Morphological Causative in Kaytag Dargwa and the (Im)possibility of Causative Recursion

Ivan Kalyakin

Institute of Linguistics, RAS / Russian State University for the Humanities
kalyakin.iv@gmail.com

Introduction. Causative is traditionally considered to denote a complex event, consisting of two sub-events: 'causing' (the event that causes another event to happen) and 'caused' (the result of that causation). These two events may have independent syntactic representation or they may be somehow 'fused' together.

There has been a long debate on whether causative can in principle be recursive. Most prominently, (Key 2013) claims that apparent double causatives do not in fact involve the syntactic recursion of causing events. Rather, they merely involve morphological reduplication of the causative morpheme. See also (Svenonius 2005) who showed that there seems to be a strong crosslinguistic prohibition against multiple productive morphological causatives.

The opposite position is (sometimes implicitly) held by the majority of linguists (Miyagawa 1998; Harley 2008 a.m.o) and is recently defended in (Nie 2022), where it is suggested that only those causatives which involve stacking of both Voice and *v* heads allow recursion; on the other hand, if causative involves only adding of the Voice head (Nie 2020), recursion should be impossible.

In this talk, I discuss the morphological causative in Kaytag Dargwa (< Nakh-Daghestanian) and show that (i) it is Voice-selecting in the terminology of (Pylkkänen 2008); (ii) it involves a syntactically represented causing event, and (iii) it is not recursive.

Structure. Amongst productive causative constructions, (Pylkkänen 2008) distinguishes verb-selecting causatives from phase-selecting (or Voice-selecting) causatives. These two types are distinguished mainly with respect to properties of the causee, particularly whether it patterns like a subject (in which case we have a Voice-selecting causative) or not (in which case we have a verb-selecting causative).

One of the most popular tests for the subjecthood of the causee in causative constructions is agent-oriented modification. Subjects can be associated with such adverbial expressions as 'on purpose', 'grumpily' and so on. In Kaytag Dargwa, as exemplified in (1), causee can be the target of agent-oriented modifier *barhu-barhul* 'on purpose'.

(1) mutaj-li   musa-c:i   barhu-barhul   mat:rat   b-elq'-uχ-un
     PN-ERG   PN-INTER   on.purpose   plate.ABS   N-break.PFV-CAUS-AOR
     i. 'Mutai on purpose made Musa break the plate.'
     ii. 'Mutai made Musa break the plate on purpose.'

Reflexive-binding possibilities can also be employed to establish the subjecthood of causees in productive causative constructions. In both (2a) and (2b) the only available binder for the complex reflexive pronoun is the causee. Importantly, in (2b) the causee can bind the pronoun even though there is an apparent case mismatch between the inter-lative causee and the ergative marked first component of the complex reflexive.

(2) a. pat'ima-l$_i$ tuχtur-c:i$_j$ [cine-c:i   ca]$_{j / *i}$ ʔaˤħ   w-ar-iχ-iw
        PN-ERG   doctor-INTER   REFL.OBL-INTER   REFL.ABS   good   M-LV.PFV-CAUS-AOR
        'Patimat made the doctor cure herself.'

b. pat'ima-l$_i$ tuχtur-c:i$_j$ [cin-ni   ca]$_{j / *i}$ ʔaˤħ   w-ar-iχ-iw
   PN-ERG   doctor-INTER   REFL-ERG   REFL.ABS   good   M-LV.PFV-CAUS-AOR
   'Patimat made the doctor cure herself.'

The example (3) illustrates that there are two syntactically represented events and, thus, morphological causative is not mono-eventive. In other words, it does not involve simple stacking of the Voice head.

(3)   rasul-li   ižel   mutal   duc'   Ø-ič'-uχ-u-l=di
       PN-ERG   today   PN.ABS   run   M-LV.IPFV-CAUS-PROG-CVB=PST
       i. 'Today Rasul made Mutal run.'
       ii. 'Rasul made Mutal run today.'

Given these facts (some others will be presented in the talk), I suggest the following structure for Kaytag Dargwa productive causative:

(4)   [$_{VoiceP}$ CAUSER [$_{VoiceP}$ [$_{CausP}$ [$_{VoiceP}$ CAUSEE [[$_{vP}$ …] Voice]] Caus] Voice]]

Recursion. Kaytag Dargwa, unlike some other Daghestanian languages (Kulikov 1993 for Tsez; Sibilev 2023 for Khwarshi Proper), prohibits double causatives, as (5a) shows for the unergative predicate 'run'. However, as we can see in the example (5b), a sentence with multiple causees is grammatical when only one causative suffix is present.

(5) a. *učiteľ^j-li   rasul-c:i   musa   duc'   Ø-ič'-uχ-uχ-u-l   ca
       teacher-ERG   PN-INTER   PN.ABS   run   M-LV.IPFV-CAUS-CAUS-PROG-CVB   COP
       'Teacher asks Rasul to make Musa run.'

    b. učiteľ^j-li   rasul-c:i   musa   duc'   Ø-ič'-uχ-u-l   ca
       teacher-ERG   PN-INTER   PN.ABS   run   M-LV.IPFV-CAUS-PROG-CVB   COP
       'Teacher asks Rasul to make Musa run.'

Elimination of causative recursion has usually been stipulated away by some specific morphological constraint, for example a process of morphological haplology (Kuroda 1993). However, this solution seems to be implausible, since the intermediate causee does not demonstrate any of the subject properties, that is it is not introduced in [Spec, VoiceP], see (6).

(6)   ʔaˤli-l   musa-c:i   barhu-barhul   rasul-c:i   kiniga   b-elč'-uχ-un
       PN-ERG   PN-INTER   on.purpose   PN-INTER   book.ABS   N-read.PFV-CAUS-AOR
       'Ali asked Musa to make Rasul read the book on purpose.'
       i.   on purpose CAUS > CAUS > V
       ii. #CAUS > on purpose CAUS > V
       iii. CAUS > CAUS > on purpose V

In 'no causative recursion' camp, in order to account for the availability of multiple causees, it is suggested that "the semantics of indirect causation allow for an indefinite number of causal links"; however, these links crucially "are not syntactically represented" (Key 2013: 225). That is, intermediate causees might be associated with intermediate causing events in the semantics, but not in the syntax.

Consequences. Kaytag Dargwa data may pose a challenge for (Nie 2022), according to which recursion should be allowed if the causative involves adding a new v head, responsible for the introduction of a separate thematic domain. On the other hand, there seems to be strong support for an approach as in (Key 2013), which completely prohibits causative recursion and postulates some fixed universal functional hierarchy.

Abbreviations: ABS – absolutive; AOR – aorist; CAUS – causative; COP – copula; CVB – converb; ERG – ergative; INTER – inter-lative; IPFV – imperfective; LV – light verb; M – masculine gender; N – neuter gender; OBL – oblique; PFV – perfective; PN – proper name; PROG – progressive; PST – past; REFL – reflexive

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