

Causatives in the Sham Variety of Ladakhi¹

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Abstract

Ladakhi is a Sino-Tibetan Language spoken mainly in the Ladakh region in the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir. In this paper, I primarily discuss the causatives in the Sham variety of Ladakhi, spoken in the lower part of Ladakh. I explore causatives as a valence increasing device which is expressed both lexically and morphologically in Sham-Ladakhi. I also explore how the role of the arguments changes in monovalent, bivalent and trivalent predicates when a causative situation is expressed in the verb stem. Furthermore, I explore the relationship between the direct-indirect causation and lexical-morphological causatives in this variety.

Keywords: Sham-Ladakhi, lexical and morphological causative, direct and indirect causation

1.0 Introduction

A causative is a valence increasing operation in which a subject causes someone or something to do something. It is defined as the addition of an external AGENT (causer) in an event, and thus the valence of the predicate increases. Payne (1997:176) describes a causative as “a linguistic expression that contains in semantic/logical structure a predicate of cause, one argument of which is a predicate expressing an effect”. Causatives, as Payne (1997:176) categorizes them, can be divided into three types: lexical, morphological and analytical causatives. In Sham-Ladakhi, the presence of both lexical and morphological causatives is observed.

1.0.1 The Ladakhi Language and Speech Community

Ladakhi is a Sino-Tibetan Language spoken mainly in the Ladakh region in the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir. The Census of India 2001 reported that there were 104618 Ladakhi speakers, but the latest Census of India 2011 reports an exponential decrease in the number of Ladakhi speakers, which is 14952.² Ladakhi is different enough from Tibetan. Ladakhis and Tibetans often use Hindi or English for communication. Educated Ladakhis usually know Hindi/Urdu and often English. Within Ladakh, there is a range of dialects/varieties of Ladakhi. The language of the Chang-Pa people may differ markedly from

¹ The first analysis of the present paper is done by the ‘valence change in Ladakhi’ group during my MA at the University of Delhi. I hereby acknowledge all the contributions of my group members namely Priya, Kaushika, Anwesha, Basundhara, and Amit.

² <http://www.censusindia.gov.in/2011Census/Language-2011/Statement-8.pdf> Accessed on 14-02-2022

that of the Purig-pa in Kargil, or the Zangskaris, but they are all mutually intelligible. Due to its position on important trade routes, the racial composition, as well as the language of Leh, is enriched with foreign influences. Traditionally, Ladakhi had no written form distinct from classical Bhoti, but recently several Ladakhi writers have started using the Bhoti script to write the colloquial tongue. (Tashi 2010:2)

Grierson (1909) said, “the dialect of Ladakh is not the same all over the district. Our information about the local variations is, however, rather scanty. The dialect of Khalaste and of Lower Ladakh generally has preserved some old features which have been lost in the Leh dialect. Thus, the genitive is distinguished from the case of the agent, and several words have presented more ancient forms.”



Map 1: Map of Ladakh³

There are five regional varieties of Ladakhi-Zangskar Ladakhi, Nubra Ladakhi, Upper Ladakhi, Lower Ladakhi and Central Ladakhi. Upper Ladakh also called Stotpa, is spoken in the higher altitude regions. This variety shows a marked influence of Tibetan on its phonology. Lower Ladakhi, also called Sham/Shamma is spoken in the northwest of Leh, in places like Khaltse, Timizgam etc. While the Nubra variety is spoken in the north of Leh, mostly in Nubra Tehsil, the Zangskari variety is spoken in the west of Leh and spread all over the Zangskar tehsil. The Central Ladakhi, also called Leh-Ladakhi is spoken in Leh and in the neighbouring areas and is accepted as the standard form. These regional varieties differ phonologically, grammatically as well as lexically. (see Koshal 1979 for details).

1.1 Data and Methodology

Data for the present study is drawn from three native speakers from the Sham variety of Ladakhi. The first preliminary observation of the study was noted during the preparation of

³ https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Ladakh_locator_map.svg accessed on 12.02.2022

my MA dissertation at the University of Delhi in 2019. The study is then supplemented by additional data elicited from two native speakers of Sham-Ladakhi in 2021.

1.2 Causatives in Sham Ladakhi

The Sham dialect of Ladakhi shows both lexical and morphological causatives. Lexical causatives are discussed in section 1.2.1 followed by morphological causatives in section 1.2.2.

1.2.1 Lexical Causatives

In lexical causatives, a different lexical item is used to express causation. Just like English has a distinct causative verb ‘kill’, and a non-causative verb form ‘die’, Ladakhi also uses a different lexical item to indicate causation. In example (2), a distinct lexeme *teṭčas* ‘feed’ is used when an external AGENT *ama* ‘mother’ is added to the event of *zočas* ‘eat’ in example (1). The external AGENT *ama* ‘mother’ in (2) is marked with ergative case marker *-e* and the AGENT argument *tʰugu* ‘the child’ of the bivalent predicate in (1) is marked with *-a* ‘non-agentive’ when causativized as in (2).

- (1) *tʰugu-e* *pʰatiŋ* *zo-s-ṭok*
 Child-ERG apricot eat-Past-RPT
 ‘the child ate an apricot.’
- (2) *ama-e* *tʰugu-a* *pʰatiŋ* *teṭ-s-ṭok*
 mother-ERG child-NA apricot feed-Past-RPT
 ‘The mother fed the child an apricot.’

Example (3) shows a non-causative form *šiṭ* ‘die’, and its causative form *šaṭ* ‘kill’ is shown in example (4).

- (3) *tʰugu* *ši-s-ṭok*
 child die- Past-RPT
 ‘The child died.’
- (4) *Stenzin-e* *tʰugu-a* *šaṭ-s-ṭok*
 Stenzin-ERG child-NA kill- Past-RPT
 ‘Stenzin killed the child.’

1.2.2 Morphological Causatives

In Ladakhi, the valence is increased by one from monovalent to bivalent morphologically by affixing the causative suffix *-čuk* to the verb root. In example (5.b), the verb *goṭčas* ‘laugh’ is suffixed with *-čuk*. The external AGENT *ŋa*, ‘1SG’ is marked with ergative case marker *-e* and the SUBJECT argument *tʰugu*, ‘the child’ of the monovalent predicate (5.a) is marked with *-a*, non-agentive when causativized as in (5.b). Moreover (5.c) is ungrammatical as *goṭčas* ‘laugh’ is not a labile verb.

(5.a) t^hugu got-s
 child laugh-Past
 ‘The child laughed.’

(5.b) ŋa-e t^hugu-a got-čuk-s-pin
 1SG-ERG child-NA laugh-CAUS-Past-CTL
 ‘I made the child laugh.’

(5.c) *ŋa-e t^hugu-a got-s-pin
 1SG-ERG child-NA laugh-Past-CTL
 ‘I laughed the child’

Examples (6.a and 6.b) show that the valence is increased by one from bivalent (example 6.a) to trivalent (6.b) morphologically by affixing the causative suffix *-čuk* to the verb root, *zočas* ‘eat’. The external AGENT (i.e. the agent of the cause) *tenzin* ‘Tezsin’ is marked with *-e* and the AGENT of the caused event *t^hugu* ‘child’ is marked with *-a*. The inanimate PATIENT *p^hatiŋ* ‘apricot’ is unmarked. It is important to note that the word order of the agent and patient of the caused event can not be reversed.

(6.a) t^hugu-e p^hatiŋ za-s-ṭok
 child-ERG apricot eat-PAST-RPT
 ‘The child ate an apricot.’

(6.b) tenzin-e t^hugu-a p^hatiŋ zo-čuk-s-tok
 tenzin-ERG child-NA apricot eat-CAUS-PAST-RPT
 ‘Tenzin made the child eat an apricot.’

Examples (7.a-7.d) show that the valence is increased by one from trivalent to tetravalent morphologically by affixing the causative *-čuk* to the verb root *ṭaŋčas* ‘give’. The external AGENT (i.e. the agent of the cause *ŋa* ‘1SG’ in (7.b) and (7.d) is marked with *-e* ‘Ergative’ and the AGENT argument *tenzin* ‘tenzin’ of the trivalent predicate in (7.a) and (7.c) is marked with *-a* ‘Non-Agentive’ while causativized. However, the RECIPIENT argument *bumo* ‘woman’ of the trivalent predicate retains the marker *-a* and the THEME *p^hatiŋ* ‘apricot’ and *t^hugu* ‘child’ of it remains unmarked as well when causativized.

(7.a) Tenzin-e bumo-a p^hatiŋ ṭaŋ-s-ṭok
 Tenzin-ERG woman-NA apricot give-Past-RPT
 ‘Tenzin gave an apricot to the woman.’

(7.b) ŋa-e Tenzin-a p^hatiŋ bumo-a ṭaŋ-čuk-s-pin
 1SG-ERG Tenzin-NA apricot woman-NA give-CAUS-Past-RPT
 ‘I made Tenzin give an apricot to the woman.’

(7.c) Tenzin-e bumo-a t^hugu t̪aŋ-s-ɬok
 Tenzin-ERG woman-NA child give-Past-RPT
 ‘Tenzin gave a child to the woman.’

(7.d) ŋa-e Tenzin-a t^hugu bumo-a t̪aŋ-čuk-s-pin
 1SG-ERG Tenzin-NA child woman-NA give-CAUS-PAST-RPT
 ‘I made Tenzin give a child to the woman.’

Valence adjusting operators are very common in verbal morphology. Ninety per cent of the languages investigated by Bybee (1985) have the morphological manifestation of valence marked on the verb. In the Yagua language, the valence adjusting suffixes are consistently closer to the verb root than the TAM suffixes (Payne 1997:172-73). The same case has been observed in Ladakhi as well. The verb morphology of the Ladakhi morphological causative clause is:

Verb Root-CAUS-Time maker –(CTL/RPT)

1.3 Direct and Indirect Causation

In Ladakhi, direct causation is expressed lexically. A different verb *satčas* ‘kill’ in (8.b) is used to causativize the verb *šičas* ‘die’ in (8.a). Similarly, in (9.b) a different verb *teṭčas* ‘feed’ is used to causativize the verb *začas* ‘eat’ in (9.a).

(8.a) t^hugu ši-s-ɬok
 Child die-Past-RPT
 ‘The child died.’

(8.b) Tenzin-e t^hugu-a sat-s-ɬok
 Tenzin-ERG child-NA kill-Past-RPT
 ‘Tenzin killed the child.’

(9.a) t^hugu-e p^hatiŋ zo-s-ɬok
 Child-ERG p^hatiŋ eat-Past-RPT
 ‘The child ate an apricot.’

(9.b) ama-e t^hugu-a p^hatiŋ teṭ-s-ɬok
 Mother-ERG child-NA apricot feed-Past-RPT
 ‘The mother fed the child an apricot.’

However, indirect causation is expressed morphologically by suffixing *–čuk* to the verb roots as shown in (10.a) and (10.b).

(10.a) Tenzin-e t^hugu-a ši-čuk-s-tok
 Tenzin-ERG child-NA die-CAUS-Past-RPT
 ‘Tenzin made the child to die.’

(10.b) Tenzin-e t^hugu-a p^hatiŋ zo- čuk-s- tok
 Tenzin-ERG child-NA apricot eat-CAUS-Past-RPT
 ‘Tenzin made the child eat an apricot.’

1.4 Conclusion

This study shows the presence of causatives as a valance increasing operator in Sham-Ladakhi. It is observed that valence increases both lexically and morphologically in this language. While lexical causatives express primarily direct causation, morphological causatives express indirect causation. The *-čuk* morpheme is suffixed to the verb roots for morphological causatives.

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Abbreviations

CAUS: Causative marker, CTL: Control by the AGENT, ERG: Ergative case, NA: Non-Agentive case, RPT: Reported form, SG: Singular number.

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