1977

On downstairs transitivity in causative clause unions

Donald G. Frantz
SIL-UND

[How does access to this work benefit you? Let us know!](#)

Follow this and additional works at: <https://commons.und.edu/sil-work-papers>

Part of the [Linguistics Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Frantz, Donald G. (1977) "On downstairs transitivity in causative clause unions," *Work Papers of the Summer Institute of Linguistics, University of North Dakota Session*: Vol. 21, Article 3.

DOI: 10.31356/silwp.vol21.03

Available at: <https://commons.und.edu/sil-work-papers/vol21/iss1/3>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by UND Scholarly Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Work Papers of the Summer Institute of Linguistics, University of North Dakota Session by an authorized editor of UND Scholarly Commons. For more information, please contact und.common@library.und.edu.

ON DOWNSTAIRS TRANSITIVITY IN CAUSATIVE CLAUSE UNIONS

Donald G. Frantz

- 0. Introduction
- 1. Antipassive
 - 1.1 Blackfoot
 - 1.2 Iñupiaq
 - 1.3 Modern Hebrew
 - 1.4 Isleta
- 2. Inversion (1-3)
 - 2.1 Georgian
 - 2.2 Modern Hebrew
- 3. Passive
 - 3.1 French
 - 3.2 Kannada
- 4. Direct Object Retreat (2-3)
 - 4.1 Turkish
 - 4.2 Southern Paiute

0. The purpose of this paper is to demonstrate that a number of languages require downstairs (ds) intransitivity¹ for causative clause union (CsU). In addition I offer for testing the hypothesis that ds intransitivity is a universal constraint in CsU. In order to accomplish my initial purpose and at the same time give preliminary testing to the proposed hypothesis, I will compare the predictions made by the received version of CsU ('received CsU' below) with those made by my own version (A below) plus the proposed ds intransitivity constraint (B below) for a number of languages.

Received CsU:

- 1. ds ergative is union 3
- 2. ds absolutive is union 2
- 3. ds predicate plus other dependents become dead dependents of upstairs (us) predicate.

My proposals for CsU:

- A.
 - 1. ds 1 becomes union 2
 - 2. all other ds dependents retain their ds relations but bear them to the us predicate in the union.
 - 3. ds predicate becomes a dead dependent of the us predicate (as in received CsU).
- B. CsU requires intransitivity; i.e., there can be no ds 2.

I will organize the paper according to mechanisms of detransitivization, of which there are four according to Postal (1977:298). So each of sections 1-4 exemplifies languages which, if my proposals A and B are correct, meet constraint B by a different one of the four mechanisms. (A given language will not necessarily make use of one mechanism to the exclusion of all others.)

1. Certain logically transitive clauses in many languages exhibit case marking and/or verb inflection normally associated with intransitive clauses in those languages (see Johnson 1976, Heath 1976, and Postal 1977 for discussion). This is most commonly the case when the direct object is either unspecified or non-particular in reference. I illustrate first with Blackfoot, an Algonkian language.

1.1 Blackfoot. As indicated in Frantz (1971:22), many Blackfoot verbs which are logically transitive have two stem forms: one which takes the transitive agreement affixes (which reflect person, number, and gender of the 2, as well as person and number of 1), and another which takes the intransitive affixes (which agree with the subject in person and number). Compare (1) with (2), and (3) with (4):

- (1) nit-oxpommāt-aw om-a ponokaomitaa-wa
 1-buy [trans]-3 that-3 horse-3
I bought that horse.
- (2) nit-oxpommaa (ponokaomitaa-i)
 1- buy [intrans] horse-non=partic
I made a (horse-) purchase.
- (3) nit-a'ki-aaw om-a pokon-a
 1-hit [trans]-3 that-3 ball-3
I hit that ball.
- (4) nit-a'kiaaki (poko-i)
 1-hit [intrans] ball-non=partic
I hit (no particular ball).

The verb roots in these examples are typical of the two major sub-classes which show this variation. The root *oxpomm-* of (1) and (2), like dozens of other verbs of Blackfoot, takes transitivizer *-at* when it has an object which is particular in reference, as in (1). But if no object is specified, or if the object is non-particular in reference, the verb root takes the intransitive 'theme' ending *-aa*, as in (2). Only slightly less common is the variation in stem shape seen in (3) and (4), where the root evidently takes no 'transitivizer' when transitive, but adds suffix *-aaki* when no object is specified, or if the object is non-particular as in (4). For both of these types of verbs, I now would say that their intransitive forms are 'antipassive' forms, required when their 2 has lost its termhood by the mechanism of antipassive (2-2̂).

Now, as also pointed out in Frantz (1971: 65-66), Blackfoot causative suffixes are always added to the intransitive form of such verbs, whether or not the ds verb has a particular object:

- (5) nit-ohpomma-áttis-aawa n-oxko-wa om-iistsi miin-iistsi
 1-buy[intrans]-cause-3 my-son-3 that-pl berry-pl
I made my son buy those berries.

- (6) kit- a'kiaaki-átts-aaw n-itákkaa-wa om-i pokon-i
 2-hit [intrans]-cause-3 my-friend-3 that-4 ball-4
You made my friend hit the ball.

All Blackfoot causative verbs have the ds subject as 2.

Where the ds clause is logically transitive, the received formulation of CsU predicts that the ds1 will be union 3. That this expected 3 always turns up as a 2 in Blackfoot is no problem for the received formulation because 3-2 advancement is obligatory in Blackfoot; compare (7) with ungrammatical (8):

- (7) nit-oxkot-awa n-itan-a omi naapioyisi
 1-give-3 my-daughter-3 that house
I gave my daughter that house.

- (8) *nit-oxkots-iixpa omi naapioyisi nitana
 1-give -inan. that house my:daughter

The verb in (8) is the form we would expect if *house* remained 2. So since 3-2 is obligatory in Blackfoot, we don't expect to find 3's in CsU's of Blackfoot.

Under my proposals A and B, we explain the facts stated above about Blackfoot causatives by saying that Blackfoot conforms to constraint B by means of ds antipassive; but unlike antipassive in main clauses, antipassive under causative verbs is obligatory no matter what the referential status of the ds 2. This treatment affords an explanation for why the causative suffix is always attached to the 'antipassive' form of transitive verbs.

1.2 Iñupiaq. An almost identical situation obtains in Iñupiaq, except that in addition to verb agreement, Eskimo uses case endings to signal grammatical relations. We first show the effect of antipassive in main clauses; compare transitive (9) with antipassive (10):

- (9) aṇuti-m aḡviq qiñiḡ-aa
 man-erg whale see-3:3
The man saw the whale.

- (10) aṇuti aḡviḡ-mik qiñiq-tuq
 man whale-instr see-3
The man saw a whale.

In (9), the object is a particular *whale*, and the clause is transitive as indicated by the ergative case suffix on the 1, and by the transitive verb suffix in agreement with subject and object person and number. The absolute (2; or 1 if there is no 2) is unmarked in Eskimo, so *whale* has no suffix in (9). In (10), because the particular whale is not of concern to the speaker, antipassive (2- $\hat{2}$) makes the clause intransitive; note that the subject is now unmarked, and the verb is inflected to agree with subject only.² The initial 2, now $\hat{2}$, is marked with the instrumental case. As Seiler (1976) amply demonstrates, all $\hat{2}$'s are marked with the instrumental case in Iñupiaq; compare (11) and (12):

- (11) miiyu-um mani-ich aḡut-mik-nun qaitch-ai
 Miiyu-erg money-pl man-her-to give-3:3pl
Miiyu gave the money to her husband.
- (12) miiyu-um aḡut-riṅ manṅ-ñik qaitchi-gaa
 Miiyu-erg man-her money-instr:pl give-3:3
Miiyu gave her husband (the) money.

In (11) *money* is 2 and *man* is 3, but in (12) *man* is final 3; *money* is a 2̂ and marked with instrumental case.

Eskimo antipassive verbs, like those of Blackfoot, are not all marked in the same manner; in fact some, like the verb of (10), evidently make use of the same stem as is used in transitive clauses. Some others select from an assortment of what could be called antipassive markers.³

Looking now at Iñupiaq causatives, we find that, as in Blackfoot, the initial ds1 is union 2. The received formulation of CsU would explain this by saying the 3-2 is obligatory with CsU, even though it is optional otherwise in Iñupiaq. But generally for such cases⁴ where the antipassive form differs from the transitive form, the causative suffix is attached to the antipassive form:

- (15) Mary kamiṅ-nik tuni-si-ruq
 Mary mukluk-instr:pl sell-antip-3sg
Mary sold mukluks.
- (16) John-um Mary taapkuniṅa kamiṅ-nik tuni-si-pkaḡ-aa
 John-erg Mary those mukluk-instr:pl sell-antip-cause-3:3
John made Mary sell those mukluks.

As with Blackfoot, we can explain this if we say that Eskimo meets constraint B by ds antipassive.

1.3 Modern Hebrew. Modern Hebrew has two ways of dealing with ds transitive CsU's; one has the ds ergative as union 3, as received CsU predicts, but the other has the ds ergative as union 2. I will discuss the former in section 2; the latter I will illustrate here as (17) (Cole 1976.99):

- (17) Heexalti et haben selax { et hasalat }
 { accus salad }
 caused:eat accus son your { basalit }
 { obliq:salad }
I fed your son the salad.

Son is the 2 in (17), as Cole (1976) demonstrates conclusively. He also demonstrates that *salad* is not a 2, and claims that it is a 2̂, which permits it to be marked either with accusative or oblique case. The received formulation of CsU predicts that *salad* will be a 2 and *your son* will be a 3; hence that treatment must invoke 3-2 as obligatory in the CsU's of a large class of verbs. Cole objects to this mainly on the grounds that there

is no independent evidence for 3-2 in Modern Hebrew. Within some views of universal grammar, this is not a valid objection. A somewhat better objection, though still not conclusive, is that this obligatory 3-2 advancement in the union is governed by the ds verb, which is 'dead' in the union. I propose that examples such as (17) exist because Hebrew meets my ds intransitivity constraint in such cases by ds antipassive. While I know of no additional evidence that antipassive has applied ds, semantic data presented by Cole (1976) can be interpreted to motivate this treatment.⁵

1.4 Isleta. Isleta is another language where an analysis involving antipassive in CsU's is preferable to one involving 3-2 on the output of the received CsU (Allen and Frantz, in preparation). In this language, 3-2 results in the use of a different set of verb prefixes (the 'dative' set) than those used otherwise. Compare (18) and (19):

(18) ti- 'u'u-wia-ban i-'ay
1:3-baby-give-past 2-to
I gave the baby to you.

(19) ka-'u'u-wia-ban
1:2(dat)-baby-give-past
I gave you the baby.

CsU's in Isleta have the ds1 as union 2. If this situation resulted from obligatory 3-2 on the output of received CsU, then we would expect to find the 'dative' prefixes in CsU's involving ds transitives. But as we see in (20), such CsU's make use of the non-dative prefixes.

(20) seuanide ti-liora-hwiet-'am-ban
man 1:3-lady- hit-cause-past
I made the man hit the lady.

2. It has only recently been accepted that clauses may be intransitivized by demotion of a 1 to a 3, with subsequent advancement of the initial 2 to 1. The resultant clause has a 1 and a 3 but no 2, and is thus intransitive by definition. This is a productive mechanism in Georgian (Harris 1976).

2.1 Georgian. Compare examples (21) and (22) (from Harris 1977:87):

(21) rezo gačukebs samajurs
Rezo:nom he:gave:you:it watch:dat
*Rezo (1) is giving you (3) a watch (2).*⁶

(22) rezos turme učukebia samajuri šen-tvis
Rezo:dat apparently he:gave:it watch:nom you-for
Apparently Rezo (3) has given you (3̂) a watch (1).

According to Harris, the initial 1 of (22) is final 3, putting the initial 3 en chômeage. That the initial 2 (*watch*) has been advanced to 1 is evident in that it is nominative case. The postposition *tvis*, glossed *for*, quite regularly marks initial 3's that have lost their termhood by whatever means and remain non-terms.

In Georgian causatives, we find that a ds 1 is union 3, as predicted by received CsU:

- (23) masçavlebeli atargmninebs moçapes axal gaçvetils
 teacher:nom he:causes:translate:him:it pupil:dat new lesson:dat
The teacher has the pupil translate a new lesson. (Harris 1977.85)

If there is a ds 3, it ends up as a non-term marked as a former 3 by post-position *tvis*:

- (24) mamam mimacemina vardebi didis-tvis
 father:erg he:caused:give:me:it roses:nom mother:for
Father made me give the roses to Mother.

This also is predicted by received CsU, which says that ds dependents other than 1 and 2 become 'dead' dependents in the union.

Observe now that this same state of affairs is predicted by my proposals A and B if Georgian meets constraint B by ds 1-3. The ds 3 then is a $\hat{3}$, and will be a $\hat{3}$ in the union (by proposal A.2). And since the initial 3 will be marked by *tvis* as a former 3 whether it is a $\hat{3}$ or a 'dead' 3, the two versions of CsU predict, as I said, the same relations in the union. The only clear way I can see to distinguish between these for Georgian is to look for a difference in behavior between a dead 3 and a $\hat{3}$.

If no serious problems arise for my proposal for the treatment of CsU in Georgian, where 1-3 is a productive rule, then in universal grammar the same mechanism can validly be a candidate for the means by which other languages detransitivize the ds clause to meet constraint B on CsU. This being the case, I propose that in all CsU's which have the ds ergative as union 3, constraint B has been met by ds 1-3. Thus in French, German, Turkish, Japanese, and many other languages the ds ergative ends up as union 3 because it was demoted to 3 downstairs.

I will illustrate with an example from Modern Hebrew (as promised in section 1, where an example was presented in which a ds ergative is union 2 rather than union 3 as in this example):

2.2 Modern Hebrew

- (25) Hišmati lo ø et hataklit
 caused:hear dat 3 accus record
I played him the record.

The dative marker *lo* indicates that third person ('zero-pronominalized') is a final 3, though it is an initial 1 of transitive 'hear'. This is, of course, predicted by received CsU. Under my proposals ds inversion (1-3) would account for the final relations. The fact that the initial 1 in such cases is never an agent (as Cole 1976 demonstrates), can be adduced to be evidence for this analysis. (See footnote 5.)

It may seem strange that what could be the most common way of dealing with

ds transitivity (under my proposal) in CsU's is "independently motivated" in so few of the languages concerned. This situation (which I do not view as a serious problem for my proposals within universal grammar) may be only temporary, however; I suspect that examples of 1-3 will be found in virtually all of these languages now that the working-hypothesis that languages can have no demotions has been dispensed with; see e.g. Perlmutter (1977).

3. Advancement of 2 to 1, putting the 1 en chômage, results in an intransitive clause (there being no final 2). Almost all languages mark the $\hat{1}$, the most common way being with the same case or preposition/post-position as is used to mark instrument and/or means.

Causative unions in some languages optionally mark the initial ds ergative as a $\hat{1}$ in the union. For example, beside French (26) we find also (27):

3.1 French.

(26) Je laisserai boire le vin à Claude.

(27) Je laisserai boire le vin par Claude.

The obvious hypothesis in such cases is that the initial ds ergative has become a $\hat{1}$ by ds passive; i.e., that languages can meet constraint B on CsU by advancing the ds 2 to 1. The fact that this ds $\hat{1}$ is marked as a $\hat{1}$ in the union is predicted by A.2.

Kannada evidently has this as the only mechanism for dealing with many ds transitives in CsU's. Compare (29) with non-causative counterpart (28) (from Cole and Sridhar 1977):

3.2

(28) Kāryadarshiyu T vishayavannu horageḍ-ahidaru
secretary:nom this matter:accus revealed
The secretary revealed this fact.

(29) Sačivaru kāryadarshiyinda T vishayavannu horageḍahisidaru
minister secretary:instr this matter:accus reveal:caused
The minister made the secretary reveal this fact.

The marking of the ds ergative with instrumental case is predicted by the ds passive analysis plus proposal A, for Kannada marks $\hat{1}$'s as instrumental; compare (30):

(30) Darjiyinda baṭṭe holeyalpaṭṭitu
tailor:instr cloth stitch:pass:past
The cloth was stitched by the tailor.

Cole and Sridhar reject this analysis for two reasons. First, even verbs which cannot be passivized in main clauses have their ds 1 marked with the instrumental case in CsU. They argue that one would expect the fact that these verbs aren't passivizable otherwise to block passivization ds in

causatives. This argument would have some force in derivational, cyclic TG, but in "uninetwork" RG it has little, especially under my proposals in which it is the upstairs predicate ('cause') which governs the ds detransitivization. The second argument they present against the ds passive analysis is more disturbing, though not compelling. They point out that certain verbs allow their 2 to be marked with either accusative or dative case:

- (31) Ramanu { Krishnanna
 Rama:nom Krishnanige } hodedanu
 { accus } hit
 { dat }
Ramanu hit Krishna.

Because this option is restricted to this small class of verbs, Cole and Sridhar would not expect the option to exist in CsU's involving these verbs if ds passivization is involved in CsU; yet they show that the same option exists for causatives of these verbs:

- (32) Mēshtru Rāmaninda Krishnan- { annu }
 teacher:nom Rama:instr Krishna- { ige }
 { accus }
 { dat }
The teacher made Rama hit Krishna.

They propose that case is assigned cyclically, and that Kannada does not obey a universal formulation of CsU.

Actually, examples such as (31) are a problem for any version of CsU which makes the ds verb dead in the union; it would seem expectable that a dead verb could not govern any such options. However, assigning case cyclically to account for it is not even possible in RG; current RG has no 'cycle' (Postal 1977:273). So on the face of it, the assignment of case to CsU 2's in Kannada makes reference to its ds governor.⁷

4. I have no thoroughly convincing examples of Postal's fourth detransitivization rule, but as he says, logical 2's marked with the case a language usually uses to mark 3's (e.g. dative) are candidates for 2's which have been demoted to 3's. Thus a sentence like (33) in Turkish may be an example of 2-3; if so, its causative (34) has exactly the relations predicted by my proposal A.

4.1 Turkish

- (33) Hasan derse başla-d+
 Hasan lesson:dat begin-past
Hasan began the lesson.
- (34) hasan-+ derse başla-t-t+-m
 Hasan-accus lesson:dat begin-cause-past-1
I had Hasan begin the lesson.

Nor have I any clear case of a language which meets constraint B in CsU's

by 2-3. However, Sapir (1930.147) presents causative verbs with ds transitives which I can account for only by positing ds 2-3:

4.2 Southern Paiute

- (35) maa-i-t:ui-nqĩ-tĩ-va-ŋa-raŋwa
 catch-cause-indir-"pass"-fut-3-1pl
He will get us caught.

Evidently third person is 1 and first person plural is 2 of this verb. The "indirective" suffix -ŋki in other verbs apparently marks advancement of a non-term or 3 to 2, as in (36) and (37) (Sapir 1939.144):

- (36) ya:ŋqĩk:i *bring to* (cf. ya:- *carry*)
 (37) sa'aŋqĩni *make mush for me* (cf. sa'a- *make mush*)

The only explanation I can see for the presence of the indirective suffix in (34) is one involving ds 2-3 and subsequent 3-2 in the union. The "passive" suffix would then have to be explained as incorporated registration that the union 2 (ds 1) is unspecified. (As Sapir demonstrates, (34) is not a passive of a causative, as one might suspect based on the relative order of the suffixes.)

NOTES

¹This paper assumes a good deal of knowledge of the current Relational Grammar framework. Readers unfamiliar with this framework may be able to follow the discussion here after reading the first paragraph of Allen and Gardiner, in this volume, plus their footnotes 1, 7, and 9.

Abbreviations include: ds=downstairs; us=upstairs; except in glosses, 1=subject; 2=direct object; 3=indirect object; in glosses, 1=speaker, 2=addressee, 3=third person; CsU=causative clause union; trans=transitive; intrans=intransitive; n (where n=1, 2, or 3)=n-chômeur; partic=particular; pl=plural; inan=inanimate gender; instr=instrumental case; erg=ergative case; antip=antipassive; accus=accusative case; obliq=oblique case; nom=nominative case; dat=dative case; pass=passive; fut=future; indir=indirective.

²Ivan Kalmar informs me that he has textual examples of personal names as initial 2 in such sentences, and claims that the relevant parameter is 'given' vs. 'new' rather than particular vs. non-particular.

³See Heath's (1976) restatement of some material from Woodbury (1975).

⁴There apparently are a few causative clauses in which ds 1 can be union 3, but these I would explain by the mechanism discussed in section 2.

⁵In a later version of this paper I hope to demonstrate that semantic factors commonly associated with universal transitions (e.g. advancements and retreats) can be adduced as evidence for the correctness of my analysis of some of the causatives in this paper.

⁶Evidently some verbs use nominative and dative for 1 and 2, while others use an ergative system.

⁷There is an unlikely alternative which bears consideration. If this optional dative marking of 2's is in fact marking of their deomtion to 3's, then the network for a sentence such as (32) would involve ds 2-3 (see section4), making the ds clause intransitive. As a consequence, the ds 1 would be union 2 and one woule expect it to be accusative rather than instrumental. This analysis could still be correct if instrumental case is assigned to all initial 1's which are not final 1s, or if the instrumental case assigned to these 2's is analogical to CsU's with ds passivization; in either case, the instrumental of (32) should otherwise behave as a final 2, so this analysis should be easily falsifiable if there are clear tests for 2's.

87
REFERENCES

- Allen, B and D. Frantz (in preparation) Grammatical Relations and Transitions in Isleta.
- Cole, P. (1976) "A causative construction in Modern Hebrew: theoretical implications." Studies in Modern Hebrew Syntax and Semantics. Amsterdam.
- Cole, P. and S. Sridhar (1977) "Clause union and relational grammar: evidence from Hebrew and Kannada." Linguistic Inquiry 8.4
- Frantz, D. (1971) Toward a Generative Grammar of Blackfoot. SIL Publications in Linguistics and Related Fields #34. Dallas.
- Harris, A. (1976) Grammatical Relations in Modern Georgian. Ph. D. dissertation, Harvard University.
- (1977) "Marking former terms: Georgian evidence." In Kegl et. al.
- Johnson, D. (1976) Ergativity in universal grammar. Unpublished manuscript.
- Kegl, J. et. al. (1977) Proceedings of the Seventh Annual Meeting of the North Eastern Linguistic Society. Cambridge.
- Postal, P. (1977) "Antipassive in French." In Kegl et. al.
- Perlmutter, D. (1977) "The Russian Reflexive." Papers from the Thirteenth Annual Meeting of the Chicago Linguistic Society. Chicago.
- Sapir, E. (1930) The Southern Paiute Language. Proceedings of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, 65.1.
- Seiler, W. (1976) "The 'modalis' case in Eskimo." Unpublished manuscript.
- Woodbury, A. (1975) Ergativity of Grammatical Processes: A Study of Greenlandic Eskimo. Unpublished Master's Essay, University of Chicago.