RESULTATIVE CONSTRUCTION IN THAI AND THE RELATED ISSUES*  

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0. Introduction

The subject of resultative construction has been studied in a number of languages. Although some debatable theoretical issues, i.e. the relationship between syntax and semantics, are still open, there is much interest in issues of predication as well as the status of the second noun in the resultative construction. That is, in the former case, the semantic interaction between an action predicate and a result predicate has been accounted for in various ways. Put simply, the resultative phrase forms a complex predicate1 with the matrix verb, as found in Green (1973), or the resultative is an argument of the verb as found in Carrier and Randal (1988), among others2. In the latter case, an explicit claim that the second noun is a direct object is found in Levin and Rappaport Hovav (1995). Related to this, Goldberg (1995) uses the term patient, whereas Van Valin (1990a) uses the term undergoer to account for the status of the second noun in the resultative construction.3 On the other hand, Hoekstra (1988) claims that the second noun is the subject of a small clause.

In this paper, Thai data is discussed as an additional example to provide some support for the view that the interpretation of resultatives is mainly based on semantic terms, and at the same time, the resultative construction itself is also derived by compositional means in the syntax. To this end, the transition marker ‘con’1, literally meaning ‘until’, is used as a parameter.

We propose that resultative construction based on transitive verbs is the typical pattern of Thai. Thus, the transition marker ‘con’1 cannot occur in this type of resultative construction. However, we don’t reject the idea that there is an occurrence of ‘con’1 between some transitive verbs, as well as the idea that unergative activity verbs and result verbs can also yield the resultative sense. In this case rather, a conjunction as widely understood as ‘con’1 should be viewed as the transition marker of an event in which the action denoted by the activity verb has to be iterative or durative before the effect on the second noun is achieved.

Further, we suggest that resultative phrases, which specify a particular state as the result of an action denoted by the first verb, can have a range of possibly conceivable resultant states, which we call Scalar Construal of resultant state4. In other words, although the resultant state is brought about by the activity verb, it is not necessarily semantically bound by the meaning of the activity verb. The resultative phrases, therefore, are not fixed by any grammatical reasons, but rather are variable in accordance with the potential for perception in the real world. Consequently, this reflects

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the properties of the second noun as an important factor, at which stage the \( N_2 \) can undergo its change of state.

Finally, we briefly mention the distinctive nuance in the resultative construction brought about by two different markers, i.e. the transition marker ‘con’ (until), and the mood emphasis marker ‘sia’ (literally meaning ‘to be damaged’). Moreover, the matter is further complicated when these two markers are combined together as ‘sia\(^5\) con\(^1\)’. In any event, for the sake of argument, the main discussion about resultative construction in Thai in this paper takes only the transition marker ‘con’ into consideration. A comparison of these markers will also be made in other related issues.

We will then close this paper with the outcome of our analysis indicating the characteristics of each construction.

To begin with, the background information on resultative construction in English and Japanese is mentioned in section 1.

1. Background

Before beginning the main discussion of Thai, the Resultative construction in English and Japanese, based on some recent works, is discussed in brief below.

1.1 The English Resultative Construction

In spite of the controversial issue of whether or not the resultative construction should be appropriately predicted from the compositional means of syntax or in purely semantic terms, the resultative construction in English can be divided as shown below. Note that we take either AP or PP as resultative phrases. As a result, the syntactic form of resultative construction in English can be represented as follows:

\[ [N_1 \text{ V} N_2 \text{ AP/PP}], \]  

in which \( N_1 \) stands for the instigator, \( V \) is the activity verb, \( N_2 \) indicates an entity which undergoes the change of state, and AP or PP is an achieved state brought about by the matrix verb.

(1) Resultative construction based on transitive verbs.

\text{e.g.} Woolite safely soaks all your fine washables clean.\text{(Levin and Rappaport Hovav, 1995, p.34 (1a))}

(2) Resultative construction based on unergative verbs. In this case, the addition of a postverbal NP is required.

a. Fake reflexives: He talked himself hoarse.

b. Non-reflexives: The dog barked the baby awake.

c. Body part: She cried her eyes out.

(3) Resultative construction based on unspecified object verbs.

\text{e.g.} Drive your engine clean.\text{(L & R, 1995, p.37 (10d))}

(4) Resultative construction with passive

\text{e.g.} She was shaken awake by the earthquake.\text{(L & R, 1995, p.39 (18c))}

(5) Resultative with unaccusative verbs.

\text{e.g.} The vase broke into pieces.

According to Levin and Rappaport Hovav (1995), there are two classes of unaccusative verbs that cannot occur in the resultative construction. Those are stative unaccusative verbs such as remain and verbs of inherently directed motion such as go,
come, arrive. This is attributed to the fact that the matrix verb in the resultative construction needs to be dynamic and therefore, stative unaccusative verbs do not qualify. Likewise, verbs of inherently directed motion are incompatible with the resultative construction due to the fact that they tend to take goal phrases to indicate the end-point of location, rather than resultative phrases which specify the achieved state. This view is in line with what Goldberg (1995) mentions as the Unique Path Constraint.

1.2 The Japanese Resultative Construction

We will turn now to the resultative construction in Japanese. According to Kageyama(1996) and Washio (1997), Japanese expresses the resultative construction comparatively in a limited scope. Namely, Japanese permits resultative construction based on some transitive verbs only, which implies the change of state of the patient. In addition, Japanese also permits a broad sense of resultative construction, in which the change of state of a patient is further specified without any overt action or causing the patient to go into an achieved state. The syntactic form of resultative construction in Japanese can be represented in two ways as in (6a) and (6b).

(6) a. [ N1 N2 V1 V2 ]
   b. [ N1 N2 ATP V]

Again, the representation form of N1 and N2 in (6) refers to the instigator and the patient, respectively. The difference is that in (6a) the relationship between action and result is shown in the form of a compound verb in which V1 denotes the action, whereas V2 is either an unaccusative verb denoting result or a transitive verb with the implication of change of state. According to Matsumoto (1997), most, but not all of the cases of such compound verbs are right-headed compounds, viz. V2 is viewed as a head, while V1 is merely a modification of cause, manner, or means. (See Matsumoto(1997) for further details of the reversed type: left-headed compounds). On the other hand, in (6b) the term ATP adopted here belongs to Washio(1997). It stands for “Adjective-type phrase”, which functionally corresponds to the AP in the English construction. To see the illustration of these points, consider the examples below.

(7a) ooame-de dosha-ga kuzure-ochi-ta
   heavy rain-Inst earth and sand-Nom. crumble-fall down-Past
   ‘The heavy rain caused the landslide.’

   b. taroo-wo doa-wo oshi-ake-ta
   Taro-Top Jiro-ACC push-open
   ‘Taro pushed the door open.’

(8) taroo-wo kabin-wo konagona-ni wat-ta
    Taro-Top vase-ACC into pieces break-Past
    ‘Taro broke the vase into pieces.’

(9) kabin-wo konagona-ni ware-ta
    vase-Top into pieces be broken-Past
    ‘The vase broke into pieces.’

As shown above, the compound verb ‘kuzure-ochita’ in (7a), a past form of ‘kuzure-ochiru’(crumble-fall down) shows the combination between action ‘kuzure’ in V1 and result ‘ochita’ in V2, whereas in (7b) ‘oshi-aketa’, a past form of ‘oshi-akeru’ (push-open)
shows a transitive compound verb in which the first verb 'oshi' represents means of the action and 'akeru' represents an action implying the change of state of the door. On the other hand, in (8) 'konagona-ni' (into pieces) corresponds to ATP, which is brought about by the activity verb 'wat-ta', a past form of 'waru' (break). In addition, (9) illustrates resultative construction in a broad sense. That is, the ATP 'konagona-ni' (to pieces) is used merely to further specify the achieved state denoted by the unaccusative verb 'ware-ta', a past form of 'waru' (be broken).

It is worth noting that some Japanese transitive verbs, which can occur in the resultative construction, are mainly less informative transitive verbs such as 'waru' (break), 'nuru' (paint), 'someru' (dye), 'kooraseru' (freeze), and 'fuku' (wipe), among many others. In contrast to this, transitive verbs which are more informative on the action, as well as the unergative verbs in Japanese, cannot occur in the resultative construction. We compare unacceptable Japanese examples with their free translation equivalents in English below.

(10) *kare-wa kanaduchi-de kinzoku-wo taira-ni tatai-ta
    he-Top hammer-Inst metal-ACC flat beat-Past
    'He hammered the metal flat.'

(11) * kare-wa kutsu-ga boroboro-ni hashit-ta
    he-Top shoes-Nom be torn to shreds run-Past
    'He ran his shoes threadbare.'

It is clearly seen that in (10) the verb 'tatai-ta', a past form of 'tataku' (beat) is unacceptable in the resultative construction, in spite of the fact that (10) is perfectly acceptable without the ATP 'taira-ni' (flat). Likewise, (11) is undoubtedly acceptable when the phrase 'kutsu-ga boroboro-ni' (shoes threadbare) is deleted.

Up to now, we have tried to give two distinctive pictures of resultative construction between English and Japanese briefly. As noted above, English has a wide variety of verbs that occur in this construction, whereas Japanese has more restriction. Put simply, Japanese permits only some transitive verbs with the implication of change of state to occur in resultative construction. Keeping this in mind, we turn now to the investigation of resultative construction in Thai.

2. Resultative Construction in Thai

In discussing the resultative construction found in Thai, we begin with the scope of this article as well as the approach adopted in this paper.

2.1 Scope

It is widely acknowledged that resultative construction is found in complex eventualities which derive accomplishment sense as a result of the interaction between activity and state. In other words, we limit the scope of resultative construction to the case in which the interpretation of accomplishment is brought about by two predicates, i.e. an activity verb in V₁ and a result verb in V₂. Therefore, the case of accomplishment sense denoted by a lexical accomplishment verb, such as hak² (break), p@t² (open), pit² (close), is beyond the scope of the present work. In relation to this, see Thepkkanjana (1999) for an interesting discussion about lexical causative verbs.