



# *The Hebrew University of Jerusalem*

## *Syllabus*

### *The Language of Causation - 25868*

*Last update 28-09-2023*

*HU Credits:* 2

*Degree/Cycle:* 2nd degree (Master)

*Responsible Department:* Hebrew Language

*Academic year:* 0

*Semester:* 1st Semester

*Teaching Languages:* English

*Campus:* Mt. Scopus

*Course/Module Coordinator:* Prof. Elitzur Bar-Asher Siegal

*Coordinator Email:* [ebas@mail.huji.ac.il](mailto:ebas@mail.huji.ac.il)

*Coordinator Office Hours:* by appointment

*Teaching Staff:*

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Prof Elitzur Bar-Ashersiegal

Course/Module description:

We would like to inquire how to adequately define causation truth conditionally, by studying the properties of a wide range of syntactically distinct causative constructions, including overt verbs (such as cause, make, allow, enable) connectives (such as because (of), from, by, as a result of), and also change of state verbs, which may or may not include what are thought to be dedicated causative morphemes.

In so doing we will also tackle the question of whether there is only one causative meaning component or should there be different ones underlying diverse linguistic phenomena.

This investigation will enable us to examine to what extent philosophical inquiries about the concepts of causation on the one hand and cognitive studies about the conception of causation on the other hand are relevant for linguistic analysis.

Course/Module aims:

1. Familiarization with the syntax and semantics of the linguistic expressions that encode causation
2. Sharpening tools of syntactic and semantic investigation
3. Exploring the relationship between the syntax and the semantics of the relevant constructions
4. Understanding the relationship between the linguistic analysis and studies of a similar concept in other disciplines

Learning outcomes - On successful completion of this module, students should be able to:

1. Reach a linguistic generalization
2. Formulate hypotheses
3. Compare competing analyses
4. Criticize the validity of an argument
5. Build a linguistic argument

Attendance requirements(%):

100

Teaching arrangement and method of instruction: Lectures on Zoom

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Course/Module Content:

*Causation: what is it all about*

*Causative Constructions – the linguistic expressions of causation (typological perspective)*

*Do languages encode causal relations?  
(syntactic and semantic perspectives)*

*Causal Selection (philosophical and cognitive approaches)*

*Causal Models 1 (philosophical background)*

*Causal Models 2 (philosophical background)*

*Modeling Causation for linguistic expressions 1  
(Semantics)*

*Causal selection – the linguistic take  
(The experimental perspective: linguistic vs. cognitive approaches)*

Required Reading:

*Abbreviations for the long list:*

*Proposed: Mumford & Anjum Introduction and Ch 1*

*Shibatani 1976; Bar-Asher Siegal & Boneh*

*Neeleman & van de Koot*

*Cheng & Novick; Hitchcock & Knobe*

*Mackie*

*Halpern & Pearl; Pearl*

*Hitchcock, Lauer & Nadathur, Baglini & Bar-Asher Siegal*

*Bar-Asher Siegal, Bassel & Hagmayer*

Additional Reading Material:

*Abbott, Barbara. 1974. Some problems in giving an adequate model-theoretic account of CAUSE. Charles Fillmore, George Lakoff, & Robin Lakoff, (eds.), Berkeley Studies in Syntax and Semantics (BS3), volume I. Berkeley, CA: Department of Linguistics and Institute of Human Learning, University of California, pp. 1-14.*

*Achinstein, Peter. 1976. Causation, transparency, and emphasis. Canadian Journal of philosophy 5: 1-23*

*Alexiadou, Artemis, Elena Anagnostopoulou, & Florian Schäfer. 2006. The properties*

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of anticausatives crosslinguistically. In *Phases of interpretation*, ed. Mara Frascarelli, Berlin & New York: Mouton de Gruyter. pp. 187–211.

Anscombe, Gertrude E. M. 1981. *The collected philosophical papers of G.E.M. Anscombe: v. 2. Metaphysics and the philosophy of mind*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press

Baglini, Rebekah and Elitzur A. Bar-Asher Siegal, 2019. Direct causation: A new approach to an old question, *U. Penn Working Papers in Linguistics* 26 (1): 19–28.

Baglini, Rebekah & Itamar Francez. 2016. The implications of managing. *Journal of Semantics* 33(3): 541–560.

Bar-Asher Siegal, Elitzur A., Noa Bassel and York Hagmayer. 2021. Causal selection – the linguistic take. *Experiments in Linguistic Meaning* 1: 27–38

Bar-Asher Siegal Elitzur & Nora Boneh. 2019. Sufficient and Necessary Conditions for a Non-unified Analysis of Causation. *Proceedings of the 36th West Coast Conference on Formal Linguistics*, pp. 55–60.

Bar-Asher Siegal, Elitzur A. & Nora Boneh. 2015. Non-core datives in Modern Hebrew. *Proceedings of the 30th Annual Conference of the Israel Association for Theoretical Linguistics* [http://www.iatl.org.il/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/IATL30proceedings-01-Bar-Asher-Siegal\\_Boneh-.pdf](http://www.iatl.org.il/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/IATL30proceedings-01-Bar-Asher-Siegal_Boneh-.pdf)

Bar-Asher Siegal Elitzur & Nora Boneh. 2019. Sufficient and Necessary Conditions for a Non-unified Analysis of Causation. *Proceedings of the 36th West Coast Conference on Formal Linguistics*, edited by Richard Stockwell, Maura O'Leary, Zhongshi Xu, and Z.L. Zhou, pp. 55–60  
<http://www.lingref.com/cpp/wccfl/36/index.html>

Bar-Asher Siegal, Elitzur A. and Nora Boneh. 2020. Causation: from metaphysics to semantics and back. In Bar-Asher Siegal, Elitzur and Boneh, Nora (editors), *Perspectives on Causation*. Springer. Pp. 3–51.

Beebe, Helen. 2004. Causing and Nothingness, in J. Collins, N. Hall, and L. Paul (eds.), *Causation and Counterfactuals*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 291–308.

A. Beller, E. Bennett, T. Gerstenberg. 2020. The language of causation. *Proceedings of the 42nd Annual Conference of the Cognitive Science Society*.

Bittner, Maria. 1998. Concealed Causatives. *Natural Language Semantics* 7: 1–78.

Bjorndahl, A. & Todd Snider. 2015. Informative counterfactuals. *Proceeding of Semantics and Linguistic Theory (SALT)* 25: 1–17

Carroll, John. 2009. Anti-Reductionism. In Helen Beebe, Christopher Hitchcock & Peter Menzies (eds.), 279–298. *The Oxford Handbook of Causation*. Oxford University Press

Charnavel, Isabelle. 2018. Perspectives in causal clauses. *Natural Language and Linguistic Theory*. 36: 1–36.

Cheng, Patricia. W, & Novick, Laura R. 1991. Causes versus enabling conditions. *Cognition* 40, 83–120.

Copley, Bridget & Phillip Wolff. 2014. Theories of causation should inform linguistic theory and vice versa, in Bridget Copley & Fabienne Martin (eds.), *Causation in grammatical structures*, (*Oxford Studies in Theoretical Linguistics* vol. 52) .11–57. Oxford University Press.

Copley, Bridget, Phillip Wolff & Jason Shepard. 2015. Force interaction in the expression of causation. In Sarah D'Antonio, Mary Moroney, and Carol Rose Little

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- Dixon, Robert M.W. 2000. A typology of causatives: form, syntax and meaning. In Dixon, Robert M.W. and Alexandra S. Aikhenvald (Eds.), *Changing valency: Case Studies in Transitivity*, pp. 30-83. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
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- Hall, Ned and L. A. Paul. 2013. Metaphysically Reductive Causation. *Erkenntnis* 78 :9-41.
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56:889-911.

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Maienborn, Claudia and Johanna Herdtfelder 2015, *A compositional account of the eventive/stative ambiguity of German causal von-modifiers*. In *Proceedings of Semantics and Linguistics Theory (SALT)* 25: 163-183

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- Maienborn, Claudia & Johanna Herdtfelder. 2017. Eventive vs. stative causation: The case of German causal von-modifiers. *Linguistics and Philosophy* 40: 279-320
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- Schaffer, Jonathan. 2013. *Causal Contextualism*, in Blaauw, Martijn. (ed.) *Contrastivism in Philosophy*, 35-63. London: Routledge.
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Grading Scheme:



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*Essay / Project / Final Assignment / Home Exam / Referat 70 %*  
*Presentation / Poster Presentation / Lecture/ Seminar / Pro-seminar / Research  
proposal 30 %*

*Additional information:*