



Syntax of causatives in language contact: Insights from Kurdish and Arabic

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Introduction

Today's Goal: to provide a comparative investigation of the periphrastic causative formed with 'give' in Northern Kurdish (i.e., Kurmanji, NK) and Sason Arabic (SA).

- In NK, indirect causatives are formed with *dan* 'give' plus the infinitival verb.

(1) Min xanî da avakirin.
1SG.OBL house. da.PST.3SG build
'I had the house built.' (NK, Ciwan 1992:96)

- SA also can form indirect causatives with 'give' and the infinitival verb.

(2) ams adi-tu dolab-ad-i addil.
yesterday gave-1SG shelf-PL-my fix.INF
'Yesterday I had my shelves fixed.' (SA)

Our assumption:

↪ Given that 'give'-causatives are unknown to Arabic, this construction in SA is *calqued* on the Kurdish periphrastic causative (Akkuş & Benmamoun 2018).

- Interestingly, this construction exhibits various differences in NK and SA.

Results & Proposal:

- The causativizer 'give' is treated as a light verb in NK on Voice/v head (Gündoğdu 2018, Akın & Boueveret 2021), but as a lexical verb into SA realized on V (Akkuş, To Appear).
- From the language contact perspective, 'give' was borrowed/transferred as a grammatical structure (Kuteva 2017) into SA as a lexical verb in analogy to another causativizer *xalla* 'let' - a rare instance of *degrammaticalization* (Norde 2010).
- Moreover, 'give' embeds a canonical VoiceP in NK, but a Voice_{CAUSEE} (or CauseeP) in SA (Akkuş 2021).

1. Properties of 'give' in NK and SA

1.1 Predicate types under 'give'

- Unaccusatives are disallowed in both languages.

(3) *Ew min di-d-in ketin.
3PL.DIR 1SG.OBL PROG-give.PRS-PL fall
Int: 'They made me fall.' (NK)

(4) *ad-o-ni var mî mardivan-ad.
gave-3PL-me fall.INF from stair-PL
Int: 'They made me fall from the stairs.' (SA)

- Unergatives are allowed in NK with a DP causee, (5), but disallowed in SA (6), (irrespective of the Causee being a DP or PP).

(5) Ew min di-d-in xebitîn.
3PL.DIR 1SG.OBL PROG-give.PRS-PL work
'They made me work.' (NK)

(6) *ad-o-ni faqz. (*ad-o miş-a-ni 'gave-3PL to-me')
gave-3PL-me run.INF
'They made me run.' (SA)

- Transitives can be causativized, with the causee realized as a PP, headed
 - by *bi* 'with' in NK, (7),
 - by the preposition (*mi*)*şa* 'for, to' in SA, (8).

(7) Ew bi min kitab-ê di-d-in xwandin.
3PL.DIR with 1SG.OBL book-OBL PROG-give.PRS-PL read
'They make/are making me read the book.' (NK)

(8) imm-a miş-a fatma şî ad-îd-u addil
mother-her to Fatma food gave-3F-it.M fix
'Her mother had Fatma cook.' (SA)
(Lit: The food, her mother gave it to Fatma to fixing) (Taylan 2017:221, (30))

1.2 Size of the embedded structure

Both NK and SA are bi-eventive, (9)-(10), and embed a second VoiceP layer.

(9) Merik-î zevi-yê bi hêrs [bi pale-yan zûbzû da cotkirin].
man-OBL field-OBL P anger P worker-OBL.PL quickly give.PST.3SG plough
'The man angrily made [the workers plough the field quickly].' (NK)

(10) imbala diqqat adi-tu dolab-ad-i addil hedi.
without care gave-1SG shelf-PL-my fix.INF slowly
'I carelessly had my shelves fixed slowly.' (SA)

However, they lack higher projections such as AspP, TP, (11)-(12), or NegP.

(11) *Bav-ê min doh bi min zevi-yê îro da avdan.
father-EZ.M 1SG.OBL yesterday with 1SG.OBL field-OBL today gave.3SG water
'My father, yesterday, had [me water the field today]. (NK)

(12) *imm-a ams miş-a fatma şî ad-îd-u addil lome.
mother-her yesterday to Fatma food gave-3F-it.M fix today
'Her mother, yesterday, had [Fatma cook today]. (SA)

1.3 Interpretation of the Null Causee

- The causee is optional, and the null causee is interpreted as existential (like a missing 'by'-phrase) rather than pronominal (like a *pro*-dropped argument) in both NK, (1), and SA, (2).
- A pronoun in a following clause cannot refer to the implicit causee, (13)-(14).

(13) Min zevî da rakirin *e_i*. #Ewî gelek zû xilas kir.
1SG.OBL field gave.3SG plough 3SG.OBL very fast finish did.3SG
'I had the field ploughed. # He finished it very fast.' (NK)

(14) adi-tu dolab-ad-i addil *e_i*. #*pro_i* boş bacarîkî kan.
gave-1SG shelf-PL-my fix.INF very talented aux.PST.3M
'I had the shelves fixed *e_i*. #He_i was very talented.' (SA)

- The null causee cannot license depictives, in contrast to an overt causee.

⇒ The presence of a null causee interpretation asserts an implicit agent and supports the idea that a larger structure than vP is involved, commonly identified as *VoiceP*.

2. Agentive Diagnostics

- Despite the presence of VoiceP in both NK and SA causatives, agentive diagnostics (e.g., Bruening 2013, Legate 2014, Alexiadou et al 2015) demonstrate that NK 'give' embeds a canonical VoiceP, SA embeds a distinct type of voice, CauseeP (Akkuş, To Appear).
- In both NK and SA, the causee can be introduced in a passive VoiceP/CauseeP as a PP (with the preposition *bi* 'with' in NK, and *miş-a* 'to' in SA), or existentially closed.

Difference #1:

- Though in both languages, the null causee behaves like the implicit agent of a passive, only in NK, instrument phrases, (15a), and comitatives can be associated with the embedded agent. whereas this is not the case for SA, (15b).

(15) *Instrumentals*

a. Nêçîrvan kêvrûşk-ê bi tîfing-ê di-d-e kuştin.
hunter.DIR rabbit-OBL with shotgun-OBL PROG-give.PRS-3SG kill
'The hunter makes [someone kill the rabbit with a shotgun]. (NK)

b. im-mu ad-e lalû potad miş-a hasan xassil wara furça gbir-e
mother-his gave-3F these clothes to Hasan wash with brush big-F
'His mother made Hasan wash the clothes with a big brush.' (SA)
YES: His mother used the brush.
NO: Hasan used the brush.

3. Analysis

Difference #2:

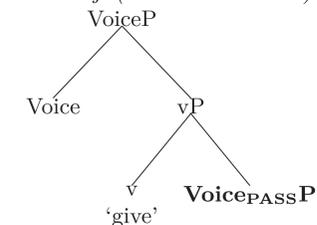
- Whereas 'give' in SA can be passivized, allowing the embedded object to raise to matrix subject, (16), it cannot be in NK, (17).

(16) SA
a. ams dolab-ad m-ad-o (mî-nnî) miş-a tamircî addil.
yesterday shelf-PL PASS-gave-3PL by-me to repairman fix.INF
'Yesterday the shelves were made (by me) to be fixed by the repairman.'
b. şî m-ad-a (mî imm-i) tabx.
food PASS-gave-3SG.F by mother-my cook.INF
'The food was made (by my mother) to be cooked.'

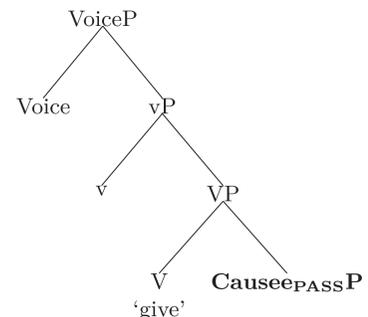
(17) NK
a. *Kitab (ji aliye wan) tê dan xwandin.
book.DIR (by them) come.PRS.3SG give read
'Int: 'The book was made (by them) to be read.'
b. *Zevî (ji aliye wan) hat dan cotkirin
field.DIR (by them) come.PRS.3SG give plough
'Int: The field was made to be ploughed (by them).'

- The structures of 'give' causatives in NK and SA are sketched in (18) and (19).

(18) *Kurmanji (Northern Kurdish)*



(19) *Sason Arabic*



- This hypothesis is compatible with other language-internal properties of SA.
 - The permissive *xalla* 'let'-causatives cannot be passivized in other Arabic varieties (Saad 1982), e.g. Hijazi, whereas they can be passivized in SA.

(20) a. *Hijazi Arabic*
*l-awlaad n-xall-u y-akl-u l-laham.
the-boys PASS-let-3PL 3-eat.IPFV-PL the-meat
Int: 'The boys were let eat the meat.'
b. *Sason Arabic*
sabiyaad m-xall-o y-ayl-o laham.
the-boys PASS-let-3PL 3-IPFV-PL meat
'The boys were let eat the meat.'

Conclusions

- 'Give'-causatives calqued in SA from NK show commonalities as well as divergences.
 - despite the null causee interpretation, SA doesn't show agentive properties (thus, canonical Voice in NK, and CauseeP in SA).
 - 'give' can be passivized in SA, but not NK (thus a main verb in SA, and a light verb in NK, cf. Pitteroff 2015 *let*-middles in German).
- From the perspective of language contact, 'give' was borrowed into SA as a lexical verb in analogy to 'let'.

Selected References: Akkuş, F. To Appear. On Causee in Sason Arabic. *Syntax*. Gündoğdu, S. 2018. Argument Adjunct Distinction in Kurmanji Kurdish. PhD, Boğaziçi University. Legate, J. 2014. *Voice and v: Lessons from Acehnese*. MIT Press. Norde, M. 2010. *Degrammaticalization*. OUP.