirect object could be licensed in a mono-eventive structure (recall that the presence of an indirect object does not necessarily make the sentence implicative).

Fourthly, defeasible causatives with agent subjects also do not show other properties of non-core transitive verbs such as resultative formation (29a, b); cf. Levin (1999).

- (29) a. *Er ermunterte die Kinder zuversichtlich
He encouraged the children confident
'He caused the children to be confident by encouraging them'
b. *Er ermunterte sich müde
He encouraged himself tired
'He encouraged (someone) and became tired thereby'

The hypothesis that the non-implicative use of defeasible causatives involves a mono-eventive event structure is thus wrong: defeasible causatives are bi-eventive with causers *and* agents. Observe however that this conclusion does not force us to give up the idea that (2)-(4) on one hand and (6)-(11) on the other illustrate the same kind of phenomenon. However, the generalization behind these two sets of data has to be reformulated. Causers do not differ from agents in that they require a bi-eventive structure. Rather, causers require an *implicative* bi-eventive structure, while agents also accept mono-eventive structure, or non-implicative bi-eventive structure. In the next section, we briefly summarize the alternative analysis of defeasible causatives developed in more detail in Martin & Schäfer (in prep.). It crucially makes use of the sublexical modal component of Koenig & Davis (2001). Observe, in passing, that in admitting that the non-implicative reading of defeasible causatives involves a bi-eventive structure, we lose the nice account of the object drop in terms of the difference between core versus non-core transitive verbs. In Section 7, we show however that the new analysis proposed can explain these data too.

6. Defeasible Causatives as Sublexical Modal Verbs

Some defeasible causatives like *offer* are also addressed by Koenig & Davis (2001), although for another reason. They propose to divide the semantics of these verbs into (i) a situational core component, which categorizes types of event relations and θ -roles and (ii) a *sublexical modality component* (a modal base), which evaluates these relations at various worlds, times and indices. They assume that while in the case of verbs like *must*, the selection of the modal base is contextually determined, verbs like *offer* lexically specify the modal base. Most of our defeasible causatives are what Koenig & Davis call *energetic modals*: the selected worlds are worlds in which *the action achieves the goal that motivates this action*, see the paraphrase (30b) of (30a).

- (30) a. He offered her 10\$
b. He caused her to have 10\$ in all worlds in which the goal of his offer is achieved

Introducing modality in the semantics of these verbs nicely allows us to account for the bi-eventivity of these verbs (as 30b shows, the event structure of *offer* involves a cause relation, cf. also 33-34 below), but without having to assume that they entail a result in any of their uses. Given the conclusions of Section 5, this is exactly what we need.

In Martin & Schäfer (in prep.), we discuss two ways to explain the ambiguity of defeasible causatives with the help of a sublexical modal component (note that Koenig

and Davis focus on the agentive uses of defeasible causatives, and thus do not address the ambiguity illustrated in (6-11). Before we briefly present them, we have some comments about the definition of the modal base involved.

If we assume that defeasible causatives are energetic modals as sketched above, we cannot account for the fact that the result is not entailed with agentive subjects even if the agent's intention does not fit the verbal description, cf. e.g. (31):

- (31) Pierre l'a provoquée (sans le faire exprès), mais elle n'a même pas réalisé
 Pierre her-has provoked (unintentionally), but she NEG-has even not realized
 'Peter provoked her unintentionally, but she even did not realize it'

The fact illustrated in (31) is verifiable for other defeasible causatives, too. As already observed by Oehrle (1976: 84), what has to be assumed for the non-implicative reading to be available is that *an act fitting the verbal description is performed*, cf. (32):

- (32) Sans rien faire, Pierre l'a provoquée, #mais elle n'a même pas réalisé
 Without nothing do, Pierre her-has provoked, but she NEG-has even not realized
 'Without doing anything, Peter provoked her, but she did not even realize it'

(31)-(32) suggest that the modal base of defeasible causatives contains not only worlds where the subject pursues the goal as described by the VP and achieves this goal, but also worlds where he performs an *act* fitting the verbal description without pursuing this goal. Consequently, we define the energetic modal base as follows: it picks up worlds where the action as described by the VP achieves its *inherent consequences*. For e.g. (31), these worlds are those where Pierre's provocative act achieves its inherent consequences (the theme feels offended), no matter whether the provocation is intended or not.

In Martin & Schäfer (in prep.), we discuss two ways to handle the ambiguity in (6)-(11). According to a first account, we deal with a case of systematic polysemy. With causer subjects, verbs are standard causative verbs and do not have a sublexical component, while with agents, they do. This is sketched in (33a)-(33b) for the verb *offer*, where we adopt Beavers' (2010) Rappaport/Levin style of notation of the sublexical modality. We use the necessity operator since we quantify over *all* worlds selected in the modal base, cf. the paraphrase (30b). Under the second account, defeasible causatives are sublexical modal verbs in both uses, cf. (34). However, the modal base can be of different types (energetic, circumstantial, stereotypical, ...) depending on the context. The difference in the result implication can then be handled through the selection of the modal base: agents normally select the energetic modal base, which is not realistic (hence the absence of the result implication) while causers by default select a modal base which is realistic.

- (33) *offer* (1st account)
- | | | |
|----|---|-----------------------|
| a. | [[x ACT] [CAUSE [y HAVE z]]] | (with causer subject) |
| b. | [[x ACT] □[CAUSE [y HAVE z]]] ^{w, m} | (with agent subject) |
| | modal base: <energetic> | |

- (34) *offer* (2nd account)
[[x act] □[CAUSE [y HAVE z]]]^{w, m} (any subject)
modal base: <energetic, circumstantial, ...>

Under the second account, the result implication is thus not semantically encoded but rather depends on contextual factors like the selection of the modal base. This seems to be a welcome consequence, because in some specific contexts like the one illustrated in (35), it is possible to get rid of the result implication even with a causer subject:

- (35) Objectivement, la chute de pierre les a bel et bien prévenus
Objectively, the fall of stones them has well and truly warned
du danger! Mais ils n'ont pas réalisé.
of.the danger! But they NEG-have NEG realized
'Objectively, the stone fall well and truly warned them of the danger! But they
didn't realize it'

7. Back to Object Drop

To explain why objects are easier to drop under the non-implicative reading than under the implicative one (cf. 14 and 19), we propose to adopt the hypothesis that arguments involved in a prospective event are easier to drop than those involved in a non-prospective component. This relates to observations in Levin (1999), Rappaport Hovav & Levin (1998) and Mittwoch (2005) that even core transitive verbs can drop their objects in generic contexts. Indeed, prospective events are similar to generic properties in that they do not require instantiations in the actual world. If this line of explanation is correct, we do not need to assume that defeasible causatives have two different event construals to understand the omissibility of their arguments.

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