# Causativization in Meiteilon

Chungkham Yashawanta Singh
Manipur University, Imphal

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 Silnickij 1969). If there is no antecedent, there can be no consequent.

Your silence	*caused*	*him to be angry*
Antecedent	----->	Consequent
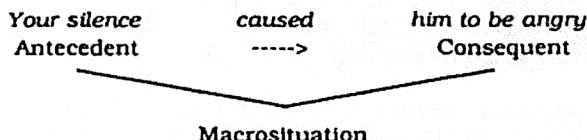
Macrosituation

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':

1a. ucek   əma   si-re
     bird   one   die-PERF ASP
     A bird has died.

1b.   əy-ne   ucek   əma   hat-le
      I + NOM   bird   one   kill-PERF ASP
      I have killed a bird.

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:

     *məhak-nə kəy əma hat-li əubu   kəy   -du si-de
     he-   NOM tiger one kill- ASP but   tiger that die-NEG
     *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 hiŋbə oi-də-bə) - CAUSE si-bə [DIE]; the lexical item hat-pə 'kill' can then be inserted to arrive at the surface structure.

Morphological Causatives.

Meiteilon 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:

Stage I: *Root*[2]   + *causative marker*   = *Stem*

                cət   + hən   = cət-hən-
                go

---

[1]   See McCawley 1968.
[2]   All verbal roots in Meiteilon are bound; after the suffixation of appropriate markers they become particular free forms.
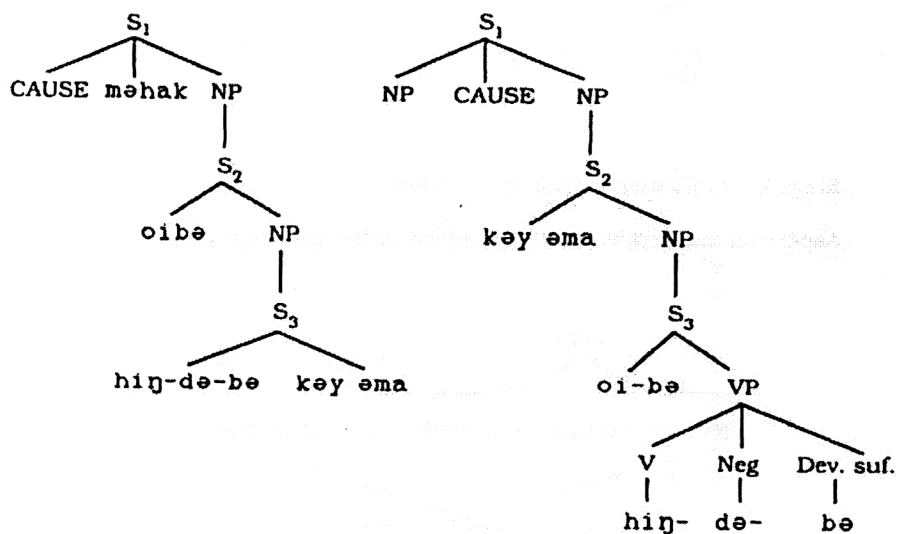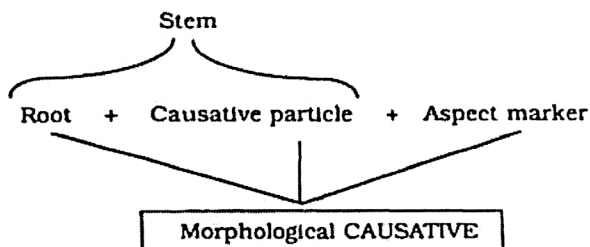
Figure 1

ca- eat	+ hən	= ca-hən-
thək drink	+ hən	= thək-hən-
pa read	+ hən	= pa-hən-
pi give	+ hən	= pi-hən-

Stage II: *Suffixation of aspect markers.*

Aspectual markers can then be added to the causative stem:

Stem

Root + Causative particle + Aspect marker

Morphological CAUSATIVE

cət	+ hən	+ li	= cət-həl-li	[cause to go]
ca	+ hən	+ li	= ca-həl-li	[cause to eat]
thək	+ hən	+ li	= thək-hən-li	[cause to drink]
pa	+ hən	+ li	= pa-hən-li	[cause to read]
pi	+ hən	+ li	= pi-hən-li	[cause to give]