

# BENEFACTIVES AND CLAUSE UNION IN LAI<sup>1</sup>

George Bedell

International Christian University

Consider Lai sentences (1) and (2).

- (1)                    *Inn ka sak.*  
                          I built a house.
- (2)                    *Inn ka sakpiak.*  
                          I built him/her a house.

(1) is a simple transitive sentence, and (2) is a corresponding benefactive sentence. Benefactives contain a complex verb with the suffix *-piak*; in (2) the benefactive verb is *sakpiak* 'build for'.<sup>2</sup> The direct object in both sentences is *inn* 'a house'. As argued in Bedell 1995, *ka* is an agreement marker reflecting a first person singular subject, empty in these examples. Lai has object agreement as well as subject agreement, but there is no overt agreement marker for a third person singular object. Sentences like (3) are benefactives of a different sort; they contain an overt benefactive postpositional phrase (PP), *amah caah* 'for him/her' in this example. This PP may appear in conjunction with a benefactive verb as in (4). Alternatively, a second object NP *amah cu* 'him/her' may appear as in (5).<sup>3</sup> Such a second object requires a benefactive verb; (6) is ungrammatical.

- (3)                    *Amah caah inn ka sak.*
- (4)                    *Amah caah inn ka sakpiak.*
- (5)                    *Amah cu inn ka sakpiak.*
- (6)                    *\*Amah cu inn ka sak.*

Sentences (7) to (12) are parallel to (1) to (6); the difference is that in these the subject is third person and the benefactive object first person.

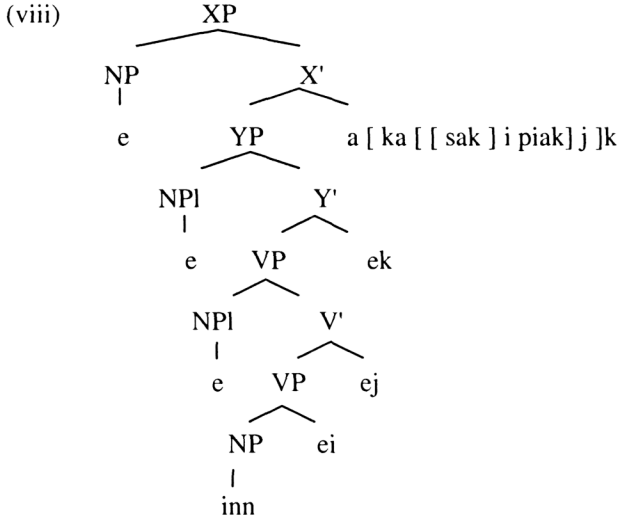
- (7)                    *Inn a sak.*  
                          He/she built a house.
- (8)                    *Inn a ka sakpiak.*  
                          He/she built me a house.
- (9)                    *Keimah caah inn a sak.*

- (10) *Keimah caah inn a ka sakpiak.*  
 (11) *Keimah cu inn a ka sakpiak.*  
 (12) *\*Keimah cu inn a ka sak.*

In (8) and (10) *ka* is a first person object agreement marker; this object agreement may be identified by a PP *keimah caah* ‘for me’ or an NP *keimah cu* ‘me’ just as in (3) to (5). Object agreement is required in sentences like these with a benefactive verb, but not allowed in (7) or (9) even though the latter is very similar in meaning to (8). Thus (13) to (16) are ungrammatical.<sup>4</sup>

- (13) *\*Keimah caah inn a sakpiak.* Cf. (10)  
 (14) *\*Keimah cu inn a sakpiak.* Cf. (11)  
 (15) *\*Inn a ka sak.* Cf. (7)  
 (16) *\*Keimah caah inn a ka sak.* Cf. (9)

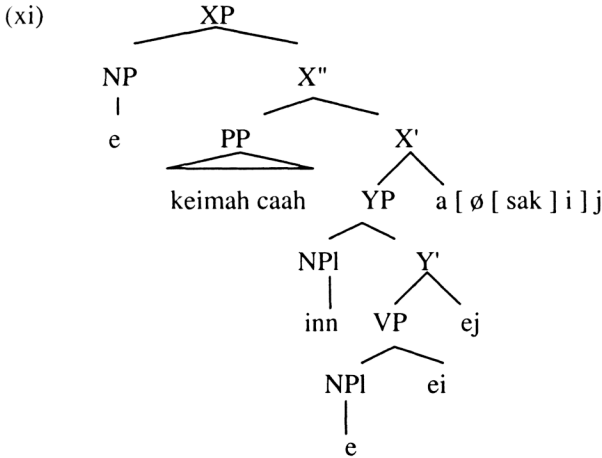
On the model of the analysis of Lai causatives given in Bedell 1996b, we take the structure of (8) to be as in (viii).



In (viii) the (empty) third person subject is represented by the NP attached to XP; the (empty) first person benefactive object is represented by the NP attached to YP. The heads of these phrases are respectively the subject

agreement marker *a* and the object agreement marker *ka*. The benefactive suffix *-piak* is represented as a verb which takes an object and infinitive complement VP whose head is *sak* 'build' and whose object is *inn* 'house'. All of these elements except the last appear as components of the verb complex *a ka sakpiak*. This structure accounts for the relation between the benefactive *-piak* and object agreement.

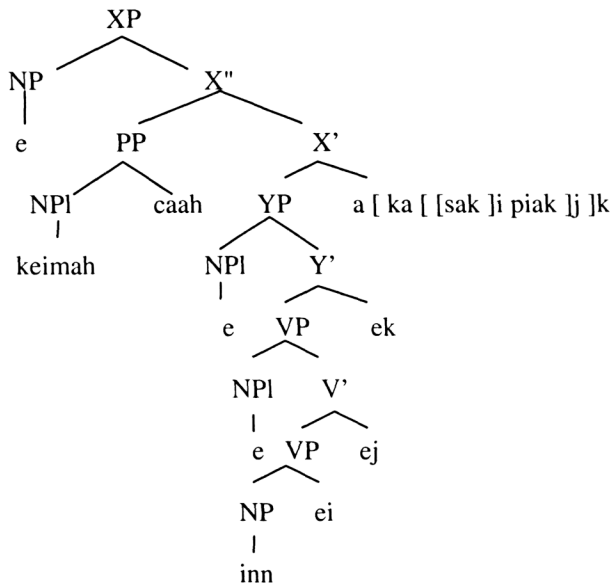
We take the structure of (9) to be as in (ix).



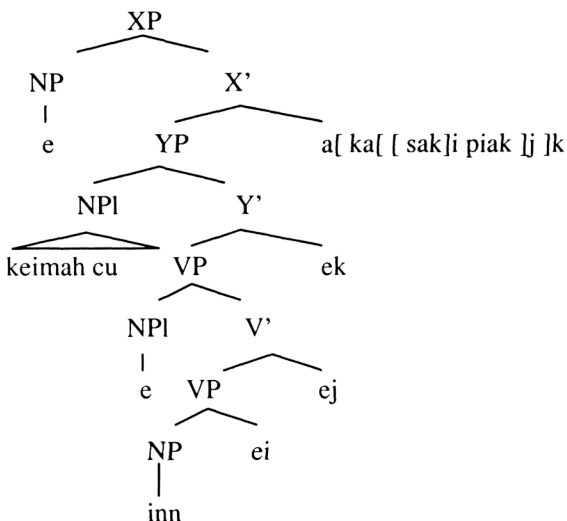
In (ix), *inn* occupies the object position, though there is no overt agreement marker in this case. The PP *keimah caah* is not an argument, either of *-piak* or of *sak*, and appears outside the verb complex *a sak*. Its meaning is similar if not identical to that of *-piak* together with its object. To have both, as in a sentence like (10), is redundant and requires coreference of the NP with the PP and the object of *-piak*.

We should then take (x) as the structure of (10) combining the essential aspects of (viii) with those of (ix). We further take (xi) as the structure of (11), in which the overt benefactive object occupies its expected position.

(x)



(xi)



It is possible for the benefactive object or PP to be coreferential with the subject in sentences like (1) through (12), but *-piak* may not appear in that case.