

Causatives in Mehweb

Ekaterina Ageeva (yekaterina.ageeva@gmail.com)
Higher School of Economics, Moscow

A word on causatives

Causative situation is a combination of two micro-situations: cause and effect [1]. The meaning of causative is ‘to cause V_o ’, ‘make V_o ’, where V_o is the base verb [2].

Formal types of causatives include:

- analytical – a separate word;
- morphological;
- lexical – suppletive forms.

Semantic differences in causative situations include:

- deliberate vs. accidental causation;
- causee-controlled vs. causer-controlled causation.

[1] Comrie, Bernard. Language universals and linguistic typology: Syntax and morphology. University of Chicago press, 1989.

[2] Haspelmath, Martin, ed. Language typology and language universals: an international handbook. Vol. 2. Walter de Gruyter, 2001

Material and methods

Focus: causative morphology. Causative constructions with *ib* ‘say’, ‘tell to’ were attested, but not studied.

Material: single and double causative forms derived from 150 simple verbs, with usage examples.

I gathered the material in Mehweb during the 2014 expedition from 8 native speakers. Some parts of the list were filled by two or more speakers for cross-checking.

Using a sample causative situation, I asked the speakers to produce a similar situation with a given verb. In case of hesitation, I produced the form and checked whether it it was grammatical.

Semantics

General meaning: introduce the situation of causation and an additional agent. Causative forms of verbs *balhes* ‘know’ and *qumartes* ‘forget’ have an additional meaning of greater participant control:

- (5a) *ʔali-ze* *q'urʔan'* *b-alh-an*
ali-INTER(LAT) koran(ABS) N-know:IPFV
‘Ali knows Koran’.
- (5b) *ʔali-ni* *q'urʔan'* *b-alh-aq-uwe* *le-b*
ali-ERG koran(ABS) N-know:IPFV-CAUS-CONV be-N
‘Ali is learning Koran’.

Double causatives express the situation with three participants for both intransitive (a) and transitive (b) verbs:

- (6a) *pat'imat.i-ni* *ʔali-ze* *diʔ* *b-arʔ-aq-aq-ib*
patimat.OBL-ERG ali-INTER(LAT) meat(ABS) N-freeze:PFV-CAUS-CAUS-AOR
‘Patimat made Ali freeze the meat’.
- (6b) *pat'imat.i-ni* *ʔali-ze* *k'apa* *b-at-aq-aq-ib* / *b-at-aq-ib*
patimat.OBL-ERG ali-INTER(LAT) hat(ABS) N-take.off:PFV-CAUS-CAUS-AOR
‘Patimat made Ali take off his hat’.

The Mehweb language

Classification: Dargwa, Northeast Caucasian

Location: Mehweb, Gunib district, Dagestan, Russia

Population: 1000 speakers

Greatly influenced by Avar due to geographical position and economic relations.



Morphology

Causatives are formed regularly by adding the suffix *-aq-* to the verb stem:

- (1) *b-ic-ib* *b-ic-aq-ib*
N-tear:PFV-AOR N-tear:PFV-CAUS-AOR

A number of one-syllable verbs stems (*g^wes* ‘see’, *ges* ‘give’, *χes* ‘bring’, *kes* ‘lead here’) use an allomorph of the causative suffix *-aχaq-*:

- (2) *g-ib* *g-aχaq-ib* **g-aq-ib*
give:PF-AOR give:PF-CAUS-AOR

Several verbs express causative meanings without changing their form (labile verbs):

- (3a) *qali* *big-ub*
house(ABS) burn:PFV-AOR
‘The house burned down’.
- (3b) *pat'imat.i-ni* *qali* *big-ub*
patimat.OBL-ERG house(ABS) burn:PFV-AOR
‘Patimat burned down the house’.

Case marking

Transitive verbs: the causee changes marking from ergative to interlative case. For intransitive verbs, the causee remains in absolutive case.

- (4a) *ʔali-ni* *κarκa* *b-alc'-un*
ali-ERG stone(ABS) N-pick.up:PFV-AOR
‘Ali picked up a stone’.
- (4b) *pat'imat.i-ni* *ʔali-ze* / **ʔali-ni* *κarκa* *b-alc'-aq-ib*
patimat.OBL-ERG ali-INTER(LAT) stone(ABS) N-pick.up:PFV-CAUS-AOR
‘Patimat made Ali pick up a stone’.