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Godoberi

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VII. Transitivity in lexicon and grammar

Nichols (1982) has suggested a typological distinction between languages inclined to transitivity decreasing (e.g. passive) vs. transitivity increasing (e.g. causative) derivational patterns. Along the lines of this typology, languages can be characterized as being predominantly transitivity decreasing (like Indo-European), transitivity increasing, or equally favoring both kinds of processes (like Kartvelian or Austronesian, see A.A. Kibrik (1993)).

Daghestanian languages are clearly on the transitivity increasing side. Usually they have no passive-type constructions, phenomena like anticausativization or verbally-marked reflexives; but they do represent prototypical transitivity increasing processes such as causativization.

Also Daghestanian languages usually have a considerable number of labile verbs allowing both transitive and intransitive usage without any verbal marking. Godoberi generally fits into this Daghestanian standard but also demonstrates some lexically and grammatically restricted transitivity decreasing processes.

0. Transitivity: preliminaries

The notion of grammatical transitivity is fairly straightforward in Godoberi. Being a semantically ergative language, it displays an Ergative NP in every transitive clause, and every transitive verb can have an Ergative argument. As in Daghestanian in general (see Kibrik (1980)), semantic roles are very transparent, that is, transparently visible through superficial cases. Transitive agent is always marked by Ergative, and Ergative always marks agent and never experiencer (though it can mark instrument too, see below). Experiential verbs have Dative, Affective, or Contrastive arguments (and this distinction is probably meaningful too).

Consider the basic semantic (also lexical) one- and two-place clause types:

(1) a. One-place intransitive patientive
   ɣali Rumi
   Ali NOM fell asleep PST
   
   b. One-place intransitive agentive
   ɣali čari
   Ali NOM ran away PST
   
   c. Transitive (always agentive)
   im-ū-di ɣali čumi
   father-OBL-ERG Ali NOM beat PST
   
   d. Experiential (Dative)
   waš-ū-li idali jali
   boy-OBL-DAT like PST girl-NOM
   Father beat Ali
   
   e. Experiential (Affective)
   il-ū-ra ɣali ha’sa
   mother-OBL-AFF Ali NOM see PST
   
   f. Other experiential
   ɣali-ču b-ɣišča darši
   Ali-CONT N=understand PST lesson-NOM
   
   Mother saw Ali
   
   All understood the lesson

Despite the transparency of grammatical transitivity in Godoberi the notion of semantic transitivity, as defined by Kopper and Thompson (1980), is still useful here. Semantic transitivity is a gradual rather than a binary, and a complex rather than a simplex semantic parameter. It is in fact a cluster of simpler semantic features, such as features of participants, their number, aspect, modality, etc. Transitivity is viewed here as a predominantly semantic parameter for cross-linguistic reasons, and also because the processes of transitivity decrease in Godoberi, as will be seen below, favour a gradual treatment.

1. Lability

1.0. Introductory remarks

Labile verbs are verbs that allow both transitive and intransitive usage without any change in the verbal morphology.

There are two types of lability:

(a) patient-preserving lability (henceforth P-lability): patient argument is always retained in the valence pattern, and the agent argument may or may not be there, as in English transitive and intransitive usages of break or open; alternatively P-lability could be called plus-or-minus-agent lability;

(b) agent-preserving lability (henceforth A-lability): the agent argument is always there, and the patient argument may be present or absent — like in English transitive eat (smith) vs. intransitive eat (with no specified patient); otherwise could be called plus-or-minus-patient lability.

P-lability is usually viewed as a more interesting semantic phenomenon, but in ergative languages A-lability is also non-trivial since it implies no Ergative in the intransitive pattern.

Lability is found only in potentially transitive agent-patient verbs; that is, it does not apply to experiential, as well as totally agentless or patientless verbs.

1.1. Patient-preserving lability

1.1.1. Basic examples

Consider the following sentences:

(2) a. hincu Xabi
    door open.PST
    The door opened

   b. im-ū-di hincu Xabi
    father-OBL-ERG door open.PST
    Father opened the door

In (2a) the verb Xabi has only one (patient) argument; in (2b) it has in addition an agent argument. This is a prototypical instance of P-lability. In both cases the patient argument is in the same case — Nominative — so the formal difference is only in the absence/presence of an Ergative NP.
The syntactic test is the placement of the reflexive pronoun žir=b=da 'oneself' after the only overt argument (patient) of a verb subject to be labile. A peculiarity of this pronoun is that a construction "N žir=b=da V" typically means 'N does V (by/on) him/her/itself.' When such a reading is not available for semantic reasons (N cannot exercise any control) quite a different understanding emerges: 'it is N that V.' (This latter meaning is generally rendered by the order "žir=b=da N V", though it also tolerates the "N žir=b=da V" order.)

In the purely intransitive verbs, the "self-control" meaning works perfectly, even in the cases where it seems semantically dubious (6):

(5) ustur  žir=b=da  b=qâl
   chair  self=N=EMPH  N=break.PST
   The chair broke by itself

(6) berkiya žir=b=da  činin'í
    snake  self=N=EMPH  crush.PST
    The snake (got) crushed by itself

If one applies the test to the labile and transitive verbs used in agentless clauses, the difference is that the former allow the "self-control" meaning as easily as intransitives, and the transitive obligatorily invoke another ("self") meaning.

Consider semantically close verbs labile mu=na 'go/drive' and transitive b=eçâ ‘take away’:

(7) a. il-u-di  zini  mu=na  b. zini  mu=na
    mother-OBL-ERG  cow  N=drive.PST  cow  N=go.PST
    Mother took the cow away
    The cow went

b. žir=b=da  mu=na
   cow  self=N=EMPH  N=go.PST
   The cow went by itself

(8) a. il-u-di  zini  b=çêâ
   mother-OBL-ERG  cow  N=take.away.PST
   Mother took the cow away
   The cow was taken away by somebody

b. žir=b=da  b=çêâ
   cow  self=N=EMPH  N=take.away.PST
   It is the cow (not, say, a donkey) that someone took away. (*The cow went by itself)

Haspelmath (1992:289-293) dealt with the same problem of distinguishing labiles from transitives in another Daghastian language, Lezgian. He proposed one test that can be called semantic, and its counterpart in Godoberi has some value too. Labile verbs, in their intransitive

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1 Here and below numbers in parentheses indicate the number of the corresponding lexical entry in the verb lexicon in this volume.

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usage, allow an agent-like referent to add into the verb valence, it playing in fact not an agentic but rather a locative role. With some labile verbs the corresponding noun can appear in the Contractive case (with other verbs it is problematic):

(9) im-u-Di budi c'ata
    father-OBL-CONT wood burn.PST
    The wood burnt with/at father

Of course nothing like this is possible with truly transitive verbs having an obligatory agent in their valence.

1.1.3. Semantic relations between the intransitive and transitive usages of the P-labile verbs
All P-labile verbs have the valence pattern <+ Pat, ± Ag>. Most commonly, the transitive usage of a P-labile verb differs semantically from the intransitive usage only in the presence of an agent argument:

(10) a. mak'i išqa w-aʔa
    child home M=come.PST
    The boy came home

b. il-u-di mak'i išqa w-aʔa
    child-OBL-ERG child home M=deliver.PST
    Mother brought the boy home

(11) a. k'yar-di r=išš
    NPL=cook.PST
    The khinkals cooked

b. *ali-di k'yar-di r=išš
    Ali-OBL-ERG NPL=cook.PST
    Ali cooked the khinkals

However, in some cases there is a lexicalization of the different meanings of the labile verbs.

1. c'ata in the intransitive usage means not only 'burn' but also 'warm up'; the corresponding transitive meaning is lacking:

(12) a. baXa'r c'at-a-da
    last year hay burn.PST-CONV-COP
    The hay has burnt

b. mak'i-di baXa'r c'at-a-da
    child-OBL-ERG last year hay burn.PST-CONV-COP
    The child has burnt the hay

2. Likewise for the verb b=ec 'fill': in the intransitive usage it also means 'eat one's fill' which is not the case with the transitive usage (the meaning 'to feed smb' is rendered by a causative verb, see 2.1.3 below):

(13) a. vedra l'eni-Li b=ec'i
    bucket water-GEN N=fill.PST
    Father-OBL-ERG bucket water-GEN N=fill.PST
    The bucket filled up with water
    Father filled the bucket up with water

c. *ali w=ec'i
    Ali M=fill.PST
    Ali ate his fill
    Mother fed Ali full

d. *il-u-di *ali w=ec'i
    mother-OBL-ERG Ali M=fill.PST

3. b=aq'al 'hide (intr)' does not have a corresponding meaning 'hide (tr)'. This meaning is reserved for a causative verb; the transitive usage surprisingly means only 'steal (tr)'.

(14) a. zini b=aq'al-at-a-da
    cow N=hide-PRES-CONV-COP
    The cow is hiding

b. im-u-di in-šu=b=da zini b=aq'al
    father-OBL-ERG self.OBL-EROBL M=NEG-EMPH cow N=hide.PST
    Father stole his (own) cow

In (14b) a meaning like 'Father hid his cow' would be perfectly natural, but it is not found. (The sentence in (14a) indeed is ambiguous, see ex. (52) below.)

1.1.4. Is there a direction of semantic derivation in the labile verbs?
A natural question arises: is it possible to find out which meaning of a P-labile verb is primary, and which one is derived? In some cases an answer is possible, and there are at least three tests allowing us to do this. The first test is again morphological and is again connected with imperatives. The P-labile verbs of self-propelled movement mu=na 'go/drive', b=ʔaʔa 'come/deliver' have no imperatives (like *wana, *swnu), while optatives from them have only intransitive meanings. This clearly suggests the primarity of their intransitive usage:

(15) caXa w=na=be!
    away M=go-OPT
    Go away from here!

This test, however, is of a very limited applicability since it does not qualify most P-labile verbs as having any directional relation between their two meanings: they have both kinds of imperative (see (4) above). The second test is lexical and is related to causative formation. We will return to it below in section 2.1.3. The third test is syntactic. It is based on the fact that in Godoberi the Ergative and the Instrumental cases are not morphologically distinguishable, and in fact can be treated as one
and the same case, having two different meanings. We, however, for a while will view Ergative and Instrumental as two homophonous forms. The verbs that are inherently transitive and have an inherent agentive argument, including non-labile transitive verbs like c'u:nni ‘beat’ and transitive usages of labile verbs, like ki:it ‘close’, b=itata ‘cook’, c’ata ‘burn’, easily allow an Ergative and an Instrumental NPs in one clause:

(16) mak’ti-di hamaXit c’ula-di c’inni
child-ERG donkey stick-INSTR beat.PST
The child beat the donkey with a stick

(17) im-u-di hincu rek’ula-di hi:ti
father-OBL-ERG door key-INSTR close.PST
Father locked the door with a key

(18) c’ali-di k’yar-di gyaq-i-di r=w:i:la
Ali-ERG knife-PL gas-OBL-INSTR NFL=cook.PST
Ali cooked knifes on gas

In contrast, the verbs that are originally intransitive, like b=ac’i ‘fill’, sinasa ‘stick’, do not allow an Ergative and an Instrumental NPs in one clause. This probably reflects the external (instrument-like) status of the agent in such usages:

(19) a. c’ali-di vedra b=ac’i
Ali-ERG bucket fill.PST
Ali filled the bucket

b. *c’ali-di vedra k’adaXit-bi b=ac’i
Ali-ERG bucket-PST fill.PST
Ali filled the bucket with a ladle

(20) a. c’ali-di kaXati (q’una-li ) sinas-at-a-da
Ali-ERG paper inter-PRP-PRF.COP
Ali is sticking the paper (to the wall)

b. *c’ali-di kaXati sini-di (q’una-li ) sinas-at-a-da
Ali-ERG glue-INSTR inter-PRP-PRF.COP
Ali is sticking the paper (to the wall) with the glue

c. sini-di kaXati sinas-at-a-da
glue-ERG/INSTR inter-PRP-PRF.COP
The paper is sticking with the glue. The glue is sticking the paper

Above (and also in 2.1.3 below), we have been able (though not always easily) to identify the following P-labile verbs as more likely to be originally intransitive: mudana ‘go/drive’, b=ac’a ‘come/over’, sinasa ‘stick’, b=ac’i ‘fill’, b=aq’ati ‘hide/steal’. The following verbs are most likely originally transitive: X’abi ‘open’, ki:it ‘close’, b=itata ‘cook’, c’ata ‘burn’, b=aXa ‘give birth’. The verb t’i:bi ‘compress’ is not clear in this respect.

Therefore one can speak about two types of P-labity: transitivity-increasing and transitivity-decreasing. Transitivity-increasing P-labity is easier to detect, since a more natural meaning of such verbs is intransitive, while they also allow a transitive usage. Transitivity-decreasing P-labity is harder to distinguish from the unspecified agent usage of transitive verbs.

There may be no absolute boundary between the intransitive usage of transitivity-decreasing P-labile verbs and the unspecified agent usage of transitive verbs. Between the clear-cut examples of the former (e.g. X’abi ‘open’ X’ ‘X opens’) and the latter (e.g. c’inni ‘beat X’ ‘smb beats X’) there can be intermediate cases where the semantic absence of an agent is unlikely but not totally ruled out, as in the verb b=aXa ‘paint’, b=efi ‘roast’ etc. that can be called “semi-P-labile verbs”. The zix=it-ida-text provides very good results for the clear-cut cases but basically fails in the intermediate cases. Consultants tend to comment: “It can happen by itself, but only in a fairy tale”.

1.1.5. Motivation for P-labity

Is there an explanation why some verbs are labile and others are not? An answer to this question is beyond the scope of this volume but consider some examples of semantically close verbs that are labile vs non-labile:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>P-labile verbs</th>
<th>Non-labile verbs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Intransitive</strong></td>
<td><strong>Transitive</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b=a?a ‘come/over’</td>
<td>b=ac’i ‘reach’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>muda ‘go/drive’</td>
<td>bu=q’i ‘drive’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sinasa ‘stick’</td>
<td>q’ardi ‘stick’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b=aq’ati ‘hide/steal’</td>
<td>b=sa ‘disappear’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Transitive</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>b=itata ‘cook’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c’ata ‘burn’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>t’i:bi ‘compress’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lequ ‘drop’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Of course there are events that cannot be expected to be represented by labile verbs in human languages. As these Godhori data demonstrate, events of another kind exist that are open to various conceptualizations even within one language.
1.2. Agent-preserving lability

1.2.1. Basic examples

Consider the following sentences:

(21) a. il-u-di waša w=ali b. ila (waš-u-qí) j=ali
   mother-OBL-ERG son M=call.PST mother son-OBL-AD F=shout.PST
   Mother called up the son
   Mother shouted (to the son)

In (21a) the verb is transitive ‘to call smb’; in (21b), it is intransitive ‘to shout’; unlike P-lability, here the argument lacking in the intransitive valence pattern is patient, and agent is always there. A-lability is frequently overlooked in accusative languages since they do not display any morphosyntactic distinction besides plus or minus patient. In an ergative language like Godoberi all of the clause’s morphosyntax changes: the case frames are different and the verb agreement is with different arguments.

The list of discovered A-labile verbs includes 10 lexemes:

b=ali ‘shout/call’, šušūk ṭašušu ‘whisper’ (#152), šunu ‘whistle’ (#165), padi ‘blow’, b=aʔašaXo ‘suck breast/udder’ (#174), lamî ‘lick’ (#176), ḳyuri ‘vomit’ (#180), b=aXa ‘give birth’, Ḥiṣ̌i ‘play’; also šumî ‘scold’ (questionable, see 3.2.1 below).

Some consultants also treated like A-labies the verbs Hiṇiṣ̌i ‘sneeze’ (#182), oḤiṣ̌i ‘cough’ (#183), and zaḥa ‘defecate’ (#185), but the more widespread intuition is that these verbs are more intransitives (having only a Nominative argument).

1.2.2. Tests for A-lability

A-lability is very easy to detect: a transitive usage implies an Ergative (agent) and a Nominative NP (patient); an intransitive usage has only a Nominative agentive NP. Moreover, in the class-marking verbs class agreement is sensitive to intransitive/transitive distinction.

Transitive and intransitive usages of A-labile verbs usually have different imperative forms — transitive in –a and intransitive in –i:

(22) a. šwu b=aʔašaXo
    milk N=shuck-IMP.TR
    Suck milk!

    ḳe=da ṃaša šušušu’ki
    two-CARD word whisper-IMP.TR
    Whisper two words!

    b. w=aʔašaX-
    M=shuck-IMP.INTR
    Suck!

    šušūk’ti
    whisper-IMP.INTR
    Whisper!

1.2.3. Semantic relations between the transitive and intransitive usages of the A-labile verbs

It is likely that in most cases the transitive usage is the semantically original one and the intransitive usage is derived by a sort of semantic incorporation of the patient. This is quite clear in the cases of ‘suck breast/udder’, ‘whisper’, ‘blow’ but less so in the pair ‘shout/call’. Evidently the most typical patient is implied in each case in the intransitive usages — lips for ‘whistle’, contents of the stomach for ‘vomit’, breast, udder, or milk for ‘suck’, etc.

Unlike the P-labile verbs, the A-labies are more or less predictable and can be more easily found. Still, the class of A-labile is very limited and A-lability is a non-productive, lexically determined feature.

It is worth mentioning that there are two separate words meaning ‘eat’ — transitive (Ag. Pat) amí (#168) and intransitive ik/ã (#169) (Ag). These two verbs are like a suppletive A-labile pair.

1.2.4. Further examples

Since A-lability was only sketchily illustrated above, several additional examples are in order.

(23) a. ʔali-dí šaša šumi
    Ali-ERG whistle whistle.PST
    Ali whistled

    b. ʔali šumi
    whistle whistle.PST
    Ali whistled

(24) a. mak’l/dí kyakyà / šwu b=aʔašaXa
    child-ERG breast / milk N=shuck.PST
    The baby sucked a breast/milk

    b. mak’l w=aʔašaXa
    child M=shuck.PST
    The baby sucked

(25) a. im-u-dí hiri k’y怀里
    father-OBL-ERG blood vomit.PST
    Father vomited blood

    b. ima k’y怀里
    father vomit.PST
    Father vomited

(26) a. bale-dí q’aʔúra Ḥiṣ̌i
    children-ERG ball play.PST
    The children played ball

    b. bale Ḥiṣ̌i
    children play.PST
    The children played

For a discussion of the verb b=aXa ‘give birth’ see section 4.3 in the current chapter.
2. Transitivity increase: Causativization

2.0. Introductory remarks

Cross-linguistically, causativization is the paramount transitivity increasing process. To our knowledge, it is the only transitivity increasing process found in Godoberi, and it is very productive and abundantly represented in the lexicon.

Virtually every verb can undergo causativization (for some exceptions see 2.5 below). The derivational suffix of the causative is -ali. The following morphophonemic rules apply:

(27) Nasalized thematic vowel effect: -hun + ali → ani

(28) Non-nasalized thematic vowel elision: -Vun + ali → ali

The final -i of the causative suffix is a thematic vowel in all causative verbs, and obeys general rules.

Here we are looking primarily at the synthetic causatives formed with the -ali suffix, and pay very little attention to the analytic causatives formed with the help of separate verbs meaning 'make', 'cause', 'say' (cf. section 2.4 below). This is because the central intent of this chapter is to reveal the semantic derivations in the verbal lexicon rather than to cover all possible ways of transitivity marking.

2.1. Causatives from various valence types

In this section we will look at how the causative semantics interacts with the original semantics of verbal lexemes.

2.1.1. Causatives from intransitives

The class of simple intransitive patientive verbs is the largest verb class in Godoberi. All such verbs allow causativization. Consider the following: b=atu 'be lost, disappear' (#66), b=tas 'be found' (#11), b=u (el) 'fall' (#38), b=i (i) (el) 'melt' (#54), k=ti (el) 'bend' (#88), Rumi 'fall asleep' (#194).

Morphosyntactically, the only difference between the causativized clause and the original intransitive clause is the addition of an extra argument in the Ergative case, and the addition of the causative suffix to the verb:

(30) a. (di-h) arsi b=si (1.OBL-DET) money N=be.found.PST
    (I) found the money (by chance); lit. (To me) the money was found

   b. den arsi b=i-an (1.ERG money N=be.found-CAUS.PST
    I found the money (as a result of a search)

(31) a. bcr-q-i tu anca hil'i b=uk (1.in.mountains-AD-EL rock downwards N=fall.PST
    The rock fell down from the mountain

   b. elli anca b=uk-ali (1.ERG rock N=fall-CAUS.PST
    Ali dropped the rock

(32) a. anzi b=ic'i (1.ERG snow N=mel.T.PST
    The snow melted

   b. allaha-l-li anzi b=ic'i-al-li (1.ERG stick N=mel.T-CAUS.PST
    May God melt the snow!

The stick bent

The stick bent

Ali bent the stick

The stick bent

Ali fell asleep

All fell asleep

The doctor put Ali to sleep (e.g. by giving a medicine)

Note that four out of the six verbs given in the examples above are semantically different from their English counterparts; the latter are either originally transitive (lose, find) or labile (melt, bend). (Of course such a discrepancy between Godoberi and English is by no means general.)

All of the verbs listed above are non-labile; that is, only intransitive. For instance, (35)

(35) * elli anzi b=ic'i

Ali-ERG snow N=mel.PST

All intransitive agentive verbs are equally easy to form causatives from, cf. the verb

k'yanqci 'jump' (#64):

(36) a. Xan k'yanqci (h)orse Xan k'yanqc-ali (h)orse jump.PST
    Xan rode the horse

   b. rasul-di Xan k'yanqc-ali (h)orse jump.PST
    Rasul had the horse jump
surprise: tibi ‘get scared’ (#204) (Nom, Consecutive); b-utlu ‘believe’ (#207) (Nom, Consecutive); zabi ‘burt’ (#63) (Nom) / ‘be in pain’ (Consecutive); b-e-nzi ‘forget’ (#209) (Consecutive, Nom); b-ì-zì ‘understand’ (#209) (Consecutive, Nom).

Ali believed his son He made Ali believe his son

(38) a. di-cù zù-a-Ìì 1.OBL-CONT problem N=understand.PST
I understood the problem
b. waù-u-di di-cù zù-a-Ìì b-ì-zì-anì brother-OBL-ERG 1.OBL-CONT problem N=understand-CAUS.PST
Brother explained to me the problem

Consider now the verbs having in their case frame Affective or Dative case as a marker of the central experiencer argument: ha?à ‘see’ (#200), anta ‘hear’ (#198), b-ì-tà ‘know’ (#208), all (Aff, Nom), idi lid ‘like, love’ (#203) (Dat, Nom). All affective verbs, under causativization, optionally replace Affective by Consecutive. In the Dative verb ‘to like, love’ the change of Dative into Consecutive is obligatory:

(39) a. di-ì (dì-ci-ì) 1.OBL-AFF 1.OBL-CONT Asíhit. F=know.PST
I got acquainted with Asihat
b. im-ì-li di-ì/di-ci-ì 1.OBL-AFF/1.OBL-CONT Asíhit. F=know-CAUS.PST
(My) father introduced me to Asihat

(40) a. di-li (dì-ci-ì) 1.OBL-DAT 1.OBL-CONT Asíhit. love.PST
I fell in love with Asihat
He made me fall in love with Asihat

This case shift is just like in the transitive verbs (see 2.1.2 below) where under causativization the original agent-Ergative turns into cause-Stage. This syntactic behavior of the Affective and Dative verbs possibly demonstrates that they are treated by the language as quasi-transitives.

2.1.2. Causatives from transitives

Godoberi is not among those numerous languages where causativization is restricted to intranuclear: all transitive verbs easily form causatives, though the semantic difference between the two forms not always amounts to regular causative meaning (see 2.2.1 below). Under causativization of the transitive, a new Ergative argument (causativizer) appears, and the former Ergative (casee) is coded by Consecutive in -ì-ci.

Consider the verbs è-ni ‘beat’ (#73), b=ali ‘put on’ (#143), kí ‘give’ (#112), màli ‘teach’ (#212). The first two of them are simple transitive two-place verbs, and the last two are three-place verbs with a Dative and Adessive arguments, respectively.

The girl beat the donkey Father made the girl beat the donkey

(42) a. waù-u-di izù r=ali 1.OBL-DAT clothes NPL=put-on.PST
The son put on the clothes
b. il-ì-li waù-u-Ìì izù r=ali mother-OBL-ERG son-OBL-CONT clothes NPL=put-on-CAUS.PST
Mother dressed her son in the clothes

The brother gave me the money
Father made the brother give the money to me

The brother taught Ali how to write
Father made the brother teach Ali how to write

Apparently, all cases in the original frame, except for Ergative, remain intact in the causative clauses. The same principle basically holds when there is a Consecutive argument in the original verb; though some speakers have troubles producing and processing clauses with...
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two Conatives other speakers are quite clear about their meanings; for some examples see 2.4 below.

2.1.3. Causatives from patient-preserving labiles

The question of how P-labile verbs form causatives is one of the most intriguing in the whole domain of transitivity grammar. The problem is that P-labile verbs have a non-agentive and an agenteive usage on their own. Which usage of a labile verb undergoes causativization, and if it is a non-agentive usage then what is the semantic difference between the causative and the agentive usage of the original verb? There is no general answer to these questions since different P-labile verbs behave differently.

In section 1.1.4 above we discussed the issue of which usage of a labile verb, if any, is primary. Causative formation provides another piece of information pertaining here. Apparently there is a distinction between the P-labile verbs as to which one of their usages serves as a basis for a causative form. Data from causative formation in phonology in most cases agree with the other sorts of data discussed in 1.1.4.

Originally clearly intransitive verbs \(mu=na\) 'go/drive', \(b=a?\)a 'come/deliver' can be causativized only in their intransitive usage. Thus, \(mu=nal\) means only 'drive, take away' but not 'make to drive, take away':

\[
\begin{align*}
(45) & \text{a. zini } zini & \text{caXa}\# \text{caXa}\# & \text{cow} & \text{self} & \text{EMPH} & \text{away} & \text{N} & \text{go} & \text{PST} \\
\text{The cow went away by itself} & \text{He took the cow away from here} & \text{The cow went away by itself} & \text{The cow went away by itself} & \text{He took the cow away from here} \\
\text{b. ho-\#li} & \text{zini} & \text{caXa}\# & \text{mu} & \text{mu} & \text{cow} & \text{self} & \text{EMPH} & \text{away} & \text{N} & \text{go} & \text{PST} \\
\text{He drove the cow away from here} & \text{He drove the cow away from here} & \text{He drove the cow away from here} & \text{He drove the cow away from here} \\
\end{align*}
\]

The transitive usage of the labile verb and the causative are both derivative from the intransitive usage, and have the same propositional semantics and case frame. Still, they are not strictly synonymous, and there is a slight difference in their senses. This difference is exactly what is known as causative meaning. Unlike (45b), (45c) implies an external causer applying some kind of force to make the internal event (going/coming) to take place. This kind of difference is present in other similar cases.

Two other verbs that appear to be of the same type of originally intransitive patient-preserving labile verbs are \(sinala\) 'stick' and \(b=aq\)\#\#ali 'hide/steal'. They allow causativization only from their intransitive usages.

Originally clearly transitive P-labile verbs \(Xab\) 'open', \(hi\#li\) 'close' form causatives only in their transitive usages. Thus, \(hi\#ali\) means only 'make to close' but not 'close (by)';

(46) a. hincu \(\#\#i\#\#da\#\#hi\#li\) door
\(\text{self}=\text{N}=\text{EMPH} \text{close} \text{PST} \text{door} \text{close} \text{PST} \text{mother} \text{OBL-ERG} \text{hincu} \text{hi\#li} \text{mother}\)
\text{The door closed by itself} \text{Mother closed the door}

b. ilu-di hincu \(\#\#da\#\#hi\#li\) door
\(\text{mother}=\text{OBL-ERG} \text{close} \text{PST} \text{mother} \text{OBL-ERG} \text{hincu} \text{hi\#li} \text{mother}\)
\text{Father made mother close the door}

According to the data from causative formation, to this class of originally transitive verbs also belongs the verb \(b=a?\)\#a 'give birth'; it will be discussed at some length in 4.3 below.

The verb \(tib\) 'compress' apparently does not have any direction of derivation between the labile usages — both of them are equally original and form causatives. As a result, the causative from this verb is polysemous. In the following set of examples (47a), and (47b) from (47b):

(47) a. bun\#a \(tib\) hay
\(\text{compress} \text{PST} \text{Ali-ERG} \text{hay} \text{compress} \text{PST} \text{Ali-ERG} \text{hay} \text{compress} \text{PST} \text{Ali-ERG} \text{hay} \text{compress} \text{PST} \text{Ali-ERG} \text{hay} \text{compress} \text{PST}
\text{The hay compressed} \text{Ali compressed the hay}

b. \(\text{ali-di} \text{bun}\#a \text{tib}\#a\#ali\)
\(\text{Ali-ERG} \text{hay} \text{compress} \text{CAUS-PST} \text{Ali-ERG} \text{hay} \text{compress} \text{CAUS-PST} \text{Ali-ERG} \text{hay} \text{compress} \text{CAUS-PST} \text{Ali-ERG} \text{hay} \text{compress} \text{CAUS-PST} \text{Ali-ERG} \text{hay} \text{compress} \text{CAUS-PST}
\text{Ali compressed the hay}

\text{The picture is more complex with the other verbs of this group, for the reasons of their semantic peculiarities mentioned in 1.1.3 above. The verbs \(b=ec\#i\) 'fill' and \(c\#a\) 'burn' are not labile in all of their meanings. The structure of the meanings of \(b=ec\#i\) and its causative \(b=ec\#ali\#ali\) is represented on the following chart where lines 0 and 1 designate the original and the causative propositional structures respectively, and columns I and T represent the intransitive and the transitive usages (of the original verb):

(48) I T 0 A. 'fill (intr)' A. 'fill (tr)' \(b=ec\#i\) B. 'eat one's fill' B. ---
1 A. 'fill (tr)' A. 'make fill (tr)' \(b=ec\#ali\#ali\) B. 'feed full' B. ---

So here, the meanings of the causative correspond isomorphically with the meanings of the original verb. Cf. examples illustrating all combinations of the chart (48):
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(49) 0IA. wedra leni-Li b=ec'i
bucket water-GEN N=fill.PST
I M=fill.PST

The bucket filled up with water

I ate my fill

0TB. *il-u-di den w=oc'i
mother-OBL-ERG bucket water-GEN N=fill.PST mother-OBL-ERG I M=fill.PST
Mother filled the bucket up with water

IIA. il-u-di wedra leni-Li b=ec'-ali
mother-OBL-ERG bucket water-GEN N=fill-CAUS.PST
Mother filled the bucket up with water

11B. il-u-di den w=oc'-ali
mother-OBL-ERG I M=fill-CAUS.PST
Mother fed me full

1TA. im-u-di il-u-ec'u wedra leni-Li b=ec'-ali
father-OBL-ERG mother-OBL-CONT bucket water-GEN N=fill-CAUS.PST
Father made mother fill the bucket up with water

1TB. *im-u-di il-u-ec'u den w=oc'-ali
father-OBL-ERG mother-OBL-CONT I M=fill-CAUS.PST
The structure of meanings of the verb c'ata 'burn, warm up' and its causative c'atali is still more complex since one of the expected meanings of the causative indeed is not present:

(50) 1 T

0 A. 'burn (intr)' A. 'burn (tr)' c'ata
B. 'warm up (intr)' B. —

1 A. — A. 'make burn (tr)' c'atali
B. 'warm up (tr)' B. —

This picture seems quite rational: there is no inconvenient synonymy between the original and the causative forms like in the case of b=ec', and very little homophony of forms. Consider examples:

(51) 0IA. hudi c'ata 01B. leni c'ata
wood burn.PST water warm.up.PST

The wood burnt The water warmed up

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0TA. maka'-di hudi c'ata
child-ERG wood burn.PST
The child burnt the wood

OTB. *maka'-di leni c'ata
child-ERG water warm.up.PST

The child warmed up the water

1IA. *maka'-di hudi c'at-ali
child-ERG wood burn-CAUS.PST
The child warmed up the wood

1IB. maka'-di leni c'at-ali
child-ERG water warm.up-CAUS.PST

The child warmed up the water

1TA. im-u-di maka'-ci'u hudi c'at-ali
father-OBL-ERG child-CONT wood burn-CAUS.PST
Father made the child burn the wood

1TB. *im-u-di maka'-ci'u leni c'at-ali
father-OBL-ERG water warm.up-CAUS.PST

The last verb, b=aq'ali, as was already stated above, means 'hide (intr)' and 'steal (tr)', but not 'hide (tr)'. The latter meaning is rendered by the causative from the intransitive usage, and the same causative form also means 'make steal (tr)'.

Consider two ambiguous clauses covering all of these meanings:

(52) a. zini b=aq'al-at-a-da
cow N=hide-PRES-CONV-COP
The cow is hiding

b. ∅ zini b=aq'al-at-a-da
someone cattle N=steal-PRES-CONV-COP

The cattle is being stolen

c. rasul-di ali-ec'u arsi
Rasal-ERG Ali-CONT money N=steal-CAUS.PST

1) Rasal hid the money with Ali
2) Rasal made Ali steal money

In (52a) and (52b) the singular form zini is used in count and mass meanings, respectively, and in (52b) there is a zero indefinite agent. The first interpretation of (52c) illustrates a locative usage of Contessive, while under the second reading Contessive is the case of the cause.

2.1.4. Causatives from agent-preserving labile

Causative formation provides no evidence regarding the direction of semantic derivation between the intransitive and transitive usages of a-labiles. For instance, the verb šami 'whistle', when causativized, remains polysemous:

(53) a. ali šami
Ali whistle.PST

b. *ali-di šaša šami
Ali-ERG whistle.PST

Ali whistled

Ali whistled a whistle
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c. rasul-di ḍali šam-ali
d. rasul-di ḍali-ču šamka šam-ali
   Rasul-ERG Ali ḍali-CONT šamka šam-ali
Rasul made Ali whistle
Rasul made Ali whistle a whistle

Similar is the verb pudi ‘blow’:

(54) a. muču pudi
    b. ḍali-di zurma pudi
       wind blow.PST Ali-CONT zurma blow.PST
       The wind blow Ali played the zurma

c. ventilator-di muču pudi-ali
    d. omar-di ḍali-ču zurma pudi-ali
       fno-ERG wind blow-CAUS.PST Omar-ERG Omar-CONT zurma blow-CAUS.PST
       The fan made the wind
       Omar made Ali play the zurma

The causative derived from  b=ū2aXa ‘suck breast/udder’, on the other hand, most typically traces back only to the intransitive usage:

(55) a. mak’i (il-u-ču)
    w=ū2aXa
       child mother-OBL-CONT M=suck.PST
       The baby boy sucked (at his mother)

b. mak’i-či (il-u-Li)
    kyakya b=ū2aXa
       child-ERG mother-OBL-GEN breast
       The baby sucked (his mother’s) breast

c1. il-u-di mak’i w=ū2aX-al
    mother-OBL-ERG child M=suck-CAUS.PST
    Mother nursed the baby boy

c2. im-u-di (il-u-ču)
    mak’i w=ū2aX-al
    father-OBL-ERG mother-OBL-CONT child M=suck-CAUS.PST
    Father made the baby boy suck (at his mother)

d. il-u-di mak’i-ču kyakya b=ū2aX-ali
    mother-OBL-ERG child-CONT breast
    M=suck-CAUS.PST
    Mother nursed the baby with her breast

Note that in (55a,c) Contensive is used in its locative meaning. Unfortunately we have not checked the possibility of Contensive (i.e., the place of Genitive) in (55b) but we assume that awkwardness of (55a) is due to the fact that in the frame of this verb Contensive is closely associated with the breast-feeding participant, and when used with a sucking participant appears to be hard to process. If so, this is an interesting example of a syntactic-pragmatic block to causativization of one of a labile verb’s usages.

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2.1.5. Causatives from variable-valence verbs

As in many other languages, in Godoberi there are variable-valence verbs other than labile verbs. Different usages of such verbs present different perspectives on the situation in question, like English He smeared the wall with blue paint vs. He smeared blue paint on the wall: in the first case the clause includes the roles of patient (wall) and instrument, in the second patient (paint) and location. Exactly the same variability is found in the Godoberi verb b=ula ‘smear, paint’, and it is preserved under causativization:

(56) a. il-u-di (banaq(u-ču))
    ţarta b=ula
       mother-OBL-ERG house-CONT clay N=smear.PST
       Mother smeared the clay (on the house)

b. il-u-di banaq(u) (ţarta-di)
    b=ula
       mother-OBL-ERG clay-ERG N=smear.PST
       Mother smeared the house (with clay)

c. im-u-di il-u-ču
    ţarta b=ul-ali
    father-OBL-ERG clay N=smear-CAUS.PST
    Father made mother smear clay

d. im-u-di il-u-ču banaq(u)
    ţarta b=ul-ali
    father-OBL-ERG house N=smear-CAUS.PST
    Father made mother smear the house

2.2. Semantics of the causatives

Below we will briefly review the regular and productive meanings of the causative (2.2.1), and then proceed to the observed cases of irregular and unpredictable semantic differences between the original verbs and their causatives (2.2.2).

2.2.1. Regular semantic relations between the original verb and its causative

The most common variation of the causative meaning is what Nedjalkov and Sînăcîkî (1968:28) called factitive meaning: the causer acts consciously and voluntarily and uses force or authority to get the event to take place. It is usually physical force when the causee is non-human — see ex. (31), (33), (36), (45). When the causee is human the force applied is normally the force of authority and order, though it can be physical force as well — see for instance (41),
Another frequent type of causative meaning is assistive causative: the causer helps or does not prevent the causee to make the event take place. Again, the causee can be non-human, cf. (29), (30), and human, as in (42). Examples (30) and (42), though, might be claimed intermediate between the factitive and assistive meanings. It also seems impossible to distinguish these two meanings in the case of the verbs of mental, emotional and sensory states — see ex. (37-40).

2.2.2. Irregular semantic relations between the original verb and its causative

When formed from the transitive verbs, causatives sometimes do not imply an extra participant; rather, the original agent gets reinterpreted as a causer, and the action gets intensified. This kind of semantic derivation is on the verge of being productive.

Consider the verbs ēbī 'splash' (#69), malī 'teach' (#212), and b=āxī 'take' (#14) (note than none of them is labile):

(57) a. māk′i-di leni ēbī
    child-ERG water splash.PST
    The child splashed the water (perhaps voluntarily)

b. māk′i-di leni čīb-ali
    child-ERG water splash-CAUS.PST
    The child splashed the water (voluntarily and repeatedly)

(58) a. wāc′-u-di qāli-qi qār=di maš
    brother-OBGERG Ali-AD write-INF teach.PST
    The brother taught Ali how to write (Ali studied voluntarily)

b. wāc′-u-di qāli-qi qār=di maš-ali
    brother-OBGERG Ali-AD write-INF teach-CAUS.PST
    The brother taught Ali how to write (overcoming his resistance)

(59) a. men qāli-ču-ru qāca b=āx-ali
    LERG Ali-CONT-EL book N=take.PST
    I took the book from Ali
    I seized the book from Ali

    Interestingly, the first two verbs allow also the normal causative semantic derivation implying an extra participant, while the last one seems to have only the irregular meaning, cf.:

(57) c. im-u-di māk′i-ču leni čīb-ali
    father-OBGERG child-CONT water splash-CAUS.PST
    Father made the child splash the water

(58) c. im-u-di wač′-u-ču qāli-qi qār=di maš-ali
    father-OBGERG brother-OB-CONT Ali-AD write-INF teach-CAUS.PST
    Father made the brother teach Ali writing

(59) c. *im-u-di di-ču qāli-ču-ru qāca b=āx-ali
    father-OBGERG 1OB-CONT Ali-CONT-EL book N=take-CAUS-ali
    Father made me take the book from Ali

An unexpected effect is observed in the causative from the verb kinni ‘lose (at play)’ (#20) — it appears to mean ‘win’:

(60) a. abūlaišan kinni (paizula-šu-ču-ru)
    Abūlaišan lose.PST Painūl-OB-EL-CONT-EL
    Abūlaišan lost (to Paizula) (e.g. at chess)

b. paizula-š-ši abūlaišan kinn-ali
    Paizula-OB-EL-ERG Abūlaišan lose-CAUS.PST
    Paizula won over Abūlaišan

Thus ‘win’ literally means ‘cause to lose’ (there is also a verb stem b=ššā (#21) originally meaning ‘win’).

The causative from L′ohidī ‘burst (intr)’ means not only ‘burst (tr)’ but also ‘shoot’ (where gun is the patient):

(61) a. mašina-di qāšūra L′ohid-ali
    car-ERG ball burst-CAUS-PST
    The car burst the ball (by having hit it)

b. qāli-di tumagī k′yand′alhu-ču L′ohid-ali
    Ali-ERG gun hare-CONT burst-CAUS-PST
    Ali shot the gun at the hare

The causative from šabiḥ ‘hurt (intr), be in pain’ (#63), developed the meaning ‘beat’ from the predictable meaning ‘hurt (tr)’:

(61) a. māk′i ḥāb-u-da
    child hurt.PST-CONV-COP
    The child is sick

b. ho-š-ši māk′i ḥāb-ali
    he-OBGERG child hurt-CAUS.PST
    He beat the child
usage). As a result, the transitive usage of the original verb and the causative, being identical in the participant structure, have radically different senses, and even tend to be opposed semantically:

(62) a. il-u-di  zini iṣqa b=a’īa
    mother-OBL-ERG cow home N=come.PST
    Mother brought the cow home (I being at this home)

b. il-u-di  zini iṣqa b=a’ā-ali
    mother-OBL-ERG cow home N=come-CAUS.PST
    Mother brought the cow home (I not being at this home)

Though it is questionable that the causative has a deictic component ‘in the direction from the speaker’ (more plausibly, the deictic component is simply erased from the verb’s meaning) the causative form tends to be interpreted so due to polarization with the quasi-synonymous transitive usage of the original verb.

For one example of an unpredictable obscene meaning of a causative that has supplanted other meanings see 2.3 below.

2.3. Quasi-causatives

As was mentioned above, in this study, by “causatives” we mean ‘morphological causatives’. Below we will look at verbs that are causatives formally but not semantically (2.3.1), and verbs that are causatives semantically but not formally (2.3.2).

2.3.1. Fossilized causatives?

There are two homophonous stems that look formally like causatives: b=ellali 1) ‘dilute’ 2) ‘be in heat, be possessed’. The first verb is transitive, the second even intransitive. Any stem like b=ell or b=elRa (the only two stems from which a causative like b=ellali could be derived) is absent in Godoberi. Cf.:

(63) il-u-di  hati b=ellali (64) baci-e  r=ell-e-lla-
    mother-OBL-ERG flour N=dilute.PST  mél-PL NPL=be.in.hot.PST-CONV-COP
    Mother made the dough  Wolves are in heat

The verb stem b=ullali ‘roast’ (135) does not correspond to any stem like b=illi or b=ulli.

(65) il-u-di  hažinka b=ullali
    mother-OBL-ERG corn N=roast.PST
    Mother roasted the corn

2.3.2. Lexical causatives?

Causativization is an extremely productive process in Godoberi. However, there seem to be some cases when two verbs with a causative-like semantic relation have entirely different stems, for instance b=ii-l ‘die’ (#195) and k̨.anni ‘kill’ (#196). On the other hand, even the semantic relation between these two verbs is not exactly causative: there is a real causative from ‘die’ — b=ii-lali. Its meaning is more transparently analyzed as ‘cause to die’:

(66) di-w  waču-di  tulman Kanni
    1.OBL-GEN.M brother-OBL-ERG enemy kill.PST
    My brother killed the enemy (in a prototypical way — with a dagger or another weapon)

(67) di-w  waču-di  tulman w=uc’-āli
    1.OBL-GEN.M brother-OBL-ERG enemy M=CAUS.PST
    My brother killed the enemy (e.g. choked)

Unlike ‘die’ and ‘cause to die’, ‘kill’ is not applicable to animal patients.

Another lexical group behaves similarly — bu-xi ‘stay, remain’ (#4) — bu-xi ‘cause to stay, keep’ — b=eta ‘leave, allow to stay’ (#5).

Evidently, morphological derivation iconically represents semantic derivation in Godoberi, and there are no grounds to speak of suppletive causatives.

2.4. Double causatives

Like many other Daghhestanian languages, Godoberi regularly allows double causativization. The second causative’s marker is again -ali, so verbs with the thematic vowel -a have double causatives in -anali, while all the rest in -alali.

When presented double causative forms, consultants regularly recognize their correctness, though it is not easy either to find such forms in natural discourse or to elicit them. As for semantics, consultants easily interpret double causatives from one-place patientive verbs, like b=ii-l ‘die out (of a fire)’ (#60), b=ic’ ‘melt (intr)’ (#54), b=uaq ‘break (intr)’ (#75) etc. For example:

(68) a. Lili b=ic’i
    butter N=melt.PST
    The butter melted

b. mak’-di Lili b=ic’-alali
    child-ERG butter N=CAUS-PST
    The child melted the butter

c. il-u-di  mak’-z’u  Lili b=ic’-alali
    mother-OBL-ERG child-CONT butter N=CAUS-PST
    Mother made the child melt the butter

As is obvious from this example, syntactically double causatives are formed from simple causatives just as normal causatives are formed from transitive (section 2.1.2 above).
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When the original verb has an agentive participant, consultants frequently have trouble with interpreting double causatives. They also vary in the ability to correlate such forms with mental images of real situations. This concerns especially originally transitive verbs, but also one-place agentive verbs, like k'yanč' 'jump' (#54). Consider the following:

(69) a. X ani k'yanč'ı
    horse jump.PST

    The horse jumped

c. rasul-di X ani k'yanč'-al-ali
    horse-ERG horse jump-CAUS.PST

    Rasul made the horse jump

(70) a. wai-u-di hincu X abi
    son- OBL-ERG door open.PST

    The son opened the door

b. im-u-di wai-u-ču hincu X ab-ali
    father-ERG son-CONT door open-CAUS.PST

    Father made the son open the door

c. im-u-di wai-u-ču hincu X ab-ali
    father-ERG son-CONT door open-CAUS.PST

    Father made the son open the door

Examples like (69c), (70c) are typically composed by consultants when they are requested to illustrate the usage of the double causative forms like Xabali. Note that these examples are interpreted as having the same propositional structure as simple causatives, e.g. (69c) is claimed to have the same set of participants as (69b), and no extra causer. Consultants usually remark that double causative clauses imply a more intensive causation and/or overcoming the causee's resistance. For example, a consultant suggested that in the situation described in (70b) the son did what he was asked to voluntarily while in (70c) father insisted that he opens the door using threats or repeated reminders. Thus it seems that all cases of double causatives from agentive verbs semantically are not regular causatives but rather fall under the rubric of action intensification discussed in 2.2.2 above.

However, this interpretation appears to dominate only to insufficient insight into linguistic form and meaning. One of our consultants, Ubaidula Magomedov, a person of outstanding linguistic intuition, was fully aware of the most complex propositional structure of double causatives. We taught him to draw pictures representing all participants of given clauses. For example, a picture corresponding to (69a) includes one horse, (69b) a man and a horse, and (69c) two persons and a horse. (69c) properly should be translated as 'Rasul made someone make the horse jump'. A full clause representing all participants of this verb would be:

(69) d. im-u-di rasul-č'u X ani k'yanč'-al-ali
    father-ERG Rasul-CONT horse jump-CAUS.PST

    Father made Rasul make the horse jump

As Ubaidula remarked once, it may seem "on the surface" that a sentence like (69c) means that it was Rasul who applied force to make the horse jump, while in reality Rasul acted through some other person.

A double causative from a transitive verb č'inni 'beat' was reported to include four participants:

(71) a. jaš-u-di hamaXi č'inni
    daughter-ERG donkey beat.PST

    The daughter beat the donkey

b. il-u-di jaš-u-č'u hamaXi č'im-ali
    mother-ERG daughter-CONT donkey beat.PST

    Mother made the daughter beat the donkey

c. im-u-di il-u-či-la hilmu jaš-u-č'u
    father-ERG mother-AD-AND say.PST daughter-CONT

    Daughter beat the donkey

A double causative from a three-place verb iši 'give' includes five participants. Ubaidula came up with a situation where a bank and a cashier were involved:

(72) a. iši-u-di wai-u-li arsi iši
    son- OBL-DAT money give.PST

    Mother gave the money to the son

b. im-u-di il-u-č' u wai-u-li arsi iši-alī
    father-ERG mother-CONT son-DAT money give.PST

    Father made mother give the money to the son

c. im-u-di il-u-či-la hilmu kalaśa-šu-č' u wai-u-li
    father-ERG mother-AD-AND say.PST cashier-CONT son-DAT money give.PST

    Father told mother to make the cashier give the money to the son
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Note that (71c), (72c) are not usual one-clause constructions; rather, a polypradective construction with a past converb has been used here. This is because of the aforementioned problem of two Contessives that would appear otherwise. Since a simple causative from transitive already contains one Contessive (corresponding to Ergative of the original verb), a standardly-formed double causative would require two Contessives. This is consistently avoided by the speakers, and when presented such structures they have difficulties in interpreting them.

The same problem arises with double causatives from the intransitive verbs that have a Contless in their original case frame, like k'ur'd 'touch' (#90), obadi/ubadi 'kiss' (#177), b=al'a 'suck breast/udder' (#174), bi-il 'understand' (#210), as well as those verbs of mental, emotional or sensory state that don't have a Contlessive originally but get one in simple causative (for a list of them see 2.1.1 above). For example:

(73) a. ho-k'u=b lela di-cu k'u'il
be-OBL.M=GEN.N hand 1.OBL-CONT touch.PST

His hand touched me

b. qa-li-dii di-cu (lela) k'u-il-ani
Ali-ERG 1.OBL-CONT hand touch-CAUS.PST

Ali touched me (with his hand)

c. im-u-dii father-OBL-ERG qa-li-cu di-cu k'u-il-an-ali
Ali-CONT 1.OBL-CONT touch-CAUS-CAUS.PST

Father made Ali touch me

Sentences like (73), when presented to a consultant, usually get rejected at first, but then accepted after a lengthy reflection.

In several cases consultants, though confirming the grammatical correctness of the double causatives, suggested that an analytic causative would be more appropriate. Analytic causatives are made with the infinitive of the source verb plus a finite form of the verb tami 'cause':

(74) a. zini b=al'a ali b=al'a ali
cow N=nade.PST Raul-ERG cow N=nade-CAUS.PST

The cow hid

Raul hid the cow

c. im-u-dii rassul-cu zini b=al'a al-ali
father-OBL-ERG Raul-CONT cow N=nade-CAUS.PST

Father made Rassul hide the cow

2. Transitivity increase: Causativization

d. im-u-dii rassul zini b=al'a al-ami tami
father-OBL-ERG Raul cow N=nade-CAUS-INFIN cause.PST

Father made Rassul hide the cow

There are two adjacent Nominatives in (74d) since one of them belongs to the case frame of the internal verb b=al'a 'suck', and the other to the external verb tami.

2.5. Constraints on causativization

As was mentioned above several times, causativization is a perfectly regular process in Godoberi. There are, however, several factors that can sporadically block causativization.

Phonological block concerns only double causatives and applies to verbs whose original stems end in -ali. When two causative markers are added, a phonemic sequence -alali (Simple Past or Inactive) arises. Such sequences are very hard for morphological processing, and consultants get confused when presented them. Cf. the verb stem b=ali 'put on': b=alali 'put on the clothes' — alali 'dressed someone in clothes' — alali . An analytic causative should be used here.

Several verbs display what can be called lexical block — a unique inability to form a causative. For instance, an agent-preserving labile verb b=ali 'abound/call' lacks a (first) causative in both intransitive and transitive usages. The reason could be complex morphology of this stem with the stems meaning 'put on' (see previous paragraph) and 'read' (see 4.4. below).

One example of a syntactic-pragmatic constraint we have seen in 2.1.4 above is the verb b=al'a 'suck breast/udder'.

Finally, one verb demonstrates a complex phonological-pragmatic block: the P-labile verb b=al'a 'cook' that has no apparent reasons to lack a causative. Still some of our consultants firmly maintained that the forms from the expected stem b=ila 'cook' are tabooed since they sound similar to the forms of the obscene verb b=ila 'copulate'. This latter verb, in turn, is a causative from b=ili 'spill, pour (tr.)'.

3. Transitivity decrease

3.0. Introductory remarks

Godoberi, like Dagestani in general, lacks most of the cross-linguistically common pathways of transitivity decrease.

Passive and anticausative are absent altogether, reflexivity is marked by reflexive pronouns and has nothing in common with transitivity marking. However, Godoberi displays two processes that are related to the realm of transitivity decrease — binominative construction and anipassive. They will be reviewed in 3.1 and 3.2, respectively.

3.1. Binominative construction

There is one exception in Godoberi to the standard ergative construction of the transitive clause. All tense forms derived from the present converb in -ota allow agent marking by both
Ergative and Nominative cases. In the latter case the binominative construction arises since both agent and patient are coded Nominative. Most frequently the binominative construction arises in the present tense which is actually formed as present converb plus copula (*ida, usually occurring as an elicitic -da.

Consider examples with the verb b=åk 'grasp, catch' (#19):

(75) a. wáš-u-dí Ru-r-e r=åk-at-a-da
    boy-OBL-ERG pigeon-PL NPL=grasp-PRS-CONV-COP
    The boy is catching pigeons

b. wáša Ru-r-e r=åk-at-a-da
    boy pigeon-PL NPL=grasp-PRS-CONV-COP
    The boy is catching pigeons

Obviously in the present tense binominative construction retains the class agreement pattern: the verb still agrees with the patient NP.

In other tenses formed from such a converb the picture is more complex. These tenses are formed analytically with the help of the auxiliary verb bu=k 'be'; this auxiliary can appear in any of the synthetic and quasi-synthetic tenses itself thus forming a whole series of analytic tenses. In all of these tenses a normal transitive clause requires that both the lexical (non-finite) and auxiliary (finite) verbs agree with the Nominative, that is, patient. In the binominative construction the lexical (non-finite) verb, if it has an agreement slot, still agrees with the patient while the auxiliary (finite) verb necessarily agrees with the agent:

(75) c. wáš-u-dí Ru-r-e r=åk-at-a
    boy-OBL-ERG pigeon-PL NPL=grasp-PRS-CONV PST
    The boy was catching pigeons (but never succeeded)

d. wáša Ru-r-e r=åk-at-a
    boy pigeon-PL NPL=grasp-PRS-CONV M=be.PST
    The boy was catching pigeons (but never succeeded)

Consultants consistently comment regarding the semantic difference between the transitive and binominative constructions that a binominative construction clearly is an answer to the question about what the agent is doing or where the agent is located. (As a result, once a consultant said that in (75a) the agent is visible to the speaker while in (75b) he is not.) To put it in different terms, binominative construction represents an essentially transitive situation not as an action of the agent on the patient but rather as an agent's activity where patient is deindividuated.

Deindividuation of the patient is one of Hopper and Thompson's (1980) transitivity-decreasing factors. This process is related to patient incorporation typical of some languages (see e.g. Givon (1990:626)) or Turkic unmarked Accusative (Nilsson (1978)).

Since the patient argument loses some of its prototypical features and becomes semantically more integrated into the verb, the verb detransitivizes and the agent assumes the Nominative case.

Probably something happens semantically to the agent too — its topical properties become more relevant than its agentic properties — hence the loss of the Ergative marking. A discourse-based study would be needed to inquire into this issue more deeply.

Nor is it the fact that the binominative construction is found only in present tenses with imperfective meaning accidental. Imperfective is an inherently detransitivizing factor, and it is also included in the Hopper and Thompson's list; cf. the Kartvelian situation where ergative construction is found only in aorist while in the present, imperfect, future etc., tenses transitive clauses follow an accusative pattern (see e.g. Harris (1981)).

The binominative construction is a general and uniform phenomenon in Godoberi, and there seems to be no need for further examples.

3.2. Antipassive

Godoberi has a more radical means of patient deindividuation and suppression than binominative construction, namely antipassive. Under antipassivization, transitive verbs lose their patients altogether, agent is coded Nominative and triggers class agreement on the verb.

(76) a. 'ài-[ë]-íq'nu b=ñel-at-a-da
    All(Erg) howat N=thresh-PRS-CONV-COP Ali M=thresh-AP.CONV-COP
    All is threshing wheat
    All is threshing

Of course, in the analytic constructions with the auxiliary verb bu=k 'be', class-number agreement on both the lexical and the auxiliary verbs is also controlled by the Nominative agent.

Antipassive is an interesting and complex phenomenon both morphologically and semantically, and we will inquire into these aspects of it in the following sections.

3.2.1. Morphology

The antipassive morpheme -a is in fact a marker of the antipassive converb. It can occur with the copula (*ida, as well as with all tense forms of the auxiliary verb bu=k 'be'. Below let us limit our attention to only the simplest forms with (*ida, or rather -da, and will term the quasi-synthetic forms in -a-da simply antipassives. These forms generally have a present temporal meaning.

Approximately 60 Godoberi verbs have been attested to have antipassive forms. Besides certain semantic limitations, there is one formal constraint on antipassive formation: it can be derived only from the verbs with the -i thematic vowel. There is a clear morphological explanation for this fact. The past converb has endings -a and -á in the verbs with thematic -i and -á, respectively, and -a in the verbs with thematic -i. If the antipassive marker -a were added to a verb in -a or -á, the resulting form would be indistinguishable from the past converb.
This morphological constraint is very strict, and, for example, the finite forms in -ada (from verbs with thematic -a) and -anada never can be understood as antipassives but only as perfects.

Compare Kamni ‘now’ and b-bak,a ‘create’. Kamni-a-da is antipassive (cf. perfect Kamn-u-da), and b-bak-a-da is perfect, the latter verb has no antipassive although its semantics would favor it. It should be noted that verbs in -a constitute about 12% of Godoberi verbal vocabulary, and verbs in -i about 10%, so this morphological constraint touches a minor part of the vocabulary.

The addition of the -a marker is not the only morphological process that can happen to verbs under antipassivization. Some of the verbs undergo various operations on their stems, including reduplication and addition of suffixes. These operations are quite irregular in nature, and it is impossible to predict the form of the antipassive from the form of the original stem. In this respect antipassive sharply differs from the rest of verbal inflection which is very regular (cf. chapter IV).

We will return to the issues of reduplication and other operations on the stem in 3.2.3 below.

3.2.2. Semantics

The semantics of (present) antipassive constructions is close to that of binominaative (present) constructions. The meaning of (76a) above, contrasted to (76a), could be rendered through a translation like ‘Ali is busy with threshing [having quit all other activities]’, or even ‘Ali is at the threshing-floor’. As with binominaative constructions, speakers consistently comment that antipassive clauses are readily interpretable as answers to questions of the type ‘What is Ali doing? Where is Ali?’ What happens in antipassives in terms of both semantic derivation and grammatical marking is that patient is altogether suppressed and agent is highlighted, both semantically (becomes the sole distinct participant of the situation) and referentially (in the topic).

To provide a more illuminating account of the difference between the binominaative and antipassive constructions (or, to put it differently, between the present and antipassive verbs) one needs to look into the contextual and discourse factors, which remains for future research.

A problem with the label ‘antipassive’ is that the form in question can be derived not only from transitive but also from quite a few intransitive verbs (as well as some A-labile verbs).

For instance:

(77) a. mat' u girgis-at-a-da
      glass shake-PRS-CONV-COP
      The glass shakes

b. mat' u girgis-a-da
      glass shake-AP-CONV-COP

The two constructions are very similar in meaning, though sometimes consultants emphasize a more actual present meaning in antipassives (‘shakes at this very time’) as opposed to a more general present in the -atada forms (note, however, that there is a synthetic form in -ida, which is by all means a genuine habitual tense). Further, antipassives sometimes acquire a semi-lexicized additional meaning, for instance, girgisida frequently means ‘is feverish’. Some verbs reveal a certain aspectual difference between the two forms:

(78) a. hów = Rum-at-a-da
      he-M fall asleep-PRS-CONV-COP
      He is falling asleep

b. hów = RumRud-a-da
      he-M fall asleep(Rad)-AP-CONV-COP
      He is sleepy, falling asleep and awaking all the time

It is not impossible, however, that in the latter example the aspectual meaning is due to reduplication, see below.

Is it justifiable to use the term ‘antipassive’ given that this form can be inflected from intransitive verbs? It is an open question but in the approach to transitivity as a semantic phenomenon (Hopper and Thompson (1980)) it is sensible to think of the degrees of transitivity in the grammatically intransitive verbs too. Also, it is likely that transitive verbs constitute the nucleus of the whole of antipassive-forming verbs, even though they are not statistically prevalent (see below).

The question of which verbs can form antipassives is in no way an easy one. Semantically, the majority of these verbs can be characterized as follows: they tend to be activities (implying no natural limit), have animate agents as their primary arguments, and inanimate patients (if transitive). More specifically, the set of antipassive-forming verbs breaks down into four groups, as represented below (the list includes as many lexemes as we were able to find).

A. Verbs of work activities (all transitive; 11)


The following verbs assignable to groups A or B perhaps have antipassives, though it is not absolutely certain: šusuk’ ‘shift’ (#124), harq’ ‘milk’ (#125), b-elelt ‘cut out’ (#129), šarami ‘rock’ (#98). The verb gergēč ‘dangle’ appears to have a defective paradigm with no synthetic and quasi-synthetic finite forms other that antipassive gergēčuda; also there is no causative attested from gergēč-. Similar situation is the one with the verb Xam- ‘scold’ of group C (see below) that is used by most consultants only as an antipassive (Xamada) while simple past (Tam) and other synthetic and quasi-synthetic forms are almost out of use.

C. Verbs of sound production (intransitive/transitive/A-labile; 27 and more)
Reduplication appears to be an important process in Godoberi verb stem morphology. There are stems that inherently (at least in synchrony) contain a reduplicative fragment, like girtis ‘tremble’, šukak’tšubadi ‘whisper’, č’anc’adi ‘chew’ and others.

All of these verbs apparently designate iterative situations, thus reduplication is being used as an iconic device. A number of verbs exist in two variants — simplex and reduplicate, with the corresponding difference in the meaning (multiplicity of action and/or the most involved participant):

- g’ami ‘bite’
- q’am’adi ‘bite all over’
- Rumi ‘fall asleep’
- Ruman ‘many people fall asleep’
- q’ardi ‘stick’
- q’arq’adi ‘many objects stick’
- hik’us ‘urinate’
- hik’uk’adi ‘many people urinate’

There is a similar relation between the verbs qardi ‘comb’ and qarqadi ‘scratch’ listed above (group C) as separate lexemes.

The general pattern of reduplication in a non-antipassive stem evidently is insertion of a sequence -čan, C being usually (but not always) the first consonant of the stem.

Now let us look at three possibilities in antipassive stem formation.

a. No change. All antipassive-forming verbs that contain an inherent reduplication retain their stem intact (that is, reduplicate) in the antipassive: girtisada, šukak’a, č’anc’ada, etc., and the same is done by almost all of the verbs with the stem including three consonants (initial glottal stop, class marker slot, and -č- of the -čč suffix count): obadada, hik’usada, gašata, b-eškada, harqada, Hjádada, kandada, etc. Also remaining intact are some of the verbs with roots of CVČ or even simpler structure: Hjapada, godada.

If a verb inherently has simplex and reduplicate variants, antipassive sometimes is formed only with reduplication, and sometimes in both ways. Examples of the first case are:
- č’an’a ‘tie’ / č’anc’adi ‘tie’, ‘chew’
- č’anc’ada ‘tie’, ‘chew’

qard da ‘comb’ / qarqada ‘comb all over, scratch’
Ruman ‘fall asleep’ / Ruman ‘plural persons fall asleep’

b. Reduplication alone. Most of the verbs with the roots of the form C1VC2 undergo reduplication under antipassivation, and it is usually done according to the following common scheme. The stem has the shape C1VC2čč, and when reduplicated it takes the form C1VC2C1čč. Reduplication seemingly the obligatory and the only means of antipassive stem modification in the following verbs:

-Xardda ‘dig’
-Xardada
k’yärda ‘vomit’
k’ar’tada

Note that both antipassive variants in this case have only metaphorical meanings.
One verb displays a more elementary suffix -aq: "čabi 'defecate' — čabuqada 'plural persons defecate'.

The last attested suffix -es is found in two verbs and supplants the -di suffix: Hindidi 'sneeze' — Hincēsada, hong'idi 'solv' — hong'esada.

In order to find a motivation behind the diversity of the means of antipassive formation, if it is possible at all, additional study is needed. It is more than likely that repudication is a fully meaningful though unproductive mechanism (of some iconic function).

3.2.4. Antipassive infinitive

In the grammatical positions where infinitive must be used (primarily predicate of a complement clause) antipassives take a special form in -a-li (where -a is the antipassive converb marker, and -li coincides with the Genitive marker; this form was discovered by Martin Haspelmath). Consider the following examples with an analytic-causative verb t'ami 'cause, make', and with a modal verb q'ara'anda (perfect of q'ara'da 'need, want'):

(79) mak'li-di Xaaj b=aj-ia-Li t'ami
    child-INF dog N=shout(REP-AP-CONV-GEN cause:PST
    The child made the dog cry

(80) Xaani-hi k'axe'ac'-a-Li q'ara'a-an-da
    horse-DAT jump(REP-AP-CONV-GEN be.necessary:PST-CONV-COP
    The horse wants to jump

The verb 'scold', that, according to some consultants, has no synthetic forms other than antipassive converb, displays only an infinitive in =a-li:

(81) im-ú-li Xar-a-Li q'ara'a-an-da
    father-REL-DAT scold-AP-CONV-GEN be.necessary:PST-CONV-COP
    Father wants to scold

4. Complex cases

This section contains brief lexical and grammatical discussions of some Godoberi verbs that present exceptions to regularities in the domain of transitivity or are especially complicated in their grammatical behavior.

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3 The second form usually means 'flatter' while the first one merely 'lick all over'.

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4 Both forms can have iterative and reciprocal meanings, but the first one also a metaphorical meaning 'is going to die' (lit. 'is being pulled').
4.1. obadi/ubadi ‘kiss’ (#177)
This verb has an Ergative in its case frame, that is, it seems transitive. However, it is the only such verb with which it proved to be impossible to elicit any overt patient (in the Nominative case). Both the addressee of a kiss and the goal are marked with Comitative:

(82) waš-u-di jaš-u-ču ubadi
boy-OBL-ERG girl-OBL-CONT kiss.PST
The boy kissed the girl

(83) waš-u-di jaš-u-Li k’išu-ču ubadi
boy-OBL-ERG girl-OBL-GEN cheek-CONT kiss.PST
The boy kissed the girl on her cheek

There may be some covert patient in this verb (lip? air?), since in the analytic tenses the auxiliary verb agrees with a non-human singular participant:

(84) waš-u-di jaš-u-ču ubud-u buš-k’a
boy-OBL-ERG girl-OBL-CONT kiss.PST-CONV N-be.PST
The boy has kissed the girl

Compare a verb that also typically does not express patient but easily allows it when needed — tudī ‘spit’ (#179):

(85) ‘ali-di rasul-ču (tata) tudi
Ali-ERG Rasul-CONT (saliva) spit.PST
Ali spat (saliva) at Rasul

Another verb that is possibly like ‘kiss’ in not allowing an overt patient is q’amti ‘bite’ (#175).

4.2. Xudi ‘drink’ (#171)
This is the only verb we encountered that has a form that can be called resultative. This form is like perfect morphologically but implies a valence change — detransitivization:

(86) a. gap’ti Xudi Ali
Ali-ERG vodka drink.PST
Ali drank vodka

b. *’ali Xudi Ali
drunk.PST

(87) a. pat’imati-di waša w=ux’āl
Patimat-ERG son M=give.birth.PST Patimat
Patimat gave birth to a son

b. pat’imati j=ux’āl
Patimat F=give.birth.PST

Patimat gave birth

4.3. b=ux’āl ‘give birth’
This verb is outstanding in being both P- and A-labile:

(88) a. pat’imati-di waša w=ux’āl
Patimat-ERG son M=give.birth.PST Patimat
Patimat gave birth to a son

b. pat’imati j=ux’āl
Patimat F=give.birth.PST

Patimat gave birth

The causative b=ux’āl can only have an obscure sense ‘give her a child (through copulation)’, and can be semantically traced back to both the transitive (88) and the A-labile (89) usages:

(89) rasul-di pat’imati-ču waša w=ux’ā-ani
Rasul-ERG Patimat-CONT son M=give.birth-CAUS.PST
Rasul gave Patimat a son

Rasul gave Patimat a baby

In the last example feminine class agreement on the verb is with Patimat, gender of the baby is not represented here.

The causative meaning like ‘give assistance in giving birth’ can be rendered only analytically:
The doctor helped Patimat give birth.

4.4. b=ali ‘shout/call’, ‘read’ (#215); rali ‘study’

This is the most complicated tangle of polysemy and semantic and grammatical derivation encountered in Godoberi lexis. From the outset it should be mentioned that the verb b=ali is homophonous also with the transitive verb b=ali ‘dress’ (#143) which is probably unrelated to the group in question, is rather regular and will not be mentioned subsequently.

First, as was noted above, b=ali ‘shout/call’ is an A-lable verb:

(90) wrač-ali Patimat-li kumski thi j=aX-I
doctor-OBL-ERG Patimat-DAT help make.PST F=give.birth-INF

The doctor helped Patricia give birth.

b=ali ‘shout/call’, ‘read’ (#215); rali ‘study’

Again unlike ‘shout/call’, it does not allow an antipassive, in other words, the antipassive from b=ali (e.g. wajlata) does not have a meaning related to reading.

Third, the further development of this stem was fossilization of the neutral plural class marker r= as the initial of the stem: rali ‘study’ (inaactive). The plural class marker probably comes from the patient’s ‘books’, so the evolution is likely to have been: hošti qaṭhe r=ali ‘he books them-read’ → how rali ‘he then-read’ → ‘he studied’. Consider an example:

(95) rali madrasa-lo rali
Ali madrasah-LOC study
Ali studied in a madrasah

A causative is perfectly acceptable:

(96) im-u-di rali rali
father-OBL-ERG Ali study-CAUS.PST
Father made Ali study

Antipassive is again possible, and in two forms, as in ‘shout/call’:

(97) rali madrasa-lo rali-a-da / rali-r-a-da
Ali madrasah-LOC study(RED)-AP CONV-COP study(RED)-AP CONV-COP
Ali studies in a madrasah

b=ali ‘shout/call’, ‘read’ easily allows causativization:

(93) q6-dl qu6a b=ali
Ali-ERG book N=read.PST
Ali read a book

Unlike ‘shout/call’, ‘read’ easily allows causativization:

(94) im-u-di rali a-li qaṭhe r=al-ali