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## Causes and processes in the decline of causative *bring*

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Mondorf and Schneider (2016) have shown that causative *bring* is a dying construction. We found that over time the construction honed in on modal negated reflexive uses, as in (2). Thus uses such as (1) were possible and common in the earliest period, but were completely lost by the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

- (1) [...] but as **he had now brought her to confess** a former love [...]. (EPPF, 1671)
- (2) Nor could he bring himself to stand with his back to the fire escape. (BNC, 1985-1993)

In more general terms, the construction has gone from expressing prototypical causation to being far more restricted. The nature of this restriction can be best described as a reduction of semantic transitivity (cf. Hopper and Thompson 1980). On its way out of the language, *bring* has retreated to a last narrow niche of low transitive uses.

I investigate possible motivations and causes for the demise of *bring* in general and for its pathway of decline in particular. I focus on competition from other multi-word causatives, such as *make*, *get*, *force* and *cause*, as a reason for the demise of *bring*.

Furthermore, Dixon (2000:61-2) argues that languages generally divide the territory of their causative constructions along the lines of semantic transitivity parameters so that each causative is prototypically used for a specific semantic configuration. Therefore I investigate whether this typological generalization also holds for English multi-word causatives. The use of diachronic corpora spanning some 500 years also permits me to track diachronic developments.

**References:** • Dixon, Robert M.W. (2000): "A Typology of Causatives: Form, Syntax and Meaning." In Dixon, Robert M.W. and Alexandra Aikhenvald (Eds.): *Changing Valency. Case Studies in Transitivity*. Cambridge: CUP. 30-83. • Hopper, Paul J. and Sandra A. Thompson (1980): "Transitivity in Grammar and Discourse." *Language* 56 (2). 251-99. • Mondorf, Britta and Ulrike Schneider (2016): "Detransitivization as a Support Strategy for Causative *bring*." *English Language and Linguistics* 20 (3). 439-62.