Is Hây Really a Benefactive-Causative in Thai?

Udom Warotamasikkhadit
Ramkhamhaeng University

0. Introduction.

One of the most troublesome verbs in Thai is hây 'to give' which has several semantic interpretations when occurring with another verb. A similar verb in Cambodian (Schiller 1992: 777-790) and Vietnamese also has the same problem. It is rather difficult for a foreigner to know when hây 'to give' should appear in a sentence or not. This paper attempts to define the occurrence of hây 'to give' in different sentence types.

1. Benefactive hây 'to give'.

A benefactive hây meaning 'to give' occurs in:
\[
\text{NP}_1 \ V_1 (\text{NP}_2) \ \text{hây} \ \text{NP}_3 \ V_2 \ t_2
\]
(1) phó hồn hồn hây lưuk chây (hơn)
father seek money give child spend money
A father earns the money for his child to spend.
(2) khâu sê sêa hây mạe sây (sêa)
he buy blouse give mother wear blouse
He bought a blouse for his mother to wear.

\(t_2\) is a trace of \(\text{NP}_2\) where the same \(\text{NP}_2\) in the sentence has been deleted. \(V_2\) in (1) and (2) can be further deleted as in:
(3) phó hồn hồn hây lưuk
father seek money give child
A father earns money for his child.
(4) khâu sê sêa hây mạe
he buy blouse give mother
He bought a blouse for his mother.

If the preceding sentence of (1) contains hồn 'money', and of (2) contains sêa 'blouse', \(\text{NP}_2\) can be deleted:
(5) phó hồ hồ lưuk
father seek give child
A father earns (it) for his child.

(6) khǎw sī hây māæ
he buy give mother
He bought (it) for his mother.

In this case NP₂ becomes t₂. It should be noted that NP₃ must be an animate noun and hây 'to give' cannot precede an inanimate noun.

(7) * phōc hāa nœn hây bāan
father seek money give house
* A father earns the money for a house.

(8) * khǎw hāa khoɔŋ tōktǎŋ hây bāan
he seek thing decorate give house
* He has been looking for something to decorate his house.

Both (7) and (8) are ungrammatical. (8) should be without hây 'to give' because bāan 'house' is an inanimate noun.

(9) khǎw hāa khoɔŋ tōktǎŋ bāan
he seek thing decorate house
He has been looking for something to decorate his house.

Some may find that hây 'to give' in (10) precedes an animate noun which contradicts the statement above.

(10) phōc hāy nœn lûuk
father give money child
A father gives a son money.

It must be noted that word arrangement in Thai is different from English. Thai nœn 'money' precedes lûuk 'child' but in English 'son' precedes 'money'. The deep structure of (10) is (11):

(11) phōc sɔŋ nœn hây lûuk
father hand out money give child
A father gives a son money.
2. Causative hay in different environments.

2.1 hay preceding a descriptive verb.

When hay precedes a descriptive verb, hay no longer conveys the meaning of benefactive. It is a causative.

\[ \text{NP}_1 \ X \ \text{hay} \ t_1 \ V_{\text{des}} \]

(12) mãe kéy yaa háy (máé) rúán
mother eat medicine caus. mother fat
Mother takes medicine to get fat.

(13) phóm máy yóom càay ñen háy (phóm) nôo
I not agree pay money caus. I stupid
I would not make myself look stupid by paying the money.

The ungrammatical sentence (8) can contain hay and become grammatical as in:

(14) kháw háa khóơng tòktéñ bàan háy (bàan) súay
he seek thing decorate house caus. house beautiful
He has been looking for something to decorate his house to make it beautiful.

(14) is grammatical and hay conveys the meaning of causative when it precedes a descriptive verb.

2.2 hay following tham 'to make'.

When the verb tham 'to make' precedes hay with an empty category between tham 'to make' and hay, hay will convey the meaning of causative in the following sentence type:

\[ \text{NP}_1 \ \text{tham} \ \text{PRO} \ \text{hay} \ \text{NP}_2 \ \text{VP} \]

(15) nâataa khun tham háy dèk rónhâay
face eye you make caus. child cry
Your features make the children cry.

(16) khun tham háy phóm mii khwaamsük
you make caus. I have happiness
You make me happy.

It must be noted here that no element can occur between tham 'to make' and hay 'causative'. 
A sentence like (17) is grammatical and one may think that it violates the postulation of 2.2.

(17) màæ tham khànõm hûuk kin (khànõm)  
mother make dessert caus. child eat dessert  
A mother makes dessert for her children.

It can be seen here that (17) follows the pattern of 1., not 2.2 because khànõm 'dessert' is an inanimate noun and it occurs between tham 'to make' and hûuk 'to give.' If it were to become a causative, the element between tham 'to make' and hûuk 'causative' must be an empty category.

2.3 hûuk preceded by another verb of a certain sentence type.

If hûuk is preceded by a verb of command like bôok 'to force', bôok 'to tell', chày 'to use', sãŋ 'to order', or other verbs like sõon 'to teach', wâa 'to scold mildly', or others in the following sentence type:

NP₁  V  NP₂  t₁  hûuk  t₂  VP

NP₂ must be an animate noun and NP₂ can be placed after hûuk, for example:

(18) khâw bôok páhm hûuk tham ŋaăn  
he force I caus. do work  
He forced me to work.

(19) màæ sãŋ phõm hûuk pay  
mother order I caus. go  
Mother ordered me to go.

(18) can also appear as (20), and (19) as (21):

(20) khâw bôok hûuk phõm tham ŋaăn  
he force caus. I do work  
He forced me to work.

(21) màæ sãŋ hûuk phõm pay  
mother order caus. I go  
Mother ordered me to go.

(22) khruu sõon phõm hûuk wâay nãám  
teacher teach I caus. swim water  
The teacher teaches me to swim.