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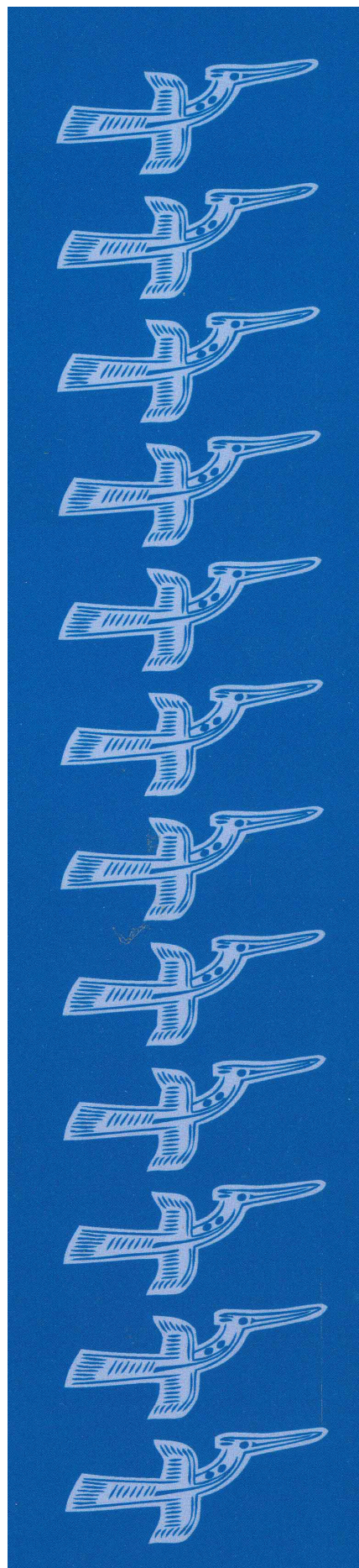
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# The Temiar causative (and related features)

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## Abstract:

The productive causative inflection of the Temiar verb is formed by the affixation of *-r-*, either alone or as *tr-* and *br-*. This formative has no obvious Mon-Khmer source (which usually forms causatives with *p-*), and it may therefore be an Aslian innovation. In Temiar, *r* is a phonestheme with the notional meaning ‘REPLICATION (OF SELF)’, found also in the reflexive intensifier *ri:*<sup>2</sup>, the relative pronoun *rə-* and the preposition *rɛ*<sup>2</sup> ‘like’. In the causative, *r* is iconic of the replicative verb’s valency-increase. The causative inflection has high productivity as a true causative with inanimate secondary subjects and as the transitivizer of intransitive verbs. However, there are syntactic and semantic limitations on its use with various kinds of animate secondary subject. In particular, cultural inhibitions against imposing one’s will on someone else suggests that Temiar ‘causatives’ are frequently better thought of as permissives. The paper also discusses a set of verbs that retain a recognizably Mon-Khmer-like ‘causative’ shape but which no longer behave productively or semantically as causatives in Temiar.

**Key words:** causative, reduplication, morphology

**ISO 639 language codes:** tea, mly, jah, kns, mnq,

In a series of papers on the Aslian language Temiar and the Austronesian language Malay I have argued that certain grammatical and lexical features are related, *via* iconic expression, to the social and cultural context in which the languages are spoken.<sup>1</sup> The iconicity involved is not a simple matter of speech-sounds imitating reality. Rather, it is based variously on (i) oral-articulatory gesture rather than on speech-sounds as such,<sup>2</sup> and (ii) *a posteriori* (secondary) rather than *a priori* (primary) iconicity.<sup>3</sup>

By ‘oral-articulatory gesture’ I refer mainly to the following opposition, which applies in varying degrees to both Temiar and Malay:

- Opening the mouth wide, as if addressing oneself to the rest of the world
- Closing the mouth in self-contemplation, as if in temporary retreat from the world.

The relatively open mouth position, which signifies the directing of one’s attention to the ‘objective’ realm of OTHER is expressed phonically in Temiar by the low vowel *a*, the back consonants <sup>2</sup> and *h*, and velic opening (i.e. vowel nasality). The relatively closed mouth position, which conversely signifies the more ‘subjective’ SELF-focused, ‘I’-deixis realm, is expressed phonically by the high vowel *i* and the front consonants *m*, *j*, *c* and *r*.<sup>4</sup> In this paper, I deal mainly with the iconicity of *r*, with some brief attention to *i*.

<sup>1</sup> The theoretical justification for the argument is elaborated in Benjamin 2012a (for Temiar, and language more generally) and Benjamin 1993: 344–356 (for Malay). For further discussion, see Benjamin 2011, 2012b on Temiar and Benjamin 2009 on Malay.

<sup>2</sup> This approach overrides the oft-assumed necessity when discussing iconicity to dissect the phonemes into separate distinctive features in favor (as here) of examining entire phonemes (cf. Jakobson & Waugh 1979:181–182). Similarly, Gafos (1999:99–100) gives primacy to vocal gesture over feature analysis in his examination of the phonology of reduplication in Temiar.

<sup>3</sup> In Temiar, the *a priori* iconicity additionally involves the inflectional morphology of the verb (Tables 2 and 3), which employs a variety of complex reduplicative patterns to model non-punctiliar patterns of temporality (Benjamin 2012a).

<sup>4</sup> To accord with the preference of *Mon-Khmer Studies* for IPA transcription, changes have been made to the author’s regular phonemization for Temiar: *j* is the palatal approximant (usually written as *y*); *j* is

The ‘social and cultural context’ just mentioned refers specifically to the various ‘modes of orientation’ maintained by the ‘cultural regimes’ associated with particular ‘polities’ (Benjamin 1993: 349–350, 2005: 262, 2011: 176, ). In the Temiar case, the preferred mode of orientation has been dialectical (Benjamin 1994, 2011, 2012a), and this is directly reflected not only in their music, interactional patterns, religion, food behavior and so on, but also in the iconically expressed semantic underpinnings of Temiar grammar.

### Iconicity: the affix *-r-* ‘REPLICATION (OF SELF)’

The special iconic properties of the phoneme /r/ are widely exhibited in the languages of Malaysia and beyond. In the Northern Aslian languages that abut on Temiar to the north and east, the *-ra-* infix forms the collective-plural inflection of human nouns: Jahai *babo* ‘woman’ → *brabo* ‘young women’ (Burenhult 2005: 74). In some Semai expressives (Diffloth 1976a: 253) it serves as a largely productive element with the meaning ‘simultaneous plural’. In Jah Hut,<sup>5</sup> a *ra*<sup>2</sup>- prefix forms the superlative (a kind of intensification-through-plurality) of some verbs and nouns: *num* ‘ripe’ → *ra’num* ‘very ripe’ (Diffloth 1976b: 97). In Semelai, the same prefix indicates ‘a comparative relationship between two or more entities’ (Kruspe 2004: 146). See also Kruspe’s notes (2004: 148–149) on *ra*<sup>2</sup>- and *-r-* as pluralizers and replicatives in Aslian. In the Austronesian languages too, *-r-* widely indicates ‘plurality’ and it very likely derives from the Proto Austronesian infix *\*-r-* (or perhaps Wolff’s reconstructed *\*D*) ‘human pluralizer’.<sup>6</sup> Malay in particular seems in its earlier stages to have employed *-r-* to express duration, intensity, plurality, reciprocity, confusion and so on (Benjamin 2009: 304). The Temiar clitic *bar-* ‘progressive’ (probably an early Malayic borrowing) also incorporates the REPLICATIVE *r*, in this case as an indication of progressive or continuative *Aktionsart*.

To what then are the apparently iconic properties of /r/ due? Prototypically, /r/ is a trilled consonant [r] or a (velar) continuant [ɣ], which would lend it the inherent potential to express a ‘repetitive’ or ‘durative’ meaning in an *a priori* manner. But given the variation in the pronunciation of /r/ in Aslian (cf. Diffloth 1975: 4), an *a posteriori* iconic motivation is more likely. In the Maniq (Northern Aslian) of Southern Thailand /r/ is pronounced in a variety of manners, but never as a trill (Wnuk 2010: 14). In the Kensiw (Northern Aslian) of Southern Thailand (Bishop 1996: 234) /r/ is pronounced as a trill in only one word. Some Menriq and Batek Dèq (Northern Aslian) speakers employ uvular or velar fricatives for /r/ (Niclas Burenhult, p.c.). In the Sabūm dialect of Lanoh (Central Aslian) an original /r/ has become /j/ (Diffloth 1975: 11). In most varieties of Temiar, /r/ is an apico-alveolar flap (Benjamin 1976b: 135); but in some Temiar dialects, such as that spoken in the Ber valley (Kelantan) in the 1960s, /r/ was (is?) a retroflex flap or labialized vocoid.<sup>7</sup>

### The ‘related features’

This paper is concerned primarily with the causative-voice inflection of the Temiar verb.<sup>8</sup> But first I take a brief look at the ‘related features’ mentioned in the title. In addition to the iconically expressed ‘REPLICATION’ meanings just discussed, the element *r* as a phonetically high and (usually) front consonant is well suited to express a variety of SELF-referring subject-orientation meanings. This is especially apparent in the forms *ri:* ‘the selfsame’, *rə-* ‘who’ and *rɛ*<sup>2</sup>- ‘like’ (Table 1 and sentences (1)–(6)).

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the voiced palatal stop (usually written as *j*); and the length mark (:) indicates phonemically long vowels (usually written doubled).

<sup>5</sup> Jah Hut was formerly placed in the Central Aslian division (Diffloth 1975, Benjamin 1976a), but Diffloth (in Diffloth & Zide 2005) and others (Burenhult, Kruspe & Dunn 2011) now regard it as forming a separate Aslian division on its own, alongside the Northern, Central and Southern divisions.

<sup>6</sup> The uncertainty as to the Proto-Austronesian form is discussed in Benjamin 2009: 309. For Wolff’s most recent views on the various mergers that overtook Proto-Austronesian *\*D* in Malay, see Wolff 2010: 484–485, footnote 27.

<sup>7</sup> In Temiar the *a posteriori* character of its iconicity is further reinforced by the ‘two, dual’ meaning expressed by *-r*: *na:r* ‘two’, *ja:r* ‘we two (exclusive)’ and *ʔa:r* ‘we two (inclusive)’ all contain the same component, *-aar*.

<sup>8</sup> On the reasons for referring to the causative as a ‘voice’ of the verb rather than as a derivation, see Benjamin 2011: 23.

**Table 1:** Forms in (-)r-

<i>ri:</i> <sup>?</sup>	the pronoun-intensifier ‘self(same)’ (emphatic, free-standing, stressed)
<i>re</i> <sup>?</sup>	the preposition ‘like, in the manner of’
<i>rə-</i>	REL, the relative-pronoun ‘who’, anaphoric to agentive topics (proclitic to verb)
<i>rə-</i>	the pronoun-intensifier ‘self(same)’ (proclitic, unstressed)
<i>-r- / tər-</i>	CAUS, the causative, valency-raising verbal affix

**The Reflexive intensifier *ri:*<sup>?</sup>**

*Ri:*<sup>?</sup> is not a reflexive pronoun; it is, rather, a participant adjunct meaning ‘the person in focus’ or ‘the aforementioned, the selfsame’. In (1) for example, *ri:*<sup>?</sup> is obviously not the object of the verb *ko*<sup>?</sup> ‘vomit’ but an intensifier (Moravcsik 1972) of the focused-on broad subject, *ʔalɯj*. (In all examples *ri:*<sup>?</sup> takes an emphatic sentence-stress.)<sup>9</sup>

- (1) *Na-ko*<sup>?</sup>                      *ri:*<sup>?</sup> *ʔi-ʔalɯj*      *na*<sup>?</sup>,    *na-kəbɯs*.  
 3SG-vomit.PFV    self    NOM-ʔalɯj    that,    3SG-die.PFV.  
 ‘ʔalɯj himself vomited, he died.’

It may be that *ri:*<sup>?</sup> originated as an Austronesian loan. In Malay the so-called reflexive pronoun is *diri*. This, like *ri:*<sup>?</sup>, also behaves like a noun. Winstedt remarks (1927: 116), without giving his evidence, that the Malay word originally meant ‘body’. Some relevant Austronesian forms are given by Blust under Proto-Austronesian \**diri* ‘to stand’ (Blust & Trussel 2010), with polysemous extensions in some branches to ‘person’ and ‘self’ (see also Wurm & Wilson (1975: 150), under ‘person, human being’). Blust thinks that these may be due to ‘borrowing from Malay, in which the senses of “self” and “erect posture” evidently have become intertwined’ – presumably via the connecting idea of bipedalism. Malay *diri* is probably also related to the Temiar forms *dəri:*<sup>?</sup>, *dəʔri:*<sup>?</sup> ‘alone, by oneself’.

Thus, if Temiar did indeed borrow *ri:*<sup>?</sup> from early Malay or some other Austronesian source, that would explain some of the meanings the word appears to have retained, despite having been reanalyzed *a posteriori* for other purposes by Temiar speakers. In (2), for example, *ri:*<sup>?</sup> is the noun-possessee of a possessing pronoun (‘his self’) as well as the affected noun-object (the ‘presentee’) in *ha-ri:*<sup>?</sup> (‘ACC-self’). The gloss is in less than comfortable English, but it represents the literal meaning of the original quite closely:

- (2) *Na-ʔog*                      *ʔi-Tata:*<sup>?</sup>      *ʔɛŋkã:j*      *ha-ri:*<sup>?</sup>      *nej*,    *ha-ʔalɯj*      *nej*    –  
 3SG-give.PFV    NOM-Tata:<sup>?</sup>    ʔɛŋkã:j    ACC-self    one,    ACC-ʔalɯj    one    –  
*kədə:g*    *ʔabi:r*    *ma-ʔalɯj*,    *ri:*<sup>?</sup>    *ʔəh*    *kədə:g*    *ʔagə:c*.  
 squirrel    ʔabi:r    to-ʔalɯj,    self    3SG    squirrel    ʔagə:c.  
 ‘Tata:<sup>?</sup> ʔɛŋkã:j presented his self with one and ʔalɯj with one – an ʔabi:r squirrel to ʔalɯj, and an ʔagə:c squirrel to his (own) self.’

**The pronoun-anaphor *rə-***

The pronoun-anaphor *rə-* behaves much like a relative pronoun, in that it refers back to the subject of the verb in a replicative manner. Its usage varies. In the easterly Temiar speech with which I am more familiar *rə-* seems to occur only as an anaphor to the interrogative pronoun *cə:*<sup>?</sup> ‘who?’, as in (3a) and (3b). The latter is taken from Schebesta (1931: 646), where it is written as

<sup>9</sup> The following abbreviations are used in the glosses: 1 ‘first-person’, 2 ‘second-person’, 3 ‘third-person’, ACC ‘accusative’, CAUS ‘causative’, CTRS ‘contrastive’, DET ‘determiner’, DU ‘dual’, EMP ‘emphatic’, EXCL ‘exclusive’, IMP ‘imperative (irrealis)’, INT ‘intensive (irrealis)’, IPFV ‘imperfective’, IRR ‘irrealis’, MID ‘middle voice’, NOM ‘nominative’, PFV ‘perfective’, PL ‘plural’, PROG ‘progressive’, PSTV ‘presentative’, Q ‘interrogative’, REL ‘relative’, SG ‘singular’, VET ‘vetative’.

*cɔ(r) tæɛl a naʔʔ* and translated as ‘who did this?’. In (3c) the character of *rə-* as a proclitic pronoun is confirmed through its ability to take the irrealis clitic *-m-* (as *rum-*):<sup>10</sup>

- (3) a. *Cɔ:ʔ rə-tɛŋlɛk jehʔ*  
 Who REL-teach.IPFV 1SG?  
 ‘Who is it who taught me?’ (implying that the skill in question was self-taught)
- b. *Cɔ:ʔ rə-təʔɛl ʔa-naʔ.*  
 Who REL-do.PFV DET-there?  
 ‘Who did it just there?’
- c. *Cə-babo:ʔ, cɔ:ʔ rum-həwɔʔʔ*  
 CTRS-woman, who REL.IRR-desire?  
 ‘As for the woman, who might have fallen for her?’

But in the north-westerly Temiar speech-area near Gerik in Upper Perak I observed that *rə-* was also used freely as an anaphor to ordinary personal pronouns, as in (4):

- (4) *Nɔb rə-tɛŋlɛk kanɛh.*  
 2PL REL-teach.IPFV 1PL.EXCL.  
 ‘It is you who teach us.’

It is possible that *rə-* ‘relative’ and *ri:ʔ* ‘self(same)’ are more closely related than the above remarks suggest. In (5), for example, it is likely that the two occurrences of *rə-* are a reduced procliticized form of *ri:ʔ*, equivalent therefore to *ri:ʔ bə:h ri:ʔ kəwā:s*:

- (5) *ʔe-loʔ wɛ-ʔejʔ Tɔʔ wɛ-mɛʔma:ʔ, rə-bə:h rə-kəwā:s.*  
 What 3DU-happen.to? Not 3DU-return.IPFV, REL-father / REL-child. /  
 self-father self-child.  
 ‘What happened to them that they’ve not returned – [the one] who is father,  
 [the one] who is child?’  
 Or?:  
 ‘What happened to them that they’ve not returned – the father himself, the child  
 himself?’

### The preposition *wab* ‘with’ and the verb *rəwab*

A seemingly related form is *rəwab* ‘to accompany’, the verbal form of the preposition *wab* ‘along with, accompanied by’. At first sight it looks as if the initial *rə-* might be a prefixal version of the ‘causative’ *r* (just as the nominalizing infix *-n-* also occurs as a prefix, *n-*, especially in Perak and increasingly in Kelantan). Etymologically, however, *rəwab* is the fuller form, related to the proposed Proto-Mon-Khmer series *\*rum*; *\*ru:m*; *\*ruəm*; *\*ruap* ‘to assemble’, under which Shorto (2006: 379, no. 1389) lists a large number of cognates from all branches of the family. In the Temiar case, therefore, it is the preposition *wab* that has been derived from the verb *rəwab*. But would this have happened if *rə-* was not already thinkable-of as a formative with causative connotations? The most common occurrence of *rəwab* is in the utterance *cɔ:ʔ rəwabʔ* ‘who went along (as company)?’, which could easily be re-construed as *cɔ:ʔ rə-wabʔ* ‘who REL-with?’. However, a transparently causative derivative of this verb is also found: *pərwab*, *pərebwab* ‘to get someone to accompany someone’ (employing the non-productive *pə-* rather than *ter-*).

### The preposition *rɛʔ* ‘like’

With the preposition *rɛʔ* ‘like’, on the other hand, the idea of REPLICATION is expressed at its simplest, as in (6):

<sup>10</sup> The form *rum-* is very rare, occurring only once in my own data. Consequently, this analysis must be taken as tentative.

- (6) *ʔi-bə-cəmcap*      *tɛːʔ*,      *bukan*      *rɛʔ-hǎːʔ*.  
 1SG-PROG-pack.IPFV      earlier,      not      like-2SG.  
 ‘I was packing up earlier, not like you.’

It seems likely, then, that *riːʔ* ‘self(same)’ has become a purely iconic form consisting solely of the components REPLICATION and SELF, signaled by the front consonant *r* and the closed vowel *i*, respectively. If so, the forms *rə-* ‘relative’ and especially *rɛʔ-* ‘like’ would appear to have somewhat downplayed the SELF component signaled by the high vowel, retaining primarily the REPLICATION component indicated by the *r*. The forms *rə-* and *rɛʔ-* are probably etymologically cognate with (or just possibly borrowed from) equivalent Mon words: cf. Old Mon *row* /rɔw/, Middle Mon *rau*, Spoken Mon *rɛa* ‘manner, like, as’ (Shorto 1971: 323).

### Productive causatives in *-r-*

The productive causative inflections of the Temiar verb (Tables 2 and 3)<sup>11</sup> incorporate the formative *-r-*, indicating that the causee REPLICATES in some sense whatever has been set in process by the causer.<sup>12</sup> This may be a peculiarly Aslian feature: Shorto (2006) lists no *-r-* causatives at all in his wide-ranging survey of Mon-Khmer, but Burenhult (2005: 108) and Kruspe (2004: 124, and in her ‘comparative notes’ on p.134) report that *-r-* causatives are found in Jahai (Northern Aslian) and Semelai (Southern Aslian), respectively. This suggests that the productive Temiar (Central Aslian) form, as well as cognate forms in Semai (also Central Aslian), might result from an innovation at the Proto-Aslian level. On the other hand, as a prefix, alone or in combination, *r-* is occasionally found elsewhere in Mon-Khmer, but not with an obviously causative meaning (Shorto 1963); it also occurs as an infix in Old Mon (Jacob 1963).

As Comrie (1985: 323) puts it, causative verbs indicate that the causer ‘brings about (or, more weakly, fails to prevent) the situation described by the sentence containing the basic verb’. More ‘weakly’ still, Temiar causatives, especially with an animate causee, often indicate a mere *permitting* or *making-possible* of the situation. From a semantic point of view an animate causee in such cases retains a degree of agentivity, thereby becoming what Palmer (1994: 237) describes as a ‘secondary agent’. The causer will almost always be animate and agentive, although non-agentive causers (i.e. material ‘things’) may also occur under certain restricted circumstances. But I have yet to find any examples of non-material forces in that role (cf. Comrie 1985: 332ff.). Perhaps this is because ‘rain’ *tɛhtəːh*, ‘flood’ *bɛgʔaːg*, ‘storm’ *dɛŋdək*, ‘wind’ *hɛnhül* etc are verbal (imperfective) or deverbal (*-n-*) forms, rather than simple nouns.

<sup>11</sup> To simplify the presentation, Tables 2 and 3 omit two other forms of the Temiar verb, namely the inflected middle voice with infixed *-a-* (*salɔg*, *gagəl*) and the derived progressive aspect with proclitic *bar-*, which are not directly relevant to the present discussion. The valency-reducing middle voice is of course incompatible with the valency-increasing causative. Consequently, middle-causative forms in *\*-ra-* do not occur in the normal inflectional pattern of the verb. The morphology is found elsewhere in the language, however, in certain lexical items and (especially) in expressives (Benjamin, 2012a). On the other hand, the progressive *bar-* is completely compatible with the imperfective causative (*bar-tərelgəl*, *bar-sərelgəl*). But it is hardly ever found with the unreduplicated perfective – (*\*)bar-tərgəl*, (*\*)bar-serlgəl*) – with which it would appear to be semantically somewhat incompatible.

<sup>12</sup> As discussed in the final section of this paper, non-productive causative-like forms, lacking the formative *-r-*, also occur.

**Table 2: Verbal inflection (sesquisyllabic): *səɔŋ* ‘to lie down, sleep’**Prefinal ə and ɛ are wholly determined: phonemic in *italics*

VOICE	ASPECT		VERBAL NOUN
	Perfective	Imperfective	
<b>Base</b>	<i>sɔŋ</i> [səɔŋ] ‘sleep’ (completed act)	<i>sgɔŋ</i> [sɛŋɔŋ] ‘sleep’ (incomplete act)	<i>snɔŋ</i> [sənɔŋ] ~ <i>sngɔŋ</i> [səɛŋɔŋ] ‘a sleeping’
<b>Causative</b>	<i>srlɔŋ</i> [sərɔŋ] ‘put to sleep’ (completed act)	<i>srgɔŋ</i> [səɛŋɔŋ] ‘put to sleep’ (incomplete act)	<i>srnɔŋ</i> [sərənɔŋ] ‘a putting to sleep’

**Table 3: Verbal inflection (monosyllabic): *gəl* ‘to sit’**Prefinal ə and ɛ are wholly determined: phonemic in *italics*

VOICE	ASPECT		VERBAL NOUN
	Perfective	Imperfective	
<b>Base</b>	<i>gəl</i> [gəl] ‘sit’ (completed act)	<i>glgəl</i> [gɛlgəl] ‘sit’ (incomplete act)	<i>glnəl</i> [gɛlnəl] ~ <i>nlgəl</i> [nɛlgəl] ‘a sitting’
<b>Causative</b>	<i>trgəl</i> [tɛrgəl] ‘set down’ [completed act]	<i>trlgəl</i> [təɛlgəl] ‘set down’ [incomplete act]	<i>trngəl</i> [təɛngəl] ‘a setting down’

In sesquisyllabic verbs (Table 2) the causative inflection is *-r-* unaltered: *sɔŋ* [səɔŋ] ‘to lie down’ → *srlɔŋ* [sərɔŋ] ‘to lay down’.<sup>13</sup> With monosyllabic verbs (Table 3) the causative is formed by prefixing the affix *tr-* [tɛr- ~ tər-]: *gəl* ‘to sit’ → *trgəl* [tɛrgəl] ‘to set down’. This regularly dissimilates to *br-* [bɛr- ~ bər-] before stems with an initial *c-* or *t-*: *ci:b* ‘to go’ → *brci:b* [bɛrci:b] ‘to cause to go’, *tu:k* ‘to fear’ → *brtu:k* [bɛrtu:k] ‘to instill fear’. The *-r-* affix is retained when the causative verb stem undergoes incopifixation to produce the imperfective-causative and verbal-noun forms (with *-n-*):

*sgɔŋ* → *srgɔŋ* → *srnɔŋ* [sɛŋɔŋ → sɛɛŋɔŋ → sərənɔŋ]  
*trgəl* → *trlgəl* → *trngəl* [tɛrgəl → tɛɛlgəl → təɛngəl]  
*brci:b* → *brbci:b* → *brnci:b* [bɛrci:b → bɛɛbci:b → bəɛnci:b].

The prefixes *tr-* and *br-* are also found in Malay (as *tər-*, *bər-*), from which the Temiar forms are likely to have been borrowed.<sup>14</sup> If so, an interesting semantic reversal took place, for the Malay prefixes express (non-agentive) passive or (agentive) middle-voice ‘undergoer’ meanings respectively (Benjamin 1993: 383–384; 2009: 306–314), while the Temiar ones are clearly causative in meaning. In a dialectical cultural regime like that of the Temiars, however, such a switch would be relatively easy to effect, on the grounds that what happens to oneself necessarily

<sup>13</sup> Some apparently irregular verbs diverge from this paradigm in one or more respects. The causative of *həwal* ‘to emerge’, for example, is not \**herwal* but *terhəwal*, *tərelhəwal*. The ‘irregularity’ here, however, is not in the reduplicative pattern employed (it is a frequent means of forming expressives), but in the use to which it is put. The explanation in this particular case lies in an earlier vocalic shift from the diphthongal but monosyllabic \**hual* to the reanalyzed sesquisyllabic *həwal* (Cf. Diffloth 1975:11).

<sup>14</sup> However, according to the Gérard Diffloth (p.c.), the Semai and Temiar *br-* causatives derive from *pr-*, in accordance with the general Central Aslian rule that such unvoiced stops become voiced under certain conditions. This suggests that at least some of the *bər-* causatives of Temiar are possibly ‘ancient’ Mon-Khmer forms that for some obscure reason have been preserved before *c-* and *t-*, but not in other positions.



also happens to one's salient others. This applies especially to the structure of Temiar sanctions controlling interpersonal behavior (Benjamin 1967b: 336–340), where it is the 'doee', not the doer, who is expected to suffer the automatic consequences of the doer's misdeeds.

Semai shares something of this orientation – but with a twist. There, a common use of causatives with statives is to express the meaning 'to pretend to': *bɔːr* 'good', *pərbɔːr* 'to pretend to be good', which Gérard Diffloth (p.c.) explains as implying that the subject is being good *for others*, not that he is *in himself* good. The reference has shifted from self to others, and the causative meaning applies only to those others. Semelai (Southern Aslian), on the other hand, retained the original middle-voice meaning when it borrowed the Malay *ber-* (Kruspe 2004: 117–123). This accords with my suggestion in other contexts (Benjamin 1985, 2002) that the 'Malayic' societal pattern which the Semelais but not the Temiars have adhered to evinces a non-dialectical (specifically, a 'transcendental') rather than a dialectical mode of orientation. They would therefore be much less likely to have engaged in the kinds of semantic switch that the Temiars and Semais have taken up.

A straightforward example of the causative occurs in (7), which employs both the causative form *terʔɔɰ* 'to raise, carry up' and its underlying base form *ʔɔɰ* 'to ascend, climb up'. Here, there is no secondary agency, for this is not a permissive but a true ('make') causative governing an inanimate causee.

- (7) *Kɔːd, na-ʔɔɰ, hamɛʔ deh, na-terʔɔɰ*  
 Take, 3SG-ascend.PFV PSTV PSTV, 3SG-CAUS.ascend.PFV  
*lamuːŋ ʔəh, terʔɔɰ ha-wɛl ʔə-naʔ.*  
 springy.sapling 3SG CAUS.ascend.PFV ACC-coil 3SG-that.  
 'Then he climbed up, he brought up his springy sapling, he brought up his coiled [sapling].'

Less straightforward examples of the causative also occur. In (8) for example, the base form of the verb *səg* 'to get caught' carries an inherently passive meaning, but the active meaning 'to catch' is expressed by its causative form, *tersəg*.<sup>15</sup>

- (8) *Nam ʔames na-səg bakɔːʔ jeːʔ Ma-ʔalɯ*  
 Animal small 3SG-get.caught.PFV springtrap 1SG To-ʔalɯ  
*na-tersəg nam rajaːʔ.*  
 3SG-CAUS.catch.PFV animal large.  
 'A small animal got caught in my trap. But ʔalɯ's trap caught him a large animal.'  
 OR, more explicitly:  
 'A small animal got caught (in the) trap. The trap caused a large animal to get caught for the benefit of (ma-) ʔalɯ.'

The causative is also employed to generate the transitive form of semi-deponent verbs (Benjamin 2011: 20–22) that otherwise appear only in the intransitive middle-voice form. In (9b), for example, the middle-voice *catək* is clearly the anticausative transform of *certək* in (9a) (cf. Comrie 1985: 322–333); there is no base form \**cətək*.

- (9) a. *Na-certək rɛŋkaːʔ.*  
 3SG-close.CAUS.PFV door.  
 'She closed the door.'

<sup>15</sup> In (8), and probably also in (10b) and (11b), the causative inflection should more strictly be considered as indicating the 'applicative' voice (Aikhenvald 2011: 93–97). Languages sometimes employ different surface constructions for the two voices, but Temiar would appear to be one of the many languages in which the two voices are expressed in the same way morphologically, typically as the 'causative'.



- b. *Rɛŋka:*? *na-catək*.  
 Door 3SG-close.MID.  
 ‘The door closed.’

Occasionally, the causative is employed to derive active verbs from stative verbs (adjectives), as with *mɛj* ‘good’ → *tɛrmɛj*, *tərmɛmɛj* ‘to repair, improve’, or (from a Malay loan) *bətul* ‘correct’ → *bərtul* ‘to correct’.

Causatives can also be generated from nominal roots, as in (10), where the noun *kəlɔːj* ‘interior, insides’ (10a) is inflected to produce the idiomatic factitive ‘to turn inside out’ (10b):

- (10) a. *kəlɔːj* *dɛ:k*  
 interior house  
 ‘inside (of) the house’  
 b. *Ham-kərlɔːj* *ʔabat* *doh!*  
 2SG.IMP-inside.CAUS.PFV sarong this!  
 ‘Turn this sarong inside out!’

A further example (11) is *tərcɔb*, here further nominalized with *-n-* as *tərencɔb*, from the noun *cɔb* ‘position between’:

- (11) a. *ʔɛn-cɔb*  
 in-between  
 ‘in between’  
 b. *tərencɔb*  
 CAUS.NMLZ.between.PFV.  
 ‘the hem of a plaited object, made by interweaving the unwoven strands’

As exemplified in (10b) and (11b), the resultant meaning of a derived causative is sometimes idiomatic rather than predictable. A further example is presented in (12), taken from the lyric of a commercial pop-song recording,<sup>16</sup> where the causative (*kərdɯ*?) of *kədu* ‘to remain, stay’ is used to refer to the girl’s silence:

- (12) *Kəmɯn kah cə-hã:*? *hɔj ha-je?* *ma-je:??*  
 True Q CTRS-2SG PAST 2SG-reject.PFV to-1SG?  
*Ham-tuh, ham-tuh, ʔagɔ? kərdɯ?*  
 2SG.IMP-say.PFV, 2SG.IMP-say.PFV, VET stay.CAUS.PFV.  
 ‘Is it true that you have rejected me? Say, say, don’t make it stay [i.e. don’t keep it to yourself].’

Note that the ostensibly ‘causative’ *kərdɯ* in (12) is an example of what Aikhenvald (2011: 86) refers to as ‘causatives which do not cause’. These are morphological ‘causatives’ in which, instead of an expected valency-increase, the construction adds an extra meaning to the verb, typically ‘to

<sup>16</sup> From track 3 (‘Menhapekik’ = *Mɔn ha-pəki?*, ‘Why do you ignore me?’) of the video karaoke CD *Yang Lain Tetap Lain* (Warisan Sound 0607) performed by the Temiar pop-group Seniroi (i.e. *Sənirɔy* ‘Echoes’), Kuala Lumpur: Power Records. However, Diffloth (1977: 484) reconstructs the Proto-Semai cognate as *\*krdi* ‘to remain silent, quiet’ on the basis of several modern Semai forms that all contain the *kr-* element, which he interprets as ‘malevolent causative’. It is possible, therefore, that Temiar *kədu* ‘to remain, stay’ was originally a back-formation from *kərdɯ*?, which may therefore have originally meant ‘to cause offence by keeping silent’. A parallel but non-productive example is *gertu:h* ‘to be carried along in a current’, cf. *tɯ:h* ‘to let drop’. (The change of voicing from *\*kr-* to *gr-* is regular in both Temiar and Semai.)

do with manipulative effort, forceful and intensive action, complete involvement of the object’ – all of which happen to suit the song-lyric at this point.

Although the causative inflection is highly productive in Temiar, there are nevertheless some restrictions. Causatives appear to be derivable only from intransitive verbs or from verbs that can be employed both intransitively and transitively. Examples of the latter are *ca:* ‘to eat (intrans); to consume (trans)’ or *səlog* ‘to lie down, sleep (intrans); to marry (trans)’; *tu:k* ‘to be afraid (intrans); to fear (trans)’. Forming a causative from an intransitive verb produces a transitive verb, such as *ter’og* ‘to raise’ from *’og* ‘to ascend’, as in (7). Forming a causative from an already transitive verb, such as *berca:* ‘to feed’ from *ca:* ‘to eat (consume)’, produces a ditransitive verb. But in the latter case, one of the causees usually appears as the indirect object, indicated by the proclitic *ma-* ‘to’: *na-berca:* ‘*kebə:* *ma-sajē:d* (she-eat.CAUS.PFV fruit to-child) ‘she feeds fruit to the child’. A further example occurs in (17), below.

This is as far as it goes, for I have found no instances of a ditransitive causative like *berca:* being further raised to a tritransitive verb (‘to make someone feed someone else’). Accordingly, the ditransitive verb *’og* ‘to give’ appears not to occur in the causative (*\*ter’og* ‘\*to cause to give’). This restriction applies even to such ‘fully’ monotransitive verbs as *tə’el* ‘to make’ or *səluh* ‘to shoot (something with a blowgun)’. Such potential ‘double causative’ forms as *\*ter’tə’el* ‘to make someone make something’ or *\*sərluh* ‘to make someone shoot at something’ would be morphologically well-formed, but they are semantically proscribed. To express such constructions, periphrasis would be employed, with *’o:r* ‘to order’ (13a) or *’og* ‘to give (i.e. permit, let)’ (13b):

- (13) a. *’i-’o:r*                      *nam-tə’el*                      *de:k*.  
           1SG-order.PFV    3SG.INT-build.PFV    house.  
           ‘I ordered him to build a house’
- b. *Na-’og*                      *’im-tə’el*                      *de:k*.  
           3SG-give.PFV    1SG.INT-build.PFV    house.  
           ‘He let me build a house.’

### Cultural issues: control v. permission

In Temiar there appears to be no way of saying ‘to make’ someone do something, whether inflectionally, periphrastically or lexically. As Alves (2001: 118) remarks in his subtle study of Mon-Khmer causatives, ‘perhaps more interesting than what causative verbs can do is what they cannot since that would be the real testing ground for lexically inherent syntactic constraints.’ With inanimate non-agentive causees, as in (7), (9), (10) and (11), the causative carries the meaning ‘bring about’ or ‘make’. But with human (and other animate?) causees, as already noted, the causative is usually *permissive*: the primary actor’s action merely makes it possible or sets the conditions for the secondary actor to do what he or she wishes. This would avoid the suggestion that one person’s will is being imposed on another’s. Thus *berca:* ‘feed’, the causative of *ca:* ‘eat’, would normally mean not ‘force someone to eat’, but ‘get someone to eat’ or ‘provide food so that someone might eat’, with ‘food’ rather than the eater as the direct-object causee of the verb. (In former times *berca:* ‘feed’ was the regular way of referring to the custom by which a man would support a pre-pubertal girl in the hope that she would eventually marry him. This was not thought of as a formal agreement or contract, and the girl could later refuse.)

Similarly, with the causative *terbət* ‘to provide the breast, get the baby to suck’, from *bət*, *benbət* ‘to suck at the breast’ (*bət* also means ‘breast’, and sometimes ‘milk’), the actor is not seen as forcing the baby to suck, but simply as providing the means for it to do so if it wishes. The reciprocal expression is not ‘the child was forced to suck’ – a true agentive passive for which there is no equivalent in Temiar – but ‘the child sucks’, a straightforward active expression implying that the child is in control of its own actions. In any case, Temiar parents have no means to impose their will on their children, as it would clash with the strong value they place on individual personal autonomy (Benjamin 1967a: 14, 1994: 51). Similarly, *ter’og*, the causative of *’og* ‘to drink’, is a permissive with the meaning ‘to get someone to take their medicine’ rather than an example of one person controlling another.

I suggest that this reluctance to use the causative to express control over a secondary actor's actions is one reason why the Temiars have not developed the middle voice into a true agentive passive – a transition that has occurred in other languages. 'Control' in Temiar can be expressed only in relation to the primary causer's own actions or effects; it cannot be imposed or extended further. (A similar pattern also applies to the syntax of the 'irrealis' clitic *-m-*, discussed in Benjamin 2012b.) Animate causees ('secondary agents') are understood as retaining their own independent agency.

In some cases, however, this stricture appears at first glance to be waived; but closer inspection shows that this is because special circumstances hold. In (14), for example, the causee's will had been put aside by the altered state of consciousness induced in her by the shaman. (Or perhaps the shamanic blowing merely *permitted* her to sit down, still agentively.)

- (14) *Təho:l      ?i-pəʔ                      ?əh,      tɛrgəl                      ?ə-ma-tɛʔ.*  
 Blow.PFV    NOM-younger.sibling    3SG,    CAUS.sit.PFV    3SG-to-ground.  
 'Her younger brother blew (shamanically) on her, and set her down.'

In (15), the accusative marker *ha-* is attached to the causee ('wife'), presumably to indicate a more direct degree of causation, though physical manipulation. (The verb *səŋi:l*, *sɛŋi:l* is inceptive in meaning: 'to wake up', whereas *wəg* means 'to get up (from sleep)').

- (15) *Na-sɛŋi:l                      lah      ha-ləh                      ?ə-naʔ,      na-wəg                      hamɛʔ.*  
 3SG-wake.CAUS.PFV    EMP    ACC-wife    3SG-that,    3SG-woke    PRSTV.  
 'He woke his wife up, and she got up.'

In (16), the death of ?aləŋ's wife was the unintended result of his brother Karey's excessive sex with her. In other words, this was a case of manslaughter rather than murder, and therefore a kind of permissive – 'he let her die' / 'he did nothing to stop her dying'.

- (16) *Kəbus      ?ə-lah,                      na-kerbus                      ?ə-lah.*  
 Die.pfv    3SG-EMP,    3SG-DIE.CAUS.PFV    3SG-EMP.  
 'She died, he had killed her.'

In (17) there is a contrast between *gəp*, *gəmgəp* 'to paint one's own face' and its causative *tərgəp*. Rather than 'cause someone to paint his/her face', the latter means 'to cause paint to be applied to someone's face', with *sumba:ʔ* (red annatto) as the direct object of the verb. Semantically, therefore, it is an applicative rather than a simple causative. The indirect object here, *ma-babə:h* [to-man], is somewhat 'passive/undergoer' in character, in apparent accordance with the 'causee hierarchy' of Comrie (1985: 342): direct object > indirect object > oblique object.

- (17) *Habis      pəhpə:h,      jemjap                      ?ə-lah,                      gəmgəp                      sumba:ʔ      –*  
 Finish    trance.IPV,    prepare.IPFV    3SG-EMP,    paint.IPFV    annatto      –  
*babo:ʔ      tərgəp                      ma-babə:h,      bə-kəŋi:ʔ.*  
 woman    paint.CAUS.PFV,    to-man,                      PROG-flirt.  
 'After they trance, then they prepare, paint their faces with annatto – women painting the men, flirting.'

Since causation from the Temiar point of view prototypically has its source in some animate being's will, it may therefore be impossible or at least difficult to employ a causative verb non-metaphorically in such expressions as 'The tree fell and made the house collapse' or 'The car killed the man'. (The appropriate verb-forms exist: *tərkəl* (also *təkəl*) 'to cause a collapse' from *kəl* 'to collapse', and *kerbus* 'to kill', from *kəbus* 'to die'.) Such expressions could perhaps be realized with a causative verb if the tree or car were being deliberately personified, as they just might be in a typical Temiar story involving the transmogrifying of plants and animals into human beings, or in

the animistic ascription of a controlling soul to the tree or car.<sup>17</sup> But I have yet to discover a clear example of such a construction.<sup>18</sup>

### Non-productive ‘causatives’

As noted earlier, there are also non-productive ‘causatives’ with formatives other than *-r-*. These include: *tilek*, *teŋlek* ‘to teach’ (cf. *lek*, *leŋlek* ‘to know’); *təgɔːs*, *təsgɔːs* ‘to hunt for food’ (cf. *gɔːs*, *gesgɔːs* ‘to be alive’); *pəneːh*, *pəhneːh* ‘to show’ (cf. *neːh*, *nehneːh* ‘to see’); *pəjɯl*, *pəljɯl* ‘to hunt with dogs’ (cf. *jɯl*, *jəljɯl* ‘to bark’); *pədoː*, *pəːdoː* ‘to drive fish’ (cf. *doː*, *dəːdoː* ‘to run, flee’, and the contrasting ‘regular’ causative *terdoː*, *təreːdoː* ‘to cause to flee’). There is also a set of transparently causative words with *pi-* ‘to utter a ... sound’: *piːe.w* ‘to say “don’t know”’, from *ːe.w* ‘dunno’; *pihəː* ‘to say “yes”’, from *həː* ‘yes’;<sup>19</sup> *piced* ‘to suck one’s teeth’, from *cəd* ‘the sound of sucking’. However, these are non-inflecting verbs, with no imperfective form.

Since the most common causative formative in Mon-Khmer is *p-* (Gérard Diffloth, p.c.; Alves 2001: 109), at least some of these forms may be ancient. *Pədoː*, for example, has *p-* cognates elsewhere in Mon-Khmer (see Shorto 2006, item 84a: *\*p[d]uː* ‘to carry, transport’, ~ 81 *\*duː* ‘to run away’). In one of my texts, *terdoː* and *pəːdoː* occur in the same utterance (18). But here, the first occurrence is a productive permissive-causative (‘to let run away’), while the second is a non-productive lexical item (‘to fish-drive’) in itself, with a simple transitive semantic:

- (18) *Na-ʔaŋked*    *ha-kēʔ*    *naʔ*,    *na-terdoʔ*                      *la-kēʔ*    *naʔ*.  
 3SG-take.PFV    ACC-fish    that,    3SG-CAUS.flee.PFV    EMP-fish    that.  
*ʔun-maːʔ*                      *un-pəːdoʔ*                      *naʔ*.  
 3PL-return.PFV,    3PL-drive.IPFV    that.

‘He took the fish, and let it get away. Then they who had been driving fish returned home.’

However, Temiar-speakers probably do not regard the non-productive forms as causatives. For example, they also employ the verbs *pəjɯl* and *pədoː* in the ‘collective, all-together’ middle-voice forms *pəjɯl* ‘to go hunting together’ and *pədoː* ‘to go fish-driving together’ (Benjamin 2011: 15–16). As already noted, the combination of valency-increasing causative with valency-reducing middle-voice is a semantic impossibility, and these forms therefore must lack any ‘causative’ component.<sup>20</sup> These and the other such words lack the *-r-* affix that marks the morphologically productive causatives, demonstrating that they are lexical rather than morphological causatives. It is nevertheless likely that at least some of the very common words just listed formerly contained the *-r-* affix: *(\*)terlek*, *(\*)perneːh* (but perhaps not *\*perjɯl*). That this still sometimes occurs is evidenced by the following extant alternative forms, in which the *-r-* is optional: *termuh*, *tərehmuh*,

<sup>17</sup> As long ago as the 1930s, according to Noone (1955: 4), at least one Temiar spirit-medium had Outboard Motor as his personal spirit-guide. See also footnote 18 for a possible recent development in this area of the language, involving an implied non-animate causer.

<sup>18</sup> This restriction may no longer apply in all circumstances. In 2006 I heard some Temiars employ the word *taseʔ* for ‘continue, restart’ when they were operating a video player. Normally, this verb shows two forms, the causative *terseʔ* ‘to release, set free’ and the middle *saseʔ* ‘to get away’. The base form *\*seʔ* seems not to occur. If the *t-* of *taseʔ* carries a causative meaning (by reduction of *ter-*) and, if the *-a-* carries a middle-voice meaning, *taseʔ* would indeed be an example of the middle-voice form of an embeddedly permissive-causative verb. Accordingly, I suggest that *taseʔ* is best understood as meaning ‘to cause it to restart itself’, in a new formation that extends the verbal morphology to deal with the apparently self-controlling ‘auto’ characteristics of modern technology.

<sup>19</sup> To proceed properly, Temiar story-telling requires that someone else should regularly agree to *pihəː*, in a chorus-role.

<sup>20</sup> This did not prevent a Temiar child in 1964 from inventing the related but ‘impossible’ form *wərwɔːg*. In saying to me *helhūl na-wərwɔːg* [wind 3SG-open.CAUS] ‘the wind turned over [my notebook’s page]’, he appears to have causativized the (normally) intransitive middle-voice form *wawɔːg* ‘to open up’ in a manner not acceptable in adult speech. In other words, he took *wawɔːg* as the transitive base form, where an adult would have started with *wɔːg* and then produced *wawɔːg* when required to express the (anticausative) intransitive. To my mind, this illustrates that the child already understood *-r-* to be ‘causative’, but that he had not yet fully appreciated the force of *-a-* as an optional ‘middle-voice’ infix.

alongside *təmuḥ*, *təhmuḥ* ‘to bathe (someone else)’, from *muḥ* ‘to bathe (oneself)’; *təbət*, *tənbət*, alongside *terbət*, *tərenbət* ‘to let suckle’, from *bət* ‘to suckle’; *təgɛːs*, *təsgɛːs* ‘to get someone to commit incest’ (alongside the reciprocal *bar-gɛːs* ‘to mutually commit incest’), from *gɛːs* ‘incest’; *pədɔg*, *pegdɔg* alongside *perdɔg*, *pəregdɔg* all meaning ‘to lean (transitive), set in place’. In one of my texts, both *perdɔg* and *pegdɔg* occur close together in the same utterance (19), with no discernible difference in meaning (except that the latter is imperfective in aspect, for which *pəregdɔg* could also have served).

- (19) *Na-təʔel*      *lah*    *de:k*    *ʔəh*,    *ni:s*    *ʔəh*    *na-perdɔg*.  
 3SG-build.PFV    EMP    house    3SG,    floor    3SG    3SG-lean.CAUS.PFV.  
*Lapas*    *na-pegdɔg*,                      *na-gəl*,                      *na-səlɔg*                      *lah*.  
 After    3SG-lean.CAUS.IPFV,    3SG-sit.PFV,    3SG-lie.down.PFV    EMP.

‘Then he built his house, fitted the flooring into place. After he had fitted it, he sat and lay down/slept.’

### ‘Deponent-causative’ verbs

Just as there are non-inflecting ‘deponent’ verbs in Temiar that possess a middle-voice shape (with *-a-* in the presyllable) but a superficially active meaning (Benjamin 2011), there are also a few verbs that appear to exist only in a causative shape but without an explicitly ‘causative’ meaning. Some of these contain *tə-* or *pə-* as frozen prefixes but no *-r-*, while others contain the normal ‘causative’ elements *-r-* or *ter-*, except that in these instances they are non-productive.

I have no record of any base or middle-voice forms for the following ‘deponent-causative’ verbs, and their meaning appears to be simply transitive rather than causative:

- perhej*, *pərejhej*: ‘to magic something into existence’  
*serpa:g*, *səregpa:g*: ‘to parcel up food (for cooking)’  
*cərlə:j*, *cərejlə:j*: ‘to serve food out onto mats’ (cf. *lə:j* ‘to spread mats out’)  
*terpuk*, *tərejnpuk*: ‘to ceremonially terminate a mourning period’

There is also a small set of permissive-causatives formed with *ber-* (rather than *ter-* or *-r-*), that indicate a somewhat reflexive meaning. An example is *berkeːʔ*, *bəreʔkeːʔ* ‘to search one’s mind’, from *keːʔ* ‘to search’. (This is not a case of the regular dissimilatory employment of *ber-* in stems with initial *t-* or *c-* mentioned earlier.) These refer to internal psychic events, of the kind also indicated by *berlə:k* ‘remind’, from *bələ:k* ‘to have something come to one’s mind’, a passive-like spontaneous happening rather than the result of deliberate ratiocination – which, through a morphological coincidence, also happens to begin with *ber-*. The productive causative form *berlə:k* therefore means ‘to allow something to come to (the secondary subject’s) mind’. This differs significantly from the meaning that underlies the English ‘remind’, which is more like ‘to *make* someone remember’. A more subtle example is *bertuh*, the verb sometimes used to indicate that one’s heart-soul (*hup*, the seat of agency) is internally ‘telling’ its possessor to act in a certain way. The normal, externally-directed verb for ‘to tell’ is simply *tuh*, as in (12).

Although these *berkeːʔ* type of causatives do not belong to a productive class, they are nevertheless of some interest, both semantically and historically, as implying internally-directed, ‘subjective’, permissive-causation. There is no space to pursue the issue further here, except to note that *gerʔə:b*, *gərebʔə:b* ‘to belch’ and *bəhup*, *bəmhup* ‘to fart’, both of which possess ‘causative’-like shapes, may belong here too.

### Concluding remarks

Elsewhere (Benjamin 2011, 2012a), I have argued that the Temiars’ dialectal psychocentrism, well evidenced in other domains of the culture, is also reflected in the patterning of their language. This is apparent in the peculiar manner in which the polarity of the Temiar middle and causative voices in the valency schema is given expression. (There is no inflectional passive voice in Temiar.) The middle voice carries a SELF-directed meaning through the iconically expressed incorporation of a virtual *object* into the verb, as *-a-* (Benjamin 2011: 22–23), while the

causative voice expresses the OTHER-directed meaning of getting someone *else* to do something through the iconically-expressed incorporation into the verb of the *subjective* and ‘replicative’ marker *-r-*. Thus, the dialectical SELF–OTHER deixis, exhibited in the Temiar cultural regime more generally, also pervades the semantic and grammatical organisation of the Temiar verb, where it is given phonic expression through the iconicity of oral gesture (closed/open mouth), as presented in the opening section of this paper.

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