Causativization in Meiteilon

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A causative construction denotes (expresses) a situation in which two events are involved, a preceding causing event and a subsequent caused event, such that if there had been no causing event, the caused event could not have followed (Shibatani 1976). This situation, called a "macrosituation," is thus comprised of two microsituations, a causing microsituation or antecedent, and a caused microsituation or consequent (Nedjalkov and Silinckij 1969). If there is no antecedent, there can be no consequent.

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Your silence} & \quad \text{caused} & \quad \text{him to be angry} \\
\text{Antecedent} & \quad \longrightarrow & \quad \text{Consequent}
\end{align*}
\]

Macrosituation

The causing microsituation is "your silence," as a consequence of which "he was angry." It can be asserted that had you not been silent he would not have been angry.

Causative forms are of two types: morphologically regular and productive forms, and non-productive forms which are morphologically irregular. Productive causative constructions involve either the use of auxiliary causative verbs or the use of affixes. Languages of the isolating type have a tendency to use auxiliary causative verbs, while agglutinative languages tend to use affixes.

Meiteilon is an agglutinative language, and has both productive and non-productive types of causatives.

**Lexical causatives.**

Meiteilon has some suppletive pairs of simplex/causative verbs, e.g., si- 'die' and hat- 'kill':

\[ ucek \quad oma \quad si-re \]
\[ bird \quad one \quad die-PERF ASP \]

A bird has died.
Although the two roots si- 'die' and hat- 'kill' have no phonological similarity, they can be easily related by means of the Generative Semantic approach\(^1\): the causation is not overtly marked in the surface structure, but it is there at the abstract semantic level. The verb hat- 'kill' contains in its underlying semantic structure the verb si- 'die'. Hence the semantic interpretation for hat- can be stated as CAUSE DIE, even though the verb si- never actually appears in the surface structure of the sentence. Thus, a sentence like məhak-ⁿə kəy əma hat-li "He kills a tiger", in which the element of CAUSE is not present in the surface structure, can still be viewed in terms of a causing event and a caused event. It thus makes no sense to say:

\[ ^* \text{məhak-ⁿə kəy əma hat-li əubu kəy -du si-de} \]
\[ ^* \text{he- NOM tiger one kill-ASP but tiger that die-NEG} \]
\[ ^* \text{He killed a tiger, but that tiger didn't die.} \]

In fact, both lexical and productive causatives share semantic properties. This can be accounted for in a unified way if some common predicate is posited for both of them at the abstract level.

The underlying semantic representation for məhak-ⁿə kəy əma hat-li "He kills a tiger" is shown in Figure 1.

By means of predicate raising we now have the semantic predicate (CAUSE hiŋbo oi-de-bo) - CAUSE si-bo [DIE]; the lexical item hat-po 'kill' can then be inserted to arrive at the surface structure.

**Morphological Causatives.**

Meittellon has a uniform strategy for forming causatives from all kinds of non-causative verbs. All verbs (intransitive and transitive) form their corresponding morphological causatives by adding the causative particle /-hən/-/həl/ directly:

\[
\text{Stage I:} \quad \text{Root}^2 + \text{causative marker} = \text{Stem} \\
\quad \text{cət} + \text{hən} = \text{cət-hən-}
\]

\(^1\) See McCawley 1968.
\(^2\) All verbal roots in Meittellon are bound; after the suffixation of appropriate markers they become particular free forms.
Figure 1
Stage II: Suffixation of aspect markers.

Aspectual markers can then be added to the causative stem:

\[
\text{Root} + \text{Causative particle} + \text{Aspect marker} \rightarrow \text{Morphological CAUSATIVE}
\]

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{ca} + \text{hən} + \text{li} &= \text{ca-hən-li} \quad \text{[cause to go]} \\
\text{ca} + \text{hən} + \text{li} &= \text{ca-hən-li} \quad \text{[cause to eat]} \\
\text{thək} + \text{hən} + \text{li} &= \text{thək-hən-li} \quad \text{[cause to drink]} \\
\text{pa} + \text{hən} + \text{li} &= \text{pa-hən-li} \quad \text{[cause to read]} \\
\text{pi} + \text{hən} + \text{li} &= \text{pi-hən-li} \quad \text{[cause to give]}
\end{align*}
\]