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**AN ALTERNATE APPROACH TO THE PROCESS  
OF CAUSATIVISATION IN ASSAMESE**

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**Abstract**

*The present paper aims to present an alternate analysis of the process of causativisation in Assamese. Although a considerable amount of research has already been carried out to study the process of causativisation in Assamese, no explanations seem to be appropriate to address the exceptions or irregularities occurring in the language in the process of causativisation. One such exceptions would be, the /-a/ morpheme which shows two different patterns semantically and syntactically. Grammarians have termed it as a direct causative in the language, however, keeping in view certain instances the term false causative appears to be more appropriate label for the morpheme /a/. For example: the verb /ut<sup>h</sup>/ 'rise' becomes /ut<sup>h</sup>a/ when the derivational suffix /-a/ is added to the verb. It is considered as the direct causative form of the verb /ut<sup>h</sup>/. However, in the derivation of /kɔta/ from /kat/ we observe irregularities. The direct causative form /kɔta/ does not bear any semantic differences from the indirect causative /kɔtua/. To address such irregularities or exceptions in the language, a close analysis of the form and function of the causative verbs as well as the semantic aspects of the verbs is required. Therefore, in the present study, we would like to provide a morpho-semantic analysis of Assamese verbs in order to analyse the process of causativisation in Assamese.*

**Key Words:** Causativisation, Pseudo Ditransitive verbs, False Causative

**Introduction**

In the recent years, the study of causativisation has attracted a great deal of attention from scholars around the world. The process of causativisation is perhaps one of the most discussed areas in the field of linguistics. Although a considerable amount of research has already been carried out to study the process of causativisation in Assamese, no explanations seem to be appropriate to address the exceptions or irregularities occurring in the language in the process of causativisation. One such exceptions would be, the /-a/ morpheme which shows two different patterns semantically and syntactically. Grammarians

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have termed it as a direct causative in the language, however, keeping in view certain instances the term false causative appears to be more appropriate label for the morpheme /α/. For example: the verb /ut<sup>h</sup>/ ‘rise’ becomes /ut<sup>h</sup>α/ when the derivational suffix /-α/ is added to the verb.

It is considered as the direct causative form of the verb /ut<sup>h</sup>/. However, in the derivation of /kōtα/ from /kat/ we observe irregularities. The direct causative form /kōtα/ does not bear any semantic differences from the indirect causative /kōtαα/. To address such irregularities or exceptions in the language, a close analysis of the form and function of the causative verbs as well as the semantic aspects of the verbs is required. The present study addresses the issue from two perspectives: one is the valences and the other one is the thematic roles or cases assigned to the arguments presents in a causative construction. In the present study, we will be following the framework provided by Das (2017) which was for the analysis of causativisation in Hindi. The phenomenon of causativisation in Assamese has been analysed from the perspective of morphological and syntactic aspect in the previous studies on this topic where the process of causativisation has been understood through the concepts of direct and indirect causation. In the present paper we are trying to look beyond this classification of direct and indirect causation and trying to bring the semantic aspects into the discussion of the process of causativisation in Assamese. The whole discussion will be based on the basic principle as stated by Das (2017) that the sole purpose of causativisation is to increase participant at every successive stage of derivation and thus we can transform an intransitive verb into a transitive, and finally into a causative one; a transitive verb into a ditransitive verb and then into causative form, and a ditransitive into a causative one. At every successive stage of derivation, there is an increase in the valences and the maximum number of participants or arguments allowed in a causative construction is four. Thus, the present paper tries to present an alternative approach to understanding the process of causativisation in Assamese.

### **The Thematic Roles Assigned to the Subject in the Process of Causativisation**

- a) An intransitive verb has only one argument that is, the subject. The subject of an intransitive verb in the process of direct causation changes into a direct object with the semantic feature [+affect].

- b) A transitive verb subcategorises two arguments- a subject and a direct object. The subject of a transitive verb in the process of direct causation transforms into an indirect object. It has the semantic feature [+benefitted].
- c) A ditransitive verb has three arguments: a subject, a direct object and an indirect object. The subject of a ditransitive verb in the process of direct causation functions as an instrument NP- object. It is characterised by the semantic feature of [+actor].
- d) The subject of the pseudo-ditransitive verb changes its role in direct causation and functions as an instrumental NP-object.

### **The Role of Verbs in the Process of Causativisation**

- a) An intransitive verb has a single argument, direct causation makes an intransitive verb a transitive one and hence an argument is added to the argument structure and finally, the indirect causation turns the verb into causative where another argument is added and the valency becomes three.
- b) If the basic verb is a transitive one, the process of direct causation makes a transitive verb a ditransitive verb and has three participants, and finally, the indirect causation transforms the verb into a causative one having four participants.
- c) If the basic verb is a ditransitive verb, the direct causation changes a ditransitive verb into a causative one which has four participants. In case of Assamese, ditransitive verbs do not allow indirect causation.
- d)1. If the basic verb is a transitive verb (which is a pseudo ditransitive verb), indirect causation changes it into a causative one where there is an increase in the valency and the number of participants becomes three. This set of verbs may allow direct causation which creates a false causative form however there is no increase in the valences or the number of participants. There is no semantic difference between the actual causative and the false causative.
- d)2. There is another type of pseudo ditransitive verbs which do not create a false friend. Indirect causation changes the verb into a causative one and the verb takes three participants.

**Case Association of the Causee:**

- a) In case of intransitive verbs, in the process of causativisation, the subject of the intransitive verb takes an objective case which bears the semantic feature of [+affected].
- b) In case of transitive verbs, in the process of causativisation, the cause takes the dative case and the causee bears the semantic feature of [+benefitted].
- c) In case of ditransitive verbs, in the process of causativisation, the causee takes the instrumental case and bears the semantic feature of [+actor, -affected, -benefitted].
- d) In case of pseudo-ditransitive verbs, in the process of causativisation, the causee takes the instrumental case and bears the semantic feature of [+actor, -affected, -benefitted].

In the earlier studies, Goswami (1991) has mentioned that Assamese has three morphemes for causative /-a/, /-ua/ and /-ia/. Again, Haloi (2013) stated that there are three forms or morphemes indicating causativity in the language which are /-a/, /-ua/ and /-oa/. In the present study we would like to take a different approach in order to describe the process of causativisation in the language.

Now let us discuss the process of causativisation with the help of four types of verbs in Assamese.

**Intransitive Verbs**

Derivational process	Basic verb	Transitivisation	Causativisation
Derivational suffix		/-a/	/-ua/
Verb type	Intransitive	Transitive	Causative
Example	/nam/ 'to get down'	/nom-a/	/nom-ua/ 'to make someone get down'
Number of participants	1	2	3

**Table 1 Representing Derivation of Intransitive Verb**

The verb in the table above is an intransitive one. The intransitive verbs have only one argument that is the subject and therefore, they are classified as one valency verbs. In the table it can be seen that the intransitive verb during the process of causativisation first turns into a transitive verb then it changes into the causative form. This transition of intransitive into a causative verb shows us that there is an intermediate stage or intermediate derivation. This shows us that there is another way to look at the process of

causativisation. If we follow this it can be stated that there is only one causative form in the language in all the verbs in Assamese and direct and indirect causation mentioned in the previous studies is actually an intermediate derivation where in case of some verbs it is the derivation from intransitive to transitive, and in some other verbs it is the derivation from transitive to ditransitive. Now let us examine the process of causativisation with appropriate illustrations in intransitive verbs.

1. a) tai            gəs-ər            pora    nam-il-ε  
 3SG tree-GEN        from    get down-PST-3S  
 ‘She got down from the tree.’

b) moi tai-k    gəs-ər    pora    nəm-a-l-u  
 1SG 3SG-ACC tree-GEN    from    get down-TRV-PST-1S  
 ‘I got her down from the tree.’

c) moi həri-r    dwara    tai-k    gəs-ər    pora    nəm-ua-l-u  
 1SG    hari-GEN        through    3SG-DAT    tree-GEN  
 from get down-CAUS-PST-1S  
 ‘I got Hari to make her get down from the tree.’

The above examples successfully prove the claim that in the process of causativisation there is an intermediate stage which turns an intransitive into a transitive one. The verb in this sentence is intransitive and that is why it has only one argument, the subject. Under the present schema, intransitive verbs can have a maximum of three participants. By virtue of being an intransitive verb, it has one participant in the beginning. The second participant is added in the process of transitivity and the third participant is added by the process of causativisation. The table below represents some other intransitive verbs and the process of causativisation in Assamese.

Derivational Process	Basic Verb	Transitivity	Causativisation
Derivational suffix		/-a/	/-ua/
Verb type	Intransitive	Transitive	Causative
Example	/bɔh/ ‘sit’	/bɔh-a/	/bɔh-ua/ ‘to make someone sit’
	/ur/ ‘fly’	/ur-a/	/ur-ua/ ‘to make something fly’
	/utʰ/ ‘get up’	/utʰ-a/	/utʰ-ua/ ‘to make someone get up’
	/hah/ ‘smile’	/hɔh-a/	/hɔh-ua/ ‘to make someone smile or laugh’
	/nas/ ‘dance’	/nɔs-a/	/nɔs-ua/ ‘to make someone dance’
Number of Participants	1	2	3

**Table 2 Representing Derivation of Intransitive Verbs**

### Transitive Verb

Transitive verbs subcategorise for two arguments- subject and direct object and hence the valences for these verbs are two. In the table (3), it can be seen that in the process of causativisation, the transitive verb first turns into a di-transitive one and then it transforms into the causative form of the verb in the second stage. When the transitive verb in the first stage turns into a ditransitive verb, the valency changes into three and in the second stage or when the verb changes into a causative one, the valency becomes four. It should be pointed out that the maximum number of participants allowed by the process of causativisation is four and it should not exceed the mentioned limit. Let’s take a transitive verb and examine the process of causativisation.

Derivational process	Basic verb	Di-transitivisation	Causativisation
Derivational suffix		/-a/	/-ua/
Verb type	Transitive	Di-transitive	Causative
Example	/pɔrh/‘read’	/pɔrh-a/	/pɔrh-ua/ ‘to make someone study’
Number of Participants	2	3	4

**Table 3. Representing Derivation of Transitive Verbs**

2. a) lora-tu-ε xex-ɔr pat<sup>h</sup>-tu pɔrh-il-ε  
 boy-CL-A last-GEN chapter-CL read-PST-3S  
 ‘The boy read the last chapter.’
- b) moi lora-tu-k xex-ɔr pat<sup>h</sup>-tu pɔrh-a-l-u  
 1SG boy-CL-ACC last-GEN chapter-CL read-TRV-PST-1S  
 ‘I taught the boy the last chapter.’
- c) moi lora-tu-k ram-ɔr dwara xex-ɔr pat<sup>h</sup>-tu pɔrh-ua-l-u  
 1SG boy-CL-DAT ram-GEN INS last-GEN chapter-CLread-CAUS-PST-3  
 ‘I got Ram to teach the boy the last chapter.’

The above examples are instances of causativisation of default transitive verb /pɔrh/ ‘study’. The example 2 (a) is a transitive verb and hence it subcategorises two arguments: subject and direct object. The example 2 (b) shows that the transitive verb /pɔrh/ changes into a ditransitive one and consequently increases the valences. Now there are three participants: subject, direct object and indirect object. The example 2 (c) is an instance of actual

causative form of the verb /pɔrh/ where the causative marker /ua/ changes the verb into a causative one and increases the valency to four.

In Assamese, we have found two types of transitive verb which behave differently during the process of causativisation: default transitive verbs and pseudo ditransitive verbs. Let us first take some Assamese transitive verbs and examine the process of causativisation.

3. a) lora-tu-ε gan-tu xun-il-ε  
 boy-CL-A song-CL listen-PST-3S  
 ‘The boy listened to the song.’
- b) moi lora-tu-k gan-tu xun-a-l-u  
 1SG boy-CL-DAT song-CLlisten-TRV-PST-1S  
 ‘I made the boy listen to the song.’
- c) moi ram-r hotuwai lora-tu-k gan-tu xun-ua-l-u  
 1SG maid-GEN INS boy-CL-DATsong-CLlisten-CAUS-PST-1S  
 ‘I got Ram to make the boy listen to the song.’

The examples 3 (a-c) exhibit the process of causativisation for the default transitive verb /xun/ ‘listen’. The example 3 (a) shows the verb here is a transitive one and therefore it has two arguments or participants: a subject and a direct object. The example 3 (b) the transitive verb turns into ditransitive verb and therefore it has three: a subject, a direct object and an indirect object. When the transitive verb is transformed into a ditransitive verb one through the process of causativisation, the indirect object is marked with dative case marker /-k/ and has the semantic feature of benefitted and the direct object has the accusative case. The example 3 (c) represents actual causative form of the verb /xun/ and there is an increase in the valences from three to four.

Derivational Process	Basic Verb	Di-Transitivisation	Causativisation
Derivational suffix		/-a/	/-ua/
Verb type	Transitive	Di-transitive	Causative
Set A Example	/xun/ ‘to hear, listen’ /xik/ ‘to teach’  /buz/ ‘to understand’	/xun-a/  /xik-a/  /buz-a/  /pahɔr-a/	/xun-ua/ ‘to make someone listen’  /xik-ua/ ‘to make someone teach’  /buz-ua/ ‘to make someone understand something’

	/pəhɔr/ 'to forget'	/dɛk <sup>h</sup> -a/	/pəhɔr-ua/ 'to make someone forget something.'
	/dɛk <sup>h</sup> / 'to see'	/dʒik-a/	/dɛk <sup>h</sup> -ua/ 'to make someone see something'
	/dʒik/ 'to win'		/dʒik-ua/ 'to make someone win'
Number of Participants	2	3	4

**Table 4 Representing Causativisation of Transitive Verbs**

Most of these verbs are related to human perception and human mind. These verbs show great connection between the agent and action. As pointed out by Das (2017) these verbs show an inalienable relationship of the instrument with the agent. This sense of perceptions helps these verbs to not have the need of external instrument in order to carry out the action.

### **Ditransitive Verb**

<b>Derivational process</b>	<b>Basic verb</b>	<b>Causativisation</b>
Derivational suffix		/-a/
Verb type	Di-transitive	Causative
Example	/dɛ/ 'give'	/di-a/ 'to make someone give something'
Number of participants	3	4

**Table 5 Representing Causativisation of Ditransitive Verbs**

The Ditransitive verb has three participants. In the process of causativisation of ditransitive verbs one more argument or participant is added and the valences become four. The process of causativisation of Assamese ditransitive verbs is very simple. There is no intermediate stage. In the above example it can be seen that when the morpheme /-a/ is added to the ditransitive verb /dɛ/, we get the causative form /di-a/ and it increases the number of participants involved from three to four. Now if we go on and try to add the morpheme /-ua/ (which otherwise is the causative marker in Assamese as illustrated by previous examples) with /dɛ/ then we get /diua/ which is unacceptable in the language. The reason for such irregularities is the fact that the maximum number of participants allowed by the process of causativisation is four and it should not exceed this limit. However, when we add the morpheme /-ua/, it will exceed the allowed number of participants. Moreover, after the affixation of /-a/, there is no room for modifying or enhancing valences. Therefore, the morpheme /-ua/ is not used for the causativisation of the verb /dɛ/.



Consider the following ditransitive verb and examine the process of causativisation.

Derivational process	Basic verb	Causativisation
Derivational suffix		/-a/
Verb type	Di-transitive	Causative
Example	/pət <sup>h</sup> a/ ‘give’	/pət <sup>h</sup> i-a/ ‘to make someone give something’
Number of Participants	3	4

**Table 6 Representing Causativisation of Ditransitive Verbs**

In the above table it can be seen that the verb /pət<sup>h</sup>a/ ‘to send’ already has three participants and therefore, there is no intermediate derivation as it would increase the valency. Unlike Hindi which shows some false friends or false causatives in case of ditransitive verbs like /dena/ ‘to give’, /b<sup>h</sup>edžna/ ‘to send’ and /rək<sup>h</sup>na/ ‘to keep’ as mentioned by Das (2017), Assamese is quite straight forward and does not allow intermediate derivation in case of ditransitive verbs.

Thus, the process of causativisation of intransitive verbs, transitive verbs and ditransitive verbs in Assamese can be described as having an intermediate stage or intermediate derivation between the basic form of the verb (transitive or intransitive) and the causativised form of that particular verb rather than direct and indirect causation. This intermediate derivation derives transitives from intransitives or ditransitives from transitives.

### **Pseudo Ditransitive Verbs**

While examining the process of causativisation of the transitive verbs, we have come across a set of verbs which are endowed with a sense of instrumentation. When we examine the semantic aspect of such verbs, we find an extra valency which brings such verbs close to the category of ditransitive verbs. Das (2017) calls verbs with such semantic features ‘pseudo ditransitive’. According to Das (2017) the action denoted by pseudo ditransitive verbs comprises of an understood participant i.e., an instrument. Consider the following example:

<b>Derivational process</b>	<b>De-transitivised</b>	<b>Basic verb</b>	<b>Deriving different forms of verbs</b>	<b>Causativisation</b>
Derivational suffix	Removal of /-α/		/-α/	/-ua/
Verb type	Natural passive	Pseudo Ditransitive	False causative	Causative
Set A Example	/kat/	/kat/ 'cut'	/kɔt-α/	/kɔt-ua/ 'to make someone cut something'
Number of Participants	1	2 (3)	3 (4)	3 (4)

**Table 7. Representing Causativisation of Pseudo Ditransitive Verbs**

In the table, /kat/ 'cut' represents the verb class pseudo ditransitive in the language. This verb expresses an inherent sense of instrumentation and if we look at the semantic aspect of the verb, we find an inherent instrument which suggests that such verbs have three participants and therefore they can be treated at par with the ditransitive verbs. Note that the purpose of causativisation is to increase participants or increase valences. In contrast to causativisation, the process of de-transitivisation is to decrease the valences. Das (2017) stated that it is the 'reverse mechanism' of causativisation. In the process of de-transitivisation, the subject of the pseudo-ditransitive verb gets removed and the verb becomes an intransitive one which is called 'natural passive', we will come back to this point later.

Now, in the present study, we have found two types of pseudo ditransitive verbs. Type 1 is exemplified in the table (7) and the second type of pseudo ditransitive verbs is represented in the table below. This type of pseudo ditransitive verb has been called 'ideal' pseudo ditransitive verbs by Das (see Das 2017) as they do not allow a false causative derivation in the language as opposed to the type 1 of pseudo ditransitive verbs.

<b>Derivational Process</b>	<b>De-Transitivised</b>	<b>Basic Verb</b>	<b>Deriving Different Forms of Verbs</b>	<b>Causativisation</b>
Derivational suffix	Removal of /-α/			/-ua/
Verb type	Natural passive	Pseudo Ditransitive	False causative	Causative
Set B Example	/bɔn/	/bɔnα/ 'to make/buid'	no forms	/bɔn-ua/ 'to make someone build something'
Number of Participants	1	2(3)	3(4)	4

**Table 8 Representing Causativisation of Pseudo Ditransitivisation**

So, there are basically two types of pseudo ditransitive verbs: one which has a false causative form and one without the false causative form. Now let us discuss pseudo ditransitive verb which has false causative form. Consider the following examples:

1. a) manuh-dʒon-ε (kut<sup>h</sup>are-re) ɡos-dʒupa kat-il-ε  
 man-CL-A axe-INS tree-CL cut-PST-3S  
 ‘The man cut the tree (with an axe).
- b) manuh-dʒon-ε ram-ɔr hɔtuai (kut<sup>h</sup>are-re) ɡos-dʒupa kɔt-a-l-ε  
 man-CL-A ram-GEN INS axe-INSTree-CL cut-FC-PST-3S  
 ‘The man gets Ram to cut the tree (with an axe).
- c) manuh-dʒon-ε ram-ɔr hɔtuai (kut<sup>h</sup>are-re) ɡos-dʒupa kɔt-ua-l-ε  
 man-CL-AGN ram-GEN INS axe-INS tree-CLcut-CAUS-PST-3S  
 ‘The man gets Ram to cut the tree (with an axe).

The verb in the above examples is an instance of pseudo ditransitive verb. In the examples the instrument with which the action has been carried out is shown as optional. However, this information or this instrument is actually inherent to the verb. In the literature there is no explanation addressing this particular issue. The present study would like to examine the morpho-semantic aspects of such verbs. The pseudo-ditransitive verbs are those verbs which requires an instrument to denote the action described by the verb. They appear to be normal transitive verbs but the semantic properties put them closer to the ditransitive verbs. However, it should be noted that there is no semantic difference between the false causatives and actual causatives. The false causatives are generally used in casual speech.

Derivational Process	De-Transitivised	Basic Verb	Deriving Different Forms of verbs	Causativisation
Derivational suffix	Removal of /-a/		/-a/	/-ua/
Verb type	Natural passive	Pseudo Ditransitive	False causative	Causative
Set B Example	/b <sup>h</sup> aŋ/ /p <sup>h</sup> ut/ /kat/	/b <sup>h</sup> aŋ/ ‘to break’ /p <sup>h</sup> ut/ ‘to burst’ /kat/ ‘to cut’	/b <sup>h</sup> ɔŋ-a/ /p <sup>h</sup> ut-a/ /kɔt-a/	/b <sup>h</sup> ɔŋ -ua/ ‘to make someone divide something’ /p <sup>h</sup> ut-ua/ ‘to make someone burst something’ /kɔt-ua/ ‘to make someone cut something’
Number of Participants	1	2 (3)	3 (4)	3 (4)

**Table 9 Representing Causativisation of Pseudo Ditransitive Verbs.**

In the above table it can be seen that the pseudo ditransitive verbs have false causative derivation. However, they do not bear any semantic difference with the actual causative forms. These false causatives are found in the casual speech and not found in the written form. These pseudo ditransitive verbs do take the dative case or dative role. If the pseudo ditransitive verbs allowed one of the participants to bear the dative case or dative role then there would have been difference between false forms of verbs and causative forms of verbs. If we see other transitive verbs like /p̄orh/ ‘to read’, /lik<sup>h</sup>/ ‘to write’ etc., they undergo the intermediate derivation and becomes ditransitive verbs such as /p̄orh̄a/, /lik<sup>h</sup>a/ and one of the participants could take a dative case. In case of pseudo ditransitive verbs such kind of a dative case is absent.

Derivational Process	De-Transitivised	Basic Verb		Causativisation
Derivational suffix	Removal of /-a/		a	/-ua/
Verb type	Natural passive	Pseudo Ditransitive	False causative	Causative
Set B Example	/b̄on/	/b̄ona / ‘to make/buid’	No form	/b̄on-ua/ ‘to make someone build something’
	/b̄orh/	/b̄orha/ ‘to increase’	No form	/b̄orh-ua/ ‘to make someone increase something’
	/d̄ʒol/	/d̄ʒola/ ‘to burn’	No form	/d̄ʒol-ua/ ‘to make someone burn something’
Number of Participants	1	2 (3)	3 (4)	3 (4)

**Table 10 Representing Causativisation of Pseudo Ditransitive Verbs**

The verbs mentioned in the table shares similar morphological and semantic properties and we can see that there is no intermediate derivation in this type of pseudo ditransitive verbs. In other words, these verbs do not allow derivation as false causative verbs in the language. In such cases, it leaves a gap in the language as it is not supported by the morphological structure of the language. The fact that the language does not support the derivation of pseudo ditransitive into a false causative makes such verbs perfect candidates to be pseudo ditransitive verbs. Semantically such verbs are almost equal to the ditransitive verbs therefore the language does not allow the derivation of these verbs into false causatives.

In the traditional approach, Assamese causatives are described as direct and indirect causatives. However, in such approaches there

is no explanation regarding such semantic nuances and irregularities occurring in the language. In the present study, we have employed Das (2017) framework to resolve the irregularities occurring in the process of causativisation. To obtain a better understanding on the phenomenon of causativisation, the Assamese verbs have been reclassified into intransitive, transitive, ditransitive and pseudo ditransitive verbs.

Again, consider the following set of verbs.

De-Causativised Form (Natural Passive)	Pseudo Ditransitive Verb	False Causative	Causative
/kat/ 'cut'	/kat/	/kət-a/	/kət-ua/ 'to make someone cut something'
/kʰul/ 'open'	/kʰul/	/kʰul-a/	/kʰul-ua/ 'to make someone open something'
/bʰaŋ/ 'break'	/bʰaŋ/	/bʰəŋ-a/	/bʰəŋ-ua/ 'to make someone break something'
/mər/ 'die'	/mar/	/mər-a/	/mər-ua/ 'to make someone kill or hit someone'

**Table 11 Representing De-Causativisation of Pseudo Ditransitive Verbs**

As it has already been mentioned in the very outset of this paper that the purpose of causativization is to increase participants or increase valency. In contrast to causativisation, de-causativisation is a process through which valency can be decreased. So, if the valences of these pseudo ditransitive verbs are removed through the process of de-causativisation, then the subject and the instrument get removed from the argument structure and only the object remains with the verb. According to Das (2017), the verbs created by the process of decausativisation are called natural passives. In the above examples, it can be seen that by the process of decausativisation, we have /kat/, /kʰul/ and /bʰaŋ/ as natural passives. Here it should be noted that one of the ways to create passives in Assamese is by introducing V<sub>3</sub>- /za/ 'go' and /hə/ 'be verb'. For passivisation when we add /dʒa/ and /hə/, the main verb takes the form of the false causative as mentioned in the above table and then the process of passivization takes place. For example:

- 5.a) bohut gəs kət-a go-l  
 many tree cut-PASS go-PST

‘Many trees got cut.

- b) tɔla-tu k<sup>h</sup>ul-a ho-l  
lock-CL open-PASS be-PST

‘The lock was opened.’

Before addressing the possible relation between false causative forms and passivization in Assamese, let us understand the process of passivisation in Assamese.

The passives in Assamese can be divided into three types: regular passives, impersonal passives and inability passives.

Regular passive:

The regular passive constructions are formed by converting the main verb into a participle form and the participle form is followed by a helping verb /hɔ/. In this process of passivization, the subject in the active construction becomes optional and more emphasis is given to the ‘theme’.

4. a) kam-tu ram-ε kor-il-ε  
(ACTIVE)  
work-CL ram-A do-PST-3S

‘Ram did the work.’

- b) kam-tu kɔr-a ho-l ram-ɔr dwara  
(PASSIVE)  
work-CL do-PASS be-PST ram-GEN INS

‘The work has been done.’

5. a) moi ram-ɔk kali bozar-ɔt dek<sup>h</sup>-is-il-u (ACTIVE)  
1SG ram-ACC yesterday market-LOC  
see-PFV-PST-1S

‘Yesterday I saw Ram in the market.’

- b) ram-ɔk kali bozar-ɔt  
dek<sup>h</sup>-a go-is-il (PASSIVE)

Ram-ACC yesterday market-LOC see-PASS go-PFV-PST

‘Ram was seen in the market’.

6. a) pulis-ε sur-tu-k d<sup>h</sup>ɔr-il-ε (ACTIVE)  
police-A thief-CL-ACC catch-PST-3S

‘Police caught the thief.’

b) sur-tu            d<sup>h</sup>ər-a    por-il    (PASSIVE)  
theif-CL            catch-PASS    fall-PST

‘The thief was caught.’

### Impersonal Passive:

In Impersonal passive formation when the active sentence is transformed into a passive sentence, all the arguments of active construction lose their syntactic realization in passive construction.

7. a) bola            olop    k<sup>h</sup>uz kərh-a    zauk  
      come on        a little walk-PASS    PASS

‘Come on, let’s go for a walk.’

b) bola            olop    pərh-a        zauk  
      come on        a little read-PASS    PASS

‘Come on, let’s read a little.’

### Inability Passive

The inability passive in Assamese formed by the main verb which is immediately followed by the passive auxiliary and the auxiliary is marked by the negative marker /no/. for example:

8. a) mur dwara    kam-tu    kər-a    no-hobo  
      me        INS    work-CL do-PASS NEG-be-FUT

‘I am unable to do the work.’

9. b) mur dwara    ta-loi    zu-a    no-hobo  
      me    INS    there-LOC    go-PASS NEG-be-FUT

‘I am unable to go there.’

From the above examples we have formed the basic understanding about the process of passivisation in Assamese. Now coming back to the issue at hand, let us take two examples to show the relationship between the de-causativised forms of the pseudo ditransitive verb and their passive usage.

10. a) mur    aṅuli-tu            kat-il  
      my    finger-CL            cut-PST  
      ‘My finger got cut.’

b) xakpasoli-k<sup>h</sup>ini    kət-a            ho-l  
      vegetable-CL    cut-PASS        be-PST

‘The vegetables were cut.’

As we have seen in the discussion of the process of passivisation that according to the default passivisation rule in Assamese the main verb takes the participle form ( $V_3$ ) and the verbs like /hə/ and /zə/ is added in order to make the verb into a passive one. In the above example 12 (a) it can be seen that this default passivisation rule is not applicable, the reason for this can be attributed to the process of de-causativisation. As we have already discussed that in the process of de-causativisation, the valences of the pseudo ditransitive verb is reduced or decreased meaning both the subject and the inherent instruments are taken away from the argument structure and only the object remains with the verb, creating naturally passive verbs such as /kat/, 'cut', /bʰaŋ/ 'break' and so on. When the verbs like /zə/ and /hə/ added with main verb for passivisation, the main verb changes back into its pseudo ditransitive form and passive construction is formed.

### **Conclusion:**

In the traditional approach to the phenomenon of causativisation, it is analysed as having direct and indirect causation. In the present study, however, we have adopted a different approach in analysing causativisation in Assamese. The reason behind departing from the traditional approach and adopting Das (2017) approach is to address some irregularities for which no explanations could be found in the existing literature. In order to discuss the process of causativisation we have reclassified the verbs in Assamese as intransitive, transitive, ditransitive and pseudo ditransitive verbs. In the process of causativisation, we have found that the process of causativisation of intransitive verbs, transitive verb and ditransitive verbs in Assamese can be described as having an intermediate derivation between the basic form of the verb (transitive or intransitive) and the causativised form of that particular verb rather than direct and indirect causation. This intermediate derivation derives transitives from intransitives or ditransitives from transitives. However, it is interesting to note that the ditransitive verbs do not undergo intermediate derivation and yield false causatives in the language like Hindi.

The category of pseudo ditransitive verbs provides interesting insights into the process of causativisation in Assamese. We have found two types of pseudo ditransitive verbs one where intermediate derivation creates a false causative form and the other one which has no false causative form. Moreover, in the present study, we have found that there is a relation between false causative forms and passivisation in Assamese. We tried to provide a brief account on the issue, however, it requires a detailed analysis.



**Abbreviations:**

A	Agentive
ACC	Accusative
CAUS	Causative
CL	Classifier
DAT	Dative
GEN	Genitive
FUT	Future
FC	False Causative
INS	Instrument
LOC	Locative
NEG	Negative
PASS	Passive
PFV	Perfective
PST	Past
3S	Third Person Singular

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