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## Sept suffixes causatifs pour une seule langue: le cas du wolof

Seven causative suffixes for one language: the case of Wolof

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### Introduction

Wolof : Niger-Congo, Atlantic, mainly spoken in Senegal (~10M speakers, all included)

- Rich system of suffixes for verbal derivation (up to 40)
- Fine grained distinctions inside categories: 2 applicatives, 3 reciprocals and... **7 causative** suffixes in addition to 3 verbs used for periphrastic causatives:  
*tax* 'to cause', *def* 'to do', *bàyyi* 'to leave, abandon'  
 (= only indirect causatives ± intentionality, cf Nougier Voisin 2002)

5 causative suffixes, well studied by **Nougier Voisin (2002)**

2 additional suffixes added by S. Robert for the CORTYPO project ([cortypo.huma-num.fr](http://cortypo.huma-num.fr))

CAUS 1	-al ~ -ale
CAUS 2	-e
CAUS 3	-le
CAUS 4	-lu
CAUS 5	-loo
CAUS 6	-antal
CAUS 7	(stem alternation)+-ali

→ Obviously related (-/ 'morphem', except for CAUS2) but not segmentable in synchrony (fused forms, portmanteau) (for diachronic hypothesis, see Nougier Voisin 2002)

- Typology: Distinction between different semantic types of causatives well known (e.g. Shibatani 1975, Comrie 1976..., see Song 1996 for a review, Dixon 2002)

But usually distributed across **a few** constructions or **polyvalent** morphemes

cf. Chimwi:ni (Bantu G): 5 types of causation but a single suffix (Abasheikh 1978):  
 causative semantics depends on the type of predicate

Wolof: 7 causative suffixes (+ 3 periphrastic constructions):

Why is Wolof so ?

- what kind of distinctions or subcategorizations in Wolof ?
- typologically rare types of causatives ?

### 1. A few definitions

#### ▪ The causative construction

e.g. *The child fell* → *I made the child fall*

→ a caused event, addition of a **causer** (fr. *causateur*), a **causee** (fr. *causataire*)  
 initiates/controls                      realizes/undergoes the process

Syntax: Valence increasing with readjustment of the semantic and syntactic roles

Wolof: causative derivation → Causer in **Subject** position, Causee in **Object** position (SVO)

#### ▪ Types of causation

- **direct** causation: *le soleil a blanchi* (= *fait devenir blanc*) *le coussin*
- **indirect** causation: *the speaker made the audience laugh*
- **sociative** causative: *la mère a fait manger les enfants* / *the mother had the kids eat*

A continuum with an intermediate type, the sociative causation (Shibatani & Pardeshi 2002):

direct → sociative → indirect causation

Causer's 'agentivity':                      +                      ±                      -  
 (physical intervention)

### 2. The 'pure' causative suffixes of Wolof

#### 2.1. (-e) CAUS1 and (-al) CAUS2

- Difficult to find semantic or syntactic differences but *-al* fully productive and *-e* : ± **lexicalized**  
 cf - Restricted to a handful of verbs ('to go down', 'to be named', 'to be forbidden'...)  
 - In complementary distribution with (-al):  
 e.g. *gènn* 'go out': *genn-e*, \**gènn-al*; *toog* 'to sit': *toog-al*, \**toog-e*

- Both express **direct causation**, with intransitive verbs (stative quality, movement verbs...) becoming transitive:

*weex* 'to be white', *weex-al* 'to whiten something' i.e. to make something become white  
*fees* 'to be full', *fees-al* 'to fill in something' → **S + agent, O + patient** (cf 1b)

- (1) a. *Gènn na ci diggu kër*  
 go\_out PFT.3SG LOC.PROX middle-GEN.SG house  
 'He/she went out in the yard' (INTR)
- b. *Gènn-e na guro yu sànkàr yépp*  
 go\_out-CAUS2 PFT.3SG cola\_nut LINK be\_with\_worms CLSy-all  
 'He/she took out all the cola nuts that had worms' (TRANS) (from Creissels & Voisin 2008)

- Extension to **joint action** or **assistive causation** (= sociative causation) with animate Objects

- (2) *Toog-al na gan yi*  
sit-CAUS2 PFT.3SG guest DEFy.PROX  
'He had the guest seated'

= to sit an invitation for the others to seat (joint action)  
or to provide seats for the guest to sit (assistive causative)

**CAUS1/2** → **direct causation**, can be extended to joint action

## 2.2. (-le) CAUS3

May apply to transitive or intransitive verbs but apparently not to stative quality verbs (≠ CAUS1/2)

**Specific** causative meaning, cf (3b)

- (3) a. *Bul wat saaku bi !* *wat* 'to lift' (TRANS)  
PROH.1SG lift bag DEFb.PROX  
'Ne traîne pas le sac par terre !'

- b. ... *moo koy wat-le qaal qi* *wat-le* (DITRANS)  
FOC.S.3SG O.3SG-IPFV lift-CAUS3 dugout DEFg.PROX  
'...c'est elle qui l'aidait-à-tirer la pirogue' (Nouguier 2002: 186)

Addition of a new argument (**causer**) in S position, **helping** O (causee) to realize the action =

(3b) = **Joint action**: both Causee and Causer participate physically in the caused action

(4) = **Assisting action**: the causer assists/helps the causee but does not perform the action

- (4) *Lekk-le na xale bi*  
eat-CAUS3 PFT.3SG child DEFb.PROX  
'Il fait manger l'enfant / il aide l'enfant à manger' (Nouguier 2002: 185)

NB. transitive derived verbs > ditransitive, but sometimes no valence increasing: one object (causee or recipient) may be omitted while semantically present, cf (4) no recipient

**CAUS3** → **sociative causation only** (typologically rare ?), i.e. **joint action or assistive**  
± 2 agents: O causee agentive, causer ± agentive, more than in direct causation

## 2.3. (-lu) CAUS4

Applies only to transitive dynamic verbs, e.g. *ñaw* 'to sew':

- (5) a. *Ñaw naa roob*  
sew PFT.1SG dress  
'I sewed a dress'

- b. *Ñaw-lu naa roob*  
sew-CAUS4 PFT.1SG dress

'I had a dress sewed' (Creissels & Voisin 2008)

- S (causer) is a mere controller, the causee realizes the action: **indirect causation**
- Specificity**: the causee can not be explicitly mentioned: **omitted causee**
- Syntactically: no valence increasing since the causee is not mentioned

Why to code an omitted causee ?

The causee might be discursively not important or pragmatically not known, e.g. in requests (Nouguier 2000: 188-9):

→ **indirect causation with omitted causee** (possible extension to sociative meaning)

## 2.5. (-loo) CAUS5

Does not apply to stative verbs, only with dynamic verbs (actions)

**Indirect** causation but with an **explicit causee** (discursive prominence): contrast (6) with (5)

- (6) *Ñaw-loo naa ko roob*  
sew-CAUS5 PFT.1SG O.3SG dress  
'I had him/her sew a dress' (Creissels & Voisin 2008)

- S (causer) is a mere controller
- O (causee) is the real agent, so generally animate (≠ CAUS2)
- Valence increasing

→ a strict **indirect causative** (no extension)

## 2.6. A first summary

		Prototypically :		Agentivity	
				O	S
CAUS 1	-al ~ -ale	<b>direct causative</b>			
CAUS 2	-e (lexicalized)	(> joint action if O anim.)	S agentive causer O patient/undergoer causee		
CAUS 3	-le	<b>assistive causative</b> (or joint action)	S ± agentive causer O agentive causee		
CAUS 4	-lu	indirect causative (or assistive) <b>with omitted causee</b>	S beneficiary/ordering causer Agentive causee omitted [O recipient]		
CAUS 5	-loo	<b>indirect causative</b>	S controller causer O agentive causee		

### 3. The “complex” causative suffixes of Wolof

CAUS6 (-*antal*) and CAUS7 (stem alternation+*-ali*) are paired forms combining causative meaning with an indication about the state of the process

→ ‘uncompleted’ vs. ‘completing’ causation / causation ‘incomplete’ vs. ‘parachevante’

#### 3.1. CAUS 6 (-*antal*) : the uncompleted causative

- a **rare** causative suffix (not really productive in derivation) but well attested in **lexicalized** verbal forms (e.g. *fenantal* ‘to digress’ < ? *fen* ‘to lie’) or in **deverbal nouns** (e.g. *mujj-antal* B ‘finition’/‘finishing stage or touch’ from *mujj* ‘to be the last one’)

applies mostly to stative intransitive verbs: e.g. *set* ‘to be clean’, *sett-antal* ‘to purge s.t. from’, *suufe* ‘to be low’, *suufeental* < *suufe-antal* ‘to put down somebody’ / ‘rabaïsser’

- **direct causative** (as *-al*) but indicating an **uncompleted process** : compare (7)b and c

(7) a. *Xale bii, dafa reew*  
kid this, FOC.V.3SG be\_impolite  
‘this child is disrespectful/impolite’

b. *dafa reew-al doom ji*  
FOC.V.3SG be\_impolite-CAUS2 child DEFj.PROX  
‘il a rendu son enfant impoli’ / ‘he spoiled his child’ lit. ‘he made his child impolite’

c. *dafa reew-antal doom ji*  
FOC.V.3SG be\_impolite-CAUS6 child DEFj.PROX  
‘il a un peu gâté son enfant’ i.e. ‘l’a rendu un peu mal élevé (mais pas complètement)’  
/ ‘he spoiled a little bit his child’

→ indicates an **incomplete transformation**, slightly affecting the Objet

- *baaxantal* : a remarkable meaning

(8) *Dañuy baax-antal cosaan-u maam yi*  
FOC.V.3PL:IPFV ?-CAUS6 custom ancestor-GEN.SG DEFy:PROX  
‘ils commémorent la coutume des anciens’ / ‘they commemorate the ancient custom’

*baax* ‘être bon’ ; cf. *baax-al* ‘rendre qqn bon/positif’  
→ *baax* G ‘tradition’

*baax-antal* : ‘to commemorate something’  
i.e. ‘to make something become a celebrated tradition (*baax*) to repeat’

→ CAUS6 indicates that **the caused event is not a completed process**, be it **in time** (frequentative meaning) or **in quality** (incomplete transformation),

*jéem* ‘to try’  
*jéem-antal* ‘to train somebody’ (‘exercer, entraîner qqn’) = ‘to make s.o. try a little bit’

- A compound suffixe ? *-antal* < *ant-* + *CAUS2-al* ?

Problem : *-\*ant* does not exist in synchrony, however visible in other verbal suffixes (reconstruction): *-ante* (RECP3): prototypical reciprocal; - *anti* (with stem altern): “correctif” (Diouf 2003) cf. *jubanti* “redresser qqch qui est courbé” < *jub* “être droit” (an additional causative); *-antu* : « simulatif » (Diouf 2003), « limitatif » (Church 1981). Church (1981: 167) : « limitatif, indiquant un **engagement à partiel** dans l’action, l’absence de sérieux » ; Sa valeur est dans certains cas assez proche celle du **diminutif** – *adi* » :

*beyantu* ‘faire semblant de / s’amuser à cultiver la terre’ < *bey* ‘cultiver la terre’  
*doxantu* ‘flâner’ < *dox* ‘marcher’  
*laalantu* ‘toucher sans but précis’ < *laal* ‘toucher’  
*gëmantu* ‘avoir un peu de foi’ < *gëm* ‘croire’....

→ the causative suffix (*-al*) alternates with the middle suffix (*-u*) in *-antal* vs. *-ant-u*  
*reew* ‘être impoli’, *reew-antu* ‘faire semblant d’être impoli/ faire l’enfant gâté), *reew-al* ‘rendre impoli’, *reew-antal* ‘un peu gâter un enfant’

#### 3.2. CAUS7 (stem final alternation + *-ali*) : a completing causative

Applies mostly to stative quality verbs but sometimes also dynamic verbs (e.g. *àgg* ‘to arrive’, *àggali* ‘to lead something to completion’ / ‘faire arriver à terme, donner le coup de grâce’)

Close to (*-al*) for its causative component but express a **direct causation** for **completing/finalizing** a process.

*-al/-ali* :

*fees* ‘to be full’, *fees-al* ‘to fill in s.t.’, *feccali* ‘to complete filling s.t.’  
*mat* ‘être mature, complet’, *mat-al* ‘compléter’, *mottali* ‘achever ce qui était inachevé’  
*saf* ‘to be tasty’, *sàp-pali* ‘to restore the flavour of/to something’

→ CAUS7 indicates that a human causer/controller (S) is acting on a causee/patient (O) in order to **complete a process** or to lead it towards its **qualitative endpoint**: ‘completing’ causative, cf:

*dog* ‘to die’ (< ‘to cut off’), *dogg-ali* ‘to close the eye of the dead’:

(9) *Dogg-ali ko !*  
die-CAUS7 O.3SG  
Ferme-lui les yeux !

*jekk* ‘to be all right / ‘être convenable bien fait’, *jekk-ali* ‘to finish off something’/‘achever’ = to lead something correctly to completion, cf (10)

(10) a. *Lem na ko ba mu jekk*  
fold PFT.3SG O.3SG until NARR.3SG be\_correct  
‘Il l’a plié correctement.’ (Diouf 2003)

b. *Xaaral ba jekk-ali sa liggéey*  
wait:IMP.SG until be\_correct-CAUS7 POSS.2SG work  
‘Attends d’avoir terminé ton travail’ (Diouf 2003)

With (dynamic) transitive verbs, this construction adds a **beneficiary** for the completed process in a ditransitive construction:

e.g. *jot* 'to get something' / 'atteindre, recevoir'  
*jott-ali* 'to fully transmit or report s.t to s.o' / 'transmettre, passer qq ch à qqn, rendre compte' i.e. 'to cause someone to fully get something'

A compound suffixe ? No obvious segmentation:

- < CAUS2 *-al* (cf causative meaning) or APPLICATIVE *-al* (cf beneficiary) ?
- + directionnel *-i* (cf teminative value) but problem with stem alternation ??
- or reversive (stem altern + *-i*) but with which meaning ??

## Conclusion

causation →	<b>direct</b>	<b>joint action</b>	<b>assistive</b>	<b>supervision</b>	<b>indirect</b>
	CAUS <i>-e</i>	(O animate)			
	CAUS <i>-al</i>	(O animate)			
		CAUS <i>-le</i>			
		omitted causee		CAUS <i>-lu</i>	
achievement ↓				CAUS <i>-loo</i>	
<b>+ uncompleted</b>	CAUS <i>-antal</i>				
<b>+ completing</b>	CAUS <i>-ali</i>				

(adapted from Nouguier Voisin 2002: 197)

A remarkable distribution of various types of causatives and causations across different suffixes  
 A remarkable combination of causation with (un)completeness of the process

- A dedicated construction for (strictly) assistive sociative construction (*-le*) → typological rarity ?
- A dedicated construction for (indirect) causative with omitted causee (*-lu*)
- A dedicated construction for strictly indirect causative (*-loo*)

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