ACCOMPLISHMENT CONSTRUCTIONS IN THAI: DIVERSE CAUSE-EFFECT RELATIONSHIPS

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1 Introduction

In his work on the typology of event integration, Talmy (2000) points out the difference between English and Mandarin Chinese verbs of agentive activity in their preferred patterns of lexicalization with reference to the degree of fulfillment of the agent's intention to bring about a desired outcome of the action. According to him, English activity verbs are predominantly "fulfilled verbs" which express that an agent acts on a patient with the intention to cause a desired result and the intention is fulfilled (i.e. the result is realized), whereas Mandarin Chinese activity verbs are characteristically "conative verbs" which express not attained-fulfillment of the agent's intention but moot-fulfillment or implied-fulfillment, that is, the realization of the intended result is moot or merely implied and therefore it is defeasible. Whether the intended result is realized or not is beyond the referential scope of the lexical meaning of Mandarin Chinese activity verbs. To represent the achievement of the goal of the agent's action, compounds consisting of an activity verb and a change of state verb or state verb (e.g. **dǎ pò** 'hit + broken') are used in Mandarin Chinese. Similarly, the Thai language employs serial verb constructions to analytically represent the complex event beginning with the agent's action and ending up with the fulfillment of the agent's intention. However, resultative situations expressed by Thai serial verb constructions do not necessarily involve the agent's intention.

This study aims at investigating the semantics of accomplishment [1] constructions in Thai. In particular, I examine the event structure of events encoded by Thai accomplishment constructions. In this paper I use the term "accomplishment construction" to refer to Thai serial verb construction composed of two verb phrases [2] that represents a complex event consisting of two relevant events in succession, i.e., cause and effect events. Put differently, the accomplishment construction is a linguistic device to iconically encode two serial events holding a certain cause-effect relationship. The causal relation between the two events, namely a cause event brings about an effect event, can be graphically represented as follows: CAUSE → EFFECT. This invariable sequence of the two events corresponds to the fixed order of two verb phrases in the construction. As illustrated in (1) to (5) below, the former verb phrase (VP1) and the latter verb phrase (VP2) respectively represent a preceding cause event and a following effect event.

The examples below exemplify different causal relations between cause and effect events. In (1), someone's beating a box yields an expected broken state of the box. In (2), someone's spending money leads to disappearance of all the money. In (3), someone's drinking bootleg whisky leads to his inebriety. In (4), someone's stretching her line of sight away gives rise to her visual perception of some mountains. And in (5), something's falling off results in its destruction.

(1)   [tii   klɔɔŋ] _{VP1}   [tὲεk] _{VP2}
        beat   box   be broken
        '(He) beat a box and it was broken.'

(2)   [cháy   ŋən] _{VP1}   [mòt] _{VP2}
        use   money   come to an end
        '(He) used money and it was used up.'

(3)   [kin   lâw thùan] _{VP1}   [maw] _{VP2}
        eat   bootleg whisky   be intoxicated
        '(He) drank bootleg whisky and was intoxicated.'

(4)   [mɔɔŋ   pay] _{VP1}   [hěn   phuu khǎw] _{VP2}
        look   go   see   mountain
        '(He) looked away and caught sight of mountains.'

(5)   [tòk] _{VP1}   [tὲεk] _{VP2}
        go down   be broken
        '(It) fell off and was broken.'

These patterns are possibly regarded as resultative constructions in a broad sense. (1), which is composed of VP1 for volitional activity and VP2 for change of state/location or state, exemplifies a typical resultative construction expressing a complex event of canonical causation (direct and intended causation), namely an agent directly acts on a patient for some purpose and the patient is physically affected in accordance with the purpose as a result. In Rappaport Hovav & Levin's (2001) syntactic terms, examples (1) to (5) can be classified as follows. (1) to (3) are "transitive-based" (i.e. the first verb is followed by an object argument) whereas (4) and (5) are "intransitive-based" (i.e. the first verb is followed by no object argument); (1) and (2) are "object-oriented" (i.e. the second verb predicates of the object of the first verb) whereas (3) to (5) are "subject-oriented" (i.e. the second verb predicates of the subject of the first verb). At any rate, the referent of the unnamed subject of VP2 must be the same as the referent of the object or the subject of VP1.

Thai accomplishment constructions are thus "subcategorized". However, I have also discovered that examples (1) to (5) have certain common properties, hence I categorize them into a single general category, i.e., accomplishment construction. I will explicate the semantic and syntactic characteristics of the accomplishment construction in Sections 2 and 3, respectively. I will argue that cause and effect events represented by the two verb phrases in the construction are in a coordinate relationship and yet they constitute a single macro-event. In Section 4, I will examine Thai arrival expressions which I consider a subtype of the construction. Section 5 is a summary of this study.

2 Semantic Characteristics

Our understanding of causal relation is basic in our mental life. A causal relation is composed of two asymmetrical semantic components: cause/reason and effect/result. The relationship between the first pair 'cause-effect' (i.e. a cause produces an effect in the spatio-temporal domain) involves phenomenal motivation, as in 'Because he bumped me, I

dropped the glass,' while the relationship between the second pair 'reason-result' (i.e. a reason accounts for a result in the logical domain) involves logical motivation, as in 'Because it was boring, I left' (cf. Givón 1990). Although causes and effects are semantic components for describing objective events occurring in the physical world, a link between a cause and an effect never exists as part of objective reality but is established due to human expectation, inference, reasoning, and the like. Thus, causal relations, whether they are phenomenal or logical, exist in relation to our interpretation of reality. I assume that each human individual acquires from everyday experiences the "idealized cognitive model (ICM)" (cf. Lakoff 1987) for causal relations, namely one situation is correlated with another situation. Thai speakers employ serial verb constructions to express such a cause-effect relationship. Two serial verb phrases used to express a cause-effect relationship are called accomplishment constructions in this study. The following discussion will reveal that despite the semantic diversity of the construction, all subtypes of the construction must be amenable to the same constraints with regard to the eventuality of accomplishment conceived by Thai speakers. This section addresses the following questions: (a) Exactly what cause-effect relationships do Thai accomplishment constructions express?; (b) What semantic conditions is the construction subject to?

VP2 in examples (1) to (5) above includes a "completive verb" in Noss's (1964) terminology, namely, **tὲɛk** 'be broken' in (1) and (5), **mòt** 'come to an end' in (2), **maw** 'be intoxicated' in (3), and **hěn** 'see' in (4). According to Noss (1964: 126), completive verbs occurring in VP2 signal "successful completion of attempted action." However, this explanation is not adequate for all completive verbs following VP1, since the action denoted by VP1 may not have originated in the agent's intention to achieve a certain goal, in other words, the person who performs the action may not be a typical agent with clear intention. This is the case with (2) where the person did not necessarily have the intention to use up his money. Furthermore, a cause event named by VP1 may sometimes not be an agent's action but a theme's process, as illustrated in (5). Therefore, I would prefer to say that completive verbs in VP2 express "realization of an expectable event (effect) as the result of a preceding event (cause)," which may or may not involve the intention of the agent in the preceding event. A piece of evidence to support this opinion is that the accomplishment construction has an affinity with an adverbial indicating involuntariness (such as **yàaŋ pen pay dây ʔeeŋ** 'automatically' and **yàaŋ mây rúu tua** 'involuntarily') as in (6). By contrast, an adverbial indicating the agent's volition (such as **phayaayaam** 'make an effort' and **yàaŋ coŋcay** 'intentionally') is normally not used as a modifier for the construction, as in (7).

(6) a. tii   klɔ̀ɔŋ tὲɛk   <u>yàaŋ pen pay dây ʔeeŋ</u>
       beat   box   be broken   automatically
       '(He) beat a box and it was broken automatically.'
    b. cháy   ŋən   mòt   <u>yàaŋ mây rúu tua</u>
       use   money come to an end   involuntarily
       '(He) involuntarily used money and it was used up.'

(7) a.? <u>phayaayaam</u>   tii   klɔ̀ɔŋ tὲɛk
        make an effort   beat   box   be broken
    b.? cháy   ŋən   mòt   <u>yàaŋ coŋcay</u>
        use   money come to an end   intentionally

The expectation on the part of the speaker/conceptualizer is based on her consideration of the nature of the involved entities as well as the physical and cultural setting in which the entities are situated. Even if one does not have the intention to cause a specific effect, a certain effect would arise from one's activity given an appropriate setting, which we readily expect. We also know from our force-dynamic experiences in the physical world that an entity's motion mostly terminates and sometimes brings about some effect eventually.

VP2 in the accomplishment construction expresses realization of an effect event that delimits the duration of a preceding cause event denoted by VP1. The effect event denoted by VP2 bounds the complex event as a whole denoted by the combination of VP1 and VP2. In this sense, we may call the effect event a "delimiter event" or a "culminative event." There are a variety of subtypes of the delimiter event. For instance, (1) and (5) including **tὲεk** 'be broken' involve a delimiter event of "destruction" (i.e. something has been destroyed); (2) including **mòt** 'come to an end' involves that of "exhaustion" (i.e. someone has used up something) or "disappearance" (i.e. something has disappeared); (3) including **maw** 'be intoxicated' involves that of "natural consequence" (i.e. someone/something has undergone a change of state/location as a matter of course); and, (4) including **hěn phuukhǎw** 'see mountains' involves that of "perception" (i.e. someone has perceived something). It is likely that the least specific and the most inclusive label for characterizing these various delimiter events is "natural consequence" (i.e. an entity undergoes a change as a matter of course). This means that any delimiter event is a natural consequence of a preceding cause event in the given circumstances.

It is noteworthy that there may be a considerable time span before the effect event manifests itself. The effect event named by VP2 may be of any simplex aspectual type (state or activity/process or achievement), while the cause event named by VP1 should be durative, or specifically, an activity/process or state that continues until the realization of an effect event expressed by VP2. Even though the duration of the cause event is fairly short, such as hitting and lifting, it must take some time until the effect event takes place. Below is a summary of combination patterns for the meanings of VP1 and VP2.

Table 1: *Combination Patterns for VP1 and VP2 in Thai Accomplishment Constructions*

	VP1: CAUSE; VP2: EFFECT
Pattern 1	VP1: volitional activity
	VP2: change of state/location or state
Pattern 2	VP1: non-specific but direct activity
	VP2: change of state/location or spontaneous action
Pattern 3	VP1: activity/process or state
	VP2: accumulation
Pattern 4	VP1: sensation-related activity
	VP2: perception/conception
Pattern 5	VP1: non-purposive activity or process
	VP2: change of state/location or state