

## CAUSATIVES, DECAUSATIVES AND LABILITY IN AGUL

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The paper investigates the valency increase and decrease mechanisms in Agul (Lezgi, Nakh-Daghestanian). We deal with agentivization of intransitive and deagentivization of transitive predicates; in other words the problem setting is limited to the conventional causative ~ labile ~ decausative domain. The paper focuses on non-derived (i.e. non-prefixed and non-composite) Agul verbs.

**1. CAUSATIVES.** The only productive causativization pattern in Agul is a combination of the infinitive of the main verb with (*a*)*q'as* 'do' ('do'-causatives below). The causer NP is Ergative. With an intransitive predicate, the causee NP keeps its Nominative or (with experiential predicates) Dative marking. With a transitive predicate the causee NP is marked Apudessive (one of the spatial cases). The 'do'-causative is a default causativization pattern. It is available for all verbal lexemes except stative verbs (which do not form causatives); only 'do'-causatives are available for transitive predicates.

With intransitive predicates, there are three non-productive valency-increasing patterns in addition to 'do'-causatives.

- (a) A closed set of intransitive predicates have morphological causative correlates: composite forms including an *-r* suffixed verbal stem plus the stem *q'as* 'do' (cf. *Ruzas* 'stop (intr)' > *Ruza-r-q'as* 'stop (tr)', *uq'as* 'sit down' > *uq'a-r-q'as* 'seat', *ruRas* 'get cold' > *ruRa-r-q'as* 'make cold', *ruQas* 'dry (intr)' > *ruQa-r-q'as* 'dry (tr)', *Dik'as* 'find (accidentally)' > *Dik'a-r-q'as* 'find (as a result of a search)', *agWas* 'see' > *agWa-r-q'as* 'show' and several others).
- (b) A closed set of predicates may be used in both transitive and intransitive constructions; these are called labile verbs (cf. *ar<as* 'break (tr, intr)'; *ryxes* 'cook (tr, intr)'). For convenience they will be viewed as pairs of formally identical verbs expressing related intransitive and transitive meanings; see the following section for details.
- (c) Finally, there is a small number of lexical (suppletive) pairs causative ~ decausative, including for instance <*Was* 'go, move' ~ *Xas* 'bring, fetch', *ada<Was* 'roll over (intr)' ~ *adadWas* 'roll over (tr)', *ket'as* 'wake up (intr)' ~ *keRkas* 'wake up (tr)', *Rajjas* 'stand up, get up' ~ *RahadWas* 'lift, pick up' and some others.

All the intransitive predicates in (a) through (c) also have the productive 'do'-causative. The two causatives of one and the same verb contrast semantically. The non-productive causative (composite verb, or the transitive 'member' of a labile pair, or the lexical causative in a suppletive pair) expresses direct, intentional causation (cf. 1a, 2a). The 'do'-causative expresses indirect or unintentional causation (cf. 1b) or has other additional semantic components (2b).

- (1) *q'e]a-r-q'as* 'moisten, make wet' vs. 'do'-causative of *q'e]as* 'moisten, become wet'
  - a. zun kun-ar                    **q'e]arq'u-ne.**  
I:Erg clothes-Pl(Nom)    moisten(Tr)-Pft  
'I put the clothes/linen into water (to soak).'
  - b. zun lak-ar                    **q'e]a-s                    q'u-ne.**  
I:Erg foot-Pl(Nom)    moisten(Intr)-Inf    do-Pft  
'I got my feet wet (i.e. did not prevent them from becoming wet).'
- (2) *uq'a-r-q'as* 'seat' vs. 'do' causative of *uq'as* 'sit down'
  - a. **uq'arq'-e**    Hyle]juw.  
seat-Imp    guest(Nom)  
'Let the guest sit down (show him his place).'
  - b. **uq'a-s    q'-e**    ge.

sit-Infdo-Imp he(Nom)  
 ‘Make him sit (e.g. a child who misbehaves and runs about all the time). //  
 Let him wait (= sit) for a while (i.e. make him be seated while I am away).’

With labile predicates, the ‘direct’ causation of the intransitive meaning (the intransitive member of the pair) is expressed by the selfsame verbal form as in the transitive construction (the transitive member of the pair). As in (1) and (2), ‘indirect’ causation is expressed by the ‘do’-causative:

- (3) *ar<as* ‘break (intr)’ vs. its causative
- a. gur                    **ar<u-ne.**  
 plate(Nom) break-Pft  
 ‘The plate shattered.’
- b. gadaji    gur                    **ar<a-s    q’u-ne.**  
 boy:Erg plate(Nom) break-Infdo-Pft  
 ‘≈ The plate shattered because of the boy (for instance, he left it on an unsteady table).’
- (4) *ar<as* ‘break (tr)’ vs. its causative
- a. gadaji    gur                    **ar<u-ne.**  
 boy:Erg plate(Nom) break-Pft  
 ‘The boy **broke** the plate.’
- b. dada            gadaji-w    gur                    **ar<a-s            q’u-ne.**  
 father:Erg    boy-Apud plate(Nom) break-Inf    do-Pft  
 ‘The father made the boy break the plate.’

A similar contrast is observed between the ‘do’-causative of an intransitive predicate and its lexical causative in a ‘suppletive pair’:

- (5)a. ]ynyK            **Rahad-u!**  
 child(Nom) lift-Imper  
 ‘**Lift** the baby!’
- b. ]ynyK            **Rajja-s            q’-e!**  
 child(Nom) stand.up-Inf    do-Imper  
 ‘**Make** the baby **get up!** (e.g. tell him to do so)’

To sum up, ‘direct’ causation prefers morphological and lexical means, if available (morphological derivation, lability, lexical causatives), while distant causation is expressed by means of a periphrastic construction (‘do’-causative).

Note, however, that for some intransitive non-labile verbs (e.g. *ac’as* ‘become full’, *kuras* ‘become dirty’ and other) ‘do’-causatives are the only causativization pattern available and express both direct and indirect causation:

- (6)a. berHem            **kuru-ne.**  
 dress(Nom) become.dirty-Pft  
 ‘The dress became dirty.’
- b. ru]a    berHem            **kura-s                    q’u-ne.**  
 girl:Erg dress(Nom) become.dirty-Inf    do-Pft  
 ‘The girl got the dress dirty (1. deliberately put it in a dirty place // 2. unintentionally let it become dirty, was not careful enough to prevent it from becoming dirty).’

**2. LABILE VERBS.** Characteristic of Agul (and probably of other Lezgian languages) is a large number of labile predicates. (We understand here lability narrowly as P-labile predicates, alias S=O ambitransitives). At present we are aware of 30 labile verbs, their share in the non-derived

verbal vocabulary amounting to as much as 20%. Two major groups of labile verbs may be distinguished in Agul, including:

(a) predicates designating situations which may either occur spontaneously or result from the actions of an agent (cf. *ar<as* ‘break (tr, intr)’, *l’urXas* ‘tear apart (tr, intr)’, *at’usas* ‘stop burning (tr, intr)’, *all[aq’as* ‘close (tr, intr)’; cf. also *k’es* ‘die, kill’ etc.) – the majority of the Agul labile verbs;

(b) autonomous processes which are initiated by an agent and then may go on autonomously (*ryxes* ‘cook (tr, intr)’, *uDas* ‘bake, fry (tr, intr)’); cf. also *ruXas* ‘give birth to, be born’).

It has been observed that, cross-linguistically, predicates in these two classes are particularly likely to be labile; cf., among others, [Dixon & Aikhenvald (eds.) 2000: 20]. In other words, one should start looking for lability by examining the predicates in these two groups. What is peculiar about Agul is that there are considerable discrepancies vis-à-vis the statistical generalizations suggested by M. Haspelmath with regard to the choice of verbal meanings within the two classes [Haspelmath 1993]. At the same time, the set of labile verbal meanings in Agul seems to be typical of Daghestanian; cf. [Ljutikova 2002].

Although the two domains of lability cannot be delimited in a clear-cut way, these predicates behave differently, in a way that reflects the described difference in the situational pattern. For instance, a dedicated non-intentional agent construction (‘an animate participant A performs an action accidentally, without noticing it’) is more available with verbs of the first group than with verbs of the second.

A thorough analysis of the Agul verbal vocabulary also shows that lability is not simply a lexical property of the verb, but may to a certain extent depend on its interpretation in a specific context. Thus, *at’as* ‘cut (tr)’ has only one intransitive usage ‘cut one’s hand, finger etc.’ (the single argument being the designation of the damaged body part), while *uc’as* ‘melt (intr), dissolve (intr)’, when used in transitive constructions, can only be interpreted as ‘melt (tr)’ (e.g. a piece of ice), but not ‘dissolve (tr)’ (e.g. sugar in water). Sometimes the meaning of one of the members of the labile pair is lexicalized; thus, *ut’as* ‘rot’, typically intransitive, when used with an Ergative agent can only be interpreted metaphorically ‘maltreat, vex, harass’. The literal causative sense ‘let/make rot’ (e.g. potatoes) can only be expressed by a ‘do’-causative.

**3. DECAUSATIVES.** There is no decausative derivation in Agul. It should be noted, however, that in some types of contexts, such as in fairy tales, where an inanimate patient is recategorized as animate, a transitive verb may become intransitive. Such verbs include, above all, verbs designating cultural activities (‘sew’, ‘weave’, ‘cut (wool)’ etc.). Cf. the following examples with intransitive and (primarily) transitive predicates; the composite pronoun *uf u[i]ldi* in (7a) and (8a) is an equivalent of the English *itself* (literally, a combination of *uf* ‘self’ in the Nominative with the same pronoun in the Superlative which, in Agul, encodes the role of instrument):

[Pirkko: example (7) seems odd here, because in (7) it is NOT the case that “a transitive verb becomes intransitive”. A bit unclear?]

(7)a. dar            **adarxu-ne** u[            u[i-l-di.  
tree(Nom) fall-Pft self(Nom) self-Super-Lat  
‘The tree **fell** by itself.’

b. dar,            **adarx!**  
tree(Nom) fall:Imp  
‘Tree, **fall down!**’

(8)a. berHem        **duq’a-a** u[            u[i-l-di.  
dress(Nom) sew-Prs self(Nom) self-Super-Lat  
‘The dress is being sewn by itself.’

- b. **duq'** sara, berHem!  
sew:Impwell dress(Nom)  
'Dress, **do be sewn!**'

For a situation in which the agent himself is affected by the situation, such as 'eat', 'drink' etc., this kind of recategorization is virtually impossible. This phenomenon of 'contextual decausativization' shows (or at least is an argument in favor of the view) that lability, i.e. the ability of a verb to be used in both transitive and intransitive contexts, is a scalar rather than a binary feature. The verb 'drink', then, is non-labile; 'cook' and 'break', labile; while 'sew' etc. are in between.

**4. CLASSIFYING AGUL PREDICATES.** We have initially based our description of valency increase/decrease mechanisms on the traditional classification of predicates into transitive, intransitive and labile. Using some standard contexts, however, one can come to a more fine-grained classification, zooming into the transitivity scale. For instance, only some intransitive verbs are used in the non-intentional agent construction (agent coded by Apudelative), while other verbs designate situations where an agent's control is absolutely indispensable. In other words, the degree of agentivity of intransitive verbs may be different (transitive verbs may not be used in this construction at all).

On the other hand, only some transitive predicates (mainly designations of various cultural activities) allow a decausative interpretation (see above). Similar contexts with verbs designating situations which affect the agent (such as 'drink') are much less interpretable.

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