

THE EMERGENCE OF ‘GIVE’ PASSIVES IN EAST AND SOUTHEAST ASIAN LANGUAGES

Foong Ha Yap

Chinese University of Hong Kong

<foong_ha_yap@cuhk.edu.hk>

Shoichi Iwasaki

University of California, Los Angeles

<iwasaki@humnet.ucla.edu>

0 Introduction

It has been noted that in some languages the same morpheme is used to express both causative and passive meaning. Several linguists have suggested that passive constructions can arise from causative constructions via the permissive and reflexive context (e.g. Keenan 1985; Haspelmath 1990; Knott 1995). Among the languages known to reflect this causative-passive link via the reflexive are Korean (Keenan 1985:262) and Manchu-Tungusic (Knott 1995:57-58). In this paper, we will examine this phenomenon in a number of East and Southeast Asian languages, including a number of Chinese dialects, some Tai and Austroasiatic languages, and colloquial Malay. In particular, we will focus on the causative-passive link involving the morpheme ‘give’.

1 Background

We begin with a brief review of the arguments posed for the causative > passive development via the permissive and reflexive contexts in two groups of languages: one that does not involve the ‘give’ morpheme, and one that does.

Korean shows this causative-passive development with the suffix *-I-*, which is realized as *-ki-* in (1) below. The etymology of this suffix is not known.

(1) Korean (Keenan 1985:262¹)

- a. *Nuna-ka* *emeni-eke* *ai-lil* *an-ki-ess-ta*
sister-NOM mother-DAT child-ACC embrace-CAUS-PAST-IND
‘Sister had Mother embrace the child.’
- b. *Ai-ka* *emeni-eke* *caki* *mom-lil* *an-ki-ess-ta*
child-NOM mother-DAT self body-ACC embrace-CAUS-PAST-IND
‘The child had Mother embrace him.’
- c. *Ai-ka* *emeni-eke* *an-ki-ess-ta*
child-NOM mother-DAT embrace-PASS-PAST-IND
‘The child was embraced by Mother.’

¹ We have slightly modified the glosses for the sake of consistency throughout the paper. Specifically, we have chosen the case markers NOM, DAT and ACC in place of Keenan’s SUBJ, IO and DO, and we use the term IND(icative) in place of DECLAR(ative).

Mark Alves, Paul Sidwell & David Gil, eds. *SEALSVIII: papers from the 8th meeting of the Southeast Asian Linguistics Society* (1998). Canberra, Pacific Linguistics, 2007, pp.193-208.

© Foong Ha Yap & Shoichi Iwasaki

Note that both (1a) and (1b) are causative. The latter, of course, is also reflexive (hence, the term “reflexive-causative”). (1c) has passive meaning. Keenan (1985) suggests that the causative suffix *-ki-* in (1a) can come to be associated with the passive meaning in (1c) through the deletion of the reflexive direct object in (1b), and through “the reinterpretation of the subject *child* as an Experiencer rather than an Agent” (p. 262). Keenan further points out that this causative-passive development is possible because of the availability of a permissive or non-interventive ‘let’-type interpretation for the *-ki-* suffix. We summarize this causative-passive development as follows:

causative > reflexive permissive causative > passive

The Manchu-Tungusic languages provide evidence of a similar development involving the suffix *-bu-* (for Manchu) or *-v(u)-* (for the Tungusic languages), which is claimed to be etymologically derived from a verb meaning ‘give’ (e.g. Gabelentz 1861:518, cited in Haspelmath 1990:48 and I. Nedjalkov 1993:194; I. Nedjalkov 1978:73 and Sunik 1962:130, both cited in Knott 1995:58).

The causative and passive uses of the *-bu-* suffix in Manchu are illustrated in (2a) and (2b) respectively. Note that a causative interpretation emerges when the subject is construed as agentive, and a passive interpretation emerges when the subject is construed as an affected patient.

(2) Manchu (I. Nedjalkov 1993:194)

a. *i* *bata-be* *va-bu-ha*
he-NOM enemy-ACC kill-CAUS-PAST
‘He made (somebody) kill the enemy.’

b. *i* (*bata-de*) *va-bu-ha*
he-NOM (enemy-DAT) kill-PASS-PAST
‘He is/was killed (by the enemy).’

Zaxarov (1879, cited in Knott 1995:57) reports that in classical Manchu the suffix *-bu-* was also used to convey permissive meaning. As discussed in V. Nedjalkov (1964:301-310; 1971:165-171, cited in I. Nedjalkov 1993:193-194), this allows us to posit a causative > reflexive causative > passive development, again via a permissive or non-interventive ‘let’-type causative, as follows:

- (i) *He caused/let somebody kill somebody else* (causative)
- (ii) *He let somebody kill him (by his own negligence)* (reflexive-causative)
- (iii) *He was killed* (passive)

In Evenki (Northern Tungusic), the cognate for *-bu-* is expressed as *-v-/p-/b-/mu-/vuv-/muv-/mup-* (these variants being phonologically conditioned) (I. Nedjalkov 1997:218). These suffixes can also be used to express causative and passive meanings, as illustrated in (3a) and (3b) respectively.

(3) Evenki (I. Nedjalkov 1993:195)

- a. *mit homoti-va eme-v-re-p*
 we-NOM bear-ACC come-CAUS-NONFUT-1PL
 'We brought the bear with us.'
- b. *mit homoti-du eme-v-re-p*
 we-NOM bear-DAT come-PASS-NONFUT-1PL
 lit. 'We are come by the bear.' =
 'We were affected by the bear's coming.'

I. Nedjalkov (1993) reports that whereas in Manchu the causative use of the suffix *-bu-* is more productive than the passive use, the reverse situation holds in Evenki, such that the passive use of the suffix *-v(u)* and its variants is more productive than the causative use. Indeed, the causative use of the suffix *-v-* and its phonological variants is found only in archaic and non-productive causatives (i.e. "fossilized" forms), with productive causatives being formed with the suffix *-vkAn/-mukAn/-pkAn*, as illustrated in (4) below.

(4) Evenki (I. Nedjalkov 1997:231)

- Nungan min-du sulaki-l-ve iche-vken-e-n*
 he-NOM I-DAT fox-PL-ACC see-CAUS-NONFUT-3SG
 'He showed me foxes.'

Knott (1995:57, citing Sunik 1962:130) points out that this productive causative suffix *-vkAn* consists of the suffix *-v-* and an element *-kAn*, which is etymologically derived from a verb meaning "say". It appears therefore that Evenki has recruited the newer causative suffix *-vkAn* because the older causative suffix *-v-* has lost much of its semantic specificity.²

Evidence that the causative suffix *-v-* has become semantically generalized (and thus highly grammaticized) can be seen in its great versatility, or multifunctionality. I. Nedjalkov (1997:233-235) reports that in Evenki the suffix *-v-* functions as a valence-extender in a variety of constructions, namely certain causatives, instrumentals and resultatives. In these contexts, use of the suffix *-v-* allows for the introduction of an additional argument in the form of an agent, instrument, or location. At the same time, I. Nedjalkov (1997:226-228) also reports the productive use of *-v-* as a valence-reducer, particularly as a passive marker, and with a restricted set of transitive verb stems as an anticausative marker as well. These different uses of the suffix *-v-* may represent instances of homophony, as pointed out in I. Nedjalkov (1997). At the same time, it is in fact possible and highly likely that they point to a diachronic development in which a lexical verb meaning 'give' has evolved multiple functions in the following direction:

² Li and Whaley (forthcoming) also report a similar conclusion, based on reconstructive analyses of *-w(u)* constructions in a cluster of Oroqen dialects, which also form part of the Manchu-Tungusic language family.

<u>Lexical source</u> >>	<u>Valence-extenders</u> >>	<u>Valence-reducers</u>
Verb meaning 'give'	causative suffix -v-	anticausative suffix -v-
(i.e. <i>bu</i>)	resultative + suffix -v-	passive suffix -v-
	etc.	etc.

Indeed, I. Nedjalkov (1978:73, cited in Knott 1995:58), has posited that the passive suffix -v- in Evenki developed from a verb meaning 'give' via the permissive-causative. This development is similar to the one proposed by Keenan (1985) discussed above. We reiterate this causative-passive development as follows:

causative > reflexive permissive-causative > passive

In support of this proposed diachronic development, Knott (1995) offers corroborating examples from two Tungusic languages that are closely related to Evenki. Citing Novikova (1968), Knott points out that in Even, "the cognate suffix can have either passive or permissive meaning; moreover, in its permissive function it specifically denotes 'unwilling permission' as a result of negligence, or inability to prevent the action" (1995:58; see also Malchukov 1993:378-383³). It is interesting to note that the passive uses of the suffix -v- in Even likewise tends to be associated with adversative contexts, usually denoting an action that is unfavorable to the subject (e.g. Malchukov 1993:378; 1995:14).

Furthermore, citing an example from I. Nedjalkov (1978:73), Knott also points out that in Solon, "the cognate suffix -u:- has the meaning 'let something happen to oneself', without being accompanied by any overt reflexive marker" (1995:58). The Solon example is illustrated in (5) below:

- (5) Solon (I. Nedjalkov 1978:73)
zaw-u:-sa
 catch-**PERMISSIVE**-RECENT PAST
 'He let himself be caught.'

It is easy to see how this type of construction comes to be chiefly associated with inadvertent contexts such as 'He inadvertently let himself be caught' and from thence to passive interpretations such as 'He was caught'. Crucial to this type of permissive-causative > passive development is an inherent reflexive meaning, regardless of whether overt co-referential marking is obligatory or optional. In the case of Solon, as shown in (5), reflexivity can be morphosyntactically realized via "zero anaphora" (i.e. omission of a

³ Malchukov (1993) briefly presents a causative > reflexive > passive analysis, among others, then goes on to advocate a functionally (i.e. semantically and pragmatically) motivated account for the observed correlations between factitive causatives, permissive causatives, and passives. (Included among the factitive causatives are the manipulative, coercive and directive type causatives.) Given that permissive-causatives in Even involve non-volitional subjects, Malchukov views both permissive causatives and passives as subsets of adversative constructions, with permissive causatives occupying one end of the continuum and prototypical passives the other. In our view, the diachronic account (i.e. the causative > reflexive > passive analysis) that is being highlighted in this paper is not incompatible with Malchukov's functional account.