The Analysis of *Pa*- Verbs in Amis

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Abstract

This paper examines the *pa-* causative verbs in Amis within the framework of Role and Reference Grammar (RRG, Valin and LaPolla 1997; Van Valin 2005). The following observations and analyses are proposed in this paper. First, *pa-* causative predicates can be further differentiated into "cause to have", "cause to become (for somebody)", and "cause to do", depending respectively on the meaning of the attached roots as objects, result states, and activities. Second, the simple *pa-* causative verb involves a more direct and stronger causation, compared with its *pa-pi-* counterpart. It is argued that the jussive or weak causative sense carried in *pa-pi-* is due to the semantics of *pi-*, which originates from *mi-* '(go to) do…'. This prefix enhances the agentivity of the causee and thus decreases the controlling sense from the causer. Third, for three-place *pa-* predicates, the undergoer (i.e. the O argument) selection varies among the predicates. This indicates that Amis displays a mixed type of direct object and primary object (Dryer 1984) languages, and both Principle A and Principle B of undergoer selection based on the Actor-Undergoer Hierarchy in RRG are needed to fully account for the patterns in Amis. However, the primary object pattern seems more common.