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On The "Causative" Forms In Tungus Languages

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According to Ikegami (1974), Tungus languages are divided into four groups as follows mainly under the aspect of phonetic correspondences.

- (Group 1) Ewen, Ewenki, Solon, Negidal
 (Group 2) Udehe, Orochi
 (Group 3) Uilta(Orok), Nanay, Olcha(Ul'chi)
 (Group 4) Manchu, Sibe

In this paper I consider especially Uilta and Nanay in detail, and I mention also Olcha, Ewen, Manchu, and Sibe.

As a conclusion, it is indicated that the forms which have been thought only to be "causative" (or, "causative and passive") until now, have other meanings of "reflexive non-intentional use" and "the use of subject non-conversion". And further, I reconsider the meaning of "causative" in Tungus languages, and also in other languages.

"reflexive non-intentional use" in Uilta

- (1) ɲaala-bi kitaan-ʃi goči luk-**pauč**-či-ni. (Ikegami 1997 p.114)
 hand-Ref needle-Instr. again prick-Ref.Non-intent.-Past-3sg.
 "A needle pricked my finger."

"the use of subject non-conversion" in Uilta

- (2) ʃee-wi pəlim-**bəe**-či-mi ərkaullee-ni. (Ikegami 1997 p.60)
 partner-Ref. hurry-BOON-Durative/Iterative-Conv. do slowly-Pres.-3sg.
 "His partner hurries, but he does it slowly."

"reflexive non-intentional use" in Nanay

(3)əi əsi=mət xaimi tuu-wəən-dii-ni əi, (Kazama 1997 p.95)
this now=Emp. why fall-Ref.Non-intent.-Pres.-3sg. this
"Why did I fall?" she (said and) stood up."

"the use of subject non-conversion" in Nanay

(4)ə~ŋ əsi=təni pondəjoo-ji tui um-buwəən-dəə
now=Topic sister-Ref. in this way say-Sub.Non-conv.-Conv.
xamasi močo-go-raa undiisi pərgə-xə-ni. (Kazama 1997 p.124)
backward return-Asp.-Conv. no meaning try-Past-3sg.

"(The elder brother tried to eat the berries which his sisters had gathered, but they were not good, so he wanted to go away. But at that time, the youngest sister said, 'Why don't you try my berries?') Now the youngest sister said so, he went back, and tried."

(5a)amim-bi bur-buwəən-dəə, ŋoani əmučkəən balji-i-ni.
father-Ref. die-"caus."-Conv. he alone live-Pres.-3sg.

"His father died, he lives alone."

(A literal translation as causative would be, "He made/let his own father die and lives alone."
But this would be incorrect.)

(5b)ami-ni bui-ki-ni. ŋoani əmučkəən balji-i-ni.
father-3sg. die-Past-3sg. he alone live-Pres.-3sg.
"His father died. He lives alone."

(5c)amim-bi bur-buwəən-ki-ni. ŋoani əmučkəən balji-i-ni.
father-Ref. die-"caus."-Past-3sg.. he alone live-Pres.-3sg.
"He killed his father/He let his father die. He lives alone."

We can assume some types of situations which are related to the concept "causative".

Situation 1 [Causative]

I made/let him go. [A make/let B Verb.]
I made/let him eat it. [A make/let B Verb C.]

Situation 2 [Causative/Passive]

I have my hair cut(Someone cut my hair). [A have C Verb-ed.](B Verb C)
I had my house burgled [A have C(something inalienable to A) Verb-ed.]
(The burglar burgled my house). (B Verb C(something inalienable to A))

Situation 3 [Passive]

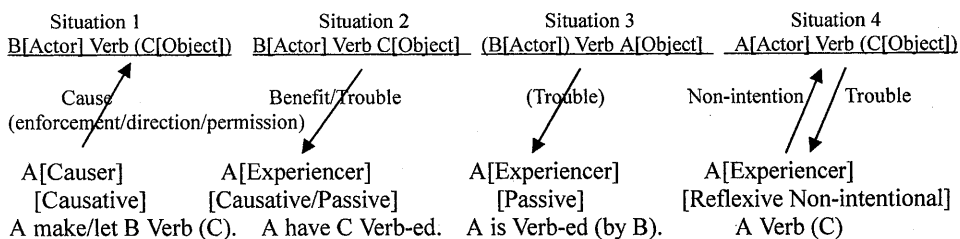
I was hit by him(This sentence implies some "trouble" to the subject). [A be Verb-ed by B.]
The house is built of brick(No implication of "trouble"). [A be Verb-ed]

Situation 4 [Reflexive Non-intentional]

I dozed off (unintentionally). [A Verb (unintentionally).]
I pricked my finger with a needle. [A Verb (unintentionally) C(something inalienable to A).]

These situations can be figured as follows.

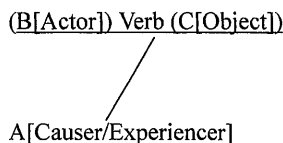
Figure 1



Some languages familiar to us (such as English) seem to have different sentence constructions for each or some of these situations. But such Tungus languages as Uilta and Nanay use only one suffix to express all of these situation-types as we have seen. So the "causative" suffix of these Tungus languages has far wider range of meaning from what has been thought to be causative only. And as we have seen, the "causative" suffix used in the subordinate clause may function only to keep the same subject between clauses if it is syntactically required. In this case the "causative" suffix does not have the meaning of causative, passive, nor reflexive non-intentional.

I think that the essential function of the suffix itself is only to connect A[Causer/Experiencer] with the situation [(B[Actor]) verb (C[Object])] (In the situation 3, C = A, and in the situation 4, B = A). If the figure like above is used, this essential function will be indicated as follows.

Figure 2



And such concrete meanings as causative, passive, reflexive non-intentional, and subject non-conversion will be determined by the following conditions.

- [1] Whether the problematic suffix is used in subordinate clause or not
- [2] The meaning of the verb stem
- [3] The semantic relation between A[Causer/Experiencer], B[Actor], and C[Object], especially whether C is inalienable to A or not