F.EX

A Coding Scheme for
Folk Explanations of Behavior

Version 4.0

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Cause Explanations [1]

Rule:

If the explained behavior is unintentional, the explanation is a cause explanation. Such explanations mention the factors that caused the unintentional behavior. For example: "Anne was yawning during the lecture because she hadn't gotten enough sleep."

Further Comments:

- Whether the behavior is unintentional or not must be decided from the perspective of the *explainer*. If the coder would judge a given behavior as intentional but the explainer's utterance and/or the context suggest that the explainer considered the behavior unintentional, the explanation is a cause explanation.

- Cause explanations are "mechanical" explanations, following straightforward physical or psychological regularities (e.g., stimuli cause sensations, other people cause emotions, traits influence behavior). A mechanical cause brings about the behavior without intervention of the agent's intention or will (and sometimes against the agent's will).

- Cause explanations never indicate the *purpose* of a behavior; in fact, cause explanations imply that the behavior had no particular purpose — it happened unintentionally, brought about by certain causes. Therefore it does not make sense to ask "What for?" to elicit a cause explanation (e.g., "Anne was in a great mood this morning." — "What for?")

- In the case of cause explanations, the actor need not be aware of the cause relation between the cause and the behavior. For example, "Anne is in a great mood today. Why? Because the sun is shining." Anne may not know that her good mood was caused by the sunny weather.

- In general, the actor need not even be aware of the explained behavior itself: Somebody might observe Anne grinding her teeth and say: "She is probably doing that because she is nervous," but Anne herself might not even be aware that she has been grinding her teeth.

Codes:

The particular causes that explain an agent's behavior or experience can be classified into the following categories.

Agent causes [11*] operate from within the agent, namely, as *behaviors* [111] (including accomplishments and lack thereof, e.g., "losing a game"), *internal states* [112] (including emotions, physiological states, bodily sensations), *perceptions* [113] (including attention, imagination, and memory), *propositional states* [114] (including beliefs, desires, thoughts, hopes, fears), *traits* [115] (including both personality and physical traits), *passive behaviors* [116] (e.g., receiving, getting, becoming), *stable propositional states* [117] (including habitual beliefs, attitudes and values), *category memberships* [118] (including club memberships, high-school grade, social categories, such as gender, race), and *character propositional states* [119] (those 117 that can be considered part of the agent's character or personality).
     Note: If a specific behavior has been performed a few times ➜ [111]; if the behavior is performed as a habit, and if that habit seems to be a "characteristic" of the agent ➜ [115].

Situation causes [120] operate from outside the agent but are impersonal, such as the weather or a difficult exam.
     Note: If a cited cause refers to a future or counterfactual situation that the agent knows about, the code is not a 120 (because that situation could not have been causally efficacious) but a 114 — referring to the agent's belief about that hypothetical situation, as in "**She is sad because he won't come back**."

Agent+Situation interactions [13*] are processes that involve both agent causes and situation causes. For example, "fulfilling a requirement" [131] is an interaction because it involves both facts about the person, such as abilities or past behaviors, and facts about the situation, such as the

particular content of the requirements. The third digit captures the agent cause that was involved in the interaction — it is often a behavior [131] but other codes occur as well.

A special code is 136 that applies when the explanation puts the agent in a passive position and the force impinging on the agent is in the situation (e.g., receiving a package; being thrown over by the wind).

OtherPerson causes [14*] operate from outside the agent but are another person's (or persons') states or attributes, namely, somebody's *behavior* [141], *internal state* [142], *perception* [143], *propositional states* [144], *trait* [145], *stable propositional states* [147], *category membership* [148], or *character propositional states* [149].

Agent+OtherPerson interactions [15*] are processes that involve both agent causes and OtherPerson causes. For example, "(I was sad because) we got into a fight" [151]. The third digit captures the agent cause that was involved in the interaction.

A special code is 156 that applies when the explanation puts the agent in a passive position and the force impinging on the agent is another person (e.g., being told to leave; being fired;).

OtherPerson+Situation interactions [160] are processes that involve both OtherPerson and Situation causes. For example, "(He was happy because) she was back in Cleveland." Typically no third digit is recorded.

Agent+OtherPerson+Situation interactions [17*] are processes that involve both Agent, OtherPerson, and Situation causes. For example, "(I was up all night because) my family and I had a neighborhood party" [171]. The third digit captures the agent cause involved in the interaction.

Examples

Code	Category	[Behavior] Explanation
111	Agent behavior	[Anne is sweating b/c] she just ran 5 miles
112	Agent internal state	[Anne is grinding her teeth b/c] she is nervous
113	Agent perception	[Anne drove above the speed limit b/c] she didn't look at her speedometer
114	Agent propos. state	[Anne was worrying b/c] she was afraid she failed the test
115	Agent trait	[Anne is feeling bad b/c] she has low self-esteem
117	Agent stable propos. state	[Ben had a craving for cherries b/c] he loves them
118	Agent category memb.	[Anne liked the movie b/c] she is just a high-school student
119	Agent charac. propos. state	[I hypnotized myself b/c] I have an innate fear of letting myself be controlled.
120	Situation	[Anne is in a great mood b/c] it's sunny outside
131	Agent+Situation	[Anne was admitted to Princeton b/c] she fulfilled the requirements
135	Agent+Situation	- " - because she was smart enough to meet their standards
141	OthPers behavior	[Anne is yawning b/c] the teacher was giving a boring lecture
142	OthPers internal state	[Anne empathizes with Ben b/c] he is in a lot of pain
143	OthPers perception	[Anne is disappointed b/c] Ben didn't notice her new haircut
144	OthPers propos. state	[Anne is happy b/c] Ben wants to go to the party with her
145	OthPers trait	[Anne likes Ben b/c] he is very kind and perceptive
146	OthPers passive beh.	[I was nervous b/c] she was getting back the results from a health test
147	OthPers stable propos.	[Anne is infatuated with Ben b/c] he has very liberal attitudes
148	OthPers categ. memb.	[Ben envies Jeff b/c] Jeff is in a fraternity
149	OthPers char. propos.	[I was sad] because they don't share my religious convictions
151	Agent+OthPers	[Anne is annoyed at John b/c] they can't agree on anything
155	Agent+OthPers	[He feels guilty b/c] he is in control of what time he spends with whom
156	Agent passive beh.	[I was in a good mood b/c] I received a call from home
160	Sit+OthPers	[She is really afraid] b/c her brother is in a bad neighborhood
171	Agent+Sit+OthPers	[I was in a good mood] b/c my friends and I were returning to school

Reason Explanations [3, 4]

Rule:

Reason explanations explain intentional actions by citing the kinds of things the agent considered when forming an intention to act — the reasons *for which*. the agent performed the action. These reasons are subjective mental states (desires, beliefs, valuings) that the agent had at the time of deciding to act. For example, "Anne ignored Greg's arguments because she knew she was right" or "Why did Jarron give in?" — "He wanted to end the argument."

Further Comments:

- The presence of an intention can be verified by testing the meaningfulness of a reformulation of the explained behavior in the following format: " . . .[explanation], and *that was her reason for choosing to* [behavior] . . ." For example, "Anne ignored Greg's argument because she knew she was right," would be reformulated as "She knew she was right, and that was her reason for choosing to ignore his argument." Such a reformulation need not sound elegant, but it must sound acceptable. "She had a stomach ache because she ate too many cherries" is not a reason explanation because the reformulation, "She ate too many cherries and that was her reason for choosing to have a stomach ache" makes little sense.

- Because the actor behaves for the reason given*,* he or she must be (at least dimly) *aware* of those reasons at the time of acting (subjectivity rule). If "Anne applauded the musicians" is explained by "because other people did so," then Anne must have been aware that she applauded for that reason. If she didn't, then other people's applauding *caused* her to applaud (she did it "automatically"), which would suggest a code for a cause explanation. (We thus code unconscious "reasons" as cause explanations.)

- The agent must have regarded the cited reasons as suitable or reasonable grounds for acting (rationality rule). For example, "Ben interrupted his mother because he was thinking about other things" is not a reason explanation because his thinking about other things does not seem to provide reasonable grounds for interrupting her. However, "Ben interrupted his mother because he was thinking about leaving and wanted to let her know" is a reason explanation because Ben perceived the cited information as reasonable grounds for acting.

Codes:

Mental state markers. Reasons can be linguistically marked as mental states by an appropriate mental state verb ("Anne watered her new plants because she *wanted* the plants to survive"), or they can be unmarked ("Anne watered her new plants to save the plants"). Typical mental state markers are *want, need, fear, hope, think, realize, like, believe, know*. If a mental state marker is used, the first digit in the coding number is '3', if no marker is used, the first digit is '4'.

Reason type. Reasons are always mental states of the agent. They can come in three types: *desires*, *beliefs*, or *valuings*. This distinction is coded in the third digit: '1' stands for desires, '2' for beliefs, '3' for valuings.

   Desires are mental states that can be *fulfilled*. The content of these states (e.g., what I wish or want) refers to events that are not yet factual. For example, "Anne interrupted her mother because she wanted to tell her something" [311]. When the reason explanation contains a mental state marker, it is easy to recognize desires — they are marked by "to want to," "to need to" "to feel like," etc. Obligations ("I had to") are also coded as desires because they imply a higher-order desire to fulfill the obligation. When no mental state marker is mentioned, the coder must try to "mark" the content: "Why did you go back into the house?" — "To get my wallet." "[Because I wanted] to get my wallet."

   Beliefs can be true or false. The content of these states (what I believe) refers to events that may or may not exist but that the agent presumes to be factual. "He started a diet because he thought he had gained too much weight" [312]. If mental state markers are used, beliefs are easily recognizable — they are marked by "He thinks," "I believed," "She knew," etc. Many beliefs are unmarked, however. In that case, only the content of the belief (the fact or circumstance believed to be true) is mentioned: "I applauded because the show was good" [422]; "I interrupted her because I

got a call on the other line" [412]; "I invited her for lunch because she had helped me out" [442]. A rule of thumb for deciding whether a given explanation is a belief reason is to ask whether the content of the explanation was likely in the agent's thoughts at the time of deciding to act. For example, when deciding to interrupt his mother, Ben was thinking, "I have a call on the other line."

Valuings include appreciations, attitudes, likings, and so on — e.g., "I liked the music," "I enjoy skiing," "I wasn't enthralled with the offer." These states are neither desires (they are not something that can be "fulfilled") nor beliefs (they cannot be true or false). Valuings are relatively easy to recognize because they are almost always marked with particular verbs — "to love," "to like," "to enjoy," "to be excited about," "to be enthralled with," "to be impressed by."

Reason content. Whether marked or unmarked, reasons always have a *content* — what is desired is the content of a desire, what is believed is the content of a belief, what is valued is the content of a valuing. The content of a reason is coded in the second digit after 3 or 4. The content can be about *the Agent* [31*/41*], about *the Situation* [32*/42*], about an *Agent+Situation interaction* [33*/43*], about *an Other Person* [34*/44*], about an *Agent+OtherPerson interaction* [35*/45*], about an *OtherPerson+Situation interaction* [36*/46*], or about an *Agent+OtherPerson+Situation interaction* [37*/47*].

For example, "Anne thought she is going to be late" has as its content "she is going to be late," and this content refers to the actor's being late, so it is coded as *Agent* content [31*]. In the statement "Anne didn't want the plants to die," the content is "that the plants die," so it is coded as *Situation* content [32*]. In "Anne didn't bring the gift because she thought Ben would bring it," the content is "that Ben would bring it" and is therefore coded as *OtherPerson* content [34*].

Examples

Marked

Desires

311	Agent content	(Anne asked Mike out for dinner) b/c she wanted to get to know him
321	Situation	(Anne watered the plants) b/c she wanted them to thrive
331	Agent+Sit	
341	OthPer	(Anne didn't call Ben) b/c she wanted him to call first
351	Agent+OthPer	(Ben called Anne) b/c he hoped they would make up again
361	OthPer+Sit	(My father puts pressure on me) b/c he wants many doors to be open to me
371		

Beliefs

312	Agent content	(Anne ignored Greg's arguments) b/c She knew she was right
322	Situation	(Anne applauded) b/c she thought the performance was excellent
332	Agent+Sit	(Anne applied) b/c she thought she fit the job requirements
342	OthPer	(Anne didn't bring the gift) b/c she thought Ben would bring it
352	Agent+OthPer	(Anne didn't call Mike) b/c she felt they didn't click
362	OthPer+Sit	(Anne won't go to the party) b/c she knows her ex is gonna be there
372		

Unmarked

Desires

411	Agent content	(Anne drove way above the speed limit) to be on time
421	Situation	(Anne watered the plants) so they grow faster
431	Agent+Sit	(Anne called the office) so the meeting wouldn't start without her
441	OthPer	(Anne teased Ben) so he would show some reaction
451	Agent+OthPer	(Anne invited Cathy over) so they could study together
461	OthPer+Sit	(I took him there) so he could be at his favorite restaurant one more time
471		

Beliefs

412	Agent content	(Anne refused the salesman's offer) b/c she didn't have any money
422	Situation	(Anne refused the salesman's offer) b/c it was too high
432	Agent+Sit	(Anne drove way above the speed limit) b/c her presentation was starting soon
442	OthPer	(Anne moved in with Cathy) b/c Cathy offered her the room
452	Agent+OthPer	(Anne invited Cathy on a trip) b/c they were getting along very well
462	OthPer+Sit	(She stopped by) b/c it was his birthday
472	Ag+OthPer+Sit	(He couldn't quit his job) 'cause that's what our money was coming from

Valuings are rarely unmarked. The few cases we have encountered involve the phrases "it's fun to . . ," or "it's a thrill."

Special Coding Cases and Conventions

Explanations that involve *liking* may seem ambiguous. In "I plan to invite her because I would like to get to know her better," the phrase *would like to* is synonymous with *want to* [311]. A contrasting case is "Anne applauded the musicians because she liked how they played." In this case, *she liked* is coded as a valuing [343].

Fears can be either beliefs or valuings. To fear or be afraid *that* something happens usually denotes a belief. For example, "(Ben didn't tell her the truth because) he feared that she would get mad [342]." To fear or be afraid *of* something usually denotes a (de-)valuing. For example, "(She didn't go to the welcome party because) she was afraid of all the new people there."

The verb *need* is by default coded as a desire (e.g., "I went back because I needed another loaf of bread" [321]) unless there is evidence in the context that it refers to a normative assessment, in which case it is coded as an unmarked belief about one's obligation (e.g., "I stayed home because I needed to finish the tax report" [412]; cf. "I have to finish my paper" [412]).

To *miss* someone is coded as the 'devaluing of the person not being here with me' —i.e., a 373.

Desires and beliefs can play two different roles in explanations. First, desires/beliefs can be mere causes for unintentional behaviors, as in "Anne was worrying about the test results because she wanted to do well" [114]. Here, the desire is not Anne's reason for worrying but rather its cause (because she didn't choose to worry). Second, desires/beliefs can be reasons for intentional actions, as in "Anne watered the plants because she wanted them to grow" [321]. Here, Anne did act for the reason given in the explanation.

"(I drove above the speed limit) because *I was in a hurry*" is best coded as [411], an unmarked desire to get somewhere quickly (see dictionary definition). By contrast, "(I drove above the speed limit) because *I was late*" is best coded as [412], an unmarked belief about being late. Pain as a reason is coded as an unmarked valuing: "I called the nurse because it hurt so bad" [413]

"I don't have any money" is either a 412 (when it means I was broke, as in explaining why the agent decided not to buy a new car) or a 432 (when it means I didn't have any money on me, at this place and time, as in explaining why the agent turned back home when arriving at the movie theater).

Belief or knowledge states that are not themselves the propositional reasons for which the agent acted are coded as the content of unmarked beliefs: "I didn't say anything because I didn't know the answer" [412]. By contrast, "I kissed him good-bye because I didn't know whether he would make it" should be coded as [342] because the agent's reason is roughly "I thought he might not make it."

Being interested is a valuing if directed towards an object ("she is interested in math" [323]) but a desire if directed towards an action ("he is interested in going" [311]).

To disagree with someone can be coded as a belief that one thinks the other is wrong [342].

Causal Histories of Reasons [2]

Rule:

Causal history of reason explanations also explain intentional behavior, but they cite factors that *preceded* (and caused) the agent's reasons. These factors literally lie in the causal history of the actor's reasons but are not themselves reasons. For example, "Why did Jarron give in?" — "He is good-natured." Here, Jarron wasn't actually thinking, "I am good-natured; therefore, I should give in." In fact, he may not even be aware that he is good-natured. Rather, the explainer presents Jarron's good-natured character as an objective fact that brought about his specific reasons (e.g., his desire to end the argument).

Further Comments:

- Contrary to reasons, causal history factors are not considered by agents when forming an intention to act. Agents may not be aware of the causal history of their reasons, at least at the time they form their intention. Thus, when coders encounter an intentional behavior and need to decide whether it is explained by a causal history or a reason explanation, they should follow this rule: An explanatory content of which the agent was not aware *cannot* be the reason for which she acted; it is likely a causal history of her reasons.

- If the explanation contains a factor of which the agent *was* aware, then it likely functioned as a reason: "Anne applauded the musicians. Why? because she enjoyed their performance [443] and she wanted to show that [311]." However, sometimes agents are generally aware of causal history factors, even if they did not actively consider them when they formed their intention. For example, "Anne invited Ben for lunch. Why? Because they are good friends [25]." Anne is generally aware of the fact that she and Ben are good friends. However, when deciding to invite him for lunch, she probably did not think, "We are good friends; therefore I should invite him to lunch."

- When we code something as a causal history factor, there must be some reason on which the action is based (whether it is mentioned in the explanation or not). If the explainer's utterance suggests that there was no reason for which the agent performed the behavior — i.e., the behavior was unintentional — then we have a cause explanation, not a causal history of reason explanation.

- Sometimes causal histories of reasons co-occur with reasons. For example "Anne invited Ben for lunch. Why? — Because she is outgoing, and she wanted to talk to Ben." In addition to a particular reason why Anne invited Ben for lunch (she wanted to talk to him [311]), the explainer also cites a fact that preceded both Anne's reason and her action — her trait of being outgoing [215].

Codes:

Causal histories (2**) and cause explanations (1**) have the same possible codes in their second and third digit. The crucial difference between cause explanations and causal histories is that causal histories apply to intentional behaviors, whereas cause explanations apply to unintentional behaviors.

Examples

211	Agent behavior	(Anne asked Mike out for dinner) b/c she has done it before
212	Agent internal state	(Anne refused the salesman's offer) b/c she was in a bad mood
213	Agent perception	(Anne stole a pound of peaches) b/c she saw them on display
214	Agent propos. state	(Anne slept until 10) b/c she didn't realize the exam was in the morning
215	Agent trait	(Anne invited Mike to dinner) b/c she is friendly
217	Agent stable prop. state	(She pushes people away) b/c she doesn't want to look vulnerable
218	Agent category memb.	(I hurt my sister) b/c I was an adolescent boy
220	Situation	(Anne invited Sue to have lunch with her) b/c it was sunny
231	Agent+Situation	(Ben greeted his aunt emphatically) b/c he was having a great day
241	OthPers behavior	(Anne went to the party after all) b/c Mike had pressured her a bit

242[1]	OthPers internal state	
245	OthPers trait	(Anne didn't say hello to him) b/c he is the kind of person nobody likes
247	OthPers stable prop. state	
248	OthPers categ. memb.	(I was going out with a guy at South) <u>cause</u> Jennie was at South
251	Agent+OthPers	(Anne invited Sue to lunch) just because they always hang out together
256	Agent passive	(Anne was very polite to the guests) b/c she was taught to
260	Sit+OthPers	(Her parents visited her) b/c she was away at school
271	Agent+Sit+OthPers	(Why did you stay up so late?) Our whole dorm was having a "screw-your-roommate"

Special Coding Cases and Conventions

The explanation "...because she was hungry" is ambiguous. If it is used to explain, say, Anne's inviting Ben for lunch, then it is merely a causal history [212] of whatever reason Anne had to invite Ben for lunch. The hunger typically fails to explain why she asked the person out for lunch. In contrast, the same explanation "...because she was hungry" may be used to explain why Anne stole a pound of peaches. In that case, the statement probably refers to a desire to reduce her hunger [411]. This desire can be considered a reason Anne had for acting that way.

"Nothing (better) to do" can be a reason [432] if the agent took that fact into account when deciding to act (e.g., He took a train to Philly because there was nothing to do in their little town"); more often, however, it is a CHR [231], as in "They vandalized the gym because they had nothing better to do."

Raw emotions ("He was scared" or "She was angry") are coded as 212 when they triggered whatever reason the agent had for acting. If the emotions are formulated as propositional states, however, they are typically reasons ("He was scared she would hurt him" [342] or "She was angry at him" [343]).

Unconscious desires, beliefs, or tryings are coded as 214 or 217.

To like or love someone is often a 217, unless the agent likely considered that fact when deciding to act.

"He couldn't control himself" (when explaining an intentional action such as eating up all the chocolate) is coded as a 212.

"I was lazy, irrepsonisble, selfish, greedy" are all motivational states (214) that are less than conscious and certainly not rational grounds for acting. They can be 215's if the context allows the inference that the person is assumed to be lazy, greedy, etc. in general.

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[1] We are currently unable to list examples for the causal history codes 242, 243, and 244. Even though these explanations exist theoretically, they are extremely rare because internal states, perceptions, and beliefs/desires of another person rarely cause an agent's reasons directly; rather, the agent realizes the presence of these factors, so they become reasons rather than causal histories.

Enabling Factor Explanations [6]

Rule:

Enabling factor explanations cite factors that clarify *how it was possible* that an agent completed an intended action. Enabling factor explanations take it for granted that the agent had an intention to act as well as reasons to form that intention. They do not explain why the intention and reasons came about (as reason explanations or CHRs do) but rather cite factors that enabled the agent to turn the intention into a successful action. For example, if asked "How come Phoebe got all her work done?", one might say, "Because she had a lot of coffee." Phoebe's act of drinking coffee does not explain why she was trying to get her work done. Rather, given that she was trying to get it done, the coffee enabled her to succeed.

Further Comments

- This mode of explanation does not really answer "Why?" questions, as all the other modes do, but rather "How was this possible?" questions. For example, "Jarron finished the assignment because he worked all night." That he worked all night is not his reason for finishing, nor did it bring about his reason for finishing; rather, it explains how it was possible that he finished his assignment (given that he intended to do so).
- Enabling factors include the agent's skill, opportunities, and other facilitating forces.
- Enabling factor explanations only explain the action's occurrence — they cannot be used to explain why the agent formed the intention in the first place. (This is what reason explanations do.)

Codes:

Enabling factors (6**) have the same codes in their second and third digit as do cause explanations (1**) and causal history of reason explanations (2**).

Examples (incomplete because this explanation is rare and certain cause types are unlikely to be enabling factors)

611	Agent: Behavior	(Mary bought a new car) b/c she borrowed money
612	Agent: Internal state	(Bob finished the assignment) because he had energy
613	Agent: Perception, attention	(Anne figured out the answer) because she paid attention
614	Agent: Propos. State	(Jack finished his homework) b/c he knew the material
615	Agent: Trait	(Bob finished a difficult class assignment) b/c he is smart
617	Agent: Stable propos. state	(She made it through the crisis) b/c she believes things will always turn out for the best
618	Agent: Role, membership	(She finished the paper) because she is a senior
620	Situation	(Bob finished the assignment) b/c it was not difficult
631	Agent+Situation interaction	(She won the game) because things went her way
641	OtherPerson: Behavior	(Mary bought a new car) b/c her brother gave her money
651	Agent+OtherPerson interaction	(Jack wrote a great paper) b/c he talked with the teacher
656	Agent passive	(Mary, who is poor, bought a new car) b/c she was given a loan

Coding Explanations into the Four Modes

Does the explainer see the behavior
as intentional?

NO

YES

**CAUSE
EXPLANATION**

Does the explanation
only explain the action,
or does it also explain the intention?

ONLY ACTION
(How possible?)

ALSO INTENTION

**ENABLING FACTOR
EXPLANATION**

Was the agent having the content
of the explanation on his or her mind
when she formed the intention?

NO

YES

**CAUSAL HISTORY
EXPLANATION**

**REASON
EXPLANATION**