Event modification of morphological causatives in Hill Mari

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One popular way of classifying morphological causatives is to divide them into mono- or bieventive depending on a number of subevents in their semantic and syntactic structure (cf. Horvath & Siloni 2010, Bartos 2011, among others). In syntactic terms, it is often formalized as a number of *v*-heads (Lyutikova & Tatevosov 2014). The two types of structures react differently when modified by low adverbials. In bieventive causatives, the causing subevent shows a higher degree of independence, so it can be modified separately from the caused subevent, resulting in a higher number of possible interpretations. This work aims to describe and investigate the event structure of morphological causatives in Hill Mari (< Finno-Ugric) and its implications for their semantics. The data comes from fieldwork (both elicitation and corpus[1] analysis) in the villages of Kuznetsovo, Nikishkino, and Malyy Apshak-Pelyak, Republic of Mari El, in 2024.

Four classes of adverbial modifiers were used: agent-oriented adverbials of manner (predicate level) and three types of temporal modifiers: expressions of localization, duration, and frequency (predicative level). Hill Mari has an elaborate system of derivational morphology, including three causative suffixes: *-ə̂kt*, *-tar*, and *-t*. The latter ones are highly lexicalized and cannot express any kind of indirect causal relations (in terms of Shibatani & Pardeshi 2002), that is, even an animate Causee has no control over the caused subevent; see examples (1)-(2). They are conceptualized as a single event, which is seen by a single interpretation of adverbial modifiers (2)-(3):

(1)   *režis'or   akt'or-ə̂m   mägə̂r-t-ä.*
        director   artist-ACC   cry-CAUS-NPST.3SG
        'The director {said something hurtful and} made the artist cry / *the director asked the artist to cry in a scene'.

(2)   *pet'a ävä-žə̂-m   kok   cäš   tə̂rgə̂ž-lan-dar-en.*
        Petya   mother-POSS.3SG-ACC   two   hour   restless-VB-CAUS-PRET
        'Petya {cried and} bothered his mother for two hours'.

(3)   *ävä-žə̂   t'et'ä-žə̂-m   kok   cäš   cə̂vəlt-en.*
        mother-POSS.3SG   child-POSS.3SG-ACC   two   hour   bathe-PRET
        'Mother bathed the child for two hours / *made the child wash themselves for two hours'.

The suffix *-ə̂kt* is more interesting in this regard as it can express both direct and indirect causation. The consultants are allocated to two approximately equal groups depending on the independence degree of the causing subevent in their idiolects. In the first group, *ə̂kt*-causatives are strictly monoeventive: only the caused subevent may be modified (4a), and if it is semantically incompatible with an adverbial modifier (4b), then a sentence is considered unacceptable. Contrarily, in the second group, the causing subevent is more accessible for modification. The results for all types of modifiers are summarized in the table.

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(4) a. *vas'a kogo juk dono mä̀n'-ə̀m mə̂r-ə̂kt-en.*
Vasya big sound with I-ACC sing-CAUS-PRET
'Vasya made me sing loudly'.

b. [%]*vas'a kogo juk dono pet'a-lan otžiman'ə̂-m ə̀št-ə̀kt-ä.*
Vasya big sound with Petya-DAT push_up-ACC do-CAUS-NPST.3SG
'Vasya is {yelling and} making Petya do push-ups'.

Adverbial modifier	Group 1	Group 2
Agent-oriented Manner ('quickly', 'loudly')	*causing, ^{ok}caused	^{ok}causing, ^{ok}caused
Temporal Localization ('tomorrow')	whole event	whole event, ^{??}caused
Duration ('for two hours')	*causing, ^{ok}caused, ^{ok}whole event	*causing, ^{ok}caused, ^{ok}whole event
Frequency ('twice')	*causing, ^{ok}caused, ^{ok}whole event	*causing, ^{ok}caused, ^{ok}whole event

Thus, there are two possible directions of structural shift. The first one is «mono → bi»: monoeventive *ə̂kt*-structure is primary, and bieventive structure is an innovation (possibly under the influence of Russian analytical causatives which are transparently bieventive). The second one is «bi → mono»: *ə̂kt*-causatives are primary bieventives, but in a subgroup of idiolects, they tend to be conceptualized as more direct. This data is interesting in light of the intragenetic typology: in Finno-Ugric languages, both bieventive (i.e. Hungarian according to Bartos (2011), Standard Udmurt (Tánczos 2015)) and monoeventive (Tatyshly Udmurt (Belova 2023)) morphological causative structures are found.

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