Causative Constructions in Kùcé: A Minimalist Perspective

Chinedu .N. Anyanwu[1] Lengji .N. Danjuma[2]
University of Jos
chineduanyanwu92@gmail.com[1] ldanjuma.danjuma@gmail.com2

Abstract
This study is a descriptive as well as theoretical study of causative constructions in Kùcé. As reported in other languages, causative construction plays a significant role in the syntax and semantics of Kùcé. However, the study of causative constructions in the language is grossly under-reported in the literature. This paper therefore investigates causative constructions in relation to their meanings and structures in the grammar of Kùcé by providing a descriptive as well as theoretical analysis of their syntax. Data for the study were sourced from native speakers of Kùcé with the use of researcher-designed wordlist and unstructured oral interview. The study recognizes tī 'cause/make' as the causative verb in Kùcé which c-selects AgrP as complement. It argues that causativization in Kùcé is syntactic as it only makes use of the causative verb, a distinct syntactic unit, which derives complex sentences from basic sentences without the morphological process of incorporation. The derivation is bi-clausal regardless of the different categories of elements in the construction. The Minimalist Program employed in this study provides a theoretical account for the causative verb and its complement via a series of merger operations.
Keywords: causative verb, complement clause, AgrP, merge, Kùcé

1.0 Introduction

According to Crystal (2008:70), the term 'causative' refers to the phenomenon of a causal relationship between alternative versions of a sentence. For example, the pair of sentences *The lion killed the buffalo* and *The buffalo died* are related in the sense that the transitive verb *kill* can be seen as a 'causative' version of the intransitive *die* which implies 'cause to die' which can also be expressed as *The lion caused the buffalo to die*. Crystal further argues that some affixes have a causative role, for example *-ize*, as in *nominalize*, which means 'cause to become nominal'. This is a relationship which is clearly established in the morphological structure of some languages, where an affix can systematically distinguish between non-causative and causative uses of a verb. A construction is said to be causative when an event (i.e. the caused event) takes place because someone is responsible for that event happening or because something happens. This phenomenon involves two arguments where one influences the other to execute the event implied by the predicate. What this means is that the event would not have happened if an argument (assumed to be the causer) did not influence another argument (the cause). Causatives are pervasive across languages. The verb used in causative construction is known as a causative verb (Anyanwu, 2007:18).

Kùcé is the language of the Bàcé people. According to Crozier and Blench 1992: 3), the language is spoken by about 50,000 people in at least 17 villages in Bássá L.G.A, northwest of Jos, Plateau State, Northern Nigeria. Some of the speakers in these villages live at the foothills while others live on the hill tops. It is interesting to know that because some of the people are known to live on the hills, the Hausa adopted the term 'Rùkùbá' as a common name for the speakers of Kùcé which translates to 'People of the rocks' (Temple, 1922 as cited in Blench, 2001: 2). The speakers of

this language call themselves *Bàché* and their territory, *Kìché.* The language is tonal and falls within the Plateau group of the Eastern branch of the South-Central Niger-Congo group (Wilson 1996: 4). Languages in the same sub-family or group as Kùcé which share a closer genetic relationship with it are those in the Ninzam group of languages such as Mada, Gwantu, and Nindem. Besides several other minority languages spoken in communities bordering the Kìché area, Hausa and Fulani traders live among the Bàché.

This study is useful in a number of ways. In spite of the works on causative constructions in a number of African languages, this paper, to the best of our knowledge is the first attempt at investigating the syntax of causative structures in Kùcé, through the lens of the minimalist program. The study is, therefore, a significant contribution to Kùcé scholarship in particular and Universal Grammar in general. Its contribution to the theory is by way of reinforcing some of the theoretical assumptions by providing evidence and insights from the Kùcé language. The paper contributes to the assumption in the minimalist program that syntactic causative structures are derived via a series of merger operations and feature checking, among other basic minimalist ideas.

The corpus for the study comprises two sets of data collected in Bássá L.G.A, North Central Nigeria. The first set consists of a researcher-designed wordlist containing clauses expressing causation. Based on the wordlist, utterances from spontaneous speech of Kùcé speakers were recorded in an interview carried out in some social settings, including the family, the market and the king's palace. The second set consists of West African Linguistic Society's questionnaire, containing about five hundred expressions ranging from words to sentences of different types. A group of speakers of Kùcé were interviewed lasting about five hours

in length. The interview was audio-recorded with the permission of the participants, four adult males and two females competent in Kùcé aged between forty and sixty. A cell phone was used to collect the data. The recorded data in both sets were transcribed, and the transcripts were classified. Only utterances identified as instances of causative constructions were utilized in the study. To provide detailed syntactic structures of the data, utterances illustrating causative structures are presented as examples in this study in a three-line format. The first line gives the utterance in the form it was recorded; the second line provides the interlinear glossing and the third line, the English translation of the utterances. In few cases, tree diagrams are used to show the syntactic structure of the expression.

2. Literature Review

According to Comrie (1985:323), the term 'causative' is a construction derived from another basic construction. Both the basic construction and the derived construction express some situation, but the derived one has a different subject and it is the referent of this new subject that brings about (or fails to prevent) the situation described by the basic construction. This definition simply assumes a causal relationship between alternative versions of a sentence. Observe inthe following pair of sentences which are related in the sense that (1b) is the causative of (1a), and the subject, *Peter* is the agent in the causative construction. Constructions such as (1a) are non-causative, whereas those as in (1b) are causative because they are made to happen.

1) a. Aaron smiles a lot

b. Peter makes Aaron smile a lot

Generally, causatives are categorized into three broad categories on formal grounds. Imoh (2014) argues that syntactic (or analytical) causatives are syntactic constructions with separate verbs such as

make. Morphological causatives are created by processes such as affixation by incorporating affixes such as -en, -ize, -ify onto the root word concerned. Lexical causatives are words like *kill, send*, and *feed* etc. Imoh argues further that one basic thing about these categories of causatives is the fact that an argument is specified in the construction as being the participant responsible for causing (or not causing) a given situation.

There are a number of studies on causative constructions in some African languages. Imoh (n.d.) reports evidences of morphological causatives in the Bassa language, where he argues that morphologically derived causative verbs could come from a verb or an adjective. He argues that the verbs, *kelegeji* 'cause to fall', *wericinji* 'cause to quench' and *zhingicinje* 'cause to wake up' are made up of verb stems and the derived morphological causative morpheme. He goes further to argue that the verb stems of some of these verbs are not causative verbs inherently, but result from the application of the affix *-nje* to the verb stems to derive such causative verbs. This is illustrated in the examples below:

2) a. Gà - Jére weci-ci-nji Jasà
NOM Jere sleep-PST-CAUS Jasa
'Jere caused/made Jasa to sleep'

b. Gà-Jere zhin-gici-nje uwewe ete
NOM Jere wake-CAUS-PST dog DEM
'Jere caused/made that dog to awake'

c. Bò ezhe-nje àganye áta
3SG lose-PST-CAUS PL-guest DEM
'S/he led the guests astray'

The examples in (2) show that the verbal morphemes inflected for tense, constitute the verb stems. The verb stem expresses the core meaning and heads the morphological causative verb followed by -*nje* 'make/cause'. This affix (*nje* 'make/cause') is a verbal affix which expresses the idea of causation in Bassa.

Baker (1988) essentially supports the range of morphological causative constructions, making a distinction on the basis of the category that is involved in the affixation process. In Baker's analysis of this type of morphological causative process, the embedded verb is assumed to move and incorporate into the main causative verbal morpheme. The Chichewa examples in (3) below illustrate the point.

(3) a. Mtsikana ana - chit - its - a kuti mtsuko u - gw - e
girl Agr - do - make – Asp that waterpot Agr – fall - Asp
'The girl made the waterpot fall'

b Mtsikana anau - gw_i - its - a t_i mtsuko
girl Agr - fall - make - Asp waterpot
'The girl made the waterpot fall'

Examples (3a and 3b) are different instances of a causative construction. In (3a) the causativised verb, *gw* 'fall' is positioned in the embedded clause, inflected separately from the causative verb *its* 'make' positioned in the main clause. Example (3a) is therefore assumed to have a bi-clausal structure. In (3b), however, the causativised verb is argued to be incorporated into the causative verb and is inflected accordingly. Ouhalla (1999:351) argues that examples such as (3b) are instances of morphological causatives which appear superficially to have a mono-clausal structure.

However, Baker (1988) argues that morphological causatives exemplified in (3b), though superficially mono-clausal, have a bi-clausal structure identical to the periphrastic causative construction in (3a). Baker argues further that this proposal is necessitated by uniformity of theta assignment hypothesis (UTAH), due to the assumption that the two constructions in (3a) and (3b) are thematic paraphrases of each other. This implies that the same NPs get theta roles from the same predicate. The idea that the embedded causativised verb is incorporated into the root causative verb in (3b) is presumably the result of a syntactic head-to-head movement operation affecting the causativised verb.

The verb incorporation analysis has been shown to be tenable in Igbo. Consider the examples in (44) below (Uwalaka, 1995: 157-158):

(4). a Okwu ahù è – bì – e – le
case that pref – end - suff - Asp
'That case has ended'

b Onye Ezè mè – rè okwu ahù è – bì – e
person chief caus – pst case that pref – end - suff
'The chief caused the case to come to an end'

c Onye Ezè me – bì – rì okwu ahù
person chief do – end – pst case that
'The chief put an end to that case'

From the data in (4b), Uwalaka argues that Igbo causative construction consists of two verbs – the causative verb which appears in the root clause and a non-causative verb which occurs in the embedded clause. The causative verb is *me* 'cause/make', while the non-causative verb can be of any type. The non-causative verb

appears within a dependent constituent which complements the matrix clause containing the causative verb. Uwalaka further argues that though Igbo clauses such as (4c) appear to be monoclausal like the structure in (4a), the complex causative verb in (4c) derives syntactically from two independent verbs. Example (4c) is therefore assumed to be bi-clausal in contrast to (4a) which is mono-clausal. This means that the clauses in (4b and 4c) are thematic paraphrases, with the same theta roles involved in the causative constructions.

This study attempts to describe causative constructions in Kùcé and the derivation of the structures in line with the basic principles and theoretical assumptions proposed in the Minimalist Program.

2.1 Theoretical framework

This study adopts the Minimalist Program (MP), outlined in Chomsky (1995, 2001, 2005), among contributions by several other scholars. MP is the latest version of generative grammar which started over four decades ago, with the ultimate goal of shifting from language-particular rules that describe syntactic structures to more general principles, which interact to explain syntactic phenomena. To adequately explain why the child acquires language with relative ease, Chomsky puts forward the idea of MP, designed to dispense with unnecessary complexities, and limit theoretical assumptions to bare necessities which he terms 'virtual conceptual necessity'. Indeed, all languages are made up of two essential elements – sound and meaning. This informed why the dichotomy between D-structure and S-structure of the earlier Government and Binding model was dispensed with, while the role of Phonological Form (PF) and Logical Form (LF) was reviewed from levels of representation to interface levels or legibility conditions. Within the MP, therefore, the PF and LF are the only levels conceptually necessary as they simply reflect the fact that structures are essentially pairings of

sound and meaning. The PF and LF interface levels are read off by the articulatory-perceptual (A-P) and the conceptual-intentional (C-I) systems respectively. A derivation is adjudged to be grammatical if it converges at these interface levels. Otherwise, it is said to have 'crashed', resulting in an ungrammatical structure. A convergent structure is assumed to have obeyed some economy principles such as *move*, *greed* and *procrastinate*, amongst others.

There are two basic operations in the MP; *Select* and *Merge*. *Select* picks lexical items from the lexicon. These lexical items already have their morphological inflections incorporated from the lexicon before they enter a derivation. *Merge* is a recursive operation which takes selected lexical items and fuses them together in a pair-wise fashion. *Merge* is the fundamental operation for building structures. This operation is further divided into *internal merge* and *external merge*. The former takes care of lexical items that have entered the derivation and involved in scrambling, while the latter takes care of lexical items introduced into the derivation straight from the lexicon.

Other notable operations assumed in the MP include *agree* and *transfer* (or *spell out*). *Agree* matches features of probe and goal for onward valuation. The probe is regarded as a functional head that triggers movement. Crystal (2008:387) argues that probe searches its complement domain and attracts the nearest c-commanding element with matching features as a goal. *Transfer* on the other hand conveys a derivation unto the two interface levels of PF and LF.

3. Syntactic Causative Constructions in Kùcé

As mentioned in earlier sections, one of the basic ways through which causative constructions may be expressed relative to the non-causative ones is via the syntax. Syntactic causative construction generally implies usage of regular syntactic devices of the language forming complex sentences, out of simplex sentences without

morphologically incorporating the predicates of the complex sentences, implying that the predicate expressing the idea of causation is separate (Comrie 1985:33). What this means is that the predicate expressing causation does not undergo morphological derivation.

There are two ways in which causative constructions are formed in Kùcé, namely the lexically derived causative constructions and the syntactically derived ones. Morphologically derived causatives are not reported in the language. However, the syntactically derived causative constructions are more productive in Kùcé compared to the lexically derived ones.

3.1 Verb-based Causative

Syntactic causative construction in Kùcé consists of two verbs: a causative verb which occurs in the super-ordinate clause and a non-causative verb which occurs in the sub-ordinate (or complement) clause. This means that syntactic causative construction in Kùcé is essentially bi-clausal. The causative verb is *tī* 'cause/make', on a mid-tone, while the non-causative verb can be either transitive or intransitive contained in a clause that is inherently finite. Justification for our claim that the sub-ordinate clauses are inherently finite is the presence of the agreement pronoun and the tense feature marked as tone on the agreement pronoun. Support for our argument stems from Heusing (1997:83) who argues that the inflection category is responsible for finiteness or non-finiteness of a sentence due to the fact that it carries the features aspect, tense, agreement and negation. This implies that whenever these features are absent, the resulting sentence is non-finite. Whenever at least one feature is present, the result is a finite sentence. The (finite) clause containing the non-causative verb functions as complement

of the causative verb contained in the super-ordinate clause. This can be illustrated as follows:

5) a. Àshóm á tī Àjón à kú
Àshóm 3SG.PST CAUS John 3SG die
'Àshóm caused John to die'

b. Àmary á tī mí ìn wàsà ùmátò ngí
Mary 3SG.PST CAUS 1SG 1SG wash car the
'Mary made me wash the car'

c. Àsò á tī Àtáng à gās kùcù
Àsó 3SG.PST CAUS Àtáng 3SG jump fence
'Àsò made Àtáng jump over the fence'

d. ādīsī ngí a̱ tī bá màsà bà tí āyhók
teacher the 3SG.FUT CAUS 3PL students 3PL do dance
'The teacher will make the students dance'

e. ì̱ tī ūvīn-ì à sò
1SG.FUT CAUS child-the 3SG sit
'I will make the child sit'

f. á tī Àpeter à bló
3SG.PST CAUS Peter 3SG go
'S/he made Peter go'

g. á tī ìbréd-ì ì kúrūk
3SG.PST CAUS bread-the 3SG dry
'S/he caused the bread to dry'

In the examples in (5) above which illustrate syntactic causative constructions, the verb *tī* 'cause/make' in the super-ordinate clause expresses the idea of causation. The causative verb sub-categorizes a proper or common noun alongside its subject (agreement) pronoun, as illustrated in (5a-d), or a pronoun subject as illustrated in (5e-g). The tense features of the clauses are realized on these subject pronouns. The diacritic mark [¬] representing a mid-falling tone expresses future tense. Each of the non-causative verbs in the sub-ordinate clauses licenses an argument subject which semantically functions as a cause. The fact that there is no incorporation process between the causative verb and the non-causative verb illustrates that these verbs count as separate units in overt syntax. The examples in (5a-g) therefore, are instances of syntactic causative constructions where the causative element stands as an independent verb in the super-ordinate clause. The independent status of the causative verb is also evident with respect to pronominal object cliticization (or incorporation). Consider the following examples:

6) a. Àjón á wūt-ī
John 3SG.PST beat-1SG
'John beat me'

b. Àsònàyhíp á tī mí ìn kēn
Àsònàyhíp 3SG.PST CAUS 1SG 1SG run
'Àsònàyhíp made me run'

7) a. Yàkúbù à kùt-ī
Yàkúbù 3SG.PRSNT beg-1SG
'Yàkúbù begs me'

b. Àtíkpì á tī mí ìn wàsà ùmátò ngí
Àtíkpì 3SG.PST CAUS 1SG 1SG wash car the
'Àtíkpì made me wash the car'

8) a. Àsò á sók-ī
Àsò 3SG.PST take-1SG
'Àsò took me along'

b. bàshìp bá tī mí ìn tō wú
darkness 3SG.PST CAUS 1SG 1SG see 2SG
'Darkness made me see you'

9) a. Àjójò à múlók-ī
Àjójò 3SG.PRSNT love-1SG
'Àjójò loves me'

b. ìnsùsù í tī mí ìn kēn
fear 3SG.PST CAUS 1SG 1SG run
'Fear caused me to run'

The examples in (6a-9a) quite interestingly indicate the different morphological forms assumed by the lexical verbs. In Kùcé, the first person singular object pronouns are found attached at the end of lexical verbs. This suggests that these pronouns are clitics. The object clitic, *mí* 'me' incorporates onto the verb with an accompanying elision of the initial consonant '*w*', resulting in a morphologically complex verb (V+CL). The examples in (6b-9b) however show that the causative verb *tī* does not incorporate the object clitic, *mí*. This further provides evidence that the causative verb in Kùcé is an independent syntactic unit.

It is important to note that each syntactic causative construction exemplified in (5) has a thematic paraphrase assumed to be the basic sentence from which the causative construction derives. This is shown in the examples below:

10) a. Àjón á kú
John 3SG.PST die
'John died'

b. ín wàsà ùmátò ngí
1SG.PST wash car the
'I washed the car'

c. Àtáng á gās kùcù
Àtáng 3SG.PST jump fence
'Àtáng jumped over the fence'

d. àmàsà bá tí āyhók
students 3PL.PST do dance
'The students danced'

e. ūvīn-ì á sò
child-the 3SG.PST sit
'The child sat'

f. Àpeter á bló
Peter 3SG.PST go
'Peter went'

g. ìbréd-ì í kúrūk
bread-the 3SG.PST dry
'The bread dried'

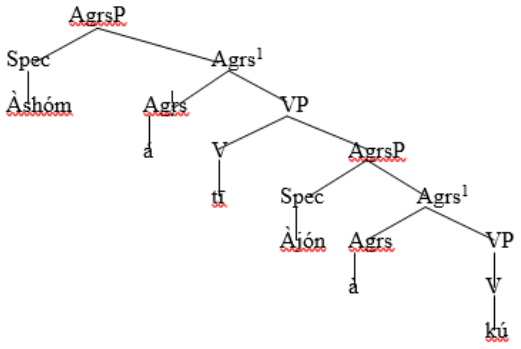
As the examples in (10a-g) show, the basic construction from which the causative construction is derived is mono-clausal, consisting of only one predicate. The verbs in these basic construction count as separate units without any adjunction process.

3.2 Complement of the Causative Verb '*Tī*'

In the literature on causative construction, the categorial status of the constituent that complements the causative verb has been subject to considerable debate. Scholars such as Comrie (1985b) and Baker (1988) argue that a CP complements the causative verb in syntactic causative constructions. Other scholars such as Zubizarreta 1985 and Guasti 1997 (as cited in Anyanwu 2007) favour a VP complement analysis. To date, there has been little agreement on what the complement of the causative verb is. From the facts of Kùcé, we argue that the complement of the causative verb *tī* is AgrsP and not the CP. This is because from a minimalist stand point, CP, though recognized is not assumed for all clauses. It is only assumed if it is lexicalized in the clause. Our argument follows from the fact that the minimalist framework does not recognize any superfluous elements or projections, informed by virtual conceptual necessity. Our data in (5) and (6b-9b) above provide evidence that the AgrsP is the complement of the causative verb. This is because the CP is not overtly realized syntactically across the examples in that the derivation does not provide a structural position for it. Example (5a), repeated as (11) will therefore have the structure in (12) below:

11) Àshóm á tī Àjón à kú
Àshóm 3SG.PST CAUS John 3SG die
'Àshóm caused John to die'

12)



As shown in the structure (12), we argue that the AgrsP serves as complement of the causative verb *tī*. In other words the causative verb c-selects the AgrsP. We therefore argue that the causative verb in Kùcé is a verb with complementation (rather than transitivity) implicitly built into the system of the verb. This implies that the causative verb has a complement clause that is another maximal projection. This complement clause is inherently finite as it contains tense and agreement features. Both the causative verb and the complement clause are in a c-commanding relationship, as there are no elements which serve as a barrier between them. What this means is that the complement clause occurs in a sisterhood relationship to the causative verb. The complement clause is licensed by the causative verb.

3.3 Syntactic Derivation of Kùcé Causative Construction

So far we have taken steps to provide a descriptive account of causative constructions in Kùcé. In this section, we shall attempt a syntactic characterization and a theory-based analysis of causative construction in the language using the Minimalist Program. Beginning with the categorial status of the complement, we observe

that the architecture of the complement clause to the causative verb consists of the functional projection AgrP, which includes the subject agreement projection and tense, realized on the subject pronoun as tone. Consider the examples below:

13) a. kìtú ngī á tī [$_{AgrsP}$ ìyín-ì ì kù]
girl the 3SG.PST CAUS pot-the 3SG fall
'The girl made the pot fall'

b. Kúrù á tī [$_{AgrsP}$ kīyhə kì shī]
God 3SG.PST CAUS world 3SG be
'God caused the world to be existent'

c. Àjón a̅ tī [$_{AgrsP}$ ūvīn-ì à sò]
John 3SG.FUT CAUS child-the 3SG sit
'John will make the child sit down'

d. Àzí á tī [$_{AgrsP}$ mí ìn kēn]
Àzí 3SG.PST CAUS 1SG 1SG run
'Àzí made me run'

e. Àjékòb á tī [$_{AgrsP}$ wú á kú]
Jacob 3SG.PST CAUS 3PL 3PL die
'Jacob caused them to die'

Of importance to our analysis is the verb phrase internal subject hypothesis (VPISH). This hypothesis essentially assumes that subject arguments originate internally within the verb phrase as Θ-marked arguments of the verb. This implies that the subject should be inside the verb's projection. Olaogun (2016:60) supports this position in his assumption that the external Θ-roles cannot be assigned under the head-complement relation which is the configuration for Θ-marking internal arguments. In this connection

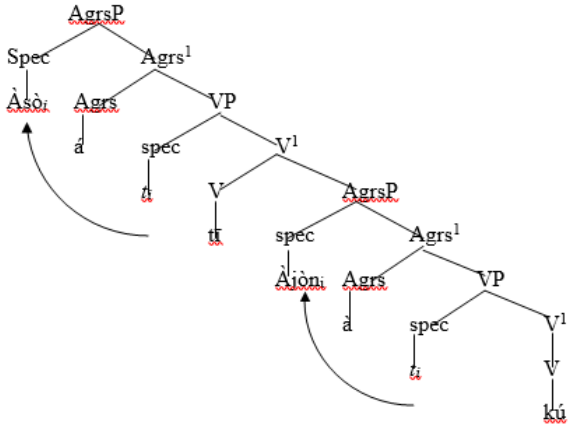
all Θ-roles associated with a head are assigned within projections of that head. This means that all external arguments are generated in the specifier of the lexical head with which they enter into a Θ-relation. To satisfy features such as Case and EPP, it is assumed that the external argument, within its base position (i.e. VP) is moved to the specifier of IP. The standard assumption is that the movement of the argument is motivated by the need to check lexical items with uninterpretable features. Following this assumption therefore, the example in (13a) for instance, is derived in the following manner: the subject of the complement clause *ìyín-ì* 'the pot' originates internally within the verb phrase as Θ-marked argument of the verb *kù* 'fall'. To satisfy Case and EPP requirements, the subject of the complement clause moves to an empty position where it can be checked for the nominative Case feature, as well as EPP feature, specifically at [spec, AgrsP] of the complement clause or be exceptionally Case-marked for accusative Case by the preceding causative verb of the super-ordinate clause. EPP requires that every clause must have a subject argument in the specifier position of the clause. The object agreement projection (AgroP) is the projection associated with assignment of accusative Case. We therefore align with Anyanwu (2007) who argues that this projection may be available within the clause complement to the causative verb depending on whether the verb of the complement has an argument object with accusative Case features to check off. A transitive verb will have an argument with accusative Case features to check off, while an intransitive verb will not.

Our analysis thus far shows that syntactic causative construction in Kùcé is bi-clausal. Regardless of the different categories of elements in this construction, one uniform account deriving this bi-clausal structure will suffice for all of them. Consider the example below:

(14) Àsò á tī [$_{AgrsP}$ Àjón à kú]
Àsó 3SG.PST CAUS John 3SG die
'Àsó caused John to die'

The bi-clausal structure in (14) above is derived by first merging the verb *kú*, in the complement clause with its subject argument *Àjón* with which it enters into a Θ-relation. To satisfy Case and EPP requirements, the subject argument *Àjón* within its base position is moved to [spec, AgrsP] of the complement clause via internal merge to check its nominative Case features by the Agrs head *à*. This movement also satisfies the EPP requirement of the head verb *kú*. The AgrsP complement clause is then merged with the causative verb *tī* of the super-ordinate clause to form V^1 and the V^1 merges with a phonologically null specifier of VP, represented by a trace which indicates movement of the super-ordinate subject argument from its Θ-marked position. The VP is then merged with the Agrs *á* to form $Agrs^1$, which is also merged with the specifier of the super-ordinate clause to form the AgrsP. This is schematically represented in (15).

15)



Following the assumption that arguments check their Case features outside their theta domains, the 'causer' subject *Àsò* moves to [spec, AgrsP] of the super-ordinate clause via internal merge to check its nominative Case where it is licensed. Similarly, the introduction of the subject agreement head *á* into the derivation projects an Agrs[1]. The Agrs head has a strong EPP feature which must be licensed in order that AgrsP is convergent. It is therefore the strong EPP feature of *á* that attracts the 'causer' subject *Àsò* to the specifier of Agrs. Our argument aligns with Jayeola (2016) who argues that the strong feature that requires checking does not reside in the moved element.

4. Conclusion

This study has examined the syntactic derivation of causative constructions in Kùcé via the use of the causative verb, *tī* 'make/cause' which forms complex sentences out of basic sentences without the morphological process of affixation. The study established that syntactic causatives are very productive in Kùcé. The language attests to a causative verb which occurs in the super-ordinate clause and a non-causative verb which occurs in the complement clause, indicating that the causative structure is bi-clausal. From the facts of the language, there is no adjunction process between the causative verb and the non-causative verb, thereby providing evidence that these verbs count as separate units in overt syntax.

From a minimalist standpoint, the complement of the causative verb is the agreement phrase. This is because the derivation consistently provides a structural position for the projection across structures. The study argues that the complement clause is inherently finite as it contains tense and agreement features. The paper concludes that convergent causative structures are derived via a series of merger operations.

References

Anyanwu, O.N. 2007. *The syntax of Igbo causatives*: *A minimalist account*. Port Harcourt: M & J Grand Orbit.

Baker, M. 1988. *Incorporation: a theory of grammatical function changing.* Chicago: Chicago University Press.

Chomsky, N. 1995. *Categories and transformations*: *The minimalist program*. Cambridge: MIT Press.

Chomsky, N. 2001. Derivation by phase. In M. Kenstowicz (Ed.). *A life in language*, 1-52. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Comrie, B. 1985. Causative verb formation and other verb deriving morphology. In T. Shopen (Ed.). *Language typology and syntactic description*, 309- 48. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Crozier, D., & Blench, R. 1992. *An index of Nigerian languages* (2nd edn.). Dallas: SIL.

Crystal, D. 2008. *A dictionary of linguistics and phonetics.* Malden: Blackwell Publishing.

Heusing, G. 1999. *Aspects of the morphology-syntax interface in four Nigerian languages*: *A Cross-Linguistic Study of Fulfulde, Igbo, Lamang and Mupun*. Hamburg: Transaction Publishers.

Imoh. (2014). *Causative constructions: a descriptive analysis*. UJAH 14(2):66

Jayeola, W. 2016. Focus fronting in Zarma. *Journal of the Linguistic Association of Nigeria*. (1) 86-101.

Olaogun, S.O. 2016. *Information structure categories of the Njo-Koo language in Akoko North-West of Ondo State, Nigeria*. (unpublished Ph.D thesis)

Ouhalla, J. 1999. *Introducing transformational grammar*: *From principles and parameters to minimalism.* (*2nd edn.*). London: Edward Arnold Limited.

Uwalaka, M.A. 1995. X^0-Movement and Igbo Complex predicates. In K. Owolabi (ed.) *Language in Nigeria: Essays in honour of Ayo Bamgbose.* Ibadan: Group Publishers.

Wilson, J. 2002. From preposition to plural marker and more: Grammaticalization of Kuce: Sana. *Studies in African Linguistics*, (31) 155-175.

Abbreviations

Agr	Agreement
AgroP	Object agreement phrase
Agrs	Subject Agreement
AgrP	Subject agreement phrase
A-P	Articulatory-Perceptual
C-I	Conceptual-Intentional
CAUS	Causative verb
CP	Complementizer Phrase
DEM	Demonstrative
EPP	Extended Projection Principle
FUT	Future Tense
LF	Logical Form
MP	Minimalist Program
NP	Noun Phrase
PF	Phonological Form
PRSNT	Present Tense
PST	Past Tense
Spec	Specifier
T	Tense
TP	Tense Phrase
UG	Universal Grammar
UTAH	Uniformity of Theta Assignment Hypothesis
V	Verb

VP	Verb Phrase
VPISH	Verb phrase Internal Subject Hypothesis
Ø	Null
1SG	First person singular pronoun
1PL	First person plural pronoun
2SG	Second person singular pronoun
3SG	Third person singular pronoun
3PL	Third person plural pronoun