Prepositional versus Verbal Causativizers

In causative constructions of natural languages, a causer argument, which does not originate in a predicate's argument structure, is typically realized as NP/DP. Since NP/DP requires Case, the predicate needs to expand its Case-licensing ability: either by being selected by an independent word as in (1a) or affixed with a bound morpheme as in (1b, c).

(1) a. John made Mary go to New York.
   b. John modernized the system.
   c. John-\textit{wa} Mary-\textit{o} New York-\textit{e} ik-\textit{sase-\textit{ta}}.

\textit{Made} in (1a) is clearly a verb. The conjugation patterns show that the affixed predicates in (1b, c) are also verbs. Like transitive verbs, prepositions can Case-license NP/DPs. It is thus expected that prepositional causativizers exist besides verbal ones. I will argue that \textit{–kan} in Indonesian instantiates an affixal preposition that accommodates the increased Case-requirement of causative constructions and that its categorial status allows non-causative usages that are not shared by verbal causativizers in (1a-c).

As summarized in Sneddon (1996) and Son and Cole (2008, S&C), \textit{–kan} constitutes distinct constructions depending on root predicates; if suffixed with \textit{–kan} (and prefixed with \textit{meN-}), unaccusatives and adjectives become causative as in (2) and (3), while transitive verbs become benefactive as in (4).

(2) a. Cangkir-nya pecah.
   b. Janet memecahkan cangkir-nya.

\textit{cup.3 break The cup broke/is broken.' Janet memecahkan cup.3 'Janet broke her cup,'}

(3) a. Wajahnya putih.
   b. Ia memutihkan wajahnya.

\textit{face.3 white 3sg \textit{meN.white-\textit{kan} face.3} 'He whitened his face.'}

(4) a. Tika memanggang roti itu (untuk Erik)
   b. Tika memanggangkan Erik roti itu

\textit{Tika \textit{meN.bake} bread the (for Erik) \textit{Tika meN.bake-kan Erik bread the}}

\textit{Tika baked the bread (for Erik).}' \textit{Tika baked Erik the bread.'}

\textit{NOT 'Tika caused Erik to bake bread.'}

Specifically, \textit{Erik} in (4b) cannot be interpreted as an external argument of the baking event caused by the matrix subject; it can only be a benefactive argument. In contrast, Japanese verbs with \textit{–sase} are interpreted as causative regardless of their transitivity.

(5) a. John-\textit{wa} Mary-\textit{no} tame ni pan-o yak-\textit{ta}.
   b. John-\textit{wa} Mary-\textit{ni} pan-o yak-sase-\textit{ta}.

\textit{John-\textit{TOP} Mary-\textit{GEN} sake for bread-\textit{ACC} bake-PAST 'John baked bread for Mary.'}

\textit{John-\textit{TOP} Mary-\textit{DAT} bread-\textit{ACC} bake-\textit{SASE-PAST} NOT 'John baked Mary bread.'}

Like (1c) with an intransitive verb, (5b), involving a transitive verb, has the causative meaning rather than the benefactive meaning expressed by (5a). The same holds true of \textit{make} in (1a).

The contrast exemplified between (4b) and (5b) can be deduced from the assumption that \textit{–kan} is prepositional. \textit{S&C} refers to the possibility of \textit{–kan} as deriving from the free-standing \textit{P akan}. Moreover, a transitive verb with \textit{–kan} alternates with an intransitive verb or adjective with a PP complement. For instance, the intransitive \textit{berpikir} and the transitive \textit{memikirkan} share the root \textit{pikir} (think), and the former takes a complement headed by the \textit{P tentang} (cf. Sneddon (1996)). It is widely held that auxiliary or functional verbs, including causative verbs, are heads selecting lexical verbs. On the other hand, no evidence has ever been presented on the existence of prepositions selecting bare verbs, while verbs taking prepositional complements are amply attested. I will thus assume that ver-
bal and prepositional causativizers constitute the opposite hierarchical configurations in (6a, b), respectively (linear order irrelevant).

(6) a. [vP v(-sase) [ ... (verbal) root ... ]] b. [√P (verbal) root [ ... [P –kan] ... ]]

I assume with Kratzer (1996) that an external argument is introduced in the projection of a functional head selecting a verbal root. If –sase counts as such a head, it should be able to Case-license an external argument in its projection. On the other hand, if –kan appears under the projection of a (verbal) root, it can only Case-license internal arguments. Specifically, –kan cannot Case-license the external argument of a transitive verbal root, and this explains the absence of the causative reading in (4b) in contrast to (5b).

As exemplified in (2b), (3b), and (4b), roots with –kan are prefixed by meN-. Contrary to S&C, I assume meN- to function only as a verbalizing head; the ability to check accusative Case comes from a root or –kan. This assumption is supported by a highly productive process with meN- to derive inchoative verbs from adjective roots (cf. Sneddon (1996)). Besides (3a, b), for example, there is an intransitive verb menuih (meN-putih) meaning 'turn pale'; its internal argument is Case-checked in the subject or IP-spec position, just as in (3a). The general pattern is that given a(n adjectival) root R with one internal argument θ_int, three constructions are available: (i) θ_int R (e.g. (3a)), (ii) θ_int meN-R, and (iii) θ_int meN-R-kan θ_int (e.g. (3b)). Accusative Case-checking is clearly irrelevant in (ii).

As in the standard view that these alternations involve a higher verbal head, the present analysis assumes an empty affixal preposition on a par with –kan; the former alternation is restricted to unaccusatives and adjectives, and 'John baked Mary bread' has no causative meaning just like the Indonesian example in (4b).

Finally, most of the inchoative-causative pairs in English lack overt morphology; so do the transitive-benefactive pairs. Contrary to the standard view that these alternations involve a higher verbal head, the present analysis assumes an empty affixal preposition on a par with –kan; the former alternation is restricted to unaccusatives and adjectives, and 'John baked Mary bread' has no causative meaning just like the Indonesian example in (4b).

References

Chonan, K. (2009) "A study of causatives and applicatives in English, Indonesian, and other languages." ms.


