

**Benefaction, cause, and purpose:
A comparative study of the Huon Peninsula languages**

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Abstract

In the Huon Peninsula family there are three ways of expressing benefaction. All peninsular languages have a benefactive auxiliary that indexes the person and number of the beneficiary. Some of them in addition use the genitive-causal case to mark beneficiary phrases. Kovai, spoken on Umboi Island at a distance from the Huon Peninsula, has benefactive pronouns, formally a possessed noun. In this paper, the three constructions are studied from a comparative-historical point of view. All of them have other functions besides expressing benefaction. Which is the original function and which are extensions? What is the history of the grammatical signs that express benefaction? In the course of answering these questions I will touch on grammaticalization. Some of the results presented challenge received ideas of grammaticalization theory.