On the causative-marked passive clauses in Old Turkic

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1. Introduction

Passives and causatives seem to be very different constructions, so it is quite surprising that there are passive constructions marked with "originally" causative morphology. Still, passives marked with causative morphemes exist in Old Turkic, in Middle Turkic (for example in the *Codex Cumanicus* (cf. Erdal 1991: 844)) and in some modern Turkic languages, e.g. in Tuvan, Tofa, Shor, Altay Turkic, Khakas, Yakut (Rassadin 1978: 138), Karakalpak (Kormušin 1976: 89) and Bashkir (Nedyalkov 1991: 14). The focus of the present paper will be on the causative-based passive constructions in Old Turkic. (It can be ruled out that we are dealing with the false interpretation of Old Turkic texts, since the phenomenon has traces up to the present times.)[i] [ii]

The following Old Turkic example illustrates the case when a causative morpheme marks a passive construction.[iii] [iv]

(1) *süčig sav-ï-ŋa   yïmšaq aġï-sï-ŋa   ar-tur-up*
     sweet word-POSS.SG3-DAT soft material-POSS.SG3-DAT deceive-CAUS-CV
     üküš türk bodun öl-tü-g (KT S6)
     many Turk people die-PAST-SG2
     "Having been taken in by their sweet words and soft materials, you Turkish people, were killed in great numbers."

In the word *ar-tur-* we can find the *-tUr-* causative suffix; however, it does not have causative interpretation, but means 'to be taken in'. This kind of passive constructions will be in the focus of the present paper. The aim of my study is to show that the formation of the passive from causative constructions in Old Turkic is due to a syntactic process (described in detail in 4. and 5.) and not connected to one single morpheme (i.e. *-(X)t-* as indicated in Robbeets 2007).

2. Different usages of the voice markers

It is not unusual in the languages of the world that voice morphemes or analytic forms mark other diathetic structures than their original function. For example, the Proto-Indo-European **s(w)e-* reflexive pronoun had marked the reflexive structures. However, the corresponding forms in the modern Indo-European languages can be found in other constructions, as well: the German *sich* pronoun (similarly to the Polish *się*) can mark anticausative and middle (as Fagan 1988 uses the term) structures, although it cannot be used to indicate passive voice. (Haspelmath 1990:

42-43) The following (2) example illustrates that the reflexive *sich* can be used in middle structures, but not in passive sentences (which renders the passive interpretation of this sentence impossible).

(2)   *Der Brief schreibt sich.*
        "*The letter is being written./ The letter writes itself."

The Russian *-sya* morpheme, also connected to the Proto-Indo-European **s(w)e-* reflexive pronoun, marks not only reflexive, but anticausative and passive constructions, as well. (Haspelmath 1990: 42-46) Sentence (3) shows the passive usage of *-sya*. (Example taken from Haspelmath 1990: 45).

(3)   *Pis'mo pišetsja (Oneginym).*
        "The letter is being written (by Onegin)."

Originally the **s(w)e-* pronoun was not used to mark passive constructions, as it is not possible in German or Polish. However, in Russian the originally reflexive marking expanded into the domains of passive, as well. Thus, this is a function evolved in Russian, but not in German. (Haspelmath 1990: 42-46)

The above examples show that it is indeed possible for a morpheme (or an analytic form) to be used in different diathetic constructions (cf. Haspelmath 1990). In the following I would like to point out that a similar process occurred in case of the causative-marked passives in Old Turkic.

3. Causatives in Old Turkic

In the course of the formation of causative constructions one (or more) causative morpheme is added to the verb stem. In Old Turkic the *-(U)r-*, *-Ar-*, *-gUr-*, *-(X)z-*, *-(X)t-*, *-tUr-* causative suffixes were used. For our discussion it is important that the morphemes *-(U)r-*, *-Ar-*, *-gUr-*, *-(X)z-* were added only to intransitive stems, while the morphemes *-(X)t-* and *-tUr-* could be added to transitive stems, as well. (Erdal 1991: 709-848)

In the clause a new element appears (compared to the base sentence), this is the causer. The causer takes the position of the subject. If the base verb has a direct object, it preserves its direct object position. The subject of the base sentence (the causee of the causative sentence) can be either in the direct object, or in the indirect object (or other oblique) position depending on the transitivity of the base verb: if the base verb is intransitive (has no direct object), the causee will be the direct object; if the base verb is transitive, the causee will appear in the indirect object position, marked with the dative case. (Comrie 1989: 165-184) The Old Turkic sentence (4) exemplifies the latter case. In this example the base verb (*aša-* 'to eat') is transitive, therefore the causee (*män* 'I') cannot take the direct object position (because it is occupied by the word *aš* 'food'), so it takes the indirect object position marked with the dative.

(4)   *ol maŋa   aš   aša-t-tï* (Kašġ. I 210)
       (s)he I.DAT food eat-CAUS-PAST.SG3
       "(S)he made me eat./ (S)he fed me."

4. Passives with causative morphemes

The passive marked with causative morphemes can only emerge in strictly determined syntactic environment. In the following I am going to give a description of this syntactic environment.

4.1 Transitive base verbs

The first criterion for the formation of the (causative-marked) passive is that the base verb has to be transitive. (This criterion was also pointed out in Erdal 1991: 845, Nedyalkov 1991: 13.) In this case the causative-marked verb has three arguments: the causer (subject), the causee (indirect object) and the direct object. Since the causative morphemes *-(U)r-*, *-Ar-*, *-gUr-*, *-(X)z-* can only be added to intransitive stems, the passive never emerges beside them. Consequently, the passive appears only when the morphemes *-(X)t-* and *-tUr-* are present (in Old Turkic). In example (5) the *-(X)t-* morpheme is adjoined to the transitive base verb, *qavza-* 'to surround', hence the passive is possible. For the use of *-tUr-* in passive constructions see example (1); also note that the base verb (*ar-* 'to deceive') in (1) is transitive.

(5)   *yeti   änük-lär-i-ŋä   ägir-t-ip   qavza-t-ïp* (Suv 609, 19)
       seven whelp-PL-POSS.SG3-DAT surround-CAUS-CV surround-CAUS-CV
       "she was surrounded by her seven whelps"

Moreover, in Tuvan and Tofa the passive can emerge with the morpheme *-GXs-*, as well. This can be observed in the (6) Tofa sentence (example taken from Rassadin 1978: 137-138).

(6)   *men a't-ka   ka-as-tï-m*ᵛ
       I   horse-DAT toss off-CAUS-PAST-SG1
       "I was tossed off by the horse"

Whereupon the view that the Turkic passive structures marked with causative morpheme are peculiar to a given morpheme (e.g. *-(X)t-* in Old Turkic), as claimed in Gabain (1974) or in Robbeets (2007: 178-179) can be rejected. The evolvement of the passive constructions is connected to the syntactic structure of the causatives and not to one morpheme.

4.2 Co-referent causer and direct object

The second criterion is that the causer and the direct object have to be co-referent (indicated in Erdal 1991: 846-847). This is the case in the following merely causative sentence, where the subjects ('we') perform the action (*ämgät-* 'make suffer') on themselves.

(7)   *anïǧ qïlïnč-ǧa 'irinčü-kä käntü öz-ümüz-ni   ämgä-t-ir-biz* (T II D 178 VI)
    evil deed-DAT sin-DAT own self-POSS.PL1-ACC suffer-CAUS-PRES-PL1
    "we make ourselves suffer pain with evil deed(s) (and) sin(s)"

In this kind of sentences the causer has someone perform an action on himself (on the causer). In this case the direct object can be omitted from the clause and that is when the passive emerges.

4.3 Ellipsis of the direct object
The third criterion is that the direct object of the causative structure has to be omitted for the passive to appear.

4.3.1 Ellipsis of the direct object in Old Turkic
Before we go on with our discussion, it has to be pointed out that the ellipsis of the direct object which is co-referent with the subject or part of the subject is a normal phenomenon in Old Turkic. According to Röhrborn (2001) the direct object (which has to be co-referent with the subject, or be part of the subject) can be left out from the expressions like *tizlärin čökit-* 'to move down one's knee, kneel', *ätözin täprät-* 'to move oneself', *ätözin bälgürt-* 'to show oneself', and still have to same meaning. Example (8) (quoted from Röhrborn: 2001: 268) shows that *čökit-* without the direct object *tizlärin* can also mean 'to kneel' (instead of merely 'to move down (tr.)')

(8)   *odun   han qamaǧ uluǧ bäg-lär-i   bodun-ï*
    Khotan khan all   great chief-PL-POSS.SG3 people-POSS.SG3
    boqun-ï   birlä   čök-it-ü   olur-up (HtTug V 77, 2-3)
    people-POSS.SG3 together move.down-CAUS-CV sit-CV
    "the Khotan khan together with all of his great chiefs and people (Hend.) knelt down and sat down"

In a similar way, on their own, without the direct object *ätözin*, *täprät-* and *bälgürt-* can mean 'to move oneself' (instead of 'to move (tr.)') and 'to show oneself' (instead of 'to appear'), respectively. (Röhrborn 2001: 269)

4.3.2 Ellipsis of the direct object in the causative-marked clauses
Similarly to the above mentioned examples, the direct object in the causative construction with transitive base verb can be omitted (if the direct object and the subject are co-referent), while the dative-marked indirect object remains in the clause. In the passive sentence (9) the base verb (*ägir-* 'to surround') is transitive and the direct object, which is co-referent with the subject ('the tigress') is not present; thus all the three criteria are fulfilled. The indirect object can remain in the sentence; its function is the same as that of the *by*-phrase in the English passive clauses.

(9)   *ač   ämgäk-kä ägir-t-ip,*
      hunger pain-DAT surround-CAUS-CV
      änük-in   ye-gäli qïl-miš-ïn. (Suv. S. 607 Z. 8ff)
      whelp-POSS.SG3.ACC eat-CV do-PART-INST
      "She was possessed by hunger and pain, so she almost ate her whelp(s)"

It is worth comparing sentence (9) with (7). In (7) the direct object is present, thus it is a pure causative sentence. However, in example (9), where the direct object is missing, the passive emerges.

It is to be noted that that these clauses are mostly ambiguous between the permissive-causative and the passive interpretation. If the nominative marked subject is interpreted as an agent, the clause itself will be interpreted as causative; however, if the subject is interpreted as a patient, the clause will be passive. In the latter case no direct object is implied in the clause. The function of the dative-marked indirect object displays an interesting similarity between the passive and causative clauses: in both cases the subject of the base sentence is expressed like that.

In example (10) the *bas-ït-tï-ŋ* clause is ambiguous: in can be interpreted as permissive-causative ('you will have let yourself beaten') or as passive ('you will have been beaten').

(10)   *yaġï-qa   yalïŋ täg   näŋ-iŋ*
       enemy-DAT naked attack.IMP.SG2 property-POSS.SG2
       al-ma-su   uzat-sa   bas-ït-tï-ŋ (KB 2369)
       take-NEG-IMP.SG3 make.longer-COND crush-CAUS-PAST-SG2
       "Attack the enemy, do not let him take your property, if you procrastinate, you will have let yourself be beaten/ you will have been beaten."

5. Ways of avoiding ambiguity

The ambiguity between the causative and the passive interpretation might have motivated the phenomenon that the passive occurs mostly with verbs which express actions that the subject would not want to cause to himself, or has no power to cause it. In the former case the base verb expresses a violent action. In my corpus these verbs are: *bas-ït-* 'suppress-CAUS', *ar-tur-* 'deceive-CAUS', *ar-tïz-* (?) 'deceive-CAUS'[vi], *ägir-t-* 'surround-CAUS', *qavza-t-* 'surround-CAUS', *qov-ït-* 'chase-CAUS', *öl-ür-t-* 'die-CAUS-CAUS', *sanč-ït-* 'stab-CAUS', *siŋir-t-* 'swallow-CAUS', *soq-tur-* 'hit-CAUS', *toq-ït-* 'hit-CAUS', *yayï-t-* 'shake-CAUS'[vii].

In example (11) it is likelier that the subject would not have himself stabbed, or let it happen (as Clauson (1972: 836) proposes in his translation). Similarly in sentence (12): it is doubtful that the subject would have himself or let himself stabbed. (Example (12) is quoted from Erdal 1991: 782.)

(11)   *sü-dä   är-sär   sanč-ït-ur* (TT I 67)
       campaign-LOC be-COND rout-CAUS-PRES.SG3

[If this omen comes to someone,] "if (s)he is on a campaign (s)he will be routed"

(12)   *yäk-lär-kä   öl-ür-ṭ-mä-yin* (M III 25,12$_3$ (text 9))
        demon-PL-DAT die-CAUS-CAUS-OPT.SG1.
        "May I not be killed by demons."

The passive can also emerge with verbs expressing affection or respect: *aġïrla-t-* 'respect-CAUS', *alqa-t-* 'praise-CAUS', *aya-t-* 'respect-CAUS', *ög$_1$-üt-* 'praise-CAUS', *säv-it-* 'love-CAUS', *tapla-t-* 'be satisfied-CAUS'[viii].

In the case of (13) the ambiguity between the causative and passive interpretation is stronger, since it can be presumed that the subject did something so that the others would love or respect him.

(13)   *ög-üt-miš   alqa-t-miš   č(ä)r(i)k   türk uluš* [...] (T. II D. 171)
        praise-CAUS-PART praise-CAUS-PART combative(?) Türk country
        "the praised (Hend.) combative(?) Türk country"

In my corpus all the base verbs belong to these two groups, the only exception being the word *te-t-* 'say-CAUS'. In the case of *te-t-* almost always the passive interpretation is present. Example (14) is only one from the many similar constructions with the verb form *te-t-*.

(14)   *ol   közsüz kiši ayïġ bilgä te-t-ir* (Hamilton 1998: 63; 74, 5-6)
        that blind   man very wise say-CAUS-PRES.SG3
        "That blind man is said to be very wise"

Beside these strategies to avert ambiguity, the passive interpretation can be made clearer if the "causee" is a phenomenon or entity over which the causer cannot have authority, like *yel* 'wind', *yäk* 'demon', *ičgäk* 'demon', *saqïnč* 'fear', *busuš* 'sorrow', *ač* 'hunger', *ämgäk* 'pain'. It is possible even in these cases, however, that the subject lets the action happen to himself, as e.g. in sentence (15) (quoted from Erdal 1991: 844-845.)

(15)   *saqïnč-qa busuš-qa   bas-ït-u   tägin-miš biz* (HtPek 96b8)
        fear-DAT   sorrow-DAT strike-CAUS-CV AUX.PAST PL.1
        "we are stricken by fear and sorrow"

Moreover, if the subject ("causer") is inanimate, it cannot cause an action, because the causers are agents as a rule; thus the passive interpretation will be dominant. (Röhrborn 1972: 74) Sentence (16) (from Röhrborn 1972: 74) is an example for this: the subject *ï ïġač* 'tree' is not animate, therefore it cannot be a real causer in a causative sentence.

(16)   *ïnča q(a)ltï ï*   *ïğač küčlüg qatïğ*   *yel-kä*
         such big   vegetation tree strong   powerful wind-DAT
         toqï-t-ïp   *qam-ïl-mïš*   *täg* (Signatur T II S 32ᵃ Ay 3, Zeile 1.)
         strike-CAUS-CV knock down-PASS-PAST.SG3 like
         "like the big trees (Hend) which were stricken and knocked down by the
         wind"

6. The new complex morphemes: *-tXl-* (~ *-(X)tXl-*) and *-tUrXl-*

The *-tXl-* and its allomorph in *-(X)tXl-*, beside the rather rare *-tUrXl-* morpheme are present only in the late Buddhist texts (Erdal 1991: 698). Röhrborn (1972: 73-74) and especially Erdal (1991: 694-698) give a long list of instances belonging here. These complex morphemes are composed of the causative *-(X)t-* and *-tUr-* morphemes and the so-called passive *-(X)l-* morpheme. The new morphemes are purely passive, thus there is no possibility for the causative interpretation. This is shown in example (17). (For more examples see Erdal 1991: 694-698)

(17)   *ädgü tučï*   *ög-dil-ür* (KB 909)
         good continuously praise-PASS-PRES.SG.3
         "the good is praised continuously"

As I showed above, the causative-marked passive constructions were ambiguous between the causative and the passive interpretation. Therefore the *-(X)l-* "passive" morpheme was added to the causative morpheme to make sure that the interpretation is passive and not causative.

7. Causative-based passive as syntactic passive in Old Turkic

But what could be the reason for the formation of the passive from the causative constructions? The answer for this question cannot be absolutely certain, nevertheless I would like to draw attention to an interesting coincidence in the Old Turkic voice system. According to Kornfilt (1991, 2008) there is no *syntactic passive* in early Old Turkic.

In the syntactic passive construction the external thematic role is assigned to the passive morpheme (or to another analytic marker), hence it cannot be assigned to the agent of the clause, which therefore can be left out from the clause. However, the external thematic role is not completely eliminated (since it is assigned to the passive maker), what explains why the "absorbed agent" or "implicit agent" can be the antecedent to anaphoras, can control *pro*s and can be the subject of adjunct predicates. This also explains why the agent or experiencer can appear in the passive clauses – for example in Turkish marked with *tarafından*. (For examples and argumentation see: Baker 1988: 315-319.)

However, there is an identically marked structure where the external thematic role is completely eliminated: these structures are called *adjectival passive*. Unlike in the syntactic passive, the agent of the adjectival passive clauses cannot control *pro*s, be the antecedent to anaphoras or be the subject of adjunct predicates.

Moreover in these structures the implicit agent cannot appear (or in the rare cases when it does, it is only a logical agent). (Baker 1988: 319-320)

Kornfilt (1991) claims that the early Old Turkic constructions marked with *-(X)l-* and its allomorph *-(X)n-* are more like the adjectival passive structures described above. One of her arguments is that in the early texts the agent is never present in the clauses marked with the morpheme *-(X)l-*. My research supports her claim: in the inscriptions of *Köli Čor*, *Tońuquq*, *Köl Tegin* and *Bilgä Qaγan* there was not a single example where the agent was present in the passive clauses. In the following sentences taken from the *Tońuquq* and *Köl Tegin* Inscriptions not only no overt agents can be found, but one cannot even presume that the Turkish people assembles because of an agent (as in example (18)); or was made to come to an arrangement with the Chinese people (in (19)).[ix]

(18)   *yarïš yazï-da   ter-il-älim   te-miš* (T N9)
        Yarïš plain-LOC assemble-PASS-OPT.PL1 say-PAST.SG/PL3)
        "They apparently said: 'Let us gather together on the Yarïš plain."

(19)   *tavγač bodun birlä   tüz-ül-dü-m* (KT S4-5)
        Chinese people together put.in.order-PASS-PAST-SG1
        "I came to an amicable agreement with the Chinese people."

This ranges with Erdal's opinion (1991: 691-693), who says that the agent could not be present in the *-(X)l-* marked clauses until the late Old Turkic period.

Thus it seems that in early Old Turkic texts the agent cannot be present in the constructions marked with *-(X)l-*. The absence of the agent points to the conclusion that the *-(X)l-* marked constructions were not syntactic passive structures in the early Old Turkic.

What I would like to point out is the fact that in early Old Turkic the agent of the passive could not be expressed in the clauses marked with *-(X)l-*, however it was possible with the causative based passive sentences. Which means that these latter constructions are syntactic passives.

Consequently the following hypothesis can be formulated: the fact that in early Old Turkic there was no way to express the agent in the passive-like sentences had a great part in motivating the formation of the passive from causative clauses.

8. Summary
The present paper argues that the formation of the passive from causative clauses is due to a (not unusual) syntactic process. This can only happen in a strictly determined *syntactic* environment: the base verb has to be transitive, and the direct object that is co-referent with the subject has to be omitted. Hence, the formation of the passive is not connected to only one particular morpheme, and this means that the "causative-passive character" of the Old Turkic *-(X)t-* morpheme cannot be used as an argument for proving the genetic relationship between the Trans-Eurasian languages (as claimed in Robbeets 2007).

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[i] My research was based on the Old Turkic language material I collected (about sixty examples) form the inscriptions of *Köli Čor*, *Toňuquq*, *Köl Tegin* and *Bilgä Qaγan* (Berta 2004), from the Uyghur-Manichean *Huastuanift* (Asmussen 1965), from the Manichean material published by Le Coq in his work *Türkische Manichaica aus Chotscho* (Le Coq 1912), from the Old Uyghur *Ač Bars* (Gabain 1974) and the *Kalyāṇaṃkara and Pāpaṃkara* stories (Hamilton 1998). I profited much from the examples cited in Clauson 1972, in Röhrborn 1972 and in Erdal 1991.

[ii] Previous accounts on this topic are: Röhrborn 1972, Johanson 1974, Johanson 1976-1977, Kormušin 1976, Erdal 1991: 843-847.

[iii] The transcription is given in a modified version, but still following Berta 2004: 129. The translations are from Tekin 1968: 262.

[iv] In the paper I use the following glosses: ABL (ablative), ACC (accusative), AUX (auxiliary), CAUS (causative), COND (conditional), CV (converb), DAT (dative), LOC (locative), INST (instrumental), OPT (optative), PART (participle), PASS (passive), PAST (past), PL (plural), POSS (possessive), PRES (present), SG (singular).

[v] This is a contracted form from: **kag-gïs-* > *kaas-*.

[vi] There is only one example with this form from the *Huastuanift* (given in (i)), where it is difficult to decide between the permissive and the passive interpretation. However, since the *Huastuanift* is a confession, the permissive interpretation seems to be likelier.

(i)   *'igidäyü tängriči-min nomči-mïn   te-gmä-kä   ar-tïz-ïp* (Huast. 173-174)
         lyingly preacher-SG1 preacher-SG1 say-PART-DAT deceive-CAUS-CV
         "letting ourselves be deceived by the false preachers (Hend.)"

[vii] Erdal (1991: 794) gives the *yayï-* verb form; while Clauson (1972: 980) gives *yay-₁* 'to shake' .

[viii] The verb *tapla-* 'being satisfied with something (acc)' is transitive. (Clauson 1972: 440)

[ix] Source of the transcription: Berta 2004: 62, 127-128. Source of the translation: Tekin 1968: 287, 261.