This investigation explores the valency-changing phenomena in Bezhta. It is the result of one-week fieldwork in the village of Tliadal (Daghestan, Russia) in August 2003 (MSU linguistic expedition under the direction of K.I. Kazenin, A. E. Kibrik and Ya.G. Testelets). Bezhta (Nakh-Daghestanian, Avar–Andi–Tsez, Tzesic) is an ergative language spoken by less than 7000 people in the Tsunta region of Daghestan.

The morphological causative in Bezhta is formed means of an affix –(i)l, which (under certain circumstances) can be duplicated or even triplicated, which is rather untypical for Daghestanian languages. A few examples are given below:

1. \[ijQ <\text{ali} \ ut'-\text{in-na-j} \]
   \[\text{mother.E Ali.N sleep-CAUS-CvPf-Cop} \]
   ‘Mother put her son to bed.’
2. \[ijQ <\text{ali} \ ut'-\text{il-in-na-j} \]
   \[\text{mother.E Ali.N sleep-CAUS-CAUS-CvPf-Cop} \]
   ‘Mother caused her son to go to bed.’
3. \[ijQ <\text{ali} \ ut'-\text{il-il-in-na-j} \]
   \[\text{mother.E Ali.N sleep-CAUS-CAUS-CAUS-CvPf-Cop} \]
   ‘Mother caused someone to put her son to bed / to make her sone go to bed.’
4. \[ijQ \text{taLe-l-[T-]-i} \ kibbT-d \text{ wara} \]
   \[\text{mother.E milk-CAUS-PrtDv-Dt-Cop girl-I cow.N} \]
   ‘The mother causes her daughter to milk the cow (keeping an eye on her).’
5. \[ijQ \text{taLe-l-[T-]-i} \ kibbT-d \text{ wara} \]
   \[\text{mother.E milk-CAUS-CAUS-PrtDv-Dt-Cop girl-I cow.N} \]
   ‘The mother causes her daughter to milk the cow (by asking or forcing).’
6. \[mThTmT-di <\text{ali} \ \text{ok'ijac'}-\text{il-ca-s-i} \]
   \[\text{Magomed-E Ali.N jump-CAUS-PrtDv-Dt-Cop} \]
   ‘Magomed makes Ali jump.’
7. \[mThTmT-di <\text{ali} \ \text{ok'ijac'}-\text{il-il-ca-s-i} \]
   \[\text{Magomed-E Ali.N jump-CAUS-CAUS-PrtDv-Dt-Cop} \]
   ‘Magomed makes Ali jump.’
8. \[\text{rasul-li} \ <\text{ali} \ \text{yo:da:-l-il-in-na-j} \]
   \[\text{Rasul-E Ali.N laugh-CAUS-CAUS-CvPf-Cop} \]
   ‘Rasul made Ali laugh.’
9. \[\text{*rasul-li} \ <\text{ali} \ \text{yo:da:-l-in-na-j} \]
   \[\text{Rasul-E Ali.N laugh-CAUS-CAUS-CvPf-Cop} \]
10. \[\text{*rasul-li} \ <\text{ali} \ \text{yo:da:-n-na-j} \]
    \[\text{Rasul-E Ali.N laugh-CAUS-CvPf-Cop} \]

The earlier description of the causative construction in Bezhta was based on the idea that transitive verbs are causativized only by reduplicated or triplicated causative morpheme (triple causative encoding strong causation) – see [Kibrik, Testelets 1982 (“causatives” by A. Dybo)], which is evidently wrong (see (5)), though it reflects a very strong tendency.

At first glance, double and triple causatives encode the meanings of distant vs. contact causation (1–2), double vs. simple causation (1,2–3) or strong vs. weak causation. In some cases they tend to be meaningless (6–7) (semi-causative in terms of [Kulikov 1993]), analyzing the examples of the related Tsez language. What is to be discovered is the constraints on the reiterating causative affix in sentences with different sets of participants and semantic background.

The probable solution of the problem is achieved by placing causer and causee both on the scale of agency / activity control. Cognitively, the scale is continual. Language divides it in two axes: in the first one the participant is conceptualized as weak, in the second one it is conceptualized as strong, these two have a
certain intersection (Figure 1). The coplacement of causer and causee on this continuous scale seems to be the only way to predict the number of causative affixes attaching to a verb.

\[
\text{not controlling (=weak)} \quad + \text{ control}
\]

\[
\text{---------------------------------} \quad \text{---intersection---} \quad \text{---------------------------------} >
\]

\[
\text{controlling(=strong)}
\]

**FIGURE 1.**

The basic principles are as follows: if the causer is weak and the causee is as weak or stronger, double causative will occur; if the causee is weak and the causer is as weak or stronger, single causative is observed; if both causer and causee are strong, triple causative. Reduplication of the causative morpheme is the means to mark that the situation is controlled by the causee rather than the causer. This model explains also the presence of “meaningless” second causative, which occurs in the conflict situations (causer and causee in the intersection).

There is a huge tradition explaining the presence of different causativizing possibilities in language (in our case: single, double and triple causatives). Certain typologically-oriented works (e.g. [Dixon 2000]) are rather close, though not identical, to our views. Dixon describes the set of analogous parameters concerning causer and causee taken separately, but that analysis fails to explain Bezhta data, where the relation between causer and causee is to be measured.

The proposed explanatory model may be useful in the analysis of causative constructions in the other related and non-related languages, especially the facts concerning “semantically empty” markers.

Finally, we should mention that the semantic features involved have some interesting parallels in syntax (e.g. causee case marking).

**REFERENCES**

