BENEFACTIVES AND CLAUSE UNION IN LAI[1]

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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'.[2] 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).[3] 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.[4]
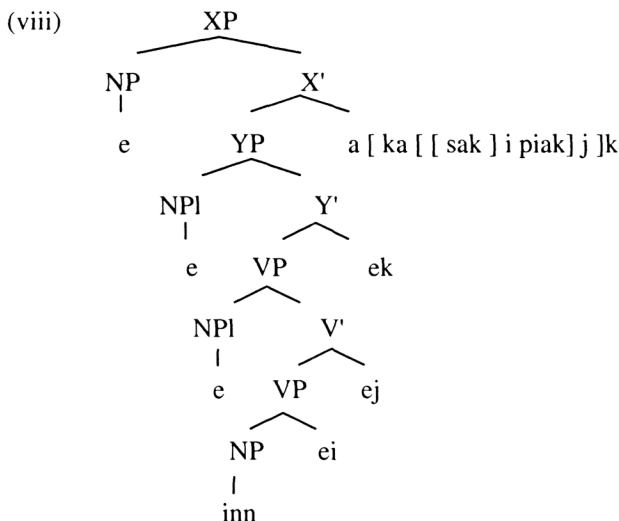
(13)   **Keimah caah inn a sakpiak.*   Cf. (10)

(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).

(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

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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).

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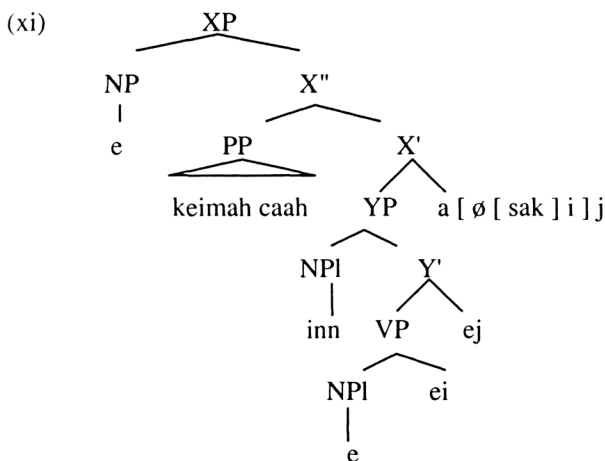
In (ix), *inn* occupies the object position, though there is no overt agreement marker in this case. The PP *keimah caah* is not an argument, either of *-piak* or of *sak*, and appears outside the verb complex *a sak*. Its meaning is similar if not identical to that of *-piak* together with its object.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

```
                        XP
            _____/  \
          NP              X"
          |        _____/  _____
          e      PP                   X'
            ____/  \           _____/  \
          NPl      caah      YP        a [ ka [ [sak ]i piak ]j ]k
          |               __/  \
        keimah          NPl     Y'
                        |    ___/  \
                        e   VP     ek
                          __/  \
                        NPl     V'
                        |     __/  \
                        e    VP     ej
                           __/  \
                         NP     ei
                         |
                        inn
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(xi)

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                    XP
          _____/    _____
        NP                   X'
        |             _____/  _____
        e           YP                 a[ ka[ [ sak]i piak ]j ]k
               ____/  \
             NPl      Y'
          __/___    __/  \
       keimah cu   VP     ek
                 __/  \
               NPl     V'
               |     __/  \
               e    VP     ej
                  __/  \
                NP     ei
                |
               inn
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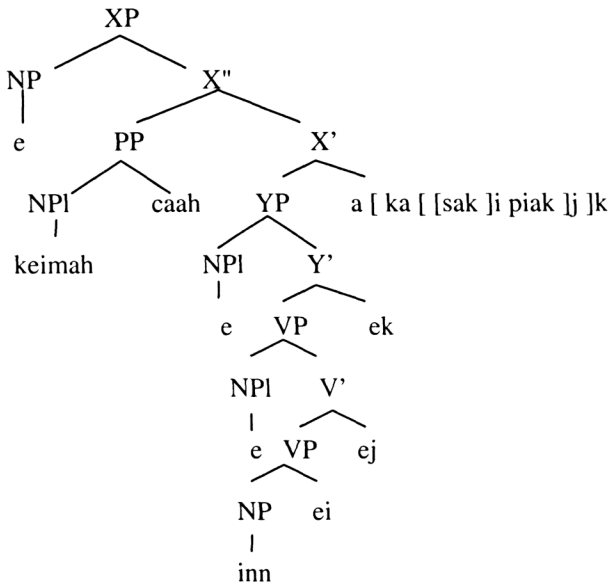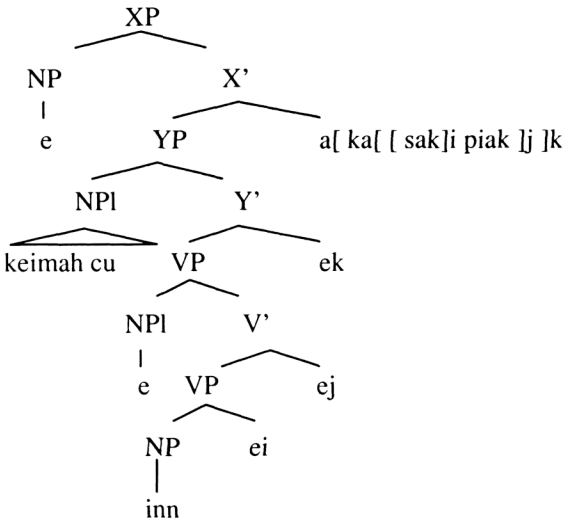
It is possible for the benefactive object or PP to be coreferential with the subject in sentences like (1) through (12), but *-piak* may not appear in that case.

(17)   *Inn kaa sak.*
                         I built myself a house.

(18)   *Keimah caah inn ka sak.*

(19)   *Keimah caah inn kaa sak.*

(20)   *Keimah cu inn kaa sak.*

Sentence (20) is not parallel to (11), since *keimah cu* occupies the subject rather than the object position.

(21)   **Inn kaa sakpiak.*

(22)   **Keimah caah inn ka sakpiak.*

(23)   **Keimah caah inn kaa sakpiak.*

(24)   **Keimah cu inn kaa sakpiak.*

        We take (xvii) to be the structure of (17), in which an empty verb replaces *-piak* in structures like (viii).[5]

(xvii)
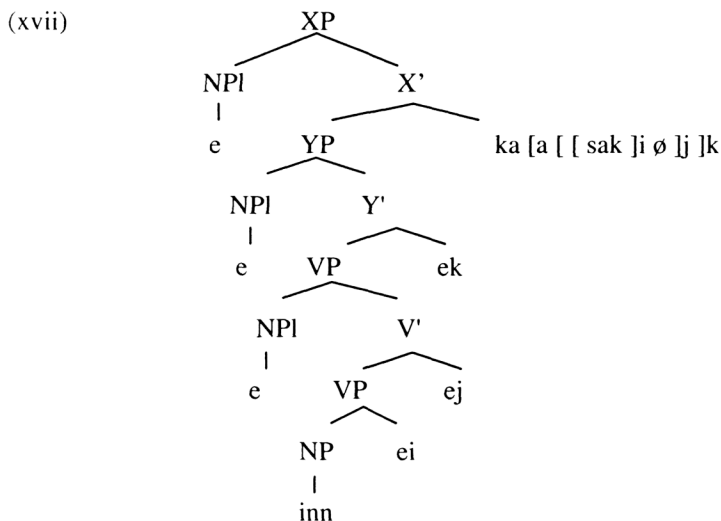
        The structure of benefactives can be further elucidated by considering corresponding passive sentences.   (24) is a passive

corresponding to (1).

(25)   *Hi inn hi sak a si.*
              This house was built.

In passives like (25), the first person subject agreement marker *ka* of (1) disappears, because the subject is no longer first person. The agent may be expressed using a pronoun and the marker *nih* as in (26); the same phrase could be added to (1) for reinforcement or contrast as in (27).[6]

(26)   *Hi inn hi keimah nih sak a si.*
              This house was built by me.

(27)   *Keimah nih inn ka sak.*
              I built a house.

       Two distinct passives correspond to benefactive sentences like (8) or (10).

(28)   *Hi inn hi sakpiak a si.*
              This house was built for him/me.

(29)   **Hi inn hi ka sakpiak a si.*

(30)   *Hi inn hi keimah caah sakpiak a si.*
              This house was built for me.

(31)   *Inn sakpiak ka si.*
              *I was built a house.

(32)   *Keimah cu inn sakpiak ka si.*
              *I was built a house.

(28) and (30) are passives whose subject *hi inn hi* 'this house' is the direct object of *sak*, just as in (25). Since passives are inherently intransitive, no object agreement may appear, and the beneficiary in (28) is unidentified, though definite. The PP *keimah caah* in (30) identifies it as first person singular.

       (31) and (32) are passives whose subject *keimah cu* 'I' corresponds to the benefactive object in (8) and (10). In this case, the first person singular agreement marker *ka* appears before the passive auxiliary *si*. The PP *keimah caah* is not possible in passives like (32), nor is *keimah cu* possible in passives like (30).

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(33)   *Keimah caah inn sakpiak ka si.

(34)   *Hi inn hi keimah cu sakpiak a si.

A passive like (30) is possible without the benefactive suffix   -piak; the relation between (35) and (30) is parallel to (9) and (10).

(35)   Hi inn hi keimah caah sak a si.
                    This house was built for me.

In passives like (31) and (32), -piak is indispensable.

(36)   *Inn sak ka si.

(37)   *Keimah cu inn sak ka si.

A passive corresponding to sentences like (17) to (20) is (38).
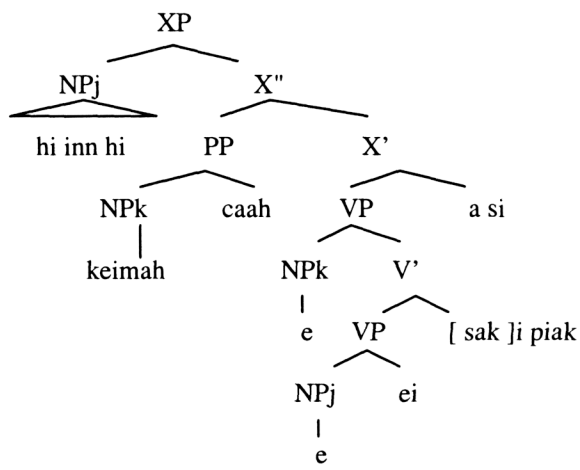
(38)   ?Hi inn hi keimah nih keimah caah sak a si.
                    This house was built by me for myself.

In (38), since no agreement may identify the agent or benefactive object, both must be made overt by a pronoun. (38) is awkward, but seems to be grammatical.

        Applying the analysis of Lai passives developed in Bedell 1996a, we take the structure of (30) to be as in (xxx). The semantic relation between -piak and keimah caah is the same in (30) as in (10); syntactically the passive auxiliary intervenes in the latter. We further take the structure of (32) to be as in (xxxii). The semantic relation between -piak and keimah cu is the same in (32) as in (11), but the latter has a different syntactic status in the two examples.

        The analysis of Lai benefactives just sketched, together with the analysis of causatives in Bedell 1996b, are examples of 'clause union'. This term is used here without implying any syntactic derivation whereby two clauses are integrated into one, but rather in sole reference to the result of such a derivation. That is, structure (a):

(xxx)

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                        XP
              ┌──────────┴────────┐
            NPj                  X"
        ┌────┴────┐        ┌──────┴──────┐
      hi inn hi   PP                    X'
             ┌─────┴─────┐         ┌─────┴─────┐
           NPk         caah       VP          a si
            │                 ┌────┴────┐
          keimah            NPk        V'
                             │      ┌───┴───┐
                             e     VP    [ sak ]i piak
                                ┌───┴───┐
                              NPj      ei
                               │
                               e
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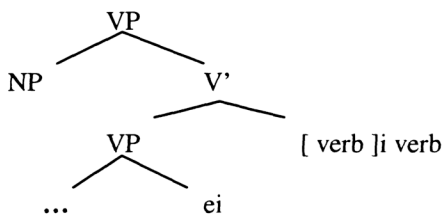
(xxxii)

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                     XP
            ┌─────────┴─────────┐
          NPj                  X'
      ┌────┴────┐         ┌─────┴─────┐
   keimah cu    VP                   ka si
            ┌────┴────┐
          NPj        V'
           │     ┌────┴────┐
           e    VP     [ sak ]i piak
             ┌───┴───┐
            NP      ei
             │
            inn
```

(a)

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            VP
      ┌─────┴─────┐
     NP          V'
            ┌─────┴─────┐
           VP       [ verb ]i verb
        ┌───┴───┐
       ...     ei
```
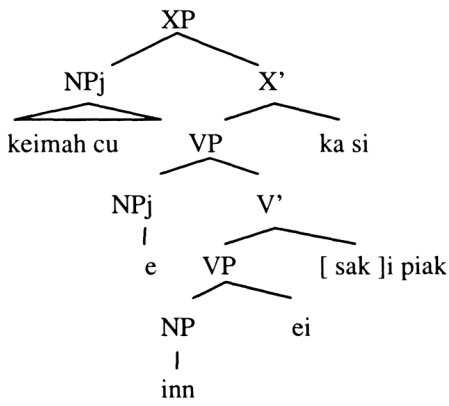
In (a), the main verb is the head of the lower VP, and the suffixed verb (*-ter*
in causatives, but *-piak* in benefactives) of the upper VP. Morphologically
the two are identical, and semantically each contributes an additional
argument to those associated with the main verb.   But the syntactic
distribution of the arguments is distinct. In a causative, the NP position in

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(a) is interpreted as the subject of the main (lower) verb; the subject of the sentence is then interpreted as the causative agent associated with –*ter*. In a benefactive, by contrast, the NP in (a) is interpreted as the beneficiary associated with -*piak;* in this case it is the subject of the sentence which is interpreted as the subject of the of the main (lower) verb. The analysis accounts in a straightforward way for why it is only the NP in (a), regardless of the varying interpretation it may receive, which is relevant for object agreement in Lai.

It may be of some interest to compare the Lai benefactive structure with corresponding English structures, as in (40) to (43).

(39) *I / He built a house.* Cf. (1), (7)

(40) *I built a house for him.* Cf. (2)
      I built him a house.

(41) *He built a house for me.* Cf. (8)
      He built me a house.

English benefactives resemble Lai in that they may contain a PP (with the preposition *for*) as well as a benefactive object. They differ in that there is neither a benefactive marker associated with the verb or object agreement.

(42) *The house was built for me.* Cf. (27), (28)
      *The house was built me.

(43) **I was built a house.* Cf. (29), (30)

English allows only one passive of a benefactive, in which the direct object becomes the passive subject, and then only in the structure with a PP.

Corresponding Japanese structures are as in (45) to (48).

(44) *Ie o tateta.* Cf. (1), (7)
      (I/he) Built a house.

(45) *Ie o (kare ni) tatete yatta.* Cf. (2)
      (I) Built him a house.

(46) *Ie o (ore ni) tatete kureta.* Cf. (8)
      (he) Built me a house.

Japanese resembles Lai in using an auxiliary construction for benefactives; it lacks agreement, including object agreement, but the choice between

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yatta and *kureta* is a matter of orientation with respect to the speaker. A pronoun object is possible, but used only for emphasis or contrast, much as in Lai.

(47)   *??Ie wa (ore ni) taterarete kureta.* Cf. (27), (28)
         The house was built for me.

(48)   **(Ore wa) ie o tatete kurerareta.*   Cf. (29), (30)
         *I was built a house (for).

Japanese does not freely allow any passives of benefactives. In the case of (47), there is a violation of the restriction that the subject of a Japanese passive must be human, which may be explicable in terms of a general animacy hierarchy. In the case of (48), it is not generally possible to passivize auxiliaries.[7] The Japanese passive *-rare* has a clause union relation to the passivized verb, but the benefactive auxiliary does not.[8] This is the reverse of the Lai situation.

We conclude this discussion of Lai benefactives by examining some examples taken from the 1978 Lai Bible which illustrate the various properties we have mentioned.

Sentence (49) is a benefactive which contains a PP making the benefactive object explicit, as in (10).

(49)   *Kan inn chungah nangmah caah hmun pakhat*
         kan sersiampiak cang. (Gn. 4:31)
         I have prepared you a place in our house.

The basic meaning (perhaps with different emphasis) will be maintained without *nangmah caah* 'for you'; or without *-piak* and its associated agreement marker (underlined in the examples).

(50)   *Kan inn chungah hmun pakhat kan sersiampiak cang.*

(51)   *Kan inn chungah nangmah caah hmun pakhat*
         ka sersiam cang.

(52) is a relative clause example containing a benefactive PP but no benefactive suffix or object agreement, as in (9).

(52)   *nangmah caah ka rak phorhmi ka laksawng cu*
                                             (Gn. 33:11)
         my gift that I brought you

Again, the meaning will be preserved if *-piak* and its associated agreement are added, and if they are added, the PP *nangmah caah* may be omitted.

(53)   *nangmah caah ka rak in phorhpiakmi ka laksawng cu*

(54)   *ka rak in phorhpiakmi ka laksawng cu*

        (55) is a benefactive in which there is an overt benefactive object as in (11).

(55)   *Abram cu a nupi Sarai nih fa zeihmanh a hrinpiak lo.* (Gn. 16:1)
        Abram's wife Sarai did not bear him any children.

In this case the NP *Abram cu* is semantically interpreted in relation to the benefactive verb *hrinpiak* 'bear for'. Without *-piak* the sentence becomes ungrammatical.

(56)   **Abram cu a nupi Sarai nih fa zeihmanh a hrin lo.*

        (57) is a benefactive lacking either an overt benefactive object or a PP, as in (8).

(57)   *King u law inka cu an in hunpiak hna lai.* (Mt. 7:7)
        Knock, and the door will be opened for
                you. (lit. knock and they will open the
                door for you)

By contrast with (55) versus (56), omission of *-piak* and its associated object agreement does not create an ungrammatical sentence, but the benefactive meaning is lost.

(58)   *King u law inka cu an hun lai.*
        Knock, and they will open the door.

        (59) is a passive as in (32), corresponding closely to (57).

(59)   *A kingtu paoh cu inka kha hunpiak an si lai.* (Mt. 7:8)
        For everyone who knocks, the door will be opened. (lit.
        *everyone who knocks will be opened the door for)

Here it is the subject *a kingtu paoh cu* 'everyone who knocks' which is semantically interpreted in relation to the benefactive verb *hunpiak* 'open for'. Just as in (55) versus (56), the omission of *-piak* will result in ungrammaticality.

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(60)   *A kingtu paoh cu inka kha hun an si lai.*

The English glosses given for (57) and (59) follow the New Revised Standard Version; both contain a passive with the subject (the door) corresponding to the direct object of the active verb (open). In Lai, by contrast, there is no passive at all in (57), while (58) contains a passive with the subject corresponding to the benefactive object. The latter is a structure which is quite ungrammatical in English.

     (61) and (62) are benefactives in which the benefactive object is coreferential with the subject, as in (19). The reflexive agreement marker is underlined in these examples; it appears as a qualitative vowel difference when immediately preceded by a singular subject agreement marker, otherwise as *i*.

(61)   *Zeihmanh keimah caah kaa lak lai lo.* (Gn. 14:24)
              I will take nothing for myself.

(62)   *Na ta cu nangmah caah i chiah ko.* (Gn. 33:9)
              Keep your things for yourself.

Explicit benefactive verbs like *lakpiak* 'take for' or *chiahpiak* 'keep for' may not be used in such sentences.

(63)   *Zeihmanh keimah caah kaa lakpiak lai lo.*

(64)   *Na ta cu nangmah caah i chiahpiak ko.*

That this is not a peculiarity of these particular verbs is clear from (65) and (66).

(65)   *A ngei lomi cu a ngeihmi hnihchunte hmanh kha*
              lakpiak a si lai.   (Mt. 13:12)
              From those who have nothing, even what they have will be taken away. (lit. *he who has nothing will be taken from even what he has)

(66)   *Vancung khua ah laksawng tampi chiahpiak nan si ko.*
              (Mt. 5:12)
              Your reward is great in Heaven. (lit. *you are kept many gifts for in Heaven)

(65) and (66) provide additional examples of the Lai passive in which the subject corresponds to a benefactive object.

Notes

[1]Lai is spoken in and around the town of Hakha, present administrative capital of Chin State, Myanmar. It is often called (Hakha) Chin in linguistic literature. I am grateful to Rev. Samuel Ngun Ling for teaching me what I know about Lai, to Tomoyuki Yoshida for comments on Japanese benefactives, and to those who attended the seventh meeting of the Southeast Asian Linguistics Society, held at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, May 9-11, 1997.

[2]The Lai verb *cawnpiak* 'teach' is certainly related to *cawn* 'learn, study'. But in this verb -*piak* is causative rather than benefactive. So far as I am aware, this is a unique exception.

[3]Pairs like (4) and (5) are not always interchangeable. A benefactive object as in (5) is favored in contexts where it is contrasted with others. It is not clear how far this is due to its syntactic status and how far to the presence of *cu*. The latter is not a case marker, but a kind of discourse demonstrative.

[4]Some Lai speakers have a second benefactive construction with *sak* (versus *sa*). Its meaning is slightly different from *sakpiak*. For such speakers, sentences like (15) and (16) are grammatical in this variant sense. I am grateful to Kenneth Van Bik (personal communication) for this observation.

[5] Note the similarity between this analysis and the analysis of English double object constructions given in Larson 1988. In our Lai case, there is no need to 'move' the benefactive object. Also see examples (39) to (43) below.

[6] That *nih*, like *cu*, is not a case marker in the usual sense, is suggested by its invariability between active and passive sentences. It is rather an agent marker.

[7]Japanese has so-called 'indirect' passives in which the passive subject is adversely affected by the event described in the sentence. Though ungrammatical, sentences like (48) may occasionally be used to make jokes which draw on this meaning. See Shibatani (1994) for general discussion of Japanese benefactives.

[8]The Japanese auxiliaries *yatta* and *kureta* are used as main verbs in the meaning of 'give'. The factor of orientation (*yatta* implying away from the speaker or speaker's group, *kureta* impying toward it) carries over from this basic meaning. This suggests that there might be a relation between Lai -*piak* and *pek* 'give'. However, the difference in vocalism as well as the stem alternation of *pek* with *pe* seems to rule out any synchronic relation.

well as the stem alternation of *pek* with *pe* seems to rule out any synchronic relation.

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