Causative and associative morphology in Takivatan Bunun

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Introduction

• Bunun, Austronesian, Taiwan
• One of the 14 officially recognised Austronesian languages of Taiwan
• Approximately 50,000 ethnic members
• Transfer to youngest generations has completely halted
* Proto-Bunun → Northern Bunun
  - Takituduh
  - Takibaka

  Central Bunun
  - Takbanuaz
  - Takivatan

  Southern Bunun → Isbukun
Introduction

Takivatan

• Less than 1700 speakers
• Counties Nantou and Hualien
Typological profile

• Agglutinative, very productive verbal morphology

• VAO

\[
\begin{align*}
V & \quad (AG) & \quad (BEN/INSTR) & \quad (PAT) & \quad (LO) \\
AUX & \quad (AG) & \quad V & \quad (BEN/INSTR) & \quad (PAT) & \quad (LO)
\end{align*}
\]

• Austronesian focus system:
  – AF: -Ø e.g. siða ‘somebody takes (sth)’
  – UF: -un e.g. siða-un ‘(sb) take something’
  – LF: -an e.g. siða-an ‘take (sth) somewhere’
Typological profile

• Ellipsis of constituents, words and morphemes is common
• Two main word classes: nouns and verbs
• All other word classes can largely be defined in terms of their noun- and verb-like characteristics
• No adverbs
Causative/associative morphology

• A subset of verbal prefixes has two or three variants:
  – Neutral variant: typically \( m \)-
  – Causative variant: initial \( p \)-
  – Associative variant: \( k \)-
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Causative</th>
<th>Associative</th>
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<td>Dynamic (DYN)</td>
<td>ma-</td>
<td>pa-</td>
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<td>Stative (STAT)</td>
<td>ma- / mi-</td>
<td>pi-</td>
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<td>min-</td>
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<td><strong>PARTICIPANT ORIENTATION</strong></td>
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Causative/associative morphology

• Neutral:

(1) ma-suað maduq
    DYN-grow  millet

‘[They] grew millet’ (TVN-012-002:7)
Causative/associative morphology

- Causative:

\[(2) \quad \text{pi-sihal-un} \quad \text{pa-luŋku} \]
\[
\text{CAUS.STAT-good-UF} \quad \text{CAUS.DYN}-\text{sit}
\]

‘You have to be good to him and give him a seat’
(lit: ‘[He] has to be good-ed and made to sit down’
(adapted from TVN-013-001:15)
Causative/associative morphology

• Associative:

(3) **ka-lumaq** naipa
**ASSOC.DYN**-home **DEM.S.DIST.NVIS**

‘He went home’ [lit: ‘That one went home to be together with his family’]
(adapted from TVN-012-001:119)
Causative/associative morphology

• Semantics:
  – Neutral
  – **Causative**: some sort of external causation is implied
  – **Associative**: the agent is not the only agentive force performing the event
CAUTION

UNCONVENTIONAL MORPHOLOGY.
MAY DISTURB YOUR PERFECTLY REGULAR ANALYSIS AND PEACE OF MIND
What is a causative?

• Comrie (1976: 261):
  “In general, a given causative verb will be expected to have one more noun phrase argument than the corresponding noncausative verb, since in addition to the subject and objects, if any, of that verb, there will be a noun phrase expressing the person or thing that causes, brings about that action.”
What is a causative?

• Comrie (1976: 264):
  “Where the restrictions on doubling require that some constituent be removed, it is always the embedded subject that is so removed, either by being omitted or by being demoted down the hierarchy.”
Causative or not?

• Causative prefixes almost never trigger explicit expression of the causer:

(4) \{\textbf{pu}-saupa-ta\} \quad [\text{muʔu}]
\textbf{CAUS.ALL}-direction-DEF.REF.DIST 2P.N

‘They sent you to that place’ [lit: ‘(sb) made you go in the direction (of that place)’] (TVN-012-002:48)
Causative or not?

(5) \{na-siða-un\}   \[ðaku\]   \[qaimaŋsuð-ti\]
IRR-take-UN   1S.N   thing-DEF.REF.PROX

\{pun-han-Ø\}   \[daða   paŋka\]
CAUS.ALL-go.to-AF   top   table

‘I want to take this thing and put it on the table.’

(TVN-xx2-003:11)
Causative or not?

- Although it is grammatically possible when UF -un or LF -an are present:

(6) {ma-su} [qaimaŋsuð-ti-a] {m-<in>-uma-ka}
DYN-2S.N thing-DEF.REF.PROX-LIG STAT-PST-broken-DEF.SIT.DIST
na {pun-han-un} [ðaku] [aipi]
thus CAUS.ALL-go-UF 1S.N DEM.PROX

[Kuhku-ta] {pa-tasʔi-un}
GeoName-DEF.REF.PROX CAUS.DYN-make-UF

‘Your thing is broken, so I will take it to Rui-Sui to have it fixed.’
(TVN-xx2-004)
Causative or not?

• With stative verbs (neutral ma-/mi-, causative pi-), causatives readily introduce a causer/agent:

(6) Ma [su ðiŋki-i-a] {m-<in>uma}  
INTER 2S.N electric.light-PRT-LDIS STAT-PST-broken  
a na {pin-sihal-uk}  
INTER thus CAUS.BECOME-good-1S.NFA  
‘Your electric light, it is broken, I will repair it’ (TVN-xx2-004:14)
Causative or not?

- It is not clear whether causative prefixes demote the original agent:

(7) \{na-kilim-un\} [ʔata] [Bunun] \{pa-ludaq\} [Bantalaŋ]
IRR-look.for-UF 1I.F people \textbf{CAUS.DYN}-beat Amis

‘Some people take us with them to beat up these Amis.’
(TVN-xx2-004:33)

\[\uparrow\]

\{\textbf{ma}-ludaq\} [ʔata] [Bantalaŋ]
\textbf{CAUS.DYN}-beat 1I.F Amis
Causative or not?

- Causative prefixes do have causative semantics:

  cf. (7):
  
  *ma*-ludaq ‘to beat’
  *pa*-ludaq ‘ask to beat up’
Are Bunun causatives causative?

• Introduction of causer is often blocked
• Often no clear syntactic demotion of original agent

But:
• Causative semantics
• External causative force is always implied
Tradition vs. observation

- **Methodological problem:**
  If causatives are special, why aren’t associatives?

- **Pro:**
  - If one member of a syntactically or functionally relevant alternation is grammatically privileged, all members should be.
  - Giving special importance to ‘causative’ and ‘applicative’ morphology is a traditional bias and not based on observational evidence
Tradition vs. observation

• Contra:
  – Whimsical functional-semantic distribution
  – Corpus frequency:
    e.g. ma- > pa- > ka-
    mu- > pu- > ku-
Complex agency

• Event flow and agency
  (Langacker 1991 / Evans & Green 2006)

(a) \[ \text{Ag} \rightarrow \text{Pat} \]
(b) \[ \text{Ag} \rightarrow \text{Instr} \rightarrow \text{Pat} \]
(c) \[ \text{Instr} \rightarrow \text{Pat} \]
Complex agency

(a) Floyd broke the glass
(b) Floyd broke the glass with a hammer
(c) The hammer broke the glass

(a) \[ \text{Ag} \rightarrow \text{Pat} \]
(b) \[ \text{Ag} \rightarrow \text{Instr} \rightarrow \text{Pat} \]
(c) \[ \text{Instr} \rightarrow \text{Pat} \]
Complex agency

• Functional notion of control:
  Is the event controlled by the agent or are there additional participants that influence the event flow?

• Complex agency = agency + control
Complex agency

- Different types of control:
  - **Neutral (m-)**: internal control
    agent = controller
  - **Causative (p-)**: external control
    causer = controller
  - **Associative (k-)**: joint control
    multiple controllers
Complex agency

Neutral

Causative

Associative
Conclusions

• Causatives are not always causatives
• Causatives are not necessarily special
• The duality of agency: complex agency = agency + control
• Future research:
  – Gather corpus-wide quantitative data
  – Compare to other (Austronesian) languages

De Busser, Rik. 2009. *Towards a Grammar of Takivatan: Selected Topics*. PhD dissertation at the Research Centre for Linguistic Typology, La Trobe University, Melbourne, Australia.


Uninanya miqumisanam!