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THE CAUSAL-NONCAUSAL RELATION IN MUHER (ETHIOSEMITIC)

Ronny Meyer (INALCO/LLACAN, Paris)

(1) ROOT	TEMPLATES	SUBJECT INDEXES
√ C ₁ -C ₂ -C ₃	I. Perfective C ₁ äCC ₂ äC ₃ -	Suffix set
	II. Imperfective -C ₁ äC ₂ C ₃ -	Circumfix set
	III. Jussive -C ₁ C ₂ C ₃ - or -C ₁ äC ₂ C ₃ -	

(2) ROOT	TEMPLATE	SUBJECT
√ s-b-r 'BREAK'	CäCCäC _{-PFV} <i>säbbär-</i>	-ä _(3SM) <i>*säbbärä</i> 'he/it broke' (= perfective base)

↓

<i>-m</i> _(CSM)	<i>säbbäräm</i>	= citation form
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- (3) a. *birf'ikk'o-we säbbär-mu-jî-m* b. *birf'ikk'o säbbär-mu-m*
 glass-DEF break\PFV-SJ.3PM-OJ.3SM-CSM glass-DEF break\PFV-SJ.3PM-CSM
 'They broke the glass.' 'They broke a glass.'

(4) SIMPLEX VERB

- a. *k'äbbäräm* (TR) 'plant; bury'

DERIVED VERBS

- b. *at-k'äbbäräm* (ICAUS) 'let plant; let bury'
 c. *tä-?äbbäräm* (MPAS) 'be buried /*'be planted'

(5) SIMPLEX VERB

- a. *k'ärräbäm* (ITR) 'be near'

DERIVED VERBS

- b. *a-?ärräbäm* (DCAUS) 'bring near'
 c. *at-k'ärräbäm* (ICAUS) 'cause to bring near'

- (6) *t'ämb^wa bä'äm* (NONCAUSAL) 'crack (with a sharp noise)'
 (lit. 'it said *tämbwa*')
t'ämb^wa amäññäm (CAUSAL) 'cause to crack (with a sharp noise)'
 (lit. 'he/it made *tämbwa*')

- (7) **SIMPLEX VERB**
- a. *färrädäm* (TR) ‘judge’ b. *näbbäräm* (ITR) ‘live’
- IMPERSONAL PASSIVE: marker ^{w+j} (labialization and palatalization)**
- jif^wɔrɕijatt* *näbb^wɔrim*
j-färd-^{w+j}ja-tt *näbbär-^{w+j}i-m*
 3-judge\IPFV-IP-OJ.3SF-CSM live\PFV-IP-OJ.3SM-CSM
 ‘she was sentenced’ ‘people/one lived’
 (lit. one judged her)

Table 1 Summary of causal–noncausal relations in Muher

	DIRECTIONAL PAIRS		NON-DIRECTIONAL PAIRS			TOTAL
	ANTICAUSATIVE	CAUSATIVE	LABILE	SUPPLETIVE	EQUIPOLLENT	
Number	11	10.5	1	3	4.5	30
Percent	37%	35%	3%	10%	15%	100%

Table 2 Anticausative/causative alternation

ANTICAUSATIVE (14 pairs)				CAUSATIVE (11 pairs)			
4	wake up	24	connect	1	boil	9	stop
11	dissolve	25	change	2	be cool/cool	10	turn
12	burn	26	gather	3	dry	13	destroy
15	finish	27	open	5	go out/put out	17	spread (> be wide)
16	begin	28	break	6	sink	20	get lost/lose
17	spread (> disperse)	29	close	8	melt		
21	rise/raise	30	split				

- (8) a. **SIMPLEX**
 PFV IPFV JUSS
bättät-ä-m *jī-bätt-u* *jä-bätt*
 C₁äCC₂äC₃ C₁äC₂C₃
 ‘be wide’
- b. **DIRECT CAUSATIVE a-**
 PFV IPFV JUSS
abättät-ä-m *j-abättit-u* *j-abättit*
 a-C₁äCC₂äC₂ a-C₁äCC₂C₃
 ‘enlarge’

- (9) a. **SIMPLEX**
 PFV IPFV JUSS
la?-ä-m *jī-lk’-u* *jä-la?*
 C₁aC₃ C₁C₃ C₁aC₃
 ‘surpass’
- b. **INDIRECT CAUSATIVE at-**
 PFV IPFV JUSS
atlä?-ä-m *j-atlä?-u* *j-atlä?*
 C₁äC₃
 ‘develop, raise’
- c. **MEDIO-PASSIVE tä-**
 PFV IPFV JUSS
täla?-ä-m *jī-tlä?-u* *jä-tla?*
 C₁aC₃ C₁äC₃ C₁aC₃
 ‘be developed, have grown up’

- (10) a. *ḡämil su? tä-lah-ä-m* / (**lah-w-i-m*)
 Jamil.M shop MPAS-send\PFV-SJ.3SM-CSM
 ‘Jamil was sent to shop [i.e. agreed to go to the shop to buy things].’
- b. *däbdabe-we lah-w-i-m* / (**tä-lah-ä-m*)
 letter-DEF send\PFV-IP-OJ.3SM-CSM
 ‘The letter was sent.’
- (11) *in-kiballäläm* (noncausal) vs. *an-kiballäläm* (causal) (no simplex: **kiballäläm*)
 ‘rolled’ (no. 18)
- (12) *tä-la?äm* (noncausal) vs. *at-lä?äm* (causal) (simplex: *la?äm*)
 ‘develop’ (no. 19) ‘surpass’
- (13) a. *kaffə bä’äm* (noncausal) vs. *kaffə amäṅṅäm* (causal)
 ‘be/make very dry’ (related to no. 3)
- b. *tʃ’ififf bä’äm* (noncausal) vs. *tʃ’ififf amäṅṅäm* (causal)
 ‘be/make completely full’ (related to no. 14)
- (14) *m^wätäm* vs. *k’ätt’ä’äm* vs. *k’ätt’ojim*
 ‘die’ ‘kill’ ‘be killed’ (impersonal passive)

Annex: Verb list with 31 causal/noncausal pairs based on Haspelmath (1993)

		(OTHER NON-CAUSATIVE)	NON-CAUSATIVE	CAUSATIVE	(OTHER CAUSATIVE)	TYPE
1	boil	<i>täfännamⁱ</i>	<i>fännam</i>	<i>afännam</i>		C
2	freeze > be cool/cool		<i>gizäggäzäm</i>	<i>agzäggäzäm</i>		C
3	dry		<i>t'ärrä?äm</i>	<i>at'ärrä?äm</i>		C
4	wake up		<i>tänässamⁱⁱ</i>	<i>k'isäkk'äsäm</i>		S
			<i>k'u'fäkk'^wä'fim</i>	<i>k'isäkk'äsäm</i>		A
5	go out/put out		<i>wätt'am</i>	<i>ɔatt'am</i>		C
6	sink		<i>b^wännamⁱⁱⁱ</i>	<i>ab^wännam</i>		C
7	learn/teach		<i>tämaräm</i>	<i>atmäram^{iv}</i>		E
8	melt		<i>k'allät'äm</i>	<i>a?ällät'äm</i>		C
9	stop		<i>k^wämäm</i>	<i>a?^wämäm</i>		C
10	turn (around)		<i>zɔaräm</i>	<i>aɔzɔaräm</i>		C
11	dissolve	<i>täbt'äbbät'äm^v</i>	<i>t'ämmam</i>	<i>bit'äbbät'äm</i>		S
			<i>bu'f'äbb'^wä'f'im</i>	<i>bit'äbbät'äm</i>		A
12	burn		<i>näddädäm</i>	<i>mäjäm</i>		S
			<i>mäggojm</i>	<i>mäjäm</i>		A
13	destroy		<i>färräsäm</i>	<i>afärräsäm</i>		C
14	fill		<i>männam</i>	<i>männam</i>		L
15	finish		<i>e?äm</i>	<i>fädḡäm</i>	<i>atfädḡäm</i>	S
			<i>f^wädḡim</i>	<i>fädḡäm</i>		A
16	begin		<i>k^wärrä'fim</i>	<i>k'ärräsäm</i>	<i>a?ärräsäm</i>	A
17	spread		<i>täbrattf'äm</i>	<i>brattf'äm^{vi}</i>		A
			<i>bättätäm^{vii}</i>	<i>abättätäm</i>		C
18	roll		<i>inkiballäläm</i>	<i>ankiballäläm</i>		E
19	develop	<i>la?äm^{viii}</i>	<i>täla?äm</i>	<i>atlä?äm</i>		E
20	get lost/lose		<i>k'ärräm</i>	<i>a?ärräm</i>		C
21	rise/raise		<i>tänässam</i>	<i>nässam</i>		A
22	improve		<i>alläfäm</i>			—
23	rock		<i>ink'ijäkk'äläm</i>	<i>ank'ijäkk'äläm</i>		E
24	connect		<i>gätt'äm^wim</i>	<i>gätt'ämäm</i>	<i>adgätt'ämäm</i>	A
			<i>tägemum^{ix}</i>	<i>adgemum</i>		E
25	change		<i>fäggojm</i>	<i>fäggä'äm</i>	<i>afäggä'äm</i>	A
26	gather	<i>täsbässäbäm^x</i>	<i>suwässäwim</i>	<i>sibässäbäm</i>	<i>assibässäbäm</i>	A
27	open	<i>täkäffätäm^{xi}</i>	<i>käff^wä'fim</i>	<i>käffätäm</i>	<i>atkäffätäm</i>	A
28	break		<i>täsäbbäräm / säbb^wärim</i>	<i>säbbäräm</i>	<i>assäbbäräm</i>	A
29	close	<i>tattf'äm^{xii}</i>	<i>attf'im</i>	<i>attf'äm</i>		A
30	split	<i>täfäkk'am^{xiii}</i>	<i>fäkk^wem</i>	<i>fäkk'am</i>	<i>atfäkk'am</i>	A
31	die/kill		<i>m^wätä-m</i>	<i>k'ätt'äläm</i>	<i>atk'ätt'äläm</i>	S

- i 'overflow'
- ii 'get up, rise'
- iii 'disappear (from view by penetrating into something, e.g. field, water, hole, etc.)'
- iv variant: *astämmäräm*
- v 'be turbid'
- vi 'disperse, scatter'
- vii 'enlarge, widen'
- viii 'surpass'
- ix 'meet each other' (only plural animate subject)
- x 'participate in a meeting, gather (only human subject)'
- xi 'open with difficulties/hardly'
- xii 'close with difficulties/hardly'
- xiii 'split easily'

Abbreviations

1,2,3	Person	M	Masculine
CNV	Converb	MPAS	Medio-passive
CSM	Clausal status marker	OJ	Object
DCAUS	Direct causative	PFV	Perfective
DEF	Definite	PM	Plural masculine
F	Feminine	SJ	Subject
ICAUS	Indirect causative	SF	Singular-feminine
IP	Impersonal passive	SM	Singular-masculine
IPFV	Imperfective	TR	Transitive
ITR	Intransitive		
JUSS	Jussive		

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