



HAL
open science

Seven causative suffixes for one language: the case of Wolof

Stéphane Robert

► **To cite this version:**

Stéphane Robert. Seven causative suffixes for one language: the case of Wolof. CALL 2017 - 47th Colloquium on African Languages and Linguistics, Leiden University, Maarten Mous, Aug 2017, Leiden, Netherlands. hal-01677760

HAL Id: hal-01677760

<https://hal.science/hal-01677760v1>

Submitted on 12 Jan 2018

HAL is a multi-disciplinary open access archive for the deposit and dissemination of scientific research documents, whether they are published or not. The documents may come from teaching and research institutions in France or abroad, or from public or private research centers.

L'archive ouverte pluridisciplinaire **HAL**, est destinée au dépôt et à la diffusion de documents scientifiques de niveau recherche, publiés ou non, émanant des établissements d'enseignement et de recherche français ou étrangers, des laboratoires publics ou privés.

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

Seven causative suffixes for one language: the case of Wolof

Stéphane Robert, LLACAN CNRS & INALCO
stephane.robert@cnrs.fr

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)

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	direct causative			
CAUS 2	-e (lexicalized)	(> joint action if O anim.)	S agentive causer O patient/undergoer causee		
CAUS 3	-le	assistive causative (or joint action)	S ± agentive causer O agentive causee		
CAUS 4	-lu	indirect causative (or assistive) with omitted causee	S beneficiary/ordering causer Agentive causee omitted [O recipient]		
CAUS 5	-loo	indirect causative	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 →	direct	joint action	assistive	supervision	indirect
	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>	
+ uncompleted	CAUS <i>-antal</i>				
+ completing	CAUS <i>-ali</i>				

(adapted from Nougier 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*)

References

- Abasheikh, Mohammad Imaman. 1978. *The grammar of Chimwi:ni causatives*. Ph.D: University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.
- Church, Eric. 1981. *Le système verbal du wolof*. Dakar : Université de Dakar [Documents linguistiques 27].
- Comrie, Bernard. 1976. The syntax of causative constructions: cross-language similarities and divergences. In Shibatani (ed.), *Syntax and semantics of causative constructions*. New-York: Academic Press.

Creissels, Denis and Sylvie Voisin. 2008. 'Valency-changing operations in Wolof and the notion of co-participation'. In *Reciprocal and Reflexives, Theoretical and typological explanations*, edited by E. König and V. Gast, 289-305. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.

Diouf, Jean-Léopold. 2003. *Dictionnaire wolof-français et français-wolof*. Paris : Karthala.

Dixon, R.M.W. 2000. A typology of causatives: form, syntax and meaning. In R.M.W. Dixon & A. Aikhenvald (eds), *Changing valency. Case studies in transitivity*. Cambridge: CUP. Livre biblio VJF

Nougier Voisin, Sylvie. 2002. *Relations entre fonctions syntaxiques et fonctions sémantiques en wolof*. PhD : Université Lumière Lyon 2.

Shibatani, Masayoshi. 1975. *A linguistic study of causative constructions*. IULC: Bloomington.

Shibatani, Masayoshi & Prashant Pardeshi. 2002. The causative continuum. In Masayoshi Shibatani (ed), *The Grammar of Causation and Interpersonal Manipulation* [TSL 48]: 85–126. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins. J'ai photocopier (pdf ?) mais bien résumé par Sylvie. Causation directe, indirect, manipulative, directive

Song, Jae Jung. 1996. *Causatives and Causation: A Universal-Typological Perspective*. London /New York: Longman.