THREE TYPES OF CAUSATIVE CONSTRUCTIONS IN HAKHA LAI [1]

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1 . INTRODUCTION

Hakha Lai (Chin) belongs to the Kuki-Chin branch of the Tibeto-Burman family. It is spoken in Hakha and Thantlang towns, and their vicinity (Chin State). Lai has predominantly SOV order.

There are three kinds of causative constructions in this language, which I call *s-* causatives, *-ʔ* causatives, and *-ter* causatives.

S- causatives are characterized by devoicing or aspiration of the stem-initial consonant, as shown in (1)[2]:

(1)   *Simplex[3]*   s- *Causative*

	Form I	*Form II*	*Gloss*	*Form I*	*Form II*	*Gloss*
a.	**káaŋ**	**kaŋʔ**	'burn' (int)	**kháaŋ**	**khaŋʔ**	'burn' (tr)
b.	**mit**	**miʔ**	'go out'(light)	**hmit**	**hmiʔ**	'extinguish'
c.	**láw**	**lawʔ**	'disappear'	**hláw**	**hlawʔ**	'erase'
d.	**ríl**	**rilʔ**	'roll' (int)	**hríl**	**hrilʔ**	'roll' (tr)
e.	**rook**	**roʔ**	'break down'	**hrook**	**hroʔ**	'destroy'
f.	**tsat**	**tsaʔ**	'be severed'	**tshat**	**tshaʔ**	'sever' (tr)
g.	**trùm**	**trúm**	'descend'	**thrúm**	**thrumʔ**	'put down' (tr)

The second type of causative construction involves a stem-final glottal stop, i.e. *-ʔ* causatives. Examples are given in (2):

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[2] For a brief summary of the Form I / Form II distinction in Lai, see section 2 below. For a full discussion of phonological alternations between Form I and Form II in Lai, see Melnik (1998); for the syntactic distribution of Form I and Form II, see Kathol and VanBik (2002); and for Tone in Lai, see Hyman and VanBik (2002a,b).

[3] Following Matisoff (1976), I use the terms 'simplex' and 'causative' to differentiate the non-causative/causative pairs.

(2)   *Simplex*   *-ʔ Causative*

	Form I	*Form II*	*Gloss*		*Gloss*
a.	dàm	dám	'be healthy'	damʔ	'heal' (tr)
b.	raŋ	rán	'be fast'	ranʔ	'rush' (tr)
c.	thlùm	thlúm	'sweet'	thlumʔ	'sweeten'
d.	nìam	níam	'short'	niamʔ	'shorten'
e.	sàaŋ	sáan	'high'	sanʔ	'make higher'
f.	saaw	sáaw	'long'	sawʔ	'make longer'
g.	tooy	tóoy	'short'	toyʔ	'shorten'

The third type, *-ter* causative, is formed by suffixing the bound morpheme *-ter* to the verbs, as shown in (3):

(3)   *Simplex*   -ter *Causative*

	Form I	*Form II*	*Gloss*		*Gloss*
a.	káaŋ	kaŋʔ	'burn' (int)	kaŋʔ-tèr	'cause to burn'
b.	mìt	mìʔ	'go out' (light)	mìʔ-tèr	'cause to extinguish'
c.	lów	lowʔ	'disappear'	lowʔ-tèr	'cause to disappear'
d.	rìl	rilʔ	'roll' (int)	rilʔ-tèr	'cause to roll'
e.	rook	roʔ	'break down'	roʔ-tèr	'cause to break down'
f.	tsat	tsaʔ	'be severed'	tsaʔ-tèr	'cause to split'
g.	tláa t	laak	'fall'	tlaak-ter	'cause to fall'

Prima facie, the three causative constructions of Lai in (1-3) look similar, in that they all are transitive, involve causative meaning, and appear to be systematically related to non-causative verbs as illustrated in (4-6):

(4) a. SIMPLEX

Boo-lúŋ   ʔa-rìl.
football   3SG.S-roll.I (int)
'The football rolled.'

b. *s-* CAUSATIVE

Boo-lúŋ   ka-hrilʔ.
football   1SG.S-roll.II (tr)
'I rolled the football.'

(5) a. SIMPLEX

Na-tùŋ   ʔa-sàaŋ.
2SG.POS-height   3SG.S-high.I
'You are tall.' [Lit. 'Your height is high.']

b. *-ʔ* CAUSATIVE

Na-tùŋ   ka-́n-sanʔ   làay.
2SG.POS-height   1SG.S-2SG.O-heighten.INV   FUT
'I will make you taller.' [Lit. 'I will heighten your height.']

(6) a. SIMPLEX

> Boo-lúŋ ʔa-ríl.
> football 3SG.S-roll.I (int)
> 'The football rolled.'

b. *-TER* CAUSATIVE

> Boo-lúŋ ka-rilʔ-ter.
> football 1SG.S-roll.II-CAUS
> 'I caused the football to roll.'

However, we will see that *s-* causative and *-ʔ* causative would best be labeled as morphologically regular but unpredictable lexical causatives, while *-ter* causative constitutes a completely productive morphological causative.

In order to describe the causative constructions in Lai adequately, it is essential to have a brief summary of Form I / II verbal morphology, because this morphology plays an important role in every aspect of Lai syntax, including causative constructions.

2. VERBAL FORM ALTERNATION IN LAI

2.1. *Form I and Form II Alternation*

The examples in (1) above illustrate a morphological alternation which has been called Form I vs. Form II (Patent 1997). This alternation is arguably not linked in any straightforward way to a single parameter of variation such as tense, aspect, or transitivity. Instead the alternation appears to be conditioned by a number of lexical and constructional distinctions which may interact with each other.

In affirmative declarative root clauses, the basic pattern is that intransitive verbs exhibit Form I morphology as shown in (7A) whereas transitive verbs exhibit Form II morphology as illustrated in (7B)[4]:

(7A) INTRANSITIVE

a. Ni Hu ʔa-tlii.
> Ni Hu 3SG.S-run.I
> 'Ni Hu ran.'

b. Ka-pàa   ʔa-ʔit.
> 1SG.POS-father   3SG.S-sleep.I
> 'My father slept.'

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[4] Under certain conditions, a notionally transitive verb can occur with Form I even in affirmative root clauses. However, as Bickel (2000:9) notes, there are constructions that are notionally transitive but nevertheless count as intransitive from the perspective of the grammar.

(7B)   TRANSITIVE

   a.   Ni Hu niʔ   vok   ʔa-thaʔ.
      Ni Hu ERG   pig   3SG.S-kill.II
      'Ni Hu killed the pig.'

   b.   Ka-nùu   niʔ   ròol   ʔa-tshúan.
      1SG.POS-mother   ERG   food   3SG.S-cook.II
      'My mother cooked a meal.'

There are some overriding factors in the syntax of Form I and Form II alternation. The presence of negative marker *láw*, imperative marker *tuaʔ*, or yes/no question marker *máa* uniformly require Form I morphology regardless of the (in)transitivity of the verb, as shown in (8):

(8) a. NEGATIVE

      Ni Hu niʔ vok   ʔa-that   láw.
      Ni Hu ERG pig   3SG.S-kill.I   NEG
      Ni Hu did not kill the pig.'

   b . IMPERATIVE

      ròol   tshùaŋ   tuaʔ !
      food   cook.I   IMP
      '(Please) cook a meal!'

   c . Yes/No QUESTION

      Ni Hu niʔ vok   ʔa-that   máa ?
      Ni Hu ERG   pig   3SG.S-kill.I   QST
      'Did Ni Hu kill the pig?'

In adverbial subordinate clauses, Form II morphology is required. This construction overrides any Form I requirements stemming from the status of the verbs as intransitive. Cf. (9):

(9) SUBORDINATE

   a   Ni Hu niʔ vok   ʔa-thaʔ   láw   tik-ʔaʔ...
      Ni Hu ERG pig   3SG.S-kill.II   NEG   when
      'When Ni Hu did not kill the pig...'

   b.   Ni Hu ʔa-tliik   láw   tsàa-ʔaʔ...
      Ni Hu 3SG.S-run.II   NEG   because
      'Because Ni Hu did not run...'

c. Ka-pàa   ʔa-ʔìʔ   hnuu-ʔaʔ...
    1SG.POS-father   3SG.S-sleep.II after
    'After my father slept...'

2.2. Invariant (Transitive)

Some Lai verbs have a third variant in addition to Form I and Form II. These verbs normally have final glottal stop as illustrated in (10).

(10) *Form I*   *Form II*   *Gloss*   *Invariant*   *Gloss*

a.	dìŋ	dín	'drink'	dinʔ	'give to drink'
b.	tshùaŋ	tshúan	'cook'	tshuanʔ	'cook for someone'
c.	tshìm	tshím	'say'	tshimʔ	'tell someone'
d.	tlìŋ	tlín	'full'	tlinʔ	'fill' (tr)

These verbs are called invariant (transitive) verbs, because they are almost always transitive and they do not display any alternation in form when they occur in syntactic constructions that require Form I (11a) or Form II (11b), respectively:

(11) a. NEGATIVE

   Ni Hu niʔ vok   tìi   ʔa-dinʔ   láw.
   Ni Hu ERG pig   water 3SG.S-give drink.INV   NEG
   'Ni Hu did not give drink to the pig.'

   b. Ka-ʔùu   niʔ   ròol   ʔa-ka-tshuanʔ   tik-ʔaʔ...
       1SG.POS.-brother ERG   food   3SG.S-1SG.O-cook for.INV   when
       'When my brother cooked me a meal...'

Sometimes, the invariant transitive form is identical to the Form II of the related simplex verb, as shown in (12):

(12) *Form I*   *Form II*   *Inv. (Tran.)*

| a. | khek | kheʔ | 'peel off' | kheʔ | 'peel for' |
| b. | pee | peek | 'give' (tr) | peek[5] | 'give' (ditr) |

In (12a) the phonological form *kheʔ* (form II) and *kheʔ* (inv.) are the same. But if we compare the argument structure of (13) and (14), we see that *kheʔ* in (13) is Form II whereas *kheʔ* in (14) is an invariant (transitive) form.

(13) FORM II

   Ka-fàr   niʔ   thày   ʔa-kheʔ.
   1SG.POS-sister ERG   fruit   3SG.S-peel.II
   'My sister peels (the skin of) the fruit.'

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5   When the final consonant is an oral stop in Form II, there is no -ʔ in the corresponding invariant transitive.

(14) INVARIANT

>   Ka-fàr   niʔ   thày   ʔa-ka-kheʔ.
>   1SG.POS-sister ERG fruit 3SG.S-1SG.O-peel for.INV
>   'My sister peels (the skin of) the fruit for me'.

3. CAUSATIVE CONSTRUCTIONS IN LAI

3.1. S-Causatives

In (1) it has been shown that the *s*- causative involves devoicing or aspiration of the initial stem. Although this morphological operation is a regular process, it does not apply productively in Lai. For instance, it is not possible to devoice or aspirate the initial consonant of just any verb (which may be a viable candidate), and get the causative meaning, as shown in (15):

(15)   *Simplex*   *Devoicing / Aspiration*

	Form I	*Form II*		*Form I*	*Form II*	
a.	pàn	pán	'thin'	*phàn	*phán	'make thin'
b.	rìŋ	rín	'loud'	*hrìŋ	*hrín	'make loud'

In the syntax of *s*- causative in Lai, the simplex verb always needs to be intransitive. There is no transitive verb with a corresponding *s*- causative variant (for the full list, see the Appendix). (16) gives such examples of impossible forms.

(16)   *Simplex*   *Devoicing / Aspiration*

	Form I	*Form II*		*Form I*	*Form II*	
a.	tán	tán	'cut' (tr)	*thán	*than	'cause to cut'
b.	lìim	lìim	'finish'(tr)	*hlìim	*hlíim	'cause to finish'
c.	nàm	nám	'push' (tr)	*hnàm	*hnám	'cause to push'

Semantically, *s*- causative is always interpreted in terms of 'direct causation', i.e., the agent is construed as directly responsible for bringing about the described event, as shown in (17b):

(17) a.   mày   ʔa-mit   máa ?
>   fire 3SG.S-go out.I   QST
>   'Did the light go out?'

>   b.   mày   na-hmit   máa ?
>   fire 3SG.S-extinguish.I QST
>   'Did you extinguish the light?'

In (17b) the gloss could not be 'did you let the light go out' nor 'did you cause the light to go out', e.g. by asking someone else to flip the light switch. The agent (here 'you') is required to be personally involved in the act of extinguishing the light.

Lai *s*-causative poses some problem in the typology of causative constructions, i.e., whether it should be classified as a 'lexical causative' or a 'morphological causative'. The Lai *s*-causative involves the regular morphological operation of initial aspiration for the causative counterpart of the simplex verb, yet still acts like 'lexical causatives', as exemplified in (18b-c):[6]

(18) a. Ni Hu niʔ   vok   ʔa-**thaʔ**.
        Ni Hu ERG   pig   3SG.S-kill.II
        'Ni Hu   killed a pig.'

    b. Ni Hu niʔ   thìŋ-ŋee   ʔa-**khiaʔ**.
        Ni Hu ERG   wood-branch   3SG.S-break.II
        'Ni Hu broke a branch of a tree.'

(18) c. Ni Hu niʔ   vok   ʔa-**thlaak**.
        Ni Hu ERG   pig   SG.S-drop.II
        'Ni Hu dropped a pig.'

The verb *that / thaʔ* 'kill'[7] in (18a) is a lexical causative verb because the notion of causation ('cause to die') is already contained in the lexical meaning of the verb itself (Whaley 1997:195; Payne 1997:178). The sentence such as *Ni Hu killed the pig but he was not there when it happened* is an anomaly (cf. 19). Such a sentence has to be expressed by a combination of the verb *thii / thiʔ* 'die' with *-ter* causative suffix (cf. 20).

(19)   *Ni Hu niʔ vok   ʔa-**thaʔ**,   ʔa-si-naan,
        Ni Hu ERG   pig   3SG.S-kill.II   3SG.S-COP-although

        tsuu-liaw-ʔaʔ   ʔa-maʔ Ni Hu ʔa-ʔùm   láw.
        at that time   he   Ni Hu   3SG.S-exist.I   NEG
        'Ni Hu killed the pig but he was not there when it happened.'

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[6] The correspondences between the causative verbs and their simplex counterparts are shown below:

	Simplex			Causative		
	Form I	Form II		Form I	Form II	
a.	**kiak**	**kiaʔ**	'break' (int)	**khiak**	**khiaʔ**	'break' (tr)
b.	**tláa**	**tlaak**	'fall' (int)	**thláa**	**thlaak**	'fell' (tr)

[7] The verb *kill* is a lexical causative in many other languages (Goddard 1998:281).

(20)   Ni Hu ni? vok   ?a-**thi?-ter**,   ?a-si-naan,
       Ni Hu ERG   pig   3SG.S-die.II-CAUS 3SG.S-COP-although

       tsuu-liaw-?a? ?a-ma? Ni Hu   ?a-?ùm   láw.
       at that time   he   Ni Hu   3SG.S-exist.I NEG

       'Ni Hu caused the pig to die, but he was not there when it happened.'

Comparison of the syntactic characteristics and semantic behavior of the lexical causative *that/tha?* 'to kill' and the causative variants, *khiak/khia?* 'to break' as well as *thlaa/thlaak* 'to drop' shows that the causative verbs *break* and *drop* behave like the lexical causative *kill*. In (18b-c), the causative verbs *khiak/khia?* 'break' (tr), *thláa/thlaak* 'drop' (tr), which are morphologically derived from the intransitive verbs *kiak/kia?* 'break' (int), *tláa/tlaak* 'fall' (int) are syntactically similar to the verb *that/tha?* 'kill' of (18a), in that they all have two arguments in their syntax. They are also semantically similar, in that they need to be interpreted as involving direct causation. In (18a-c) it is not possible to interpret the agent (here Ni Hu) as merely permitting or indirectly causing the causee to be affected by the described event, but he is required to be directly involved in bringing about the described event. It appears that the simplex counterparts of *s*- causative verbs are generally non-stative verbs (cf. the Appendix).

3.1.1. Lai S- Causative and the Proto-Tibeto-Burman Sibilant Prefix

It is considered an established fact that in many languages of the Tibeto-Burman family, "there is convincing evidence for a Proto-Tibeto Burman sibilant prefix, **s*-, that functioned along a broad spectrum in the causative domain as an intensifier, directionalizer, transitivizer, causativizer of the verbal idea" (Matisoff 1976:415). Matisoff cites evidence for the old sibilant prefix in Written Tibetan as exhibited in (21):

(21)   *Simplex*   *Causative*

   a. **gril-ba**   'be twisted'   **sgril-ba**   'wind; wrap around'
   b. **khor-ba**   'turn around' **skor-ba**   'surround something'
   c. **riŋ-ba**   'be long'   **sriŋ-ba**   'extend, stretch'

In Jingphaw (Kachin), this sibilant causative prefix has palatalized to *šə-*, varying with *džə-* before an aspirated or sibilant root-initial (Matisoff, *ibid.*), as shown in (22):

(22)   *Simplex*   *Causative*

   a. **dam**   'stray'   **šə-dam**   'lead astray'
   b. **lot**   'free'   **šə-lot**   'set free'
   c. **thum**   'be ended'   **džə-thum**   'end something'
   d. **hpriŋ** 'be full'   **džə-hpriŋ** 'fill something'
   e. **su**   'be awake'   **džə-su**   'arouse, awaken someone'

In Burmese the remnant of the sibilant causative prefix **s-* has given rise to causatives just as in Lai, i.e., by devoicing or aspiration of the initial stem of a subset of intransitive verbs as illustrated in (23).[8]

(23)   *Simplex*   *Causative*

    a. **kye**   'be ground fine'   **khye**   'grind up'
    b. **kyak**   'be cooked'   **khak**   'cook'
    c. **nwê**   'be warm'   **hnwê**   'warm up, heat'
    d. **nìm**   'be short'   **hnìm**   'shorten'
    e. **po**   'appear'   **pho**   'reveal'
    f. **tswat** 'be damp'   **tshwat** 'moisten, make damp'

In Lahu, the trace of the sibilant causative prefix **s-* is seen with only about a dozen verbs. Matisoff states that in Lahu "those verb-pairs fall into both voiced/voiceless and several well-defined tonal categories" (Matisoff, 1973/1982:32ff) as shown in (24):

(24)   a. *Simplex*   *Causative*

    / ` /   / mid /
    dɔ̀ 'drink'   tɔ 'give to drink'
    dè 'come to rest'   tɛ 'put down'
    mɔ̀ 'see'   mɔ 'show'
    jɔ̀ 'study'   cɔ 'train'

    b. *Simplex*   *Causative*

    / ^ /   / - /
    câ 'eat'   cā 'feed'
    nô 'be awake'   nɔ̄ 'awaken, rouse'
    dû 'dig'   tū 'bury (as a corpse)'

    c. *Simplex*   *Causative*

    / `ʔ /   / ´ /
    lɛ̀ʔ 'lick, eat'   lɛ́ 'feed an animal'
    vɔ̀ʔ 'wear'   fɛ́ 'clothe, dress someone'
    vàʔ 'hide (oneself)'   fá 'hide something'
    tòʔ 'catch fire'   tú 'set fire, kindle'
    yìʔ 'sleep'   í 'put to sleep'

It appears that many Tibeto-Burman languages have maintained the PTB sibilant causative prefix **s-* in one morphological form or another. Based on the evidence of modern vernacular languages and Written Tibetan, Proto-Tibeto-Burman must have had a regular process of forming causative verbs

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[8] For the full list, see Okell 1969, Vol. I, pp. 205-8.

from simplex ones by adding *s-* prefix (Matisoff 1976:32). In modern Tibeto-
Burman languages (including Modern Tibetan), however, that sibilant causative
prefix **s-* has lost productivity or generality. Song (1996:83) notes that verbs
which underwent that kind of morphological process are prone to lexicalization,
in the same way as verbs reflecting any other derivational affixes, especially
causative ones. As can be expected from Song's observation, that old fossilized
process created the *s-*causative verb-pairs in Lai.

3.2. -ʔ *Causative*

As illustrated in (2) above, a subclass of intransitive verbs acquires
causative meaning by suffixing *-ʔ*.

Morphologically, *-ʔ* causatives are similar to *s-* causatives, i.e., they are
regular but not very productive. It is not always possible to get a causative
reading in the formation of invariant transitive verbs (which are viable
candidates) as exemplified in (25):

(25)   *Simplex*   *-ʔ Causatives*

        Form I   *Form II*   *Gloss*   *Gloss*

   a. phìŋ   phín   'swell'   *phinʔ   'make swell'
   b. hrìŋ   hrín   'green'   *hrinʔ   'make green'
   c. pum   púm   'round'   *pumʔ   'make round'
   d. ʔèeŋ   ʔéen   'yellow'   *ʔenʔ   'make yellow'
   e. sèn   sén   'red'   *senʔ   'make red'

Another point of similarity with *s-* causatives, is the fact that only when the
simplex form is intransitive can *-ʔ* causatives be formed. In some cases, when
the simplex form is transitive, adding the *-ʔ* suffix gives rise to a benefactive
argument, rather than a causee, as in (26).

(26)   ka-ʔùu   niʔ   ròol   ʔa-ka-tshuanʔ.[9]
        1SG.POS-brother ERG   food   3SG.S-1SG.O-cook for.INV
        'My brother cooked a meal for me.'

Semantically, the *-ʔ* causative normally signals direct causation, similarly to
other lexical causative verbs such as *that / thaʔ* 'kill', as illustrated in (27a-b):

(27) a. ka-ʔùu   niʔ   ʔàar   ʔa-thaʔ.
        1SG.POS-brother ERG   chicken   3SG.S-kill.II
        'My brother killed the chicken.'

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[9] The verb *tshuanʔ* 'cook for' is not identical either to Form I *tsùaŋ* or Form II *tshúan* of the
related verb, meaning 'cook'.

b. ka-ʔùu   niʔ   ʔàar-zóo   ʔa-damʔ.
1SG.POS-brother   ERG   chicken-sick   3SG.S-heal.INV
'My brother healed the sick chicken.'

The simplex counterparts of -ʔ causative verbs are stative verbs. In Lai, the verbs listed in (2) above are stative. For instance, *sàaŋ/sáan* 'high' or *nìam/nɨ́am* 'short' are stative verbs because they describe a constant state of affairs. In (28a) below, the intransitive verb *nìam/nɨ́am* 'short' expresses the state of the person described as being short. The fact that (28a) could not be an answer to a question such as "what happened?" shows that *nìam/nɨ́am* 'short' is a stative verb in Lai.

(28) a. SIMPLEX

na-kháan   ʔa-nìam.
2SG.POS-stature   3SG.S-short.I
'You are short.' [Lit. 'Your stature is short.']

b. -ʔ CAUSATIVE

na-kháan   ka-́n-niamʔ.   làay.
2S.POS-stature   1SG.S-2SG.O-shorten.INV   FUT
'I will make you short.' [Lit. 'I will shorten your stature.']

3.2.1. -ʔ Causative and the Proto-Tibeto-Burman *-s Suffix

There are several instances where well attested PTB etyma with *-s correspond to Lai -ʔ :

(29)   *PTB*   *Lai*   *Gloss*   *STC (Benedict 1972)*

a. *g-nis ~ *g-ni-**s**   hniʔ   'two'   #4
b. *rus   ruʔ   'bone'   #6
c. *r-tas   tshaʔ   'thick'   #426
d. *hus   huʔ   'wet'   p. 17
e. *ras   raʔ   'fruit'   p. 17
f. *wa**s**   khùay-**vaʔ** 'bee'   p. 17

It seems possible that the Lai -ʔ causative can be linked to the PTB suffix *-s which still functions as a causative marker in modern Kiranti languages (Ebert 2000:5). Ebert notes that most Kiranti languages have a few verbs allowing a secondary causative/applicative, as exemplified by Bantawa in (30):

(30)   *Simplex*   *Causative*   *Applicative*

a. *i*   'laugh'   *is*   'make laugh'   *itt*   'laugh at'
b. *par*   'shout'   *pays*   'make shout'   *patt*   'shout at'

The fact that the -ʔ suffix in Lai can occur with either a causative (cf. 2) or an applicative meaning (cf. 26) supports the idea that the -ʔ causative derives from the PTB *-s suffix.

3.3. -Ter *Causative*

The Lai -*ter* causative fits the definition of a morphological causative (cf. Whaley 1997:195), because it is regular and productive morphologically, in that it can be suffixed to any verb to express causation or permission/request, as illustrated in (31-32):

(31)   CAUSATIVE

ka-lùŋ   ʔa-ka-roʔ-tèr.
1SG.POS-heart 3SG.S-1SG.O-break down.II-CAUS
'He made me disappointed' (Lit. 'He causes my heart to break down')[10].

(32)   PERMISSION / REQUEST

ʔa-ka-kál-tèr.
3SG.S-1SG.O-go.II-CAUS
'He let me go/He asked me to go.'

The -*ter* causative is fully productive, because even the copula *sii* (cf. 33), as well as many recent loanwords from Burmese such as *phii/phiit* 'to answer' (cf. 34), can undergo -*ter* suffixation with the expected semantic result.

(33)   zùu   loŋ - loŋ   niʔ   mi-sùal   ʔa-kan-**síi**-tèr   láw.
        beer only only ERG   person-bad 3SG.S-1PL.O-COP.II-CAUS NEG
        'Beer alone does not cause us to be [become] bad people.'

(34)   sazàa   niʔ   ca-min-púay   ʔa-kan-**phiit** -ter.
        teacher   ERG   letter-ask-festival 3SG.S-1PL.O-answer.II-CAUS
        'The teacher asked us to sit for the examination.'
        [Lit. 'The teacher caused us to answer questions at the letter-asking festival.']

The causative suffix -*ter* combines with Form II of verbs. The result of this combination is a 'frozen' morphology, because the resulting form is immune to any construction-specific alternation in form seen above in section 2.1. For instance, in Lai relative clauses, the relative marker *tuu* is required to go with Form I verbs, and does not allow relativization of non-subjects (Kathol and VanBik 1999:428). However, even in a *tuu* relative clause, the -*ter* causatives combine with a Form II verb as in (35a):

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[10] For a discussion of this kind of psycho-collocation in Lai, see VanBik 1998.

(35) a. làwthlawpaa   vok   ròol   ʔa-peek-ter   tuu   ka-hmuʔ.
      farmer   pig   food   3SG.S-give.II-CAUS   REL   1SG.S-see.II
      'I saw the one who asked the farmer to give food to (feed) the pig.'

   b. *làwthlawpaa   vok   ròol   ʔa-pee-ter   tuu   ka-hmuʔ.
      farmer   pig   food   3SG.S-give.I-CAUS   REL   1SG.S-see.II

(35b) is ungrammatical, because it violates a morphological rule that the *-ter* causative suffix combines with Form II morphology of the verbs. The verb *pee* 'give' in (35b) is in Form I morphology. This phenomenon of the *-ter* causative having to occur with Form II verbs could be accounted for in terms of the structural differences between underived verbs (36a) and morphologically complex ones, involving stem-final alternation (36b):[11]

(36)   a. V$_{I/II}$ b. [V$_{II}$]-*ter*

(36a) represents underived verbs with Form I / II morphological alternation where the choice of form is determined by lexical and/or constructional factors (see section 2.1). (36b) represents derived verbs where Form II occurs inside a morphologically complex verb in which the stem verb is 'shielded' from any form alternation.

When *-ter* is suffixed to invariant transitive verbs (cf.37c), *s-* causative verbs (cf. 37d), and *-ʔ* causative verbs (cf. 37e), there is another level of valence increase, as shown below:

(37) a. Ka-nùu   niʔ   ròol   ʔa-tshúan.
      1SG.POS-mother   ERG   food 3 SG.S-cook.II
      'My mother cooked a meal.'

   b. Ka- nùu   niʔ   ròol   ʔa-ka-tshúan-tèr.
      1SG.POS-mother   ERG   food 3 SG.S-cook.II-CAUS
      'My mother let me cook a meal.'

   c. Ka- nùu   niʔ   ròol   ʔa-ka-tshuanʔ-tèr.
      1SG.POS-mother   ERG   food   3SG.S-cook for.INV-CAUS
      'My mother let me cook a meal for him.'

   d. Ka- nùu   niʔ   hrìi   ʔa-ka-tshaʔ-tèr.
      1SG.POS-mother   ERG   rope   3SG.S-sever.II-CAUS
      'My mother let me sever the rope.'

---

[11] This excludes derived forms which involve stem-initial alternation, i.e., *s-* causatives. When there is *s-* causative's morphological complex at the stem-initial position, there is still room for the stem-final to alternate.

e. Ka- nùu   niʔ   ʔàar-zóo   ʔa-ka-damʔ-tèr.
    1SG.POS-mother   ERG   chicken-sick   3SG.S-heal.INV-CAUS
    'My mother let me heal the sick chicken.'

The syntactic effect of *-ter* causatives, i.e., their addition of a syntactic argument (Payne 1977:186ff) is similar to that provided by applicative markers such as *-piak* 'benefactive', *-pii* 'comitative', *-taak* 'relinquitive', *-hnoʔ* 'malefactive', *-kanʔ* 'prioritive', and *-naak* 'instrumental', as examplified in (38):[12]

(38)   Hakha-ʔaʔ   ʔa-ka-kal-piak-mii   ka-philʔ.
        Hakha-LOC   3SG.S-1SG.O-go.II-BENEF-REL   1SG.S-forget.INV.
        'I forgot that he went to Hakha for me.'

In some contexts we can get a deontic interpretation for the *-ter* causative, i.e., in terms of expressing an obligation that the subject places on the causee, as illustrated in (39):

(39)   Hakha ʔaʔ   ʔa-ka-kál-tèr-mii   ka-philʔ.
        Hakha-LOC   3SG.S-1SG.O-go.II-CAUS-REL 1SG.S-forget.INV.
        'I forgot that he asked me to go to Hakha.'

In (39) the deontic interpretation is the most natural one. A causative or permissive interpretation that 'I forgot that he let/caused me to go to Hakha' would require further specific background.

3.3.1. Lai ter- *Causative and Reflexive Marking*

Smith (1998:45f) discussed an interesting use of reflexive marking together with the *-ter* causative marker. She generally uses the term "middle voice" to describe phenomena involving reflexive marking in Lai. I prefer the term 'reflexive marking' to focus on the morphological identity of the formative involved, and avoid any unwarranted semantic connotations that the term "middle voice" would imply.

Smith states that "sentences with both a middle and causative marker are ambiguous without a context. They can mean either 'X let Y do something to X' or 'X really does something to Y, or pretends to do something to Y, as a pretext in order to mislead somebody' as in (40):

(40)   Ceu Mang   niʔ   Ni Hu   khàa   ʔaa-velʔ-tèr.
        Ceu Mang   ERG   Ni Hu   TOP   3SG.RFL-beat up.II-CAUS
        (a) 'Ceu Mang let himself be beaten by Ni Hu.'
        (b) 'Ceu Mang pretended to beat Ni Hu.'

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[12] For a detailed analysis of applicatives in Lai, see Peterson 1998.

Smith's representation of sentence (40) is either that 'Ceu Mang let himself be beaten by Ni Hu' as in (40a), or 'Ceu Mang pretended to beat Ni Hu', in order, for example, to divert attention from another situation, as in (40b). Smith represents the semantics of examples (40a) and (40b) schematically as in Figure I (Smith 1998:46):
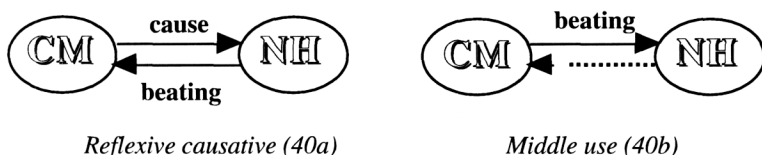

Reflexive causative (40a)   Middle use (40b)

Figure I.

Therefore (40a) is "a simple use of the reflexive together with a causative, in which Ceu Mang is the causer and affectee, while example (40b) is some kind of middle, where the subject carries out the action in such a way that the result of the action indirectly affects himself (e.g., he wants people to think his primary action is 'beating'). Thus Ceu Mang can be seen as both the initiator and endpoint of the action" (Smith 1998:55).

While Smith's interpretation of (40) is correct, it is incomplete, because it does not cover the full range of data. It is possible to get a third reading for (40). as illustrated in (41b):

(41) Ceu Mang niʔ   Ni Hu khàa   ʔaa-velʔ-tèr.
      Ceu Mang ERG   Ni Hu DEIC   3SG.RFL-beat up.II-CAUS

   a. CAUSER   CAUSEE   LOWER OBJECT

      Ceu Mang$_i$ Ni Hu$_j$ Self$_i$ - V -ter
      'Ceu Mang let Ni Hu beat him (self, i.e. Ceu Mang).'

   b. CAUSER   CAUSEE   LOWER OBJECT

      Ceu Mang$_i$ Ni Hu$_j$ Self$_j$ - V -ter
      'Ceu Mang let Ni Hu beat himself (i.e. Ni Hu).'

   c. CAUSER   LOWER OBJECT   CAUSEE

      Ceu Mang$_i$ Ni Hu$_j$ Self$_i$ - V -ter
      [Lit. Ceu Mang let himself beat Ni Hu]
      'Ceu Mang pretends to beat Ni Hu.'

In (41c) when the causer *Ceu Mang* is co-indexed with the reflexive pronoun *ʔaa* as a causee, Ni Hu is interpreted as the lower object. In such a case, the semantics of 'pretend to V' is added to the interpretation.

    Given that (41c) is possible, i.e., the causer can be co-indexed with the reflexive pronoun causee, and not necessarily the lower object, it is important to note here why (42) below is impossible.

(42)   CAUSER   LOWER OBJECT   CAUSEE

        *Ceu Mang$_i$ Ni Hu$_j$ Self$_j$ - Verb - ter

Note that the difference between (41b) and (42) is that Ni Hu is the causee in (41b) whereas he is the lower object in (42). The explanation for the impossibility of (42) is that it violates a common hierarchy among grammatical functions with respect to binding possibilities, i.e., CAUSER > CAUSEE > LOWER OBJECT (cf.Van Valin 2001:46). That is, a reflexive element can take an element to its left as its antecedent but not vice versa. (43b) illustrates how this hierarchy rules out a construal in which the lower object is an antecedent for the causee:

(43) a. CAUSER   CAUSEE   LOWER OBECT

        I   make   Bob$_i$ wash   himself$_i$.

     b. CAUSER   CAUSEE   LOWER OBECT

        *I   make   himself$_i$ wash   Bob$_i$.

The combination of reflexive marking and the *-ter* causative with the semantic result of 'pretend to V' is idiomatic, in that there is an added meaning which is not predictable on the basis of what the component parts (*-ter*, reflexive, verb) mean in other contexts. It is also noteworthy that there is no monomorphemic verb 'to pretend' in the Lai lexicon. The verb 'to pretend' in Lai is *tii-ter*, a combination of *tii* 'do, say' and the *-ter* causative, as in (44):

(44)   ʔaa-tîi-tèr.
        3SG.RFL-do.INV-CAUS
        'He is pretending.'

Smith also notes that "if intransitive verbs or verbs of one-participant events are used with a middle and causative marker, then the sentence only means 'X pretends to do something'", as in (45):

(45)   ʔan-ʔii-thiʔ-tèr.
        3PL-RFL-die.II-CAUS
        'They pretended to be dead.'

Given the right context, however, intransitives with the "middle voice nucleus" are still ambiguous between cause/permission vs. pretense reading, as illustrated in (46a-b):

(46) ?àn-báa   tuk   tsàŋ   naan   ?àn-?ii-tliik-ter   thriam-thriam.
     3Pl.S-tire.I very   PERF   although   3Pl.S-RFL-run.II-CAUS still-yet

   a. 'Although they are very tired, they still make themselves run.'
   b. 'Although they are very tired, they still pretend to run.'

It turns out that the Lai 'pretense reading' of *middle verb + ter* is the result of merger between the Proto-Central-Chin causative suffix *-tiir* and the verbal particle *der* 'to pretend to VERB'. In Mizo, the causative suffix is *-tiir* (cf. 47a) whose function is identical to the Lai causative suffix *-ter* (47b):

(47) a. Mizo (Chhangte 1993:101)

    kâ-pàà-in   keel   mín-veen-tîîr
    1POS.-father-ERG   goat   1O-watch2-CAUS
    'My father made me watch the goats.'

   b. Lai

    ka-pàa-ni?   mehe?   ?a-ka-tsoŋ?-tèr
    1POS.-father-ERG   goat   3SG.S-1SG.O-watch.II-CAUS
    'My father made me watch the goats.'

In addition, the function of the Mizo verbal particle *der* 'to pretend to VERB' (48a) is almost identical with the Lai causative suffix *-ter* (48b):

(48) a. Mizo (Lorrain 1940: dēr, *adv.* 'falsely')

    Mi fak der 'They pretended to praise me.'
    Mi zah der 'They pretended to reverence me.'

   b. Lai

    ?àn-?ii-fak-tèr
    3PP-RFL-praise.INV-CAUS
    'They pretended to praise him'

The examples in (47-48) clearly demonstrate that the Lai 'pretense reading' of middle + *-ter* is the result of a grammatical fusion between the Proto-Central-Chin causative suffix *-tiir* and the verbal particle *der* 'to pretend to VERB'.

4. COMPARISON OF *S-*, *-ʔ*, AND *-TER* CAUSATIVES.

4.1. Common Properties

There are a number of properties that the three types of causatives in Lai have in common.

Morphologically, all of them are regular, i.e., given any simplex stem, one can predict what its causative counterpart will look like, if it exists (cf. 1-3).

Syntactically, they all have a valence-increasing effect (cf.4-6).

4.2. Distinctive Properties

The three Lai causatives have distinctive morphological, syntactic, and semantic properties.

Morphologically, the *s*-causative and *-ʔ* causative are not productive whereas the *-ter* causative is fully productive.

In their syntax, the simplex of the *s*- causative or the *-ʔ* causative needs to be intransitive in order for their corresponding complex forms to be causative, whereas the *-ter* causative can combine with any verb, and have the expected result.

Semantically, *s*- causatives and *-ʔ* causatives are always interpreted in terms of direct causation, i.e., the agent is construed as directly responsible for bringing about the described event (cf.17b, 28b), whereas *-ter* causatives cover a variety of indirect causation types (cf. 31-34). The simplex counterparts of *s*-causative verbs are generally non-stative verbs (cf. the Appendix), whereas the simplex counterparts of *-ʔ* causative verbs are stative verbs (cf. 2) which can be captured by the type hierarchy, as in Figure II:
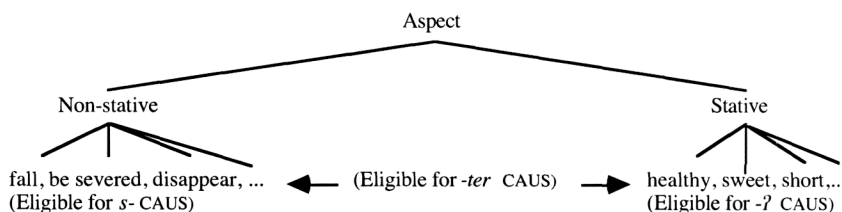

Figure II. Type hierarchy of Lai verbs

Haiman's iconicity pyramid (Haiman 1983, see Table (I) below) claims that it is possible to make predictions about which of two or more competing types will be used to describe direct and indirect causation when a language has more than one formal kind of causative (Whaley 1997:195).

Type of Causative	Form	Causation
LEXICAL	(X - "smaller")	More direct
MORPHOLOGICAL	(Y-Z)	
ANALYTIC	(YZ - "larger")	Less direct

Table I.

As illustrated in Table I, "if a language has more than one formal kind of causative, the 'smaller one' (i.e., the one that is more structurally integrated) will be used for (conceptually) more direct causation, whereas the 'larger' one will be used for less direction causation" (Whaley, *ibid*.). Lai causative constructions demonstrate that the generalization in Table I is correct. *S*-causative and -*ʔ* causative, which are smaller, are used for more direct causation whereas the -*ter* causative, which constitutes the larger construction, is used for less direct causation.

CONCLUSION

The study of causative constructions in Lai potentially contribute to the study of the Tibeto-Burman language family, in that it provides a frame of reference for the investigation of related phenomena (e.g. *s*- causative and -*ʔ* causative) in other Tibeto-Burman languages. For instance, it would be interesting to examine the syntactic as well as semantic similarities and differences of the *s*- causative type in Jingphaw, Burmese, Lahu, and Lai, given that they have the same historical source (cf. 1, 22, 23, 24). In addition, comparison between the Burmese analytic causative marker *sei* and the Lai morphological causative suffix -*ter* might illuminate the differences and similarities between analytic and morphological causatives.

This study also highlights the importance of comparative linguistics, in that two morphemes which Mizo still distinguishes, i.e., the causative suffix -*tiir* and a post-verbal particle *der* 'pretend to VERB', have already been merged into the Lai causative suffix -*ter*. This shows that a purely synchronic account of why the Lai *MIDDLE* + -*TER* results in the reading of *PRETEND TO VERB* is potentially misleading.

Figure III below shows that *s*- causatives and -*ʔ* causatives are best labeled "regular but morphologically unpredictable lexical causatives", while the -*ter* causative is an instance of a "fully productive morphological causative."

	Lexical CAUS	S- CAUS	-ʔ CAUS	-ter CAUS
Morphology:				
Segmentable	-	-	-	+
Regular	-	+	+	+
Productive	-	-	-	+
Syntax:				
Unconstrained[13]	-	-	-	+
Semantic:				
Direct CAUS.	+	+	+	-
Indirect CAUS.	-	-	-	+
Predictable	-	-	-	+
Only stative	-	-	+	-
Only non-stative	-	+	-	+

Figure III.

Abbreviations

1	'first person'	NEG	'negative'
2	'second person'	O	'object'
3	'third person'	PERF	'perfective'
BENEF	'benefactive'	POS	'possessive'
CAUS	'causative'	PTB	'Proto-Tibeto-Burman'
COP	'copula'	PCC	'Proto-Central-Chin'
DEIC	'deictic'	QST	'question'
ERG	'ergative'	PL	'plural'
FUT	'future'	REL	'relativizer'
IMP	'imperative'	RFL	'reflexive'
INT	'intransitive'	SG	'singular'
INV	'invariant'	S	'subject'
LOC	'locative'	TR	'transitive'

---

[13] This refers to whether the causative form can occur only with intransitive verbs, or whether verbs with other valences are possible simplex verbs.

Appendix

This appendix gives more examples of the *s*- causative type.

	Simplex			Causative	
Form I	*Form II*	*Gloss*	*Form I*	*Form II*	*Gloss*
pew	péw	astray	phew	phéw	exclude
peł?	inv.	fall off	pheł?	inv.	trip
pit	pi?	clog up	phit	phi?	block
pok	po?	become open	phok	pho?	open
pón	po?ŋ	come loose	phón	pho?ŋ	loosen
poy?	inv.	fall off	phoy?	inv.	untie
pùur	púur	uprooted	phúur	phúur	uproot
tłáa	tłaak	fall	thłáa	thłaak	drop
tłàaw	tłáaw	disappear	thłáaw	thłáaw	lose
tłǎy	tłáy	become free	thłǎy	thłáy	wean
tłee	tłeet	spill	thłee	thłeet	spill (tr)
tłeek	tłe?	be ripped off	thłeek	thłe?	tear off (tr)
tłèer	tłéer	be split	thłèer	thłéer	split (tr)
tłóoŋ	tło?ŋ	be loose	thłóoŋ	thło?ŋ	loosen (tr)
tłúu	tłuuk	fall	thłúu	thłuuk	fell
toł?	inv.	slide	thoł?	inv.	slide (tr)
tsat	tsa?	disconnected	tshat	tsha?	sever
tsím	tsim?	slide	tshím	tshim?	slide (tr)
trek	tre?	spread	threk	thre?	scatter (tr)
tret	tre?	wear out	thret	thre?	dismantle
triaw	tríaw	disperse	thríaw	inv.	disperse (tr)
tríl	tíł?	fall (fruit)	thríl	thrił?	drop (tr)
trùm	trúm	descend	thrúm	thrum?	bring down
káaŋ	ka?ŋ	burn	kháaŋ	khaŋ?	set fire
kiak	kia?	break	khiak	khia?	break
kúar	kuar?	have holes	khúar	khuar?	dig
kuay	kúay	break	khúay	inv.	break (tr)
maan	máan	crush	hmáan	hmáan	crush (tr)
mér	mer?	turn	hmer?	twist	
mit	mi?	be extinguished	hmit	hmi?	extinguish
mot	mo?	be in pieces	hmot	hmo?	break up (tr)
ŋer?	*inv.*	entwine (int) stir	hŋer?	inv.	entwine (tr)
láw	law?	disappear	hláw	hlaw?	erase
laaw	láaw	alarm (int)	hláaw	hlaw?	alarm (tr)
luut	lu?	enter	hlu?	insert	
ríl	rił?	roll (int)	hríl	hrił?	roll (tr)
rook	ro?	break down	hrook	hro?	destroy

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