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Causativization in Hmar

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ABSTRACT

The present paper is an attempt to describe and analyse the structure of causatives in Hmar, a Kuki-Chin subgroup of the Tibeto-Burman language family, spoken by around 98,550 speakers as per the Census of India, 2011. This paper discusses the two types of causatives in the language: Morphological and Lexical. Hmar has two morphological causative forms, viz the prefix /*sùk-*/ and suffix /*-tìr*/, that are productively employed in the derivation of causative structures. Lexical causatives, on the other hand, are uncommon and unproductive. The language is found to have a handful of causative forms that can be considered as fragments of the historical causative morphology. However, they are discussed under lexical causatives as they are irregular and no longer productive as a morphological operation. The paper further discusses the phenomenon of double causation in the language and identifies two patterns of deriving double causative structures.

KEYWORDS

Tibeto-Burman, Kuki-Chin, Hmar, Causative, Morphological causatives, Lexical causatives

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Causativization in Hmar¹

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1. Introduction

This paper provides a description of causative structures in Hmar², a Tibeto-Burman language spoken in North-East India. While a number of linguistic works have been carried out in the language, there is no work that specifically focuses on the structure of causatives in Hmar. Previous literature available on Hmar causatives finds its inclusion as a part of a larger topic, thus failing to give it due attention. The present paper, therefore, aims to provide a detailed description of the Hmar causative construction.

The paper is organized as follows. In section 2, a brief introduction of the language is provided. Section 3 discusses some of the characteristic features of Hmar relevant to the study. Section 4 contains a review of relevant literature on Hmar causatives. In section 5, the different types of causatives in Hmar will be discussed. Section 6 discusses the relationship between the reflexive/reciprocal marking and morphological causatives. Section 7 discusses the phenomenon of double causation in the language. The paper concludes with the summary of findings in section 8.

2. About the language

In the classification of Tibeto-Burman languages by Lewis et al. (2013), Hmar is classified as a central Kuki-Chin language of the Kuki-Chin-Naga group. The term Hmar, which Grierson (1904, 1967: 256) formally identified as ‘Mhār’, is used to refer to both the tribe and language. The Hmar language, as it is recognized today, was previously known as the *Khawsak* dialect (Baruah and Bapui 1996, Thiek 2013). It does not have its own script and has therefore adopted and modified the Roman script for writing purposes. Hmar is a tonal language³ and follows SOV as its basic word order.

¹ The paper is a revised version of the paper presented at the 22nd Himalayan Languages Symposium held at IIT, Guwahati on June 8-10, 2016. I am grateful to the two anonymous reviewers for their valuable comments, suggestions and observations that have helped shape the paper into its present form. Sahiini L Veikho deserves a special mention for patiently going through the earlier drafts of the paper and providing insightful comments on the same. The author takes sole responsibility for any errors found in the paper.

² Data for the present study is primarily self-generated from the author who is a native speaker of the language.

³ It must be noted that a full tonal analysis in Hmar has not been carried out yet. As such, the system of marking tone in the paper is to be considered provisional.

Hmar was recognized as one of the Scheduled Tribes by the Government of India in 1956 (Thiek, 2013). As per the Census of India (2011), Hmar constitutes a total population of 98,550 speakers. The Hmar people are mainly found in the North-East Indian states of Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, and Tripura. However, they are predominantly concentrated in the Churachandpur, Tipaimukh, Vangai areas, and Jiribam sub-division of Manipur (Sharma 1992, Dena 2008).

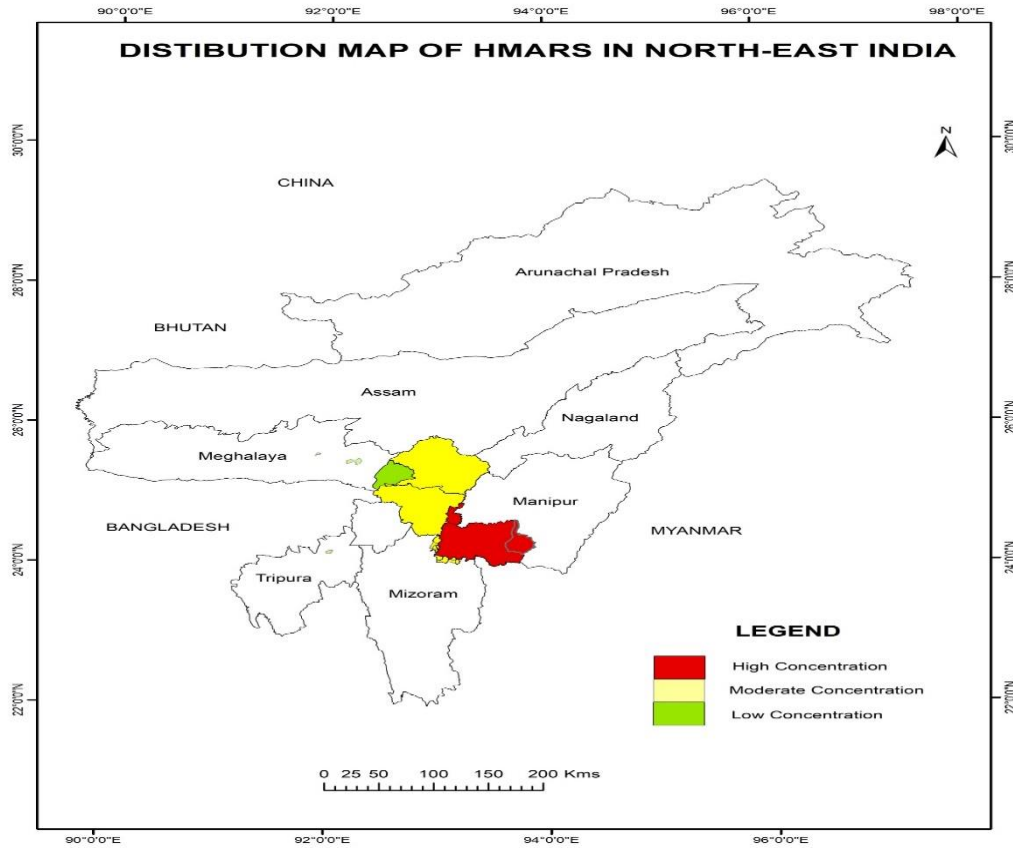


Figure 1: Map showing the distribution of Hmar in North-East (Prepared by the Author)

3. Characteristic features of Hmar

This section is a brief introduction to some aspects of the Hmar grammar which will provide a better understanding of the basic clause structure in the language with relevance to the description of its causative structures.

3.1 *Split Ergativity*

Like Mizo (Chhangte 1989a & b), Hmar demonstrates a split-ergative⁴ pattern wherein the nouns and pronouns exhibit an ergative-absolutive system while the

⁴ See Dixon (1994) for further discussion on split-ergativity.

agreement markers in the verb phrase follow the nominative-accusative system⁵. In a transitive clause, the subject NP takes the ergative case suffix */-in/* regardless of its semantic role. The ergative suffix tends to be phonologically reduced to */-n/* with NPs involving a vowel in their final position. On the other hand, the theme/patient NP and the intransitive subject are both unmarked for absolutive case.

(1) *zár-in nòu á-sùk-kɔi*
 zar-ERG cup 3SG-CAUS-break
 'Zar broke the cup'

(2) *nòu á-kɔi*
 cup 3SG-break
 'The cup broke'

In the verb phrase, the transitive and intransitive subjects are distinguished from transitive objects based on their distinctive form and word order. Both transitive and intransitive subjects have the same agreement marking on the verb while object agreement is marked differently (see agreement pattern in § 3.2).

(3) *toiá-in (kèi) á-mì-hál*
 Toia-ERG me 3SG-1SG-scold
 'Toia scolded me'

(4) *mɔité á-in*
 mawite 3SG-sleep
 'Mawite is sleeping'

3.2 Agreement

Like most Kuki-Chin languages, Hmar is characterized by its rich agreement system between the verb and its NP arguments. Subject-verb and object-verb agreement is expressed in terms of person and number. The verbal agreement pattern⁶ is shown in Table I.

Person	Subject		Object	
	Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural
First	<i>ká-</i> 'I'	<i>kán-</i> 'we'	<i>mì-</i> 'me'	<i>mì-</i> 'us'
Second	<i>í-</i> 'you'	<i>ín-</i> 'you'	<i>-tʃé</i> 'you'	<i>-tʃèu</i> 'you'
Third	<i>á-</i> 's/he/it'	<i>án-</i> 'they'	∅	∅

Table I: Agreement Pattern in Hmar

⁵ This type of NP split-ergativity is briefly discussed in Dryer (2007) and Aldridge (2007).

⁶ The question of wordhood, in particular with respect to person markers, remains to be worked out for Hmar.

Interestingly, object-verb agreement is not overtly marked when the object argument is a third person noun or pronoun and while the agreement markers tend to precede the verb in Hmar, the second person object agreement marker follows the verb. This is illustrated in the following examples.

- (5) (a) *(kái-in) (nán) ká-mù? núom tʃé*
 I-ERG you 1SG-see want 2SG
 'I want to see you'
- (b) *ká tʰí á-n-tʃát*
 1SG.GEN necklace 3SG-VR-break (in half)
 'My necklace broke'
- (6) (a) *í-mí-in-sán zì:*
 2SG-1SG-sleep-RELQ HAB
 'You always sleep off on me'
- (b) *zínà? í lèkhá-hái hùŋ tʃɔy rɔʔ*
 tomorrow 2SG.GEN paper-PL come bring IMP
 'Bring your documents tomorrow'
- (7) (a) *in án-nèi nɔʔ*
 house 3PL-have NEG
 'They don't have a house'
- (b) *án ín-aʔ sín kán-thɔ*
 3PL.GEN house-LOC work 1PL-do
 'We are working at their house'

3.3 Omission of NP Arguments

In Hmar, NP arguments are optional unless they are expressed as a topic or focus element. The speakers prefer to drop the NP arguments if it is identified as a topic of conversation or narrative and can be recovered from the context. Moreover, the agreement system that operates in the verb phrase provides relevant information regarding the omitted NP arguments. In (8), the subject *ká nú* 'My mother' is identified as the topic in the first clause of the coordinate construction and is therefore omitted in the second clause since it is recoverable from the first clause. In (9), the subject and object pronoun are put in parenthesis to show that they are optional and can be dropped.

- (8) *ká nú á-dám nɔ á, fá:k á-nèi pèi nɔʔ*
 1SG.GEN mother 3SG-well NEG SEQ eat 3SG-have want NEG
 'My mother is sick so she is not in the mood to eat anything'

- (9) (*àmá-in*) (*nán*) *à-ŋáitùo* *tálùo* *tʃé*
 s/he-ERG you 3SG-think EMP 2SG
 ‘S/he is really concerned about you’

3.4 Verb Stem Alternation

The verbs in Hmar exhibit the phenomenon of verb stem alternation, a characteristic evidently present in many Kuki-Chin languages. The two verbal paradigms generally categorized as Stem I and Stem II (Chhangte 1989, King 2010) differ in terms of tone or segmental alternation. In Hmar, however, the change in tone⁷ cannot be taken as a defining criterion for verb stem alternation. It may therefore be assumed that the verb stem alternation in Hmar is primarily based on segmental changes involving stop alternation and vowel coalescence. Some examples of the Stem I and Stem II verbs are given below:

(10)	Stem I	Stem II	Verb
	vɔ	vú:k	‘beat’
	fà	fá:k	‘eat’
	pè	pék	‘give’
	tʃá	tʃát	‘lose’
	nà	nát	‘hurt/pain’
	lien	lèn	‘big’

The categorization of Stem I and Stem II forms based on their occurrence in a less transitive or more transitive structures (Peterson 1998) is applicable in Hmar. Stem I verbs are generally used in imperatives, agentive nominalization and subordination while the Stem II verbs tend to be used in transitive clauses, purposive clauses and other nominalized constructions.

4. Relevant Literature

This section provides a survey of the previous work related to the study of causatives in Hmar. In their book *Hmar Grammar*, Baruah and Bapui (1996) briefly discuss the causative suffixes in their description of complex verbs and derivation. They identify /*sùk-*/ as a causative prefix used in the derivation of verb roots from adjective roots and /*-tìr*/ as the causative suffix for the derivation of causative verb stems from simple non-causative verb roots, which they observe as being bidirectional in that the derived causative verb stem involves a prefix /*in-*/ and the suffix /*-tìr*/. Below are a few examples of derived causative forms from Baruah and Bapui.

⁷ Since the language lacks a full tonal analysis, transcription of tones remains problematic and the author is not in a position to document whether verb stem alternation occurs as a result of tone change as it does in other Kuki-Chin languages.

- | | | | | | | |
|------|-----|-------------|----------|--------------------|-------------------|---------|
| (11) | (a) | <i>lien</i> | 'wide' | <i>sùk-lien</i> | 'widen' | |
| | (b) | <i>ruók</i> | 'vacant' | <i>sùk-ruók</i> | 'vacate' | (p. 95) |
| (12) | (a) | <i>én</i> | 'see' | <i>in-én-tir</i> | 'cause x to see' | |
| | (b) | <i>tiem</i> | 'read' | <i>in-tiem-tir</i> | 'cause x to read' | (p. 63) |

Baruah and Bapui correctly identify the two morphological causatives found in Hmar, however, their observation of the causative prefix deriving verb roots from adjectives root appear to be overstated since the causative prefix /*sùk-*/ is also found to derive verb roots from verbs. Moreover, they do not provide any discussion on lexical causatives. Their treatment of causatives is purely morphological and does not include the syntactic aspect of causatives in the language.

Subbarao and Bapui (2013) in their paper "Incorporation: Some Suffixal Valence Affecting Phenomena in Kuki-Chin Languages" include a brief account of causatives in Hmar as a valence increasing operation in two small paragraphs. They identify the suffix /*-tir*/ as the causative marker and point out that the obligatoriness of the verbal reflexive /*in-*/ with the causative suffix /*-tir*/ except with words that are already lexically marked with the verbal reflexive. Although they are right in pointing out that the verbal reflexive is obligatory in causative constructions with the suffix /*-tir*/, they fail to include the other causative types in their discussion, which of course is inevitable seeing as how their work focuses on suffixal valence affecting phenomena. Subbarao and Bapui's work differ from Baruah and Bapui in that they focus on the syntactic feature of valence raising and also focus only on the causative suffix.

Ngurte et al. (1997, 2014) in their work on *Hmar Grammar and Composition* do not describe causatives per se but include the two morphological causative markers, that is, prefix /*suk-*/ and suffix /*tir-*/, in their discussion of affixes. They describe /*suk-*/ as a prefix that can be attached to a verb or adjective root and /*-tir*/ as a suffix that can be attached to verb stems, without providing the grammatical meaning and function of these affixes.

While these studies add to the literature of Hmar causatives, they deal with only one aspect of causatives without describing the phenomenon in detail, and therefore, demonstrate the need for a comprehensive description of causative structure in the language. This paper attempts to fill this gap by describing the different types of causatives found in the language and their function within a larger syntactic structure.

5. Types of Causatives in Hmar

Causatives in Hmar can be broadly classified into two types: Lexical and Morphological. While the lexical causatives are unproductive in the language, morphological causatives are regular and highly productive in the formation of causative structures.

5.1 Morphological Causative

Languages of the agglutinating type have a tendency to use affixes in the derivation of causative verbs (cf. Singh 1992). Morphological causatives in Hmar typically involve a verb stem and a causative affix. Two causative affixes are identified in the language: a prefix /*sùk-*/ and a suffix /-*tìr*/. The choice of the causative markers appears to be syntactically and semantically conditioned.

5.1.1. The causative prefix /*sùk-*/

Unlike most Kuki-Chin languages, Hmar employs a causative prefix /*sùk-*/ in the formation of causative structures. A similar construction with a causative prefix /*tì-*/ is found in Mizo (Chhangte 1989, Bedell 2012). The occurrence of the causative prefix appears to be restricted to intransitive verbs and adjectives in Hmar⁸. The use of the causative prefix with adjectives derives verb stems in the language. Semantically, it involves direct causation, i.e., the causer argument is directly responsible for causing or bringing out the event described by the verb stem. The following examples are illustrative. It may be noted that while the derived causative with the prefix /*sùk-*/ generally occurs without the verbal reflexive marker /*in-*/, the reflexive marker /*in-*/ is obligatory in constructions having a reflexive meaning as exemplified in (14b).

- (13) (a) *mɔité thil ril-in ā-mí-sùk-tì vɔŋ táʔ*
Mawite thing tell-ERG 3SG-1SG-CAUS-scare QUAN PERF
‘What Mawite narrated has all but frightened me’
- (b) *náutè khá sùk-tāp nɔ rɔʔ*
baby DET CAUS-cry NEG IMP
‘Do not make the baby cry’
- (14) (a) *ì rìŋ-ná-in sùk-dám á-tì tʃé*
2SG.GEN believe-NMZ-ERG CAUS-well 3SG-FUT 2SG
‘Your faith will heal you’
- (b) *in-sùk-sɔ:l nùom nɔ rɔʔ*
VR-CAUS-tired want NEG IMP
‘Don’t wear yourself out’

Although the causative prefix /*sùk-*/ shows a tendency to occur with intransitive verbs, it is interesting that it cannot be employed with intransitive verbs denoting activity or motion in the derivation of causative verbs as evidenced by the ungrammaticality of the causative structures in the following examples.

⁸ The distribution of *sùk-* is discussed in §5.1.4.

- (15) **á-mi-sùk-tlá:n*
 3SG-1SG-CAUS-run
 's/he made me run'
- (16) **sikùl-á? ká-sùk-fè*
 school-LOC 1SG-CAUS-go
 'I made him go to school'
- (17) **ká pí kàn-sùk-tòŋtái*
 1SG.GEN grandmother 1PL-CAUS-pray
 'We made our grandmother pray'

It must be noted that prefix /*sùk-*/ is strictly used in forming causative constructions wherein the causer argument makes the causee perform or experience the event denoted by the predicate, suggesting the presence of true causation in the language.

- (18) *í náunù ān-sùk-tàp*
 2SG.GEN daughter 3PL-CAUS-cry
 'They made your daughter cry/*They let your daughter cry'
- (19) *ká náutè dòn-in á-mì-sùk-sò:l*
 1SG.GEN baby look.after-ERG 3SG-1SG-CAUS-tired
 'The baby I am looking after is wearing me out/Lit: The baby I am looking after is making me tired'

5.1.2. The causative suffix /-tìr/

The Proto-Central-Chin causative suffix *-*tìr* (cf. VanBik 2002) appears to have been maintained in the formation of causative structures in Hmar. The *-*tìr* has, however, undergone a segmental change involving vowel length and is realized as /-tìr/ in the language. The causative suffix /-tìr/ is morphologically regular and productive. It can derive causatives from all non-causative verb types (intransitive and transitive)⁹. The causativized verbs derived from the suffix /-tìr/ obligatorily occurs with the verbal reflexive marker /in-/, as opposed to its non-causative counterpart, resulting in an /in-V-tìr/ structure which can be treated as a circumfix.

- (20) (a) *in-sú:ŋ-a? ká-thún*
 house-inside-LOC 1SG-sit
 'I'm sitting inside the house'

⁹ See §5.1.4 and §5.1.5 for further discussion on the distribution of the causative -tìr.

- (b) *in-sú:ŋ-aʔ* *kan* *in-thùŋ-tìr*
 house-inside-LOC 1PL VR-sit.II-CAUS
 ‘We made/let them sit inside the house’
- (21) (a) *tánpùi-in* *khúr* *á-tfów*
 Tanpui-ERG pit 3SG-dig.I
 ‘Tanpui is digging a pit’
- (b) *ká* *pá-hái-in* *tánpùi* *khúr* *án-in-tfòw-tìr*
 1SG.GEN father-PL-ERG Tanpui pit 3SG-VR-dig.II-CAUS
 ‘My parents made/let Tanpui dig a pit’

The reflexive marker tends to be phonologically reduced to /-n/ when preceded by a vowel. The following examples are illustrative.

- (22) *thínpùi á-mì-n-dón-tìr*
 tea 3SG-1SG-drink-CAUS
 ‘s/he made/let me drink tea’
- (23) *nùnù-in* *ā* *sám* *à-n-tàn-tìr* *tfè*
 mom-ERG 3SG.GEN hair 3SG-VR-cut-CAUS 2SG
 ‘Mom made/let you cut her hair.’

The productivity of the causative suffix can be further evidenced by its ability to form causatives with the copula verbs. This causativization of copula verbs using the causative suffix is also attested in Lai (VanBik 2002). Hmar has two copula verbs: *nìʔ* ‘be’ and *ùm* ‘existential’. Both can undergo the causative /-tìr/ suffixation as exemplified in (24) and (25) respectively.

- (24) *tfé:rmè:n* *mì-n-ní-tìr* *nɔ* *ròu*
 chairman 1SG-VR-COP-CAUS NEG IMP.PL
 ‘Don’t let me be the Chairman/Don’t make me the Chairman’
- (25) *ùm* *lò* *ánthoká in-úm-tìr* *thèi-tú* *Páthièn* *á-nìʔ*
 COP NEG from VR-COP-CAUS able-NMZ God 3SG-COP
 ‘He is a God who can cause something to exist out of nothing’

Based on the examples illustrated above, it is evident that the causative suffix /-tìr/ does not make any distinction between true or permissive causatives. It forms causative constructions which can either have a true or permissive reading.

5.1.3. 5.1.3. Causatives of Intransitives

Intransitive verbs can be causativized using either the prefix /sùk-/ or the suffix /-tìr/. The causativization of the intransitive verb introduces a causer argument that takes

the role of an agent. This allows the introduced argument to take the ergative case marking. Further, the erstwhile intransitive subject gets demoted as the causee argument and functions as the syntactic object/theme of the causativized verb. This is indicated by the transitive agreement morphology on the causativized verb as exemplified in the following causative structures.

- (26) (a) *náutè á-tāp*
 baby 3SG-cry
 'The baby is crying'
- (b) *náŋ-in náutè ì-sùk-tāp*
 you-ERG baby 2SG-CAUS-cry
 'You made the baby cry'
- (27) (a) *ámá in-à? á-fè*
 s/he house-LOC 3SG-go
 'S/he went home'
- (b) *kèi-in ámá in-à? ká-n-fè-tìr*
 I-ERG him/her house-LOC 1SG-VR-go-CAUS
 'I made/let him/her go home'

Intransitive verbs expressing a process or state can occur with both the causative prefix /*sùk-*/ and the suffix /*-tìr*/ in the derivation of causative structures. The choice of the causative affix appears to be dependent on the causative meaning the speaker wants to convey. In (28a) and (29a), the /*sùk-*/ causative is used to describe a situation in which the agent's activity or action, whether intentional or unintentional, is the reason for the caused event. On the other hand, the /*-tìr*/ causative in (28b) and (29b) describes a caused event which the agent intentionally allows to happen.

- (28) (a) *náutè ká-sùk-tāp*
 baby 1sg-CAUS-cry
 'I made the baby cry'
- (b) *náutè ká-n-tāp-tìr*
 baby 1Sg-VR-cry-CAUS
 'I let the baby cry/*I made the baby cry'
- (29) (a) *nùnù-in bù á-sùk-ká:ŋ*
 mother-ERG rice 3SG-CAUS-burn
 'Mother burnt the rice'

- (b) *á-n-ká:ŋ-tìr* *zì:*
 3SG-VR-burn-CAUS HAB
 ‘She always lets it burn/*She always makes it burn’

Generally, the causative suffix */-tìr/* does not distinguish between true and permissive causation in Hmar. However, it is interesting that its occurrence with the verbs in the above examples is slightly more inclined towards expressing causatives with a permissive meaning. The asterisk marking of the true causative alternation provided in (28b) and (29b) indicates that although it is possible to interpret the causative structures as true causation, it is neither natural nor preferred in the given context.

5.1.4. Causatives of Transitives

Causatives of transitives in Hmar are derived using the */-tìr/* suffix. Causativization of transitives suggests a paradigm case involving a resultant ditransitive structure with the embedded subject occurring as an indirect object (Singh 1992). *Prima facie*, this appears to be the case in Hmar since the causative suffix on the transitive increases the number of its arguments and the erstwhile A argument (causee) seemingly occurs as an indirect object.

- (30) *(nán-ìn) kái grámmàr i-mì-n-tfú:k-tìr* *ŋá:i á-tì?*
 you-ERG me grammar 2SG-1SG-VR-learn-CAUS need 3SG-FUT
 ‘You will have to teach me grammar’

- (31) *núnú-ìn nán púonbí á-n-tfɔ:k-tír* *tfè ánnɔ*
 mother-ERG you wraparound 3SG-VR-take-CAUS 2SG QM
 ‘Mom made/let you buy a wraparound, didn’t she?’

- (32) *phèikhək-hái khá jóná ká-n-èmdək-tír* *ánnɔm*
 shoe-PL DET Jona 1SG-VR-put out-CAUS AFFM
 ‘I made/let Jona put the shoes out to dry’

However, the causative structures in (30) – (32) show that there is no case marking on the causee argument to indicate its syntactic role as an indirect object. It is unmarked for case, like the original O argument and syntactically behaves like a direct object. The causatives of transitive verbs in Hmar illustrate a causative pattern in which the causee argument and theme objects are treated as direct objects of the causativized verb (Comrie 1981, Baker 1988). The language therefore follows what King (2010: 42) terms as the “double object pattern” of causatives. It may also be noted that while both the causee argument and the original object share the same case i.e., they are unmarked for absolutive case, it is the causee argument which shows object agreement with the causative verb. This suggests the syntactic prominence of the causee argument in the language and may, therefore, be regarded as the primary object (cf. Dryer 1986).

5.1.5. *Verb stem alternation and causatives*

While some Kuki-Chin languages such as Mizo (Chhangte 1993), Hakha Lai (Peterson 1998, VanBik 2002) and Falam Chin (King 2010) require that the Stem II form of verbs combine with the causative morphology, both Stem I and stem II verbs can occur with the causative morphology in Hmar as exemplified in (22).

(33)	Simplex			Causative		
	Stem I	Stem II		Stem I	Stem II	
	<i>tlà</i>	<i>tlák</i>	'fall'	<i>suk-tlá</i>	<i>suk-tlák</i>	'cause to fall'
	<i>nà</i>	<i>nát</i>	'hurt/pain'	<i>suk-ná</i>	<i>suk-nát</i>	'cause to be in pain'
	<i>sì:</i>	<i>sí:t</i>	'spoil'	<i>sùk-sì</i>	<i>sùk-sí:t</i>	'cause to spoil'
	<i>fà</i>	<i>fák</i>	'eat'	<i>in-fá-tìr</i>	<i>in-fák-tìr</i>	'cause to eat'
	<i>pè</i>	<i>pék</i>	'give'	<i>in-pé-tìr</i>	<i>in-pék-tìr</i>	'cause to give'
	<i>vɔ</i>	<i>vú:k</i>	'beat'	<i>in-vɔ-tìr</i>	<i>in-vú:k-tìr</i>	'cause to beat'

It may be noted from the discussion of the causative morphology in the preceding sections that the causative */in-V-tìr/* is the more productive causative marker as it occurs with both transitive and intransitive verbs. The fact that it co-occurs with reflexivization, i.e., the prefix */in-/*, which generally functions as detransitivizer, could be the reason that it is permitted to occur with stem I form of the verbs. Nevertheless, the causative suffix */-tìr/* appears to be more commonly associated with the stem II form of verbs in Hmar. On the other hand, while the */sùk-/* causativization does not occur with reflexivization, it is possible that the ambiguous transitivity associated with the */in-V-tìr/* has in fact spread to the */suk-/* causative structures, making it possible to combine with stem II verbs.

5.2 *The Causative Alternation*

Causative alternation according to Dixon (2000), involves a single lexeme occurring in either a causative or non-causative function. When used intransitively, the verb has a non-causative function while the transitive use of the verb specifies a causer agent, thus, indicating a causative function (Tallerman 1998). Hmar is also found to exhibit causative alternation with some verbs. Transitive verbs as seen in (34a) and (35a) can be used in a causative sense in that it describes an event that is caused due to the agent's action. The transitive verb can be detransitivized using the prefix */in-/* to derive an anticausative alternation as illustrated in (34b) and (35b).

- (34) (a) *i t^huŋ-na ka-tɔ:l*
 2SG.GEN sit-NMZ 1SG-move
 'I moved your chair'
- (b) *i t^huŋ-na a-n-tɔ:l*
 2SG.GEN sit- NMZ 3SG-VR-move
 'Your chair moved'

- (35) (a) *ka nu-in bàŋ-aʔ ʃábi ā-kʰá:i*
 1SG.GEN mother-ERG wall-LOC key 3SG -hang
 ‘My mother hung the key on the wall’
- (b) *bàŋ-aʔ ʃábi á-n-kʰá:i*
 wall-LOC key 3SG-VR-hang
 ‘The key is hanging on the wall’

5.3 Lexical Causative

In addition to morphological causative, Hmar is found to have a finite set of lexical forms which inherently expresses the notion of causation in its meaning, thereby semantically opposing the non-causative form of the verb. However, it is unproductive in the language and is found to be limited in comparison to the morphological causatives.

5.3.1. Suppletive Forms

Dixon (2000) identifies a second type of lexical causative which involve two unrelated forms in expressing the causative and non-causative distinction. Hmar has some lexical forms that can be categorized into suppletive pairs of simplex/ causative verbs. The two forms are entirely distinct in their structure, i.e., they lack any phonological or morphological similarity. The simplex/non-causative forms are generally used intransitively while the causative forms are transitive in nature. The causative verbs do not have an overt marking of causation in their surface structure, nevertheless, their lexical meaning implies the presence of a causing event and a caused event. The causative verbs *inbá* and *ʃʰəl* in (36b) and (37b) can semantically be interpreted as ‘cause to eat’ and ‘cause to stop burning’ respectively and express direct causation, i.e., the causer is directly involved in bringing out the caused event. Syntactically, they differ in the number of arguments they take. The simplex/causative pair in (36) show that the simplex forms need not always be intransitive in the language.

- (36) (a) *ká dàmɔi ká-fá:k*
 1SG.GEN medicine 1SG-eat.II
 ‘I ate my medicine’
- (b) *nársi-nú-in ká dàmɔi á-mí-nbá*
 nurse-FEM-ERG 1SG.GEN medicine 3SG-1SG-feed
 ‘The nurse had me eat my medicine’
- (37) (a) *mèi á-ré:m*
 fire 3SG-stop.burning
 ‘The fire died out’

- (b) *làlá-in mòi á-t^hèl*
 Lala-ERG fire 3SG-extinguish
 'Lala extinguished the fire'

5.3.2. *Derived Forms*

Hmar is found to have some simplex/causative pairs of verbs, although uncommon, which involves two closely related forms. I use the term 'derived forms' to describe such causative pairs of verbs. The causative variant may be assumed to be derived from the simplex form through some phonological or morphological alternation. In (38b), the causative verb involves a stem initial aspiration and a reflexive prefix /*in-*/ as opposed to its non-causative form in (38a). The aspiration of the initial stem in the causative verb may be linked to the Proto-Tibeto-Burman sibilant causative prefix **s-* (cf. Benedict 1972, Matisoff 1976, VanBik 2002).

- (38) (a) *tí nɔ rɔʔ*
 be.afraid NEG IMP
 'Do not be afraid'
- (b) *náuté khá in-t^hy nɔ rɔʔ*
 baby DET VR-frighten NEG IMP
 'Do not frighten the baby'

A different type of derived form found in the language is the addition of a voiceless velar stop and a phonologically reduced reflexive prefix /*n-*/ to the simplex intransitive form giving it a causative meaning. The simplex/causative pair of verbs is exemplified in (39a) and (39b) respectively.

- (39) (a) *kà nàbé a-tlá*
 1SG.GEN earring 3SG-fall
 'My earrings fell.'
- (b) *kà nàbé á-n-tlák*
 1SG.GEN earrings 1SG-VR-drop
 'S/he dropped my earrings (cause to fall).'

The causative variant in (40b) is derived from the simplex verb by adding a suffix to the verb. It may be noted that this morphological process does not permit the derived causative to take the reflexive marker.

- (40) (a) *núnù á-n-ṁɔ á-nìʔ*
 mother 3SG-VR-be.in.hurry 3SG-be
 'Mom is in a hurry.'

- (b) *pì* *mwi-ìn* *núnù* *á-mɔlá*
 Aunty Mawi-ERG mother 3SG-CAUS.hurry
 ‘Aunty Mawi had mother hurry.’

These operations, however, cannot be taken as a regular process for causativization nor can it be productively applied in the language. They do not occur with any or every verb to get a causative meaning. In fact, the causative variants exemplified above can be assumed to be the only existing few which have preserved the historical causative morphology in the grammatical system of the language. They tend to be treated as lexical causatives since the morphological operations involved in the derivation of these forms appear to have lost their productivity in the language.

5.3.3. *Serial verbs as a causative expression*

Serial verbs are frequently found in Hmar clauses or sentences, with the two verbs expressing a number of semantic relationships such as manner, sequence, directional orientation, and cause-effect. As such, serial verbs that indicate a semantic relationship of cause-effect in their meaning tend to be used in expressing causation in the language. The expression of causative meaning through serial verbs is also discussed in Dixon (2000) and Aikhenvald (2015). The verb series exemplified in (41) – (44) expresses causation as one complex event wherein the event described by the first verb is the cause of the resulting event in the second verb. In Dixon (2000), serial verbs expressing causation and lexical causatives are characterized as two different types of causatives. However, the serial verbs with a cause-effect relationship can be treated as bimorphemic lexical causatives in Hmar since it does not involve a separate causative verb. The semantic interpretation of cause in the first verb can only be realized in relation to that of the second verb in the series. The serial verbs semantically indicate direct causation as the causer argument is physically responsible for the caused event. It does not involve any intervening agent (causee argument). It may be noted that the serial verb in (41) share the same subject while the object of the first verb is semantically the subject of the second verb in (42) – (44).

- (41) *kɔt* *à-kèi* *khá:r*
 door 3SG-pull close
 ‘S/he caused the door to close by pulling it.’
- (42) *vùl-ìn* *ā* *zákùo* *á-nɔ:t* *ká:ŋ*
 Vuli-ERG 3SG.GEN shirt 3SG-to.iron burn
 ‘Vuli caused her shirt to burn by ironing it.’
- (43) *tí-ìn* *púon* *èm* *hái* *á-mú:t* *tlá*
 wind-ERG cloth dry PL 3SG-blow fall
 ‘The wind made the clothes fall by blowing it.’

- (44) *mi a-hál táp zì:*
 people 3SG-scold cry HAB
 's/he always makes people cry (by scolding them).'

6. On reflexive/reciprocal marking and Causation

The reflexive/reciprocal prefix /*in-*/ is regularly found with transitive verbs in Hmar. It functions as a detransitivizing prefix and generally reduces the syntactic valence of the verb, thereby resulting in a syntactically intransitive structure. This is evidenced by the inability of subject to take the ergative case marker despite the semantically transitive nature of the verb in (45) and (46). The lone argument “fulfills two semantic roles and/or grammatical relations” (Payne 1997: 198). It must be noted that while reflexives and reciprocals employ an identical morphological operator *in-*, the reflexive marker is phonologically reduced to *n-* when the subject is singular.

- (45) *vúli tǝm-in á-n-át*
 Vuli knife-INST 3SG-VR-cut
 'Vuli cut herself with a knife.'
- (46) *lálnùn lè mwi án-in-mù*
 Lalnun and Mawi 3PL-REC-see
 'Lalnun and Mawi met each other.'

Nevertheless, the prefix /*in-*/ is no longer solely used in association with a reflexive/reciprocal meaning. As in the case of Mizo (Chhangte 1989a), the prefix occurs as a detransitivizer and combines with most of the verbs to form a derived or complex verb stem that indicates a middle function. Hmar may be categorized as a one-form middle system¹⁰. This is illustrated in the following examples.

- (47) *á-n-tlèŋ tálù tà?*
 3SG-VR-change DEG PERF
 'She has really changed.'
- (48) *nùnù á-n-sɔp*
 mother 3SG-VR -wash
 'Mom is washing up/washing.'

It is interesting that the morphological causatives /*sùk-*/ and /*-tìr*/ appear to have specific functions in relation to the two semantic interpretations identified with the reflexive/reciprocal marker. The causative prefix /*sùk-*/ tends to occur with the reflexive/reciprocal prefix /*in-*/ only in constructions where the subject assumes the role of

¹⁰ Kemmer (1993) distinguishes one-form middle system as a type of middle system which employs an identical marker for both middles and reflexives.

both the causer and causee, deriving what Smith (1998) identifies as a reflexive causative (as cited in VanBik 2002: 113). In the following examples, it may be noted that the main roots in the predicates are actually nouns but have an adjectival function in that they describe a state of being in (49) or someone’s personality in (50) and (51). The causative suffix, therefore, appears to derive stative verbs or adjectives from nouns. This function of the causative as a verbalizer or denominalizer is common in other TB languages (cf. Jacques 2019).

(49) *án-in-sùk-lùnsèn* *á*
 3PL-VR-CAUS-be.angry SEQ
 ‘They made themselves angry/they made each other angry’

(50) *in-sùk-pá* *á* *hùn* *nɔ* *ìe*
 VR-CAUS-be.manly 3SG time NEG DECL
 ‘This is not the time to act tough/Lit: This is not the time to make oneself out to be like a man’

(51) *sɔm sɔm* *hì* *á-n-sùk-nùŋ^hák* *tɔp*
 Sawm sawm DET 3SG-VR-CAUS-be.ladylike EMP
 ‘Sawm sawm is acting grown up (than she is)/ Lit: Sawm sawm is making herself out to be like a lady’

The causative prefix is also permitted to occur with the reflexive/reciprocal prefix in constructions that have no reflexive/reciprocal interpretation. It involves a change in its syntactic structure with prefix /*in-*/ following the causative marker as illustrated in the following examples.

(52) *ká* *mɔtɔr* *sì-in* *á-mì-sùk-in-ŋù* *vɔŋ*
 1SG.GEN vehicle spoil-ERG 3SG-1SG-CAUS-VR-late QUAN
 ‘My vehicle breaking down made me late.’

(53) *án-sùk-in-vèt* *zò* *dìŋ* *á-nì?*
 3PL-CAUS-VR-mad finish FUT 3SG-COP
 ‘They will eventually drive him completely crazy. Lit: They will eventually make him a completely mad person.’

However, the reflexive/reciprocal prefix appears to be optional in its occurrence with the causative prefix as it can be dropped by the speakers without affecting the grammatical and semantic structure of the sentence.

(54) *ká* *mɔtɔr* *sì-in* *á-mì-sùk-ŋù* *vɔŋ*
 1SG.GEN vehicle spoil-ERG 3SG-1SG-CAUS-late QUAN
 ‘My vehicle breaking down made me late.’

- (55) *án-sùk-vèt zò diŋ á-nì?*
 3PL-CAUS-mad finish FUT 3SG-COP
 ‘They will eventually drive him completely crazy. Lit: They will eventually make him a completely mad person.’

On the other hand, causative constructions involving the causative suffix */-tìr/* require the obligatory occurrence of the reflexive/reciprocal */in-/*. However, the derived causative verb does not seem to express a reflexive/reciprocal interpretation, i.e., the causer and causee are not coreferential. It must be noted that the absence of the reflexive/reciprocal marking on the verb in such constructions results in ungrammaticality as shown in (58).

- (56) *vùl-in mámpùi á sàm á-n-tan-tìr*
 vuli-ERG Mampui 3SG.GEN hair 3SG-VR-cut-CAUS
 ‘Vuli let/made Mampui cut her hair.’

- (57) *sá kán-in-tɕ:k-tìr*
 meat 1PL-VR-buy-CAUS
 ‘We let/made him buy meat’

- (58) **vùl-in mámpùi á sàm á-tan-tìr*
 Vuli-ERG Mampui 3SG.GEN hair 3SG-cut-CAUS
 ‘Vuli let/made Mampui cut her hair’

7. Double Causatives

The phenomenon of double causation is present in some Tibeto-Burman languages with the forms of expressing such a notion differing across these languages (Hongkai 1999). In Hmar, both the prefix */sùk-/* and the causative suffix */-tìr/* can occur simultaneously with the verb in causative constructions, deriving a double causative meaning i.e., X CAUSES Y to CAUSE Z. As such, the double causative structures typically involve three syntactic/semantic arguments. It may be noted that the verbs that take both the causative affixes are intransitive and stative. The causative prefix */sùk-/* transitivizes the verb and derives the first causative event. The suffixation of the causative */-tìr/* on the derived verb further involves an additional causer argument and a second causative event, resulting in a double causative structure.

- (59) *mè á-mì-n-sùk-lùm-tìr*
 curry 3SG-1SG-VR-CAUS-hot-CAUS
 ‘s/he made me heat the curry/Lit: s/he made me make the curry hot’

(60) *mɔitè in ká-n-sùk-fái-tìr*
 Mawite house 1SG-VR-CAUS-clean-CAUS
 ‘I let/made Mawite have the house cleaned. Lit: I let/made Mawite make the house clean’

(61) *náutè khá in-sùk-bal-tìr nɔ rɔʔ*
 baby DET VR-CAUS-dirty-CAUS NEG IMP
 ‘Don’t let the baby be made dirty (by him/her self or by others).’

A double causative meaning can also be drawn from some lexical causatives with the help of the causative suffix */-tìr/*. Lexical causatives are known to express causation inherently. The verb *tʰèl* ‘extinguish’ in example (62a) is a transitive verb that expresses both the causing event and the caused event. The verb can be semantically interpreted as ‘cause to stop’. The transitive structure in (62a) describes a causative event in which the burning fire is stopped due to some unspecified action of the agent. The addition of the causative suffix */-tìr/* to the verb results in a second causative event and further increases the valence of the transitive verb as illustrated in example (62b).

(62) (a) *làlá-in mèi á-tʰèl*
 Lala-ERG fire 3SG-extinguish
 ‘Lala extinguished the fire. Lit: Lala caused the fire to stop.’

(b) *làlá mèi ká-n-tʰèl-tìr*
 Lala fire 1SG-VR-CAUS.stop-CAUS
 ‘I made Lala put out the fire/I made Lala make the fire stop burning’

8. Summary

This paper describes causative structures in Hmar and identifies morphological and lexical causatives as the two types of causatives present in the language. In addition to the causative suffix generally found in Kuki-Chin languages, the language is also found to employ a causative prefix */sùk-/* in the derivation of causative verbs. In causative constructions with the causative suffix */-tìr/*, the verbs occur with an obligatory prefix */in-/* deriving a structure */in-V-tìr/*. The causative */-tìr/* is morphologically more regular and productive as it can occur with transitive, intransitive and copula verbs in forming causatives while */sùk-/* appears to be restricted to intransitive verbs and adjectives. It is observed that although morphological causatives do not condition the choice of stem I and stem II forms, the causative suffix is productively used with the stem II form of the verb. The morphological causatives increase the valence of the predicate. In terms of the functional difference between the two causative forms, */sùk-/* is solely employed to express true causation while causative constructions with */-tìr/* can have both a true and permissive interpretation.

Suppletive and derived forms, as well as serial verbs are discussed as the different types of lexical causatives in Hmar. Lexical causatives are limited, irregular and unproductive in the language. The language is found to exhibit remnants of the Proto Tibeto-Burman *s- causative prefix. However, given that it is preserved only in some few words and is extremely rare, it cannot be taken as a regular morphological process and is therefore, lexicalized. Semantically, lexical causatives express direct causation in the language.

The verbal reflexive/reciprocal marker is regularly present in the derivation of causative verbs, particularly with the causative /-tɪr/ although the derived causative forms have no reflexive or reciprocal meaning. The reflexive meaning is retained when prefixed to the derived causative verb using the causative prefix /sùk-/.

In the discussion of double causatives, it is observed that the co-occurrence of the morphological causatives and the suffixation of the causative /-tɪr/ to the lexical causative forms derive double causative meanings in Hmar.

ABBREVIATIONS

1	First Person	HORT	Hortative
2	Second Person	IMP	Imperative
3	Third Person	INCL	Inclusive
A	Transitive Subject	LOC	Locative
ADV	Adverbial	NEG	Negative
AFFM	Affirmative	NMZ	Nominalizer
CAUS	Causative	NP	Noun Phrase
COP	Copula	NPI	Non-Polarity Item
DECL	Declarative	O	Transitive Object
DEG	Degree	PERF	Perfective
DET	Determiner	PL	Plural
ERG	Ergative	RELQ	Relinquitive
EMP	Emphatic	REP	Repetitive
GEN	Genitive	SEQ	Sequential Marker
FEM	Feminine	SG	Singular
FUT	Future	QM	Question Marker
VR	Verbal Reflexive	QUAN	Quantitative
HAB	Habitual		

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