Causative Constructions in Pnar

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Abstract

Pnar is a dialect of Khasi belonging to the Mon-Khmer group of the Austro-Asiatic language family, spoken in the West and East Jaintia Hills district of Meghalaya and a few pockets of the neighbouring state of Assam and neighbouring country of Bangladesh. The study of causatives in Pnar demonstrates that Pnar has only one type of causative i.e., morphological causative which is derived by attaching the prefix *pən-* or *tən-* to the main verb. Morphological causatives according to Payne, 1997, p.176 "are one kind of 'valence increasing' operations formed on the basis of intransitive or transitive events." This paper looks into the valency properties of the causatives in Pnar, thereby focussing on the argument structure of the causative constructions found in Pnar.

Keywords: Causatives, Valency, Pnar, Khasi, Mon-Khmer, Austro-Asiatic.

1.1. Introduction: The Language

The Pnars are one of the sub-tribes of the Khasi residing in the districts of West Jaintia Hills and East Jaintia Hills of Meghalaya. A small minority of Pnar speakers also reside in the bordering state of Assam and the neighbouring country of Bangladesh. The Pnars are commonly referred to as the Jaintias which is incorrect. Many people consider Jaintia as one of the tribes of Meghalaya. But '**Jaintia**' is not a tribe, but the home of the Pnar speaking community along with some of the other sub-tribes of Khasi - the Wars and the Bhois. The Pnar speakers of the Jaintia Hills reside in the central region of Jaintia Hills district, the Wars cover the southern region, whereas the Bhois are found in the northern regions. All three sub-tribes are collectively called "the Jaintias" because they all call this area home. Pnar is the most widely spoken language in the Jaintia Hills region, with Jowai Pnar being the language of communication amongst the various communities residing here. Pnar also has other varieties spoken all over the region. Most of the Pnar speaking villages in Jaintia Hills have their own varieties of Pnar which are mutually intelligible. Although the language is widely spoken, it does not have a script, and thus has very limited written literature.

1.2 Genetic Classification of Khasi and its dialects

Khasi according to Bareh, 1977 is an off-shoot of the Mon-Khmer language, a group belonging to the Austro-Asiatic family of the Austric super family. Khasi is the only Mon-Khmer language found in the North East India frontier. According to Bareh, 1977, Khasi forms an isolated Austric island in the midst of other languages found in the region. Khasi is the only Austro-Asitic language in India which retains its basic word order SVO in spite of being surrounded by many other SOV languages. Grierson, 1903 was the first person who discussed the dialect situation. He divided Khasi into four dialects – Khassi, Lyngngam, Synteng or Pnar and War. Diffloth, 1974, 1989 and Sidwell, 2009, all group Khasi under the Northern branch of Mon-Khmer with Pnar as one of its dialects. Figure 1 is the classification of the Mon-Khmer branch of Austro-Asiatic Languages by Sidwell, 2005.
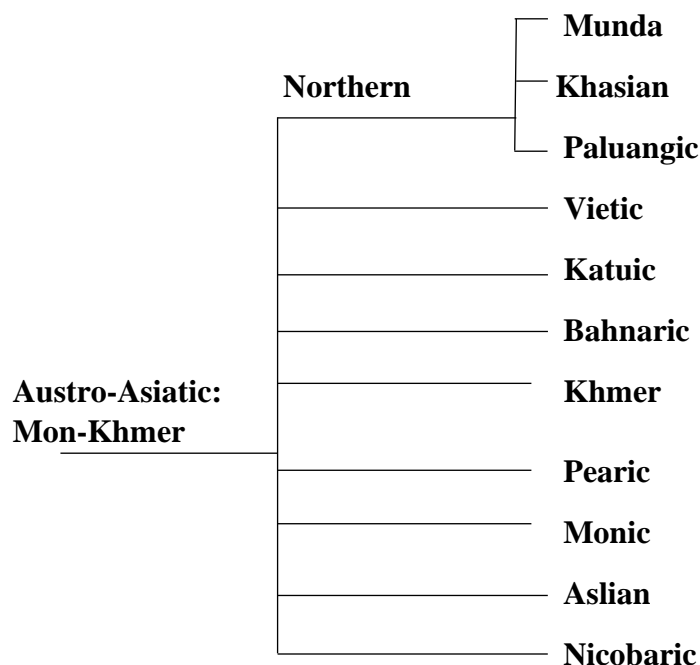

Fig. 1 Classification of Mon-Khmer branch of Austro-Asiatic languages by Sidwell (2005)

1.3 Pnar and its Varieties

Pnar, a dialect of Khasi, belongs to the Mon-Khmer group of Austro-Asiatic language families. According to Grierson, 1903 and Nagaraja, 1977 Khasi has four dialects – Pnar, Lyngngam, War and Khasi proper. Nagaraja, 1977 also mentioned Bhoi Khasi as one of the dialects of Khasi. Bareh, 1977 stated that Khasi has a number of dialectal variations of which most of them are mutually intelligible. According to him, there are eleven dialects of Khasi. These dialects include – 1. Amwi 2. Shella 3. Warding 4. Myriaw, Nongkhlaw Nongspung, Maram, Mawiang 5. Cherra 6. Nongkrem, Mylliem, Laitlyngkot Lyniong-Khasi 7. Jowai 8. Bhoi 9. Manar, Nongwah, Jirang 10. Khadar Blang and 11. Nongstoin, Langrin. Most of the Austro-Asiatic

experts classify Khasi into four varieties –Khasi Standard, War, Pnar and Lyngngam, but some of them look at these four varieties as different languages. Some previous studies propound that Khasi is an umbrella term for all the Khasi languages spoken in Meghalaya.

By Jowai, Bareh, 1977 means the Pnar spoken in Jowai, the variety which is used for this study. According to Daladier, 2011, p.175 "Pnar appears to be the main language spoken in Meghalaya as it is even closer to Lyngngam and War than Khasi" and thus claims that Pnar is the central language of the Khasi group, not Khasi. According to her "There are two groups of Pnar, the Pnar East group and the Pnar West group. The Pnar East group is found in the Jaintia Hills region, a few isolated regions in Assam (in the Karbi anglong area), while some are in the North Cachar Hills and in Jaintiapur, Bangladesh. The main sub-groups of East Pnar are - 1) Sutnga, Narpuh, Lakadong, 2) Raliang, Shanpung, 3) Jowai, Rymbai, 4) Nongbah, Nongjngi, Nartiang, 5) Mynso, Thadbamon. Pnar West group is found in the western regions of Meghalaya and have different loan words from Lyngngam which are now influenced by Standard Khasi. The Pnar West group consists of - 1) Rambrai, Myriaw, Mawiang, 2) Nobosopoh; 3) Maram (Maharam)."

According to Bareh, 2019 Pnar has more than twelve varieties. Some of them include – (1) Jowai (2) Rymbai-Pnar (3) Shangpung-Mookaiaw-Pnar (4) Tuber –Pnar (5) Bataw-Pnar (6) Sutnga-Pnar (7) Narwan-Pnar and other varieties which are identified by him as - Chiehruphi-Pnar, Iapmala-Rngad, Mynsoo-Chiliang, Myntang, Nongbah and a few others.

1.4 Two Varieties of Jowai Pnar – Pohchnong and Pohskur

Lyngdoh, War & Dkhar, 2018 discusses the two varieties of Pnar found spoken in Jowai – the Pohchnong and the Pohskur, of which they found that there are variants in socio-cultural and linguistic behaviour of the people. The difference between the two varieties is brought about by the religious language genres spoken in their particular areas. Jowai is a very small town with almost all of the population speaking Pnar. The concept of Pohchnong and Pohskur was not present prior to the coming of Christianity to the region. In the Jaintia Hills region, 'chnong' refers to those who are still following the indigenous tradition and religion and 'skur' refers to those who have already converted to Christianity. The birth of these distinctions comes from the time when some of the people from Jowai who converted to Christianity were thrown or driven away from their house by their family and were given shelter by the Welsh missionaries. They started residing in the Mission Compound area of Jowai, which thus led to the name 'Pohchnong' meaning those who reside in the region with indigenous beliefs and 'Pohskur' meaning those who reside in the missionary area. Thus, the names 'Pohskur' and 'Pohchnong' came into existence. The division between the Pohskur and Pohchnong is found not only in Jowai but in other villages in the Jaintia Hills region as well. According to Lamare, 2005, p. 82, "The coming of the Christian missionaries into this region coincided with British rule, and in consequence the emergence among the hill people of new social, psychological and religious needs." Thus, the arrival of Christianity in the Khasi and Jaintia hills region in the 1800's has

not only changed and uplifted the link language of the tribe to a written status but also catered to the striking vitality within the group since then.

According to War & Dkhar, 2018, "In Jaintia Hills the division between the Christian group and indigenous group has, ever since the arrival of Christianity, been very prominent, that the two groups are demarcated by their areas of location. The spread of Christianity has had a tremendous impact and influence on the traditional socio-cultural and linguistic practices of the Pnars in Jowai. It has brought about a transformation in the cultural practices and traditional belief of the people so much so that it surfaces in the language behaviour and etiquettes of those who embraced Christianity."

1.5 Area of Study
The present study focuses on the Pohskur variety of Jowai Pnar. This variety is spoken all over Jowai particularly in Pohskur, Chutwakhu, Mynthong, Iawmusiang and Khimusniang. Primary data is collected from the native speakers of Pnar from Jowai town. Secondary data is collected from different sources like books, journals, e-newspapers, etc. The main objective of this paper is to highlight the valency properties of the causatives in construction with causative verbs and how it changes the argument structure of the verb from the input verb.

1.6 Theoretical Background
Causative is defined by Crystal, 1980, p.70 as "a term used in grammatical descriptions to refer to the causal relationship between alternative versions of a sentence." Causative constructions on the other hand according to Hasan, 2009, p.118, "refers to any grammatical device that encodes causation which can be classified into two types based on the productivity and regularity of causative forms, namely – productive causatives and lexical causatives." Causative constructions (or causatives) according to Payne, 1997, p.175 are "the linguistic instantiations of the conceptual notion of causation." Causative constructions generally are classified into three types - Lexical, Morphological and Analytic or Periphrastic. Pnar exhibits morphological causatives which according to Hasan, 2009 are causations expressed by means of a productive suffix. According to Payne, 1997 they are a one-of-a-kind valence increasing operation. Baker, 1988 refers to a morphological causatives' derivation as verb incorporation as he believes that a single verb cannot respond to a single verb and a noun but rather to two verbs. As cited in M.K. Hasan, 2009, p. 126, Dixon, 2000, p.31 describes the process of forming a causative construction as "an involvement of an additional argument, i.e., a causer, onto a basic cause." From the above arguments, it can be seen that causative constructions can occur as follows –

(1) Causative construction occurs when there is an addition of a new argument in the structure.
(2) The additional argument is mostly the cause of the event
(3) While the original sentence without the causative verbs has one event happening in the structure, in causative constructions there exists two events – (i) the caused event and (ii) the causing event which is performed by the causer.

The study on causative constructions in Khasi and its dialects is found to be limited but not non-existing. Nagaraja, 1993, p.5 briefly analyses the causative constructions of two dialects of Khasi – Standard Khasi and Bhoi Khasi. According to him "Standard Khasi forms a causative sentence by putting a causative prefix on the verb 'to be', and putting an infinite marker before the main verb while Bhoi simply put causative prefix on the main verb" as illustrated in (1) and (2) where (1) is a sentence in Standard Khasi and (2) in Bhoi.

(As cited in Nagaraja, 1993)

(1) ŋan pɨn-lɔŋ   ya   u   ban   ban   bam
     I *CAUS-be*   *OBJ* *him* *Ban* *INF* *eat*
     'I made him eat.'

(2) pan-deyt   ŋa u
     CAUS-drink   *I* *him*
     'I made him drink.'

Temsen and Koshy, 2011, p.243, gives a detailed discussion on causative constructions in Khasi highlighting both the syntactic and semantic issues of causatives. According to them, causativization in Khasi morphology is "indicated with the use of morphological markers ***pin-*** and ***pʰaʔ*** as "first degree causatives" and ***pʰaʔ-pin-*** as 'second-degree causatives' prefixed to the verb and thereby increased the valency of the verb. They make the argument that causations are more than just valency increasing operations. The semantic property of the verb classes in the language can also determine formal usage of the causatives with particular classes of verbs. Thus, according to them, Khasi verbs are of two types – those that allow both ***pin-*** and ***pʰaʔ*** as first-degree causatives and those that allows only for ***pin-***.

Thus, from the above discussions, it may be noted that although causativization may occur as valency changing operations in many languages, its semantic properties may help us in determining the formal usage of some of the verbs in the language based on the classes to which it belongs.

1.7 Causative Constructions in Pnar

Causative constructions in Pnar are formed by having causative verbs as predicates. Causative verbs in Pnar are derived from the caused verbs by attaching prefixes pən- or tən- to the main verb. According to Temsen & Koshy, 2011, p.244, "causativization in Khasi is indicated with the use of morphological markers ***pin-*** or ***pʰaʔ-*** as 'first degree causatives' and ***pʰaʔ-pin-*** as 'second degree causative". Pnar also exhibits a similar pattern of constructions for causations as shown in (3) – (5).

(3) da   **pən-**tʰiaʔ   kɔ   o   u   manʃiɛn
     PST *CAUS-sleep*   *3FSG*   *3MSG*   *3MSG*   *Manshean*
     'She put Manshean to sleep.'

(4) da **pʰaʔ** tʰiaʔ kɔ o
   PST send sleep 3FSG 3MSG
   'She sent him to sleep.'

(5) da **pʰaʔ pən-**tʰiaʔ kɔ o u manʃiɛn
   PST ask CAUS-sleep 3FSG 3MSG 3MSG Manshean
   'She asked (someone) to put Manshean to sleep.'

From the constructions above, it is clear that causatives in Pnar increase the valency of the predicates when derived into causatives. With first degree causatives, one additional argument is added in the structure but with second-degree causatives, the valency of the verb increases by two arguments. According to Temsen & Koshy, 2011, p.245, "when two arguments are added to the constructions in second-degree causative constructions, the load of initiation of the action rests on the newly introduced argument syntactically occupying the subject position (the first causer, the initiator of the act) and the load of execution of the action rests on the other newly introduced argument (the second causer, the executor of the act). This is the prototypical instance of indirect causation."

In these kinds of constructions, the newly added argument performing the role of the second causer, even if not found in the structure explicitly, can occur implicitly as in (3). In (3) although, only two arguments are found in the structure, it is understood that there is another individual that exists performing the role of the one who puts the object to sleep. Thus, it can occur implicitly making the third argument an implicit argument in Pnar.

1.7.1 Verbal Predicates in Pnar

Verbs in Pnar are categorised into three types – intransitive verb, transitive verb and di-transitive verb. Table.1 shows the three types of verbs in Pnar and the types of arguments they take. Intransitive verbs take one core subject NP argument abbreviated as S. Transitive verbs take two core NP arguments - subject and object arguments abbreviated as A and O. Di-transitive verbs take three core NP arguments – subject, direct object and indirect object conveniently abbreviated as A, T and R. It is also found that Pnar exhibits zero valence verbs especially weather verbs that can occur only with *pʰaʔ* in order to form causative constructions.

As mentioned earlier, causatives increase the valency of the verb by one argument when derived with first-degree causatives and when derived with second-degree causatives increases the valency of the verb by two arguments. The next section of the article will look into the number of arguments the verb takes when derived into causatives with zero valence, one valence, two valence and three valence verbs and how it changes the argument structure of the said verbs.

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Sl. No	Verbs	No. of Arguments	Grammatical Relations	Abbreviation
1.	Intransitive Verbs	NP	Subject	S
2.	Transitive Verbs/Mono-transitive Verbs	NP, NP	Subject, object	A, O
3.	Di-transitive Verbs	NP NP NP	Subject, Direct Object and Indirect Object	A, T, R

Table 1. Types of Verbs in Pnar

(6) is an intransitive sentence with the verb *jap* 'die' taking only one argument. The verb *jap* 'die', when derived into causative form as in (7) becomes **pən-jap** 'to kill', a two-valence verb by adding one argument into the internal argument position of the argument structure playing the role of patient as shown in (8).

6.   da   jap   u   ksau   ɔ
       PST   die   3MSG   dog   1PSG
       'My dog died.'

7.   da   **tən**-jap   ki   o   u   ksau   ɔ
       PST   CAUS-die   3PL   3MSG   3MSG   dog   1PSG
       'They killed my dog.'

8. a. jap   'die':   (EXPERIENCER)
     b. pən-jap   'to kill':   (AGENT, PATIENT)

(9) is a transitive construction with the verb **yo** 'see' taking two arguments. When derived into a causative verb turned into a ditransitive verb **pən-yo** 'to show', the verb adds one more internal argument into the structure portraying the role of experiencer and thus changes into a di-transitive verb as illustrated in (10). The argument structure of both the input and output verb is illustrated as given in (11).

9.   da   jo   ɔ   ka
       PST   see   1PSG   3FSG
       'I saw her.'

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10.　　da　**pən-**jo　　u　　nɛt　ka　　ja　　ŋa
　　　PST　CAUS-see　3MSG　Neth　3FSG　ACC　1PSG
　　　'Neth showed her to me.'

11. a. jo　　　'see':　　　(Agent, theme)
　　 b. pən-jo　'to kill ':　　(Agent, theme, experiencer)

(12) is a ditransitive construction in Pnar with the verb *e* 'give' taking three arguments. Pnar can only take up to three arguments in its structure, when the grammatical morpheme *pən-* is attached to the verb *e* 'give', the sentence becomes ungrammatical as shown in (13) and can only occur with second degree causative *pʰaʔ* as shown in (14). The argument structure for the verb e 'give' and its derived form *pʰaʔ-e* 'send' is illustrated in (15) –

12.　　e　　pɔisa　ka　　bɛ　ja　　ŋa
　　　give　money　3FSG　bea　ACC　1PSG
　　　'Bea gives money to me.'

*13.　　da　**pən-**e　　　pɔisa　ka　　bɛ　ja　　ŋa
　　　PST　CAUS-give　money　3FSG　bea　ACC　1PSG
　　　'Bea gives money to me.'

14.　　da　**pʰaʔ-**e　　　pɔisa　ka　　bɛ　ja　　ŋa
　　　PST　CAUS-give　money　3FSG　bea　ACC　1PSG
　　　'Bea sent money to me (by someone).'

15. a. e　　　'give':　　　(AGENT, THEME, RECIPIENT)
　　 b. pʰaʔ-e　'to send':　　(AGENT, THEME, BENEFACTOR)

1.6.1.1 Zero Valence Predicates
　　　Zero valence clauses according to Dryer, 2007 are clauses which semantically do not involve any arguments but depending on the syntax of the language are treated as clauses. These types of sentences normally involve describing the environmental conditions, typically weather conditions. According to Dryer, 1985, there are different strategies followed by languages in forming these zero argument clauses. One of the strategies in a forming zero argument clause is to not express the occurrence of any argument overtly.

　　　In Pnar, there are two ways of forming a zero-argument clause, the first one is when the weather verb describes the environment or weather conditions occurring all by itself with no subject in the argument as shown in (16) – (17).

16. da   slap
    PST   rain
    'It rained.'

17. kɹam
    Cold
    'It is cold.'

The second way is by incorporating a verb into the noun itself in order to form a conjunct verb. The verb does not embody its real semantic function but only to convert the noun into a constituent predicate as shown in (16) – (17).

18. hiɛr   slap
    climb   *rain*
    'It rains. [Literally: Rain is climbing down]

19. da   hap   jɔr
    PST   *fall*   *snow*
    'It is snowing.' [Literally: Snow has fallen]

Zero valence verb like *cʰit* 'hot', *kɹam* 'cold', *hiɛr-slap* 'rain is falling' and other weather verbs only allow causation with the marker *pən-* as illustrated in (20) and (21) not with *pʰaʔ* as it will make the constructions ungrammatical like in (22) and (23). The argument structure in both (20) and (21) are found to have changed from zero valence to one valence with the argument occurring in the external argument position as subject argument.

20. da   **pən-**cʰit   i
    PST   CAUS-hot   3PL
    'We made ourselves warm.'

21. dao   **pən-**hiɛr-slap   u   blai
    FUT   CAUS-fall-rain   3MSG   god
    'God will make it rain.'

*22. dao   **pʰaʔ-**hiɛr-slap   u   blai
    FUT   CAUS-fall-rain   3MSG   god
    'God will make it rain.'

*23. da   **pʰaʔ-**cʰit   i
    PST   CAUS-hot   3PL
    'We made ourselves warm.'

The second-degree causatives **pʰaʔ-pən-** on the other hand is allowed to occur only with zero argument clauses like **cʰit** 'hot', **kɟam** 'cold' etc as in (24) but not with the second type of second argument clause as it will cause ungrammaticality in the structure as in (25). As mentioned earlier, second degree causatives increase the valency of the predicate by two arguments, the structure in (24) is found to have both subject and object argument added in the structure when the predicate is causativized.

24. da   **pʰaʔ-pən-**cʰit   ɔ   ki
     PST   CAUS-CAUS-hot   1PSG   3PL
     'I asked them to make themselves warm.'

*25. dao   **pʰaʔ-pən-**hiɛr-slap   u   blai
      FUT   CAUS-CAUS-fall-rain   3MSG   god
      'God will make it rain.'

The valency of causative constructions with zero valence verb thus increases by one argument when occurring with first-degree causatives and by two arguments when derived with second degree causatives. The argument structure for the causatives given in (18), (19) and (22) illustrates this as given in (26) –

(26) a. pən-chit   'to make oneself warm':   (AGENT)
     b. pən-hiɛrslap   'to make the rain come.':   (AGENT)
     c. pʰaʔ-pən-cit   'ask to make warm':   (AGENT, BENEFACTIVE)

Causative marker **pən-** or **tən-** in Pnar can operate and function with almost all the intransitive and transitive verbs in Pnar through the process of derivation. It is found that, when these markers are attached to some of the di-transitive verbs in Pnar, the sentences become ungrammatical while the same operation is allowed in standard Khasi as illustrated in (27) and (28). It is assumed that **pən-** is not used as a causative but as an element which indicates politeness while telling someone to do the particular act of giving or keeping and thus, no extra argument is added to the sentence as **pən-** does not function as a cause of event. In Pnar, the verbs for the same structure occur normally as di-transitive verbs without using any causative marker. Thus, causatives in di-transitive constructions for Pnar can only occur with what Temsen & Koshy, 2011 considered as second-degree causative markers, not with first degree causative marker **pən-**.

*27a. **pən**-e   bam   ka   bɛt   ja   ŋa
       CAUS-give   food   3FSG   Beth   ACC   1PSG
       'Beth gives me food.' (Pnar)

27b. **pɨn-**ai   ɟiŋbam   i   bɛt   ja   ŋa
CAUS-give   food   3FSG   Beth   ACC   1PSG
'Beth gives me food.' (Std. Khasi)

*28a. **pən-**buʔ   kɔt   ka   bɛt   ha-ɟrɔŋ   meɟ
CAUS-keep   book   3FSG   Beth   LOC-up   table
'Beth keeps the book on the table' (Pnar)

28b. **pɨn-**buʔ   i   bet   ja   ka   kɔt
CAUS-keep   3FSG   Beth   ACC   3FSG   book
ha-ɟrɔŋ   meɟ
LOC-up   table
'Beth keeps the book on the table' (Std. Khasi)

1.8 Conclusion

This paper is a brief attempt at exploring the causative constructions that occur in Pnar. It is seen that Pnar only has morphological causatives which come in the form of prefixes ***tən-*** or ***pən-*** attached to the root verbs. While ***pən-*** and ***tən-*** are derived through prefixing, another causative found in Pnar is ***pʰaʔ*** which is incorporated into the root verb through the process of verb incorporation. These causatives when they occur increases the valency of the verb by one or two arguments as discussed above. Therefore, causatives in Pnar are considered to be valency increasing operations that not only change the syntactical properties of the constructions but also the semantic properties of the sentence too.

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ABBREVIATION

1	-	First Person
2	-	Second Person
3	-	Third Person
SG	-	Singular
PL	-	Plural
CAUS	-	Causative marker
M	-	Masculine
F	-	Feminine
ACC	-	Accusative
LOC	-	Locative

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