Distributional properties of causative verbs in some Mon-Khmer languages

Mark J. ALVES
University of Hawaii

1. Introduction

Many, if not all, of the languages of the Mon-Khmer branch of Austroasiatic share a class of verbs that can be identified by two main properties: (1) a word-initial /pa/- presyllable (though there are numerous phonological variants, as discussed below) and (2) semantic properties indicating that another actor, other than the subject, is being caused to do something or be in some condition. Most previous studies of these verbs in individual Mon-Khmer languages, with a few exceptions discussed below, have focused primarily on these two characteristics with less focus on syntactic properties. Many studies provided little or no data to demonstrate how these causative verbs are used in sentences. It must be admitted that for a few Mon-Khmer languages, causative verbs are simply transitive verbs, and no more need be said. However, a survey of these Mon-Khmer subgroups suggests that more in the way of syntactic possibilities and constraints are involved in many understudied languages. The point of this paper is to demonstrate some syntactic subtypes and variation of causative verbs in Mon-Khmer languages.

The Mon-Khmer language group has as many as ten branches (Parkin 1991) and a total of several dozen languages. This study is based on about 20 Mon-Khmer languages coming from nine branches of Mon-Khmer. The studies of these languages vary significantly in terms of the depth of description, so in some cases, little can be said about causative verbs in certain languages. Members of the Summer Institute of Linguistics have provided some of the most in-depth studies of syntactic properties of verbs (Gradin 1970 on Jeh, Watson 1966 on Pacoh, Thomas 1969 on Chrau). Some publications in Vietnam from the late 1990s (especially Nguyễn Văn Lợi 1995 on Ruc, Hoàng Văn Ma and Та Văn Thông 1998 on Bru, and Nguyễn Hữu Hoành and Nguyễn Văn Lợi 1998 on Katu) have also included a significant amount of syntactic data.

This paper consists of five sections. After this introduction, the range of phonological forms of Mon-Khmer causative verbs is listed, with a brief discussion of the morphological derivational processes involved. After that section, the
syntactic concepts used in this study are summarized. Next, ten causative verb subtypes are described, with examples taken from representative languages. Finally, there are some concluding thoughts on the data.

2. Semantic and phonological properties

The causative verbs are naturally causative in their semantic function, and little more has been added to this matter in studies. However, as noted by Svanesson (1983:section 6.2), in Kammu/Khmu, these verbs can be semantically intentional, as opposed to biverbal forms (i.e., ‘do/make’ verbs plus another verb complement), which may be unintentional, focus on the result, and are not necessarily achieved. Table 2 contains examples of verbs and their causative counterparts in several Mon-Khmer languages.

The phonological forms are better documented. As mentioned, the word form considered most common to Mon-Khmer causative verbs is the /pa-presyllable, though in fact, there are many other allomorphs. The shape /pVn-/ may prove of note for historical studies, especially considering the hypothesis that this presyllable is derived from the abilitative/receptive verb */ban/ seen in some Mon-Khmer languages, such as Khmer (Haiman 1999). The allophonic variation seen in Table 2 is in part due to natural phonological reduction as well as interaction within other morphological material, such as the /-r-/ form seen in reciprocal verbs in such geographically diverse languages as Pacoh (Vietnam) and Palaung (Myanmar). Some of these presyllables have final nasals. The vowels in these presyllables tend to be minimally distinctive, central vowels, such as /ə/ or /i/, perhaps due to their position in unstressed syllables, as Mon-Khmer languages generally have syllable-final stress in bisyllabic words. The initial consonants are most often the labials /p/ and /b/, though /t/ and glottal stop are also seen. This variation highlights the irregularity seen in lexical derivation.

Table 1. Causative verbs in some Mon-Khmer languages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>MK Branch</th>
<th>Non-causative</th>
<th>Causative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pacoh</td>
<td>Katuic (East Central)</td>
<td>ca: ‘to eat’</td>
<td>pa.ca: ‘to cause to eat/to feed’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Khasi</td>
<td>Khassic (India)</td>
<td>ba:m ‘to eat’</td>
<td>pinba:m ‘to cause to eat/to feed’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>nep ‘to be straight’</td>
<td>pinnep ‘to straighten’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1The source of these prefixes have been considered related to the */pa-/ causative prefix in Austronesian languages. However, another recent hypothesis is that these forms, which are most often seen as /pVn-/, are related to the abilitative verb seen in many Mon-Khmer languages (e.g., Khmer /baan/ Pacoh /bo:n/) (Haiman 1999). An argument against that hypothesis is the presence of /pa-/ like causative prefixes in Munda (Schmidt 1906, Reid 1994).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Src</th>
<th>Bahnaric (Southeast)</th>
<th>saŋ ‘to be straight’</th>
<th>bəsaŋ ‘to straighten’</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Temiar</td>
<td>Aslian (Malaysia)</td>
<td>că/ ‘to eat’</td>
<td>bərcă/ ‘to cause to eat/to feed’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>səŋ ‘to be trapped’</td>
<td>tərsaŋ ‘to cause to be trapped/to trap’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ruc</td>
<td>Vietic (Northeast)</td>
<td>tông⁴ ‘to stand’</td>
<td>pətông⁴ ‘to cause to stand’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>lōon² ‘to enter’</td>
<td>pəlōon ‘to cause to enter/put in’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Khmer</td>
<td>Khmeric (Cambodia)</td>
<td>ṇut ‘to bathe oneself’</td>
<td>pʰọt ‘to bathe someone’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>caŋ ‘defeated’</td>
<td>pʰcaŋ ‘to defeat’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mlabri</td>
<td>Khmuic (North Central)</td>
<td>buŋ ‘to die’</td>
<td>pə.buŋ ‘to cause to die/kill’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>hot ‘to fall’</td>
<td>ba.hot ‘to let fall/throw down’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Palaung</td>
<td>Palaungic (Northwest)</td>
<td>yam ‘to die’</td>
<td>pyam ‘to kill’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>ēm ‘to be short’</td>
<td>pən-ēm ‘to shorten’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. Allophonic variation of Mon-Khmer verbs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(single consonants)</th>
<th>/p-/ , /pʰ-/</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(consonant clusters)</td>
<td>/pn-/ , /pr-/ , /ph-/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(presyllables)</td>
<td>/pa-/ , /pə-/ , /pVn-/ , /bVṇ-/ , /bVɾ-/ , /tə-/ , /tVn-/ , /tVɾ-/ , /ʔa-/</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Significant phonological variation is seen within languages as well as between them. Consider the four forms in Khmu (Svantesson 1983:198): (1) /p-/ . (2) /pn-. (3) /pr-. (4) /-m-. Moreover, the vowels in these presyllables may be /a/ , /ə/ , or /i/ .

In most cases, these verbs are derivationally related only to verbs, though in some languages, such as Katu, Khasi, and Khmu, some of the verbs are related to nouns as well. The non-causative verbs are mostly intransitive (something seen in all Mon-Khmer languages), though some are related to stative or transitive verbs. The overall tendency is to create transitive verbs regardless of the non-causative counterpart, but there are two other types seen. A locative non-causative form has a transitive and locative counterpart. If the base form is already transitive, a ditransitive verb results. Which non-causative verbs are related to causative extension verbs (verbs that take verb complements) is not predictable.
Table 3, which shows the ten subcategories identified in this study, indicates what complements each category takes. All verbs require at least a PAT complement. The three primary categories are extension verbs, which take verbs as complements; intransitive verbs, which take only PAT complements; and transitive verbs, which take AGT and PAT complements. The other three types are correspondent, locative, and mode verbs, which take COR, LOC, and MNS complements respectively. Reciprocal verbs require plural or multiple PAT complements. The verbs in this study require from one to three complements, with no more than two following verbs.

The PAT complement is the 'subject' of intransitive verbs, but the 'object' of transitive verbs. The PAT of transitive verbs are topologizable, differentiating them from COR complements, which are not. The AGT is the 'subject' of transitive verbs. Locative verbs commonly take locational nouns or locational relator nouns as LOC complements, or a locational preposition may help to mark a non-locational noun. The COR is similar to an indirect object of ditransitive verbs, though these complements may also occur as complements of other classes of verbs. A dative-like preposition is used in some Mon-Khmer languages to mark these COR noun complements. Mode verbs take MNS complements and semantically denote the means by which an action occurs. Extension verbs require predicates as complements, which are always verbs (as opposed to predicate nouns) as complements of Mon-Khmer causative verbs.

---

2 Following is a list of the common abbreviated syntactic features used in this article.

Parts of speech: N=noun, V=verb, P=preposition
Case relations: PAT=patient, AGT=agent, COR=correspondent, LOC=locative, MNS=means
Features: crsp=correspondent, cstv=causative, datv=dative, enct=enacting, lctv=locative, lctn=locational, rlx=reflexive, trns=transitive, xtms=extension

3 The PAT complement is the 'subject' of intransitive verbs, but the 'object' of transitive verbs.
Table 3. Causative Verbs Categories and Their Complements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CATEGORY</th>
<th>VERB</th>
<th>PAT</th>
<th>AGT</th>
<th>COR</th>
<th>LOC</th>
<th>MNS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Transitive</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Transitive Locative</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Transitive</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Correspondent</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Transitive Mode</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Intransitive</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Intransitive</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reciprocal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Intransitive</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Correspondent</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Intransitive</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Correspondent Locative</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Transitive Extension</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Intransitive</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Correspondent</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extension</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. Forms in Mon-Khmer languages

In the following sections, the ten categories of Mon-Khmer causative verbs are briefly described and supplemented with examples (containing formalized features) from representative languages. There is, of course, no way to test first hand all of these categories in all of those languages. In some cases, questions remain.

4.1 Transitive

Transitive causative verbs are seen in almost all Mon-Khmer languages, the apparent exception being Jeh, which instead uses the COR case relation to mark semantic objects (see section 4.7). Transitive verbs take AGT and PAT complements. This subtype consists of two semantically based subcategories: enacting (+enct) and affective/non-enacting (-enct) transitive verbs. The most

---

4 All sentence examples contain the original scripts used in the sources for these data.
5 The PAT of transitive verbs may show a corresponding topicalized form in sentence-initial position, a common property of Southeast Asian languages, as noted in Alves 2000 in regards to Pacoh.
6 Dorothy Thomas (1969:92) noted a similar distinction, calling the ‘benefactive’ form one of the order ‘direct object-indirect object’, and the ‘referent’ form one with the order ‘indirect-direct’.
common type is the enacting subcategory, in which the PAT is the semantic actor of a causative verb, as in examples 1, 2, and 3 (e.g., the dog is caused to sniff). Example 4 contains an affective verb, in which the PAT is semantically the recipient of the causative action (the knife is being caused to be played with).


1. ‘I made the dog sniff.’
ki: pa.het ?a.co:
1s make-sniff dog
N V N
AGT +cstv PAT
+trns
+enct

2. ‘We stand the child up.’
ánh tatao con-se
1s stand child
N V N
AGT +cstv PAT
+trns
+enct

(Khmu, Svantesson 1983:6.2) (Pacoh, S. Watson 1964:18)

3. ‘She made the horse kick.’
nàa phté? hmráŋ
she make-kick horse
N V N
AGT +cstv PAT
+trns
+enct

4. ‘Don’t you allow-play knife.’
don’t you allow-play knife
V N V N
+xtns AGT +cstv PAT
+trns
- enct

4.2 Transitive locative

Causative verbs in this category require AGT, PAT, and LOC complements. Four Mon-Khmer languages are found to have this category: the Vietic language Ruc, the Katuic languages Pacoh and Bru, and the Bahnaric language Chrau. All of these languages are spoken within Vietnam, though whether this is significant in terms of subgrouping or language contact cannot be stated. Languages having this category use locational prepositions (indicating direction and/or location) before the LOC complements, as in examples 5 and 6.

(Bru, Hoàng Văn Ma and Tạ Văn Thông 1998:146)

5. ‘He brought the firewood into the house.’
án amut üh tang dong
3s bring in firewood in house
N V N P N
AGT +cstv PAT +lctn LOC
+trns
+lctv
(Pacoh, Alves 2000:386)

6. ‘Bring the child up to the house.’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>?a.ʃər</th>
<th>?e.ʔeːm</th>
<th>to?</th>
<th>dʊŋ</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>cause-go-up</td>
<td>child</td>
<td>to</td>
<td>house</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+cstv</td>
<td>PAT</td>
<td>+lctn</td>
<td>-lctn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+trns</td>
<td>LOC</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+lctv</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.3 Transitive correspondent

Transitive correspondent causative verbs require three complements: AGT (subject), PAT (object), and COR (indirect object). The COR is marked either by the position of the noun or by prepositions. There are enacting (examples 7 and 8) and non-enacting/affective subcategories (example 9). It is a relatively common category as eight Mon-Khmer languages of various sub-branches showed it.


7. ‘I gave him some rice.’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ki:</th>
<th>pa.ca:</th>
<th>dɔː</th>
<th>dɔː:j</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1s</td>
<td>make-eat</td>
<td>3s</td>
<td>rice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>V</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AGT +cstv</td>
<td>COR PAT</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+trns</td>
<td>+crsp</td>
<td>+enct</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8. ‘I feed him rice.’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>aku</th>
<th>paca</th>
<th>adA</th>
<th>aviq</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1s</td>
<td>make eat</td>
<td>3s</td>
<td>rice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>V</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AGT +cstv</td>
<td>COR PAT</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+trns</td>
<td>+crsp</td>
<td>+enct</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Examples 7 and 8 show transitive correspondent verbs without prepositional phrases. However, this structure is rare, seen only in these two closely related Katuic languages, which are furthermore in contact with Vietnamese, a language in which this syntactic pattern is normal.

In most of the languages considered in this study, additional prepositions are used to mark the indirect object/the correspondent, as shown in example 9.

(Temiar, Benjamin 1972)

9. ‘I fed the vegetables to the baby.’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>?i-bɛɾcā/</th>
<th>bær</th>
<th>ma</th>
<th>papāt</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1s-make eat</td>
<td>vegetables</td>
<td>to</td>
<td>baby</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+cstv</td>
<td>PAT</td>
<td>+datv</td>
<td>COR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+trns</td>
<td>+crsp</td>
<td>-enct</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.4 Transitive mode

Transitive mode causative verbs require AGT, PAT, and MNS complements. Only the language Khuu/Kammu is found to have this category. An instrumental preposition is used to mark the MNS complement.

(Khuu, Svanesson 1983:6.2)

10. ‘Tek fed his (own) children with eggs.’

\[
têék \quad pîmâh \quad kôn \quad têe \quad jàa \quad k tôñ
\]

(name) make-eat child reflx with eggs

AGT +cstv PAT reflx +nstr MNS

+trns
+mode

4.5 Intransitive

This subcategory of causatives has been included primarily because it is mentioned as a category in some former studies. The problem with this subcategory is that it is not easily distinguishable from ‘pro-drop’ phenomena, the possibility that a complement is recoverable from the discourse context. Considering the semantic nature of causative verbs, it seems less likely that they would not take following complements. It is explicitly mentioned by Banker 1964 regarding Bahnar.

(Bahnar, J. Banker 1964:14)

11. ‘Set make-out-of-order.’

\[
Set \quad pohû\n\]

Name ruin

N V

PAT +cstv -trns

4.6 Intransitive reciprocal

Intransitive reciprocal causative verbs take plural or multiple PAT complements. Only a few languages have this subcategory: Pacoh and Khuu and possibly Khmer and Ruc. Some languages use additional words (probably adverbs) to indicate reciprocity, as in example 13.
(Pacoh, Nguyễn Văn Lợi, Nguyễn Văn Tài, Đoàn Văn Phúc, and Phan Xuân Thành 1986:75)

12. ‘We gathered together in the middle of the school.’

he:  por.cunj  to?  ?η.ki:m  triŋ
lp  gather-recip.  at  middle  school
Index  2ndex  3ndex  4ndex  5ndex
N  V  P  N  N
+prnn  +cstv  +lctv  +rltr  -unit
+plrl  -trns  LOC  +lctn  COR
PAT  +rcpr

(Bahnar, J. Banker 1964:16)

13. ‘Rok and Set are sad because of each other.’

Rôk  Set  pooh  dih-bål
Name  Name  sadden  recip.
N  N  V  Adv
PAT  PAT  +cstv  +rcpr
    -trns

4.7 Intransitive correspondent

Intransitive correspondent causative verbs require PAT and COR complements. In most cases, these verbs take dative prepositions to mark the non-dative COR noun complements, as in examples 14 and 15. Pacoh also uses a class of dative relator nouns to accomplish the same task. These are not transitive verbs since (1) the COR nouns directly follow prepositions rather than verbs and (2) they are not topicalizeable (i.e., moveable to sentence-initial position). The COR nouns are, still, the semantic recipients.

(Jeh, Gradin 1970:14-17)

14. ‘He wounded me’

čn  pĩ  pa-cháľ  lói  au
he  do  wound  for  I
N  V  V  P  N
PAT  +xtns  +cstv  +datv  COR
    -trns
    +crsp
(Bahnar, J. Banker 1964:1)

15. ‘Set put (it) out of order.’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>set</th>
<th>pohur</th>
<th>(hi)</th>
<th>kər</th>
<th>sur</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(name)</td>
<td>ruin</td>
<td>(part.)</td>
<td>to</td>
<td>3s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>V</td>
<td>Sprt</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PAT</td>
<td>+cstv</td>
<td></td>
<td>+datv</td>
<td>COR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-trns</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+crsp</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.8 Intransitive correspondent locative

Intransitive correspondent locative causative verbs require PAT, COR, and LOC complements. This category is found only in the Bahnaric language Jeh. In the single example 16, the COR and LOC complements are marked by dative and locational prepositions respectively.

(Jeh, Gradin 1970:16)

16. ‘He made my hand slap the child’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>⚕n</th>
<th>pī</th>
<th>pa-tap</th>
<th>dōh</th>
<th>ti</th>
<th>au</th>
<th>pa</th>
<th>sī’ nek</th>
<th>kon</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>he</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>cause-slap</td>
<td>for</td>
<td>hand</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>at</td>
<td>body</td>
<td>child</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>V</td>
<td>V</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PAT</td>
<td>+xtns</td>
<td>+cstv</td>
<td>+datv</td>
<td>COR</td>
<td>+lctn</td>
<td>LOC</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-trns</td>
<td></td>
<td>+crsp</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+lctv</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.9 Extension transitive

Transitive extension causative verbs require, in addition to AGT and PAT complements, a verb complement. Three Mon-Khmer languages are found to have this category: Mon, Pacoh, and Ruc.

(Pacoh, Alves 2000:407)

17. ‘Get the dog to bite the mouse.’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>pa.kap</th>
<th>?a.co:</th>
<th>kap</th>
<th>?a.bil</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>make-bite</td>
<td>dog</td>
<td>bite</td>
<td>mouse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Index</td>
<td>2ndex</td>
<td>3ndex</td>
<td>4ndex</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>V</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+cstv</td>
<td>PAT</td>
<td>+trns</td>
<td>PAT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+xtns</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
(Ruc, Nguyễn Văn Lợi 1995:78)

18. ‘I put the firewood into the house.’
ho₁₁ palōn¹² kūs¹ lōn² nha²
ls put in firewood enter house
N V N V N
AGT +cstv PAT
+trns
+xtns

4.10 Extension intransitive correspondent

Intransitive correspondent extension causative verbs require PAT, COR, and verb complements. Jeh, Mon, and Pacoh are found to have this category. The reason for considering the lower noun a dependent of the upper verb (as a COR) rather than the lower one (as a PAT) is that they cannot be fronted. Were that the case, it would then be considered a PAT complement of a transitive verb. Furthermore, in Pacoh, a special class of pronouns (with the prefix /ʔa-/) is used in this position, overtly differentiating them from PAT pronouns.

(Mon, The Hypertext Grammar of the Mon Language)

19. ‘I made the dog bite the child.’
ʔuə cika (kə) klə kit kon nay
I make Prep. dog bite child
N V P N V N
PAT +cstv +datv COR
   +xtns
 -trns
 +crsp

(Pacoh, Alves 2000: S157)

20. ‘I make him drink water.’
ki: pa.ŋɔjʔ ?a.do: ŋɔjʔ
I make-drink s/he drink
N V N V
PAT +cstv COR
 -trns
 +crsp
 +xtns

5. Concluding thoughts

Certainly, more complete studies should reveal more languages containing additional verb subcategories. Though the notion of ‘linguistic area’ applies to Southeast Asia, and the languages in this study do show some overall typological
similarities, there is far from complete uniformity, as seen in this study, regarding the syntactic distribution of Mon-Khmer causative verbs. Perhaps more interesting than what causative verbs can do is what they cannot since that would be the real testing ground for lexically inherent syntactic constraints.

Based on general views of the nature of causative verbs, there are both expected and unexpected properties. Having transitive causative verbs is not surprising, due to the semantic nature of causative verbs. Also, not surprisingly, there are some semantico-syntactic patterns between causative verbs and their non-causative counterparts, such as intransitive/transitive and transitive/ditransitive verbs. What is more unexpected are the categories of extension verbs (those that require lower verb clauses) and the intransitive correspondent verbs (in a sense, requiring an indirect object but not a direct object).

The data presented in this paper lead to a few historical questions. Is there any effect on the subgrouping of Mon-Khmer languages? The locative causative category does appear to be primarily an Eastern Mon-Khmer category, seen in Bahnaric, Katuic, and Vietic. Whether that is a proto-Eastern Mon-Khmer innovation or the result of interlanguage contact cannot yet be determined. The transitive causative subcategory is the most widespread and is probably reconstructable for Proto-Mon-Khmer. The correspondent causative verbs, though less common, are widespread throughout Mon-Khmer. The locative category is more likely an eastern innovation. Based on an overall survey of these verbs, clearly there is a strong tendency toward the loss of these verbs both through phonological reduction as well as competition with lexical causatives, which are commonly used forms in socioeconomically dominant languages, such as Thai, Vietnamese, and varieties of Chinese. How does the causative verb form relate to the Austric hypothesis? If, as Haiman 1999 suggests,* the */pa/- form is related to the abilitative verb /baan/ (or some reflex), then the similarity in phonological form of the prefix in both Austronesian and Austroasiatic languages is an accountable coincidence. If, however, it can be shown that /baan/ is restricted to a small subgroup of Mon-Khmer languages and not proto-Mon-Khmer, then the debate still remains.

It is hoped that researchers of Mon-Khmer languages will be aware of these and similar subcategories of verbs and that a more complete picture of causative and other verbs in Mon-Khmer languages is eventually discovered before language contact with mainstream Southeast Asian languages wipes out these linguistic artifacts.
REFERENCES


Gregerson, Kenneth. 1979. Predicate and Argument in Rengao Grammar. Dallas, TX: University of Texas at Arlington, SIL.


Received: 10 December 2000

Dept. of Applied Foreign Languages
Nan Jeon College
178 Chao-Chin Road
Yansui Town, Tainan County
TAIWAN ROC
<malves98@yahoo.com>