What Happened to "The King Had His Daughter Sent for"?

—A Multi-Perspective Approach to English Periphrastic Causative Construction

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Abstract

Based on the question of "what happened to *the king has his daughter sent for*", this paper aims to get a contrastive analysis of English periphrastic causative construction of [X $_{HAVE}$ Y V$_{pp}$] from different perspectives including Langacker's action chain theory, Dixon's nine semantic parameters ' framework, Talmy's causal-chain windowing analysis and Wolff's force theory. The research results show that 1) Dixon's semantic parameters' framework could provide much detailed information in the causative situation, yet most of the "Yes/No" question to correspond each semantic parameters could not solve all the problems such as the transitivity, the control of the causee, etc. 2) Both Langacker's action chain theory and Talmy's causal-chain windowing analysis seem a little similar, yet the latter one could supply with more information. 3) In Langacker's description of action chain in causative construction: there is also a slight change in adding the link not only at the beginning of action chain, but also in the middle of the action chain. 4) Wolff's force theory is quite flexible with different concrete directions of all possibly included parameters, yet it might be better if adding some information form Dixon's semantic parameters.

Keywords

Action Chain, Semantic Parameters, Causal-Chain Windowing, Force Theory, English Periphrastic Causative Construction

1. Introduction

Tremendously, the causation we live by has been explored synchronously and diachronically in a quite large number of areas from many different perspectives.

For example, according to Beebee & Hitchcock & Menzies (2009), the summarization of related studies in causation has been concluded from the perspective of history such as in ancient Greeks, the Medievals and the early moderns with several specific philosophers like Hume and Kant and so on; from the perspective of standard approaches such as regularity theories, counterfactual theories, probabilistic theories, causal process theories and agency and interventionist theories; from the perspective of alternative approaches such as causal powers and capacities, anti-reductionism, causal modelling, mechanisms and causal pluralism; from the perspective of the metaphysics such as platitudes and counterexamples, causes laws and ontology, causal relata and the time-asymmetry of causation; from the perspective of epistemology such as the psychology of causal perception and reasoning, causation and observation, causation and statistical inference; from the perspective of philosophical theories such as mental causation, causation action and free will, causation and ethics, causal theories of knowledge and perception, causation and semantic content, causation and explanation, causation and reduction; from the perspective of other disciplines such as causation in classical mechanics, causation in statistical mechanics, causation in quantum mechanics, causation in spacetime theories, causation in biology, causation in the social sciences and causation in the law.

However, in this study the causation would be narrowed down and concentrated only in the area of linguistic representation especially in the domain of English periphrastic causative construction in linguistic representation such as [X $_\text{HAVE}$ Y V$_\text{pp}$] (see Gilquin, 2010: p. 20), for example, *did you have the blades sharpened*? Here in this paper, the instance chosen from Talmy (2000: p. 474), "*The king had his daughter sent for*", would be concentrated and analyzed from different perspectives of linguistic theories. Then we can take a brief literature review of English periphrastic causative constructions in the next section of this paper.

2. A Brief Literature Review to English Periphrastic Causative Constructions Abroad

First of all, an example would be shown in the following for us to get a general idea of English periphrastic causative construction.

(1)

a) Alice opened the door.

b) Alice caused the door to open.

Based on pioneer linguists' conclusion such as "Baron (1977); Radford (1988); Shibatani (1976a, 1976b); Wolff (2003, 2007); Wolff, Jeon & Li (2009); Talmy (2000)", periphrastic causatives could express causal relations with two verbs, for example in (1)b, one is the matrix verb *caused* in the matrix clause to express the notion of causing event, while the other is the embedded verb *open* in the embedded clause to express the notion of caused event. Then we could go through a brief literature review of English periphrastic causative construction abroad.

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Early in the 1970s, Baron (1974: p. 340) has pointed out "the importance causation to the underlying structure of human language", he gives "a general analysis of linguistic expression of causation in English with special attention to periphrastic causative constructions". Shibatani (1976a, 1976b) uses the related property to describe the causation situation with the causing event and caused event, which has been widely used in many books such as in Talmy's "*Toward Cognitive Semantics*" (2000: p. 475); Talmy (1976) points out that there are four types of causation according to the participant's role and change in the related event—physical causation, volitional causation, affective causation and mental causation.

Lakoff & Johnson (1980: p. 69) considered the notion of causation as "[w]e agree that causation is a basic human concept. It is one of the concepts most often used by people to organize their physical and cultural realities". Cole (1983) accounts for the direct or indirect object of the matrix clause verb with case marking in semantic terms.

Langacker's (1991) notion of action chain and billiard-ball model, which involve the transition of energy, could explain the prototypical causation in terms of the nature of the entities taking part in the causative process. Kemmer & Verhagen (1994: p. 115) note that "[t]he grammar of causative constructions has inspired what is probably one of the most extensive literatures in modern Linguistics", which provides with the threefold interpretation of Talmy's (1976) causation types—descriptive, methodological and theoretical. Song's (1996) typology of causation (including AND v. PURP v. COMPACT type of causation) is based on the presence of "someone desire or wish", which could capture the semantic difference between natural and "force" causation.

Dixon (2000) defines the classification of causation much more widely than Song's from the perspective of semantic parameters, according to which there are two major types of causative constructions—synthetic (such as morphological, zero-marked and compound causatives) and analytic (such as permissive, periphrastic and isolating). Talmy (2000) gives an elaborate analysis force dynamics and causation and their relationship, and also uses causal-chain windowing with intention to illustrate the causal-chain event. Wolff & Song (2003) have made five experiments to examine the relationship between the psychological model of causation and the semantic of causal verbs, they find that Talmy's force dynamic model provides a better account than focal set models of causation in psychology.

Gilquin (2010) classifies the causative constructives into ten types according to the Goldberg' "Pinciple of No Synonymy" in construction grammar—"[X cause Y Vto-inf], [X get Y Vto-inf], [X get Y Vpp], [X get Y Vprp], [X have Y Vinf], [X have Y Vpp], [X have Y Vprp], [X make Y Vinf], [X be made Vto-inf], [X make Y Vpp]". Wolff (2015) develops his own force theory to explain the internal relationship of English periphrastic causative construction, which has been divided into three sub-categories—CAUSE, ENABLE, and PREVENT.

Here in the study of this paper, Langacker's action chain, Dixon's semantic

parameters, Talmy's causal-chain windowing and Wolff's Force theory to the special example of "The King has his Daughter Sent for", which would be analyzed in detail in Section 4.

3. Research Questions

As mentioned above, according to Langacker's action chain, Dixon's semantic parameters, Talmy's causal-chain windowing and Wolff's Force theory, they would provide us different perspectives to the example sentence and give us the opportunity to contrast them together, then the research questions emerge.

1) What are the main idea of those selected theories—Langacker's action chain, Dixon's semantic parameters, Talmy's causal-chain windowing and Wolff's Force theory? To what extent they could solve the problem of illustrating the example of "The King has his Daughter Sent for"?

2) What are the advantages and disadvantages of the detailed analysis in those theories? And what are the similarities and differences among them? Which would be better and to what extent they could be revised or bounded together?

4. A Multi-Perspective Approach to "The King Has His Daughter Sent for"

According to Talmy (2000: pp. 472-475), based on different standards or perspectives the causative situation could be divided into concrete ten types, in which when with regard to the number of occurrences of self-directedness along a causal chain, it could be divided into three types such as in the following:

(2)

a) The king sent for his pipe.

(2-member chain of agency)

b) The king sent for his daughter (to come).

(3-member chain of agency)

c) The king had his daughter sent for.

(4-member chain of agency)

(Cited From Talmy, 2000: p. 474)

Somebody would get confused about the last one that why there exist 4-member chain of agency in the sentence. Here is the related letter cited from Professor Li Fuyin with Talmy in his cognitive linguistic course as follows:

"Question: is the self-directedness identical with agency? (10) a has two agencies, the king and the person he asked for help. While (10)b has three, the king, his servant, and his daughter. But who are the four in (10)c? the king, his servant, and his daughter only makes three.

Talmy: The English construction in 10c has the following meaning: the king sends, say, his personal servant to speak to another intermediary—say, the daughter's maid—and the maid then instructs the daughter to come to the king. English can be amazing at times."

Thus obviously there are actually 4-member chain of agency there—from the king to his personal servant, from his personal servant to the daughter's maid,

from the maid to the daughter—in short, the king, his personal servant, the daughter's maid and the daughter. It is made clearly about the relationship so as to the next step of multi-perspective analysis within different linguistic theories.

4.1. Langackger's Action Chain to "The King Has His Daughter Sent for"

The action chain indicates a transmission of energy from an entity to one or several entities, with which the entity could be human being, animal, concrete object, abstract concept and so on. It is illustrated vividly by the billiard-ball model, which is shown in the following Figure 1.

The notion of causal chain is significant as it could provide a model to describe the clause structure, if using a periphrastic causative construction within this framework, it could have the effect of "adding a link at the beginning of an action chain, thereby extending the scope of the prediction to include the original source" (Langacker, 1991: p. 408). As we know in the examples above, "the king" is always the agent as the HEAD, and "daughter" is always the patient as the tail, in the deep meaning it could be explained that "the king asked his daughter to come", if in the example (2) b & c adding the "sent for" between the two, it will add a more link not in the beginning but in the middle of the whole scope, which could be shown in the following Figure 2 with some revised information about the periphrastic causative construction of the examples above.

From Figure 2 we could observe that Figure 2(a) and Figure 2(b) is not the periphrastic causative then is not to be concentrated here. Figure 2(c) added

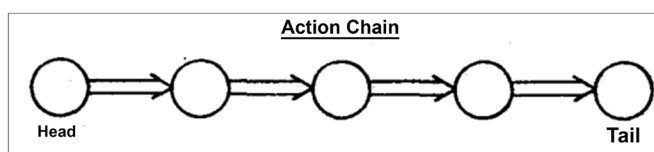**Figure 1.** Action chain (cited from Langacker, 1991: p. 283).

a. The king sent for his pipe.

b. The king sent for his daughter (to come).
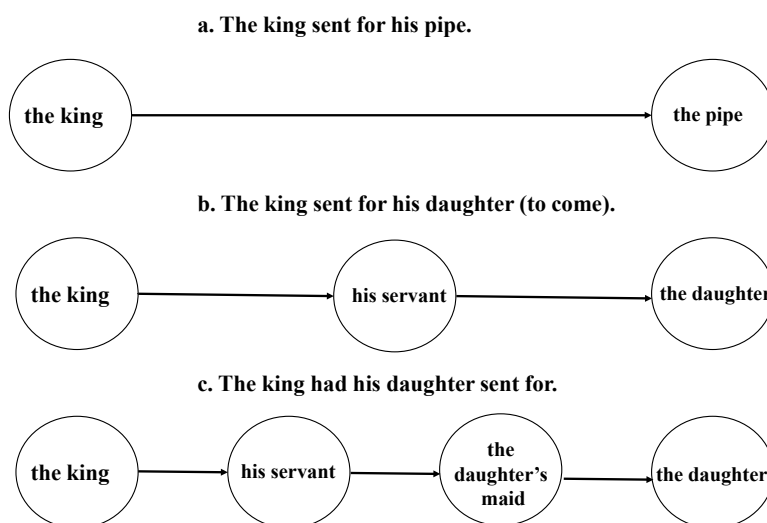

c. The king had his daughter sent for.

Figure 2. Causal chain with revised information.

more two causal chains than the original one in Figure 2(a) within the periphrastic causative construction of "[X $_{HAVE}$ Y V$_{pp}$]" (see Gilquin, 2010: p. 20). It is quite special causative construction that there is a passive voice and an implied causative situation in it—in detail—"his daughter is asked by (maybe) maid", "the maid is given the information by the king's servant"; "the king ordered his servant to execute his order".

Therefore the action chain could solve the problem of explaining the sentence "The King has his Daughter Sent for", and it could also gives the vivid chart to analyze the distribution of the special periphrastic causative construction, while there is also a slight change in adding the link not only at the beginning of action chain, but also in the middle of the action chain, thereby extending the scope of the prediction to include the original source.

4.2. Dixon's Semantic Parameters to "The King Has His Daughter Sent for"

In terms of Dixon's semantic parameters (2000: pp. 61-74), there are nine semantic parameters: (taking the sentence into the analysis at meanwhile)

A) Relating to the verb: (1) State/action. It means "Does a causative mechanism apply only to a verb describing a state, or also to a verb describing an action?" Here in the example the verb is not only a verb but a verb with an auxiliary "[X $_{HAVE}$ Y V$_{pp}$]", and it is describing an action about "asking something to be done". (2) Transitivity. It means "[d]oes it apply only to intransitive verbs", or to both intransitive and simple transitive verbs, or to all types of verbs—intransitive, simple transitive and also ditransitive? In the example we can see that it seems belong to "ditransitive", but it is also a special ditransitive for there is a passive voice in it, according to the action chain it might be the "tri-transitive" because in the deep meaning "the king ordered someone to call someone to ask his daughter to come", it still remains thinking twice.

B) Relating to the causee: (3) Control. It is noted that "[i]s the causee lacking control of the activity (e.g. if inanimate, or a young child) or normally having control?" From the example we could find the problem that there are not only one causee in the special periphrastic causative construction "[X $_{HAVE}$ Y V$_{pp}$]" and the causee could be the king's personal servant $_{causee1}$, the daughter's maid $_{causee2}$ and the daughter $_{causee3}$ with respect to the king $_{original\ causer}$. And causee 1 could also the causee 2's causer, then causee 2 could also be the causee 3's causer. However, what we can make sure is that the daughter could be the final causee, but we still don't know whether the daughter will obey or object to his father order to come or not, so maybe it is "beyond the control" only in the writer's opinion. (4) Volition. It means that "[d]oes the causee do it willingly ('let') or unwillingly ('make')?" To some extent it could be that the daughter is unwilling, if not, there is not necessary for the king to send for his servant to ask the maid to tell the daughter to come. It also could be that the daughter is willing, just as the semantic parameter of control, the daughter obey the order she is willing, if not, is unwilling. Thus it might also be the "beyond the volition" in the special

periphrastic causative construction "[X $_{HAVE}$ Y V$_{pp}$]". (5) Affectedness. It is specified as "[i]s the causee only partially affected by the activity, or completely affected?" From the example we could find that the daughter might partially affected by the activity of "sending for", for one thing the daughter is actually received the order, yet for another whether the daughter come or not the affectctedness of the activity.

C) Relating to causer: (6) Directness. It means that "does the causer act directly or indirectly?" Obviously in the example the causer of king is indirectly. (7) Intention. "Does the causer achieve the result accidentally or intentionally?" Apparently the causer has the intention. (8) Naturalness. "Does it happen fairly naturally (the causer just initiating a natural process) or is the result achieved only with effort (perhaps, with violence)?" Because the specialty of the status of the king, it might happen fairly naturally. (9) Involvement. "Is the causer also involved in the activity (in addition to the causee) or not involved?" The causer (the king) is not involved in the activity in addition to the causee (the daughter).

From mentioned above, we could clearly observe that Dixon has divided the causative situation into tree parts—the verb, the causee and the causer—which can solve the the problem with the more detailed information than Langacker's causal-chain theory. However, almost all the related semantic parameters are the "Yes/No" questions to be judged. While in the concrete especially periphrastic causative construction the detailed situation of the three sub-categories is not easily be judged as Yes or No such as in the causee's control, volition. We could not judge them only on the level of the structure or the sentence, then maybe it is the limitation of this theory. Another limitation is about the transitivity, maybe Langacker's causal chain theory could help answer why there exists not only simple transitive and ditransitive but also "tri-transitive".

4.3. Talmy's Causal-Chain Windowing to "The King Has His Daughter Sent for"

Causal-chain windowing belongs to "Attention" in one of "the major schematic systems that language has for structuring conceptual material" (Talmy, 2010), also related to the causal-chain event frame. With respect to Talmy's description of "the type of causal chain understood to be initiated by an intentional agent progresses through the sequence of subevents" characterized in Figure 3.

Back to the example (2)a-b-c sentence again, it could be applied in the next Figure 4.

From Figure 4 we could observe that the Figure 4(a) only windows the initiator and the final result, which is corresponded to the steps [1] and [5] in Figure 3. The Figure 4(b) adds one more window as an intermediary agency as in step [3] in Figure 3. Then the Figure 4(c) seems to add two more windows of the intermediary agencies as in step [3] and [4] in Figure 3.

From the mentioned above, we find that Talmy's causal-chain windowing seems similar to Langacker's action chain theory, yet with more detailed information about illustrating the example.
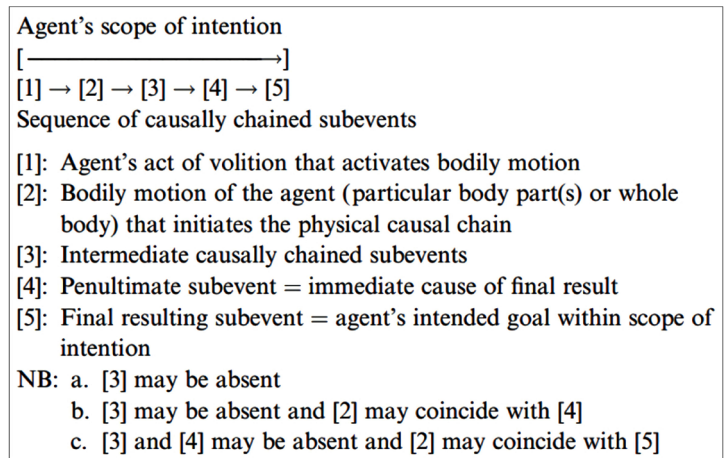
Agent's scope of intention
[————————→]
[1] → [2] → [3] → [4] → [5]
Sequence of causally chained subevents

[1]: Agent's act of volition that activates bodily motion
[2]: Bodily motion of the agent (particular body part(s) or whole
body) that initiates the physical causal chain
[3]: Intermediate causally chained subevents
[4]: Penultimate subevent = immediate cause of final result
[5]: Final resulting subevent = agent's intended goal within scope of
intention
NB: a. [3] may be absent
b. [3] may be absent and [2] may coincide with [4]
c. [3] and [4] may be absent and [2] may coincide with [5]

Figure 3. Semantic composition of a physical causal chain with an initiatory intentional agent (Cited from Talmy, 2000: p. 272).

a. The king sent for his pipe.

the king → the pipe

the initiator   the final result

b. The king sent for his daughter (to come).

the king → his servant → the daughter

the initiator   an intermediary agency   the final result

c. The king had his daughter sent for.

the king → his servant → the daughter's maid → the daughter

the initiator   an intermediary agency 1   an intermediary agency 2   the final result
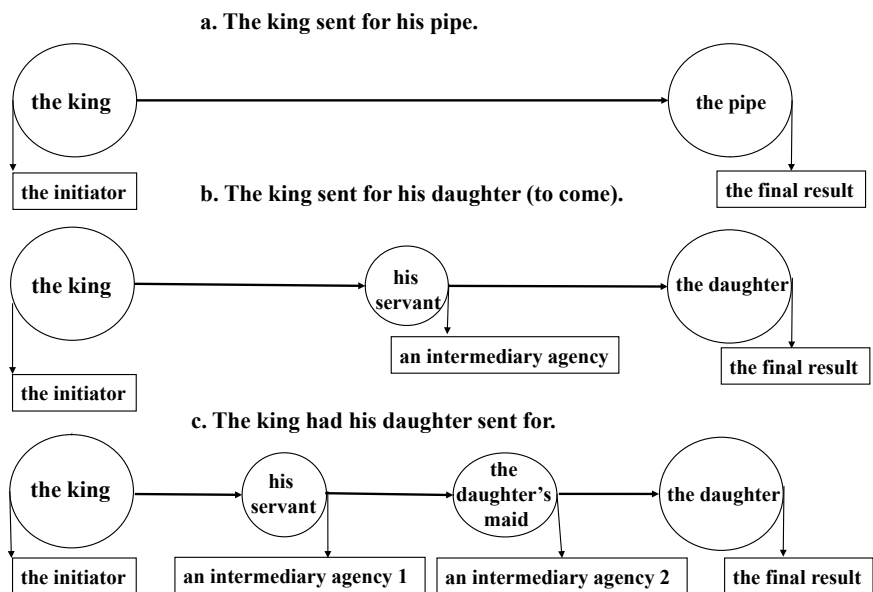
Figure 4. The application of causal-chain windowing.

4.4. Wolff's Force Theory to "The King Has His Daughter Sent for"

Wolff has developed Talmy's force-dynamic theory into force theory with several parameters in it. The main difference is that the relationship between the affector (antagonist) and patient (agonist) not only includes opposition but also concordance. The main chart is quoted form table 44 in chapter 3 of Wolff's lecture (Li, Hu, & Yu, 2017: p. 118) as shown in the following **Figure 5**.

Back to the example "the king has his daughter sent for", we could map that the patient is the daughter, the affector is the king, the other forces include the king's personal servant and the daughter's maid. The patient's tendency might to come or not, it's uncertain. The result force is to ask the daughter to come, the endstate might be that the daughter come to the king, which is showed in the following **Figure 6**.
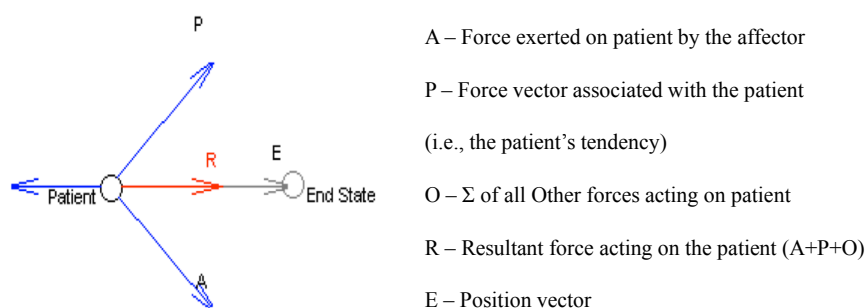
A – Force exerted on patient by the affector

P – Force vector associated with the patient

(i.e., the patient's tendency)

O – Σ of all Other forces acting on patient

R – Resultant force acting on the patient (A+P+O)

E – Position vector

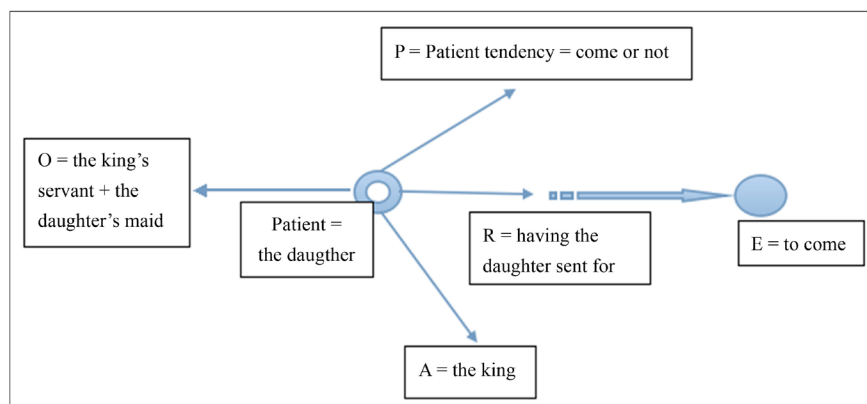**Figure 5.** The parameters in Wolff's force theory (2015).

Figure 6. The application of the force theory.

Together with **Figure 5** and **Figure 6**, we could observe that the force theory is very flexible and the direction of the patient tendency could be changed according to concrete situation in the context or in the reality. If the daughter is willing to come, the relation between the affector and patient will tend to be in concordance; if not, then in opposition.

5. Conclusion

From all mentioned above, we could get the general idea of those theories about illustrating the English periphrastic causative construction, and find that Langacker's action chain, Talmy's causal-chain windowing and Wolff's force theory could almost explain the special sentence of "the king has his daughter sent for" more or less vividly and clearly. In Langacker's description of action chain in causative construction: there is also a slight change in adding the link not only at the beginning of action chain, but also in the middle of the action chain.

What's more, Langacker's action chain and Talmy's causal-chain windowing tend to be a little similar yet the latter one seems to offer more information. Wolff's force theory is quite flexible with different concrete directions of all possibly included parameters, yet it might be better if adding some information form Dixon's semantic parameters.

Meanwhile, Dixson's nine semantic parameters could supply more detailed information for the causer, causee and the verb, such as whether it is under con-

trol or not, whether it is in state or action, etc.. However, the "Yes/No" question of each semantic parameter still cannot make it sure or clear on some unbounded or uncertain issues.

In a nutshell, there is still much room for this study of the English periphrastic causative constructions, and many other famous scholars have done much work in this area. The paper only uses the special example cited form Talmy to provide a contrastive analysis in different theories with the aim to find what might be deserved to study in the future.

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Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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