

Verbalization in Yam

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This study tries to present verb formation processes in yam language. The theoretical framework followed is the weak lexicalists hypothesis that treats only derivational morphology under the domain of the lexicon.

In Yam, there are three types of verb stems derived from verbal roots. These are causatives, passives frequentatives and intensives. The first two are formed by affixation whereas the last two use reduplication. All such processes are non-category changing. In other words, their effects are on subcategorizations rather than on categorial membership. Each type is presented as follows:

1. Causative Stems

In general, causativization refers to the act of causing or forcing someone or something to do something. Anderson, (1985:330) defines causative as "a verb that describes a situation where some entity of a causer either brings about an action or at least, fails to prevent it."

In Yam, causative stems are formed by attaching the suffixes [-i)s] and [-i)sis]. Their distribution is determined by the transitive or intransitive nature of the verbal root. [-i)s] goes with transitive roots while [-i)sis] goes with intransitive ones. The latter is a sort of reduplicated form of the former.

1.1. Causativization of Transitive Verbs

As stated above, the affix [-(i)s] is used to derive causative stems from transitive verb roots. The -i of the suffix can be considered as an epenthetic vowel used to avoid impermissible sequences of consonants.

Verb Roots	Gloss	Causative verbs	Gloss
wor-	kill	wor-s-	cause to kill
kiD-	break	kiD-s-	cause to break
dam-	kiss	dam-s-	cause to kiss
mak-	tell	mak-s-	cause to tell
teg-	call	teg-s-	cause to call
wag-	buy/sell	wag-s-	cause to buy/sell
fas-	nag	fas-is-	cause to nag
kas-	sing	kas-is-	cause to sing
ta?-	touch	ta?-is-	cause to touch
wis-	steal	wis-is-	cause to steal

Table 1 Causative Stems (1)

The causative morpheme [s], may surface as [-S] after roots ending in C or J. The process can be captured by the following allomorphy rule, $s \rightarrow S/\{C, J\}$. As Aronoff, (1976:98) states, such a rule "effects a phonologic change", and "only applies to certain morphemes in the immediate environment of certain other morphemes..."

The followings are examples of causative stems with [S].

Verb Roots	Gloss	Causative Verbs	Gloss
ic-	hit	iS-S-	cause to hit
gac-	open	gaS-S-	cause to open
kej-	kill	keS-S-	cause to kill
foc-	massage	foS-S-	cause to massage
tuj-	spit	tuS-S-	cause to spit

Table 2 Causative Stems (II)

From the above examples, we can observe process of bi-directional assimilation between the underlying causative morpheme [-(i)s] and the root final consonants. Both [-(i)s] and the root final consonant are changed to [-S]. It seems that first the causative suffix [-(i)s] assimilates to the root final palatal affricate /-C/ or /J/ in point of articulation to become /-S/. This is a process of palatalization. Then, the root final consonant also assimilates to the already assimilated suffix [-s] in manner of articulation. The two processes can be represented as follows:

- (a) s - s/{c}- palatalization/suffix assimilation
- (b) {c}-- s/-s root final consonant assimilation

Both processes can be shown with the root /ic-/ 'hit' as follows.

ic-s---- > ic-S----- > iSS - 'cause to hit'

The rules are ordered in that the causative suffix assimilation takes place before the assimilation of the root final segment; the first feeding the second.

Syntactically, a causative verb has a different characteristic from its non-causative counterpart. This is because the causative has a valency of one NP more than its non-causative counterpart. This is not peculiar to Yam. Comrie, (1976:261) quoted in Saksena, (1980:125-136) says:

In general, a given causative verb will be expected to have one more noun phrase argument than the corresponding non-causative verb, since in addition to the subject and objects, if any, of that verb, there will be a noun - phrase expressing the person or thing that causes, brings about the action.

Causativization, thus, has a valency increasing effect. In this connection, again Comrie (1985:323) says:

The causative verb may be a transitive verb formed from an intransitive; but it may also, in many languages, be formed from a basic verb already of higher valency, in which case the derived causative always has (at least potentially) one more noun phrase argument than the basic verb.

In Yam, a monotransitive verb root, like /wor-/ 'kill' which strictly subcategorizes only one argument noun phrase can get an additional argument whenever it is causativized.

Hence:

/wor-/ 'kill' V + [NP-]
 /wor-s-/ 'cause to kill' V + [NP NP-]

Similarly, a bitransitive verb like /im-/ 'give' which strictly subcategorizes two arguments can get one more argument for the same reason. Compare the forms below.

/im-/ 'give' = V + [NP NP-]
 /im-s-/ 'cause to give' = V = [NP NP NP-]

We have structures of sentences like the following as illustrations:

1. (a) asu-s gono wor-i
 man-def hyena kill-pf
 "The man killed a hyena"
- (b) C'absa asu-s-in gono wor -s-i
 Chabsa man-def-ac hyena Kill-CAUS-pf
 "Chabsa made the man kill the hyena."
- (c) na-s nawa-s -ik waga im-i
 boy-def girl-def-to money give-pf
 "The boy gave money to the girl"
- (d) asu-s na-s-in nawa-s -ik waga im -s-i
 man-def boy-def-acc girl-def to money give-CAUS-pf
 "The man made the boy give money to the girl."

In such structures, the causee NP can be either optionally omitted or expressed as an oblique object as in structures like the following:

2. (a) C'absa gono wor -s-i
Chabsa hyena kill-CAUS-pf
"Chabsa caused (some one) kill a hyena."
(b) C'absa gono -s-on asu -nik wor -s-i
Chabsa hyena-def-acc man with/by kill-CAUSE-pf
"Chabsa had the hyena killed by a man."

In such structures, there is an extra agent or causer NP, which appears as the subject of the causative sentence.

The causee which was the grammatical subject of the basic verb (non-causative form) cannot remain as the subject of the causative verb, since it is now the causer which takes the subject position of the sentence. The causee has to change its syntactic relationship by being an object of the causative verb marked with the accusative marker [-in/-on], or by being an oblique NP marked with [-nik]. It may vanish from the structure as in the above (2.a) example. The new syntactic relationship which has come about as a result of causativization is represented in the following manner.

Causativization:

Add new agent = SUBJECT
SUBJECT -----> OBJECT/OBLIQUE/O

The above representation shows how an underlying (logical) subject becomes an object or oblique or zero as a result of the introduction of a new agent NP which functions as a new subject.

Following the facts presented here, the causee is the patient of the causative predicate when it is expressed as an object as in (1b) but not when it is suppressed as in (2a), and expressed as an oblique object as in (2b). Since a patient is, according to Jakendoff (1990), "the entity affected by the action," the object causee is interpreted as affected by the causation. The oblique causee on the other hand is an agent unaffected by the causing event compare examples (1b) and (2b) above.

The semantic difference between the two forms of the causee lies in the causer's intentions: in (1.b), for example, where the causee asu 'man' is expressed as an object, the causer C'absa 'Chabsa' intends to make the causee, asu 'man' kill a hyena. In this case, the causer is acting on or affecting the semantic subject of the base predicate. In the latter case in (1.b), where the causee asu 'man' is expressed as an oblique object, the causer is not acting on the logical subject of the base predicate; because it is acting instead on the patient of the base predicate, gono 'hyena'. Here the causee is only an intermediary who carries out the action of killing. The causee asu 'man' is, therefore, the patient of the causative predicate in the former case (1.b) but not in (2.b). In the latter case, it is the base patient gono 'hyena' that is the patient of causation.

Thus, change in subcategorization is not the only thing brought about by the causativization process. The process also induces a new theta role of 'causing agent'

The subcategorization frames of such verbs are different from those of their intransitive base forms as they are characterized by an NP complement which they acquire as a result of their having the affix [-(*i*)s]. An intransitive verb like *el* - 'run', for example, is subcategorized for an $\overline{\text{NP}}$ complement, when it is causativized. Compare the following:

- | | | | | |
|----|---------|-------|-------|-----------|
| a. | /el-/ | 'run' | (int) | V + [-] |
| b. | /el-s-/ | 'run' | (tv) | V + [NP-] |

The subcategorization frame of such verbs as *els-run* (tv.) is the same as that of a transitive verb. Hence, the suffix [-(*i*)s] can be considered as a transitive morpheme. The following are structures with both types of verbs.

3. (a) C'absa el-i
 Chabsa run-pf
 "Chabsa run"
- (b) na-s C'absa -s -in el -s-i
 boy-def chabsa-def-acc run- CAUS-pf
 "The boy made Chabsa run"

The causativization of an intransitive verb changes the subject in (a) to an object in (b), and introduces a new subject.

Moreover, as stated earlier, the transitivized verbs can also undergo causativizations by having the affix [-(*i*)s] as in the following examples:

Transitivized Verb Stems	Gloss	Causativized Verb Roots	Gloss
fat-is-	fatten	fatisis-	Cause (so) to fatten
bo?-is-	make hot	bo?isis-	Cause (so) to boil
fals-	boil (tv)	falsis-	Cause (so) to boil
ha?-is-	drop (tv)	-ha?isis-	Cause (so) to drop

Table 4 Causativized forms of Transitive verbs

The subcategorization frames of such verbs is like that of transitive based causative forms. The number of complements that a verb requires increases as it changes from intransitive to transitive and then to causative. This is shown in the following entries for the lexical items /bo?/ 'boil (at low temp)' (int) /bo?-is-/ 'boil (at low temp) (tv) and /bo?-isis-/ 'cause (someone) boil (at low temp) respectively to illustrate this point.

/bo?-/	V + [-]
/bo?-is-/	V + [NP-]
/bo?isis-/	V + [NP NP-]

The followings are structures with such forms respectively:

4. (a) aka bo? -i
water boil - pf
"The water boiled"
- (b) na -s aka -s -on bo? -is -i
boy def water-def-acc boil-CAUS-pf
"The boy made the water boil"
5. (a) C'absa na-s -in aka bo? -isis-i
Chabsa boy-def-acc water boil- CAUS-pf
"Chabsa caused the boy make water boiled"
- (b) C'absa aka -s -on na -nik fal-isis-i
Chabsa water-def-acc boy-with/by
boil-CAUS-pf
"Chabsa had the water boiled by a boy."

In such sentences, there is a change in the syntactic status of NPs. The subject of sentence (4.a) aka 'water', for instance, cannot remain as the subject of the transitivized verb in (4.b). As the subject position is occupied by the newly introduced subject NP, na 'boy', aka 'water' become objects identified by the element -in (4.b). In sentences (5.a) and (5.b), a new causer NP, C'absa 'Chabsa' is introduced. This NP takes the subject position that makes the previous subject NP na 'boy' an object again identified by the same element -in in (5.a). It can also appear as an oblique object identified by the suffix -nik in (5.b).

The increase in the number of NPs and the change in the grammatical relations of NPs are not the only changes brought about by the transitivization and causativization processes. An agentive role is introduced as a result of the transitivization process and a new causing agent NP is also introduced to be

The causative of such reciprocal actions is expressed morphologically. The process refers to causing two or more people doing something to one other. The affix used to derive such stems is [-sisis] which is the reduplicated form of the causative suffix already shown. The affix occurs immediately next to the verb root and expresses that someone causes the action indicated by the verb to take place in a reciprocal manner. The following table shows such forms.

Verb Roots	Gloss	Causative Recip.	Gloss
dam-	kiss	dam-sisis-	cause to kiss other
ta?-	touch	ta?-sisis-	cause to touch each other
sun-	love	sun-sisis-	cause to love other
ki?-	kick	ki?-sisis-	cause to kick other
mak-	tell	mak-sisis-	cause to tell each other

Table 5 Causative of Reciprocal Verbs

Such verbs do not have increased valency any more than simple transitive verbs. The only difference between them and simple transitives is that, these have a causing Agent NP which has a grammatical function of subject and also an object NP which has both the Agent and Theme roles. The object which is inherently plural is both a causee as well as patient. The subject NP causes the object NPs to do something to each other.

The lexical entries of the verb [dam-] 'kiss and its reciprocal [dam-sisis] 'cause to kiss each other', for instance, is as follows:

/dam-/ v: [NP NP]
 Agent Theme
 /dam-sisis/ v: [NP NP]
 Cs.Ag. Th.

The following examples show the structural similarities between the two types of verbs:

6. (a) bar nanguta -s -n dam-i
 he children-def-acc kiss-pf
 He kissed the children
 (b) bar nanguta -s -on dam-sisis-i
 He children-def-acc kiss-CAUS of Rec-pf
 He made the children kiss each other.

A word formation rule, $[[x-] + -sisisi] \rightarrow [x-]$ CAU of Rec. may be formulated for the derivation of such forms.

2. Passive Verb Stem Formation

Passive verbs are derived from active roots with the suffix [-t]. The followings are examples of such forms:

Verb Roots	Gloss	Passive Verb Stems	Gloss
wor-	kill	wor-t-	be killed
mak-	tell	mak-t-	be told
dam-	kiss	dam-t-	be kissed
wag-	buy/sell	wag-t-	be bought/sold
sun-	love	sun-t-	be loved

Table 6 Passive Verbs (I)

The passive morpheme has the allomorphs $\{d^h - s^h - s^- - C\}$ which are phonologically conditioned passive affix /-t/ assimilates to the root final consonant as in the following.

Verb Roots	Gloss	Passive Verb Stems	Gloss
us-	drink	us-s-	be drank
kic-	burn	kic-c-	be byrbt
ic-	hit	ic-c-	bé hit
fas-	annoy	fas-s-	be annoyed
kad-	cut	kad-d-	be cut
kid-	break	kid-d-	be broken

Table 7 Passive verbs (II)

The allomorphic variations are the following:

- t -----> C/C-
- t -----> s/s-
- t -----> d/d-
- t -----> s/s-

The derivation of the passive follows the following rule, $[[x^-] + -t] \text{ -----> } [x^-] \text{ passive}$

The same rule can also derive impersonal passives from intransitive roots like the following.

Verb Root	Gloss	Impersonal Passive Stems	Gloss
kit-	die	kit-t-	(it) be died
el-	run	el-t-	(it) be run
kun-	sleep	kun-t-	(it) be slept

Table 8 Impersonal Passives

The syntactic property of such forms is that their external arguments are impersonal or non-referential. The interpretive source for the unexpressed subject is in the verb itself. One can understand what the subject is from the form of the verb.

Passivization results in the reduction of arguments of verbs. A verb with an x number of arguments changes to one with an $x-1$ arguments as a result of the passive morpheme. The following structures illustrate this.

7. (a) C'absa na -s -in wor-i
 Chabsa boy-def-acc kill-pf
 "Chabsa killed the boy"
- (b) na -s wor -t -e
 boy-def kill-PASS-pf
 "The boy was killed"

In the passive structure (b), the direct object has become the subject and the subject of the structure in (a) is missing. The subject of the passive (na-s 'the boy') has the thematic role of patient and it obtains its meaning of 'receiver of the action'.

The agent NP of the active structure in (a) can occur optionally as an oblique object of [-nik] 'by' in structures like the following.

8. na -s C'absa-nik wor -t -e
 boy-def chabsa-by kill-PASS-pf
 The boy was killed by chabsa

What is going on here is the 'demotion' of the old subject NP and the 'promotion' of the direct object to subject. This is the property of passivization as pointed out in Perlmutter and Postal (1977), Keenan (1975) quoted in Van Valin (1980:316) as follows:

...the basic function of the passive is direct object-to-subject promotion, with demotion of the initial subject as a consequence of direct object promotion, ... Subject demotion (Actor Suppression) is the basic function of the passive, with direct object promotion being an optional feature: Both of these positions take passivization to have two aspects, subject demotion and direct object promotion. Such demotions and promotions of arguments can be indicated as follows:

Passivization:

(SUBJ) -----> oblique Agent
(OBJ) -----> (SUBJ)

This shows that passivization changes the arguments associated with the function of object into subject, and the argument paired with the function of subject into an oblique Agent phrase which is optional.

Finally, a WFR $[[x-]vr \mp \text{Aff } v] \text{ --- } [x]v$ can be formulated to generate verbal stems from other roots or stem.

3. Frequentatives and Intensives

The frequentatives and intensives are formed by reduplicating verb roots. The reduplication of the whole root is a regular process of forming such verbs as shown in the examples.

Verb Root	Gloss	Intensive/ Frequentative	Gloss
wor-	kill	worwor-	kill repeatedly
kar-	cut	karkar-	cut into pieces
kiD	break	kiDkiD-	break into pieces
ic-	hit	icic-	hit repeatedly
gac-	open	gacgac-	open repeatedly
bac-	taste	bacbac-	taste repeatedly
bog-	destroy	bog-bog-	smash into pieces

Table 9 Frequentatives and Intensives

The process can be captured by the following rule:

$$[x_{vr1} + x_{vr1}] \text{-----} \rightarrow [x]_{\text{vstem} + \text{Frequentatives}} + \text{Intensive}$$

Syntactically, frequentatives and intensives do not have argument structures different from their base form. The only difference is their semantics which is one of denoting the repetitive or intensive nature of the actions. Compare the following:

1. bar i?on-s-on kar-i
 he wood-def.-acc cut-pf
 "He cut the wood"

2. bar i?on-s-on Karkar-i
 he wood-def.-acc cut/INTENSIVE/-pf
 "He cut the wood in to pieces."

To sum up, in this language causative, passive, intensive and frequentative verbs can be formed from verb roots. The first two use the processes of affixation while the latter ones use reduplication,

The causativaization process shows a valency increasing effect in contrast to that of passivaization which has a valency decreasing effect. On the other hand, the argument structures of frequentatives and intensives do not vary from that of their respective base forms.

Notes

1. The yam language is an Omotic language belonging to the Western branch of the sub-class known as Gimojan, Fleming, (1976:47). The Yam people live in Keffa Administrative region. They inhabit the area between the Gibe river in the west and the Omo River in the east, Huntingford, (1955:138). Previously, they were known as Janjero, and the name by which they were known until very recently was Yamsa.

2. The claim of the weak lexicalist hypothesis is that the lexical component contains only derivation and compounding. According to this view inflection is not treated as part of the morphological component of grammar. This approach to morphology is followed by Chomsky (1970), Halle (1973) and other.

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