SEMANTIC TYPES OF RESULTATIVE PREDICATE IN TRANSITIVE-BASED RESULTATIVE CONSTRUCTIONS IN THAI

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1. Introduction

The term “resultative” is generally used to refer to linguistic forms that express a state and a previous event. The previous event may not be explicitly manifested in a sentence but implied instead. Typically, the resultative situation can be linguistically realized by (a) single verbs, such as broken in The stick is broken and washed in The floor is washed, and (b) syntactic constructions, such as The river froze solid, The butter melted to a liquid, and Mary kicked the door open. In the English examples, the matrix verbs, which represent the causative predicate, can be either intransitive or transitive. The syntactic resultative construction with an intransitive and a transitive matrix verb will be called in this paper intransitive-based and transitive-based resultative, respectively.

This paper aims to investigate the transitive-based resultative construction in Thai, which consists of a causative predicate manifested as a transitive verb with its object argument, and a resultative predicate linguistically realized as a single verb. Specifically, it will examine semantic types of resultative predicates which co-occur with transitive verbs serving as the causative predicate in the resultative construction. An investigation of the semantic types of resultative predicates is intertwined with a study of the semantic relationships between causative and resultative predicates. A number of recent studies on resultative constructions in single languages and across languages have proposed findings on such relationships, which in turn constitute well-formedness conditions of the resultative construction. By focusing on the semantic types of resultative predicates in Thai, this study will shed light on the typological study of well-formedness conditions of the resultative
construction in general. Previous works on the semantic relationships between causative and resultative predicates across languages will be reviewed in section 2. In accounting for the relationships between causative and resultative predicates, this study will draw on Talmy’s cognitive semantic account of verbal patterns (Talmy 2000), which is considered the first work to set forth a detailed framework for analyzing the semantic relationships between causative and resultative predicates.

2. Semantic relationships between causative and resultative predicates

The first type of relationship between causative and resultative predicates to be examined was the syntactic type. Simpson (1983) claims that “resultative phrases” are always predicated of the direct object argument in English. Levin & Rappaport Hovav (1995) propose a well-formedness condition of the resultative construction in English called the Direct Object Restriction (DOR), which states that the resultative phrases must be predicated of objects. It is claimed that the DOR is valid only for some languages such as English, Dutch, and Japanese. However, it has been found to be inadequate since not all direct object arguments of transitive verbs are compatible with resultative phrases (Levin & Rappaport Hovav 1995: 56-62). Thus, the well-formedness condition for the resultative construction which is purely syntactic in nature are not sufficient.

It is only in the last five years that researchers studying resultatives have begun to realize the crucial role of semantic relationships between causative and resultative predicates in postulating well-formedness conditions of the resultative construction. Goldberg (1995) analyzes these relationships in terms of causation and time span between the two predicates. That is, there must be a direct causal link between them. No intermediary time interval between the two events is permissible. Wechsler (1997), who examines the intransitive-based resultative construction, suggests that semantic relations between the two predicates are crucial. He postulates the “Canonical Result Restriction” (CRR), which states that a
resulting event must represent a "canonical" or "normal" state of the action denoted by the verb (Wechsler 1997: 310). That is, the associated canonical result is idiosyncratic to a particular verb. Verspoor (1997) also claims that the meaning of a resultative predicate must mesh with the meaning conveyed by the verb. Any resultative predicate which bears no relation to the semantics expressed independently by the verb is ruled out. Takami (1998) also recognizes the importance of semantic relations between the two predicates. According to Takami, for a resultative to be well-formed, there must be a logical cause-effect relationship between the two predicates. If no such relationship exists, the resultative sentence will be unacceptable. Such a logical cause-effect relationship is pragmatically inferred from our real-world knowledge.

The present study will continue to examine the semantic relationships between causative and resultative predicates with special reference to the transitive-based resultative construction in Thai. This study specifically draws on a cognitive semantic account of event integration set forth by Talmy (2000) as summarized below.

Event integration is defined by Talmy as the conceptualized fusion of two simpler events into an event complex expressed by a single clause. The transitive-based resultative construction is an instantiation of event integration as Talmy defines it since it is represented by a multi-verbal construction expressing a unitary event. One type of event integration postulated by Talmy which is relevant to the issue under investigation concerns the domain of "realization," which is an event of fulfillment or confirmation of the agent’s intention or goal in carrying out an action. The resultative predicate, which Talmy would call a "satellite\textsuperscript{1}" to the verb, serves to indicate the fulfillment or confirmation of the realization of the agent’s goal incorporated in the verb representing the causative predicate. Talmy postulates four verbal patterns which are largely based on English verbs. Each of these verbal patterns consists of a verb indicating a causing action and a satellite functioning as the resultative predicate indicating the fulfillment or realization of the agent’s intention in carrying out the causing action. The main verbs in the four
Verbal patterns exhibit varying degrees of realization of the agent’s goal in performing an action and thus require different kinds of satellites, or resultative predicates in our terms, as described below.

a. *Intrinsic-fulfillment verb + further event satellite*

In this verbal pattern, the agent’s scope of intention in carrying out an action does not extend beyond the action itself. The agent’s goal is fulfilled precisely by carrying out the action referred to by the verb itself. An example of this type of verb given by Talmy is *kick*. A verb with this semantic pattern of lexicalization is termed an “intrinsic-fulfillment verb” (Talmy 2000: 263). With an intrinsic-fulfillment verb, a satellite can be added to denote a meaning that is extrinsic to the meaning referred to by the verb. A satellite with this semantic relationship to the verb is termed a “further-event satellite.” For example, in the sentence *I kicked the hubcap flat* (Talmy 2000: 262), the satellite *flat* realized by an adjective refers to a change of state which is beyond the agent’s scope of intention in performing the action of kicking.

b. *Moot-fulfillment verb + fulfillment satellite*

The moot fulfillment-verb refers to an agent intending and executing a particular action. Unlike the intrinsic-fulfillment verb, the agent further intends for the action to lead to a particular result. The agent’s intention is within the referential content of the verb. However, based on the referential content of the verb alone, the intended result does not come about and its eventual success or failure is left moot or questionable. A verb with this pattern of lexicalization is, therefore, termed by Talmy a moot-fulfillment verb (Talmy 2000: 264). On this basis, it can be said that without a satellite, the agent’s intended result is only potential. An example given by Talmy to illustrate this type of verbal pattern is *The police hunted the fugitive down* (Talmy 2000: 262). Without the satellite *down*, it is unknown whether the intended outcome has been actualized or not.

c. *Implied-fulfillment verb + confirmation satellite*
The implied-fulfillment verb also consists of two main components, namely, (1) the agent’s intended and executed action, and (2) the agent’s further intention that this action lead to a particular desired result. However, the implied-fulfillment verb conveys an implication\(^2\) that the agent’s goal to bring about a certain result has been fulfilled. Since the agent’s goal is merely an implication, this reading is defeasible or cancelable by a disclaiming phrase, as in *I washed the shirt but it came out dirty (Talmy 2000: 265). The addition of a satellite confirms what is otherwise only implied. In *I washed the shirt clean, the satellite clean confirms that the implication of the shirt’s becoming clean has been fulfilled. Consequently, the implied-fulfillment verb accompanied by a satellite cannot co-occur with a disclaiming phrase, as in *I washed the shirt clean but it came out dirty.

\(d\). Attained-fulfillment verb (+pleonastic satellite)

Like the other three types of verbs mentioned above, the attained-fulfillment verb consists of two major components. However, it indicates the actual fulfillment of the agent’s intention. The attained-fulfillment verb cannot be accompanied by a satellite to indicate the realization of the agent’s intention; otherwise, it would result in redundancy. An example of this type of verb given by Talmy is the transitive verb drown, which cannot be accompanied by the satellite dead to indicate the agent’s intention in executing the action of submerging an animate being in liquid. Thus, the sentence *I drowned him dead is unacceptable.

The incremental series of realization patterns above is characteristic of English. Talmy claims that there also exist other semantic verb-satellite relationships in other languages, such as underfulfillment, overfulfillment, antifulfillment, and other-event. These relationships are classified in terms of the type of fulfillment a satellite indicates in relation to the verb. In section 3, we will explain only those terms which are applicable to the Thai data. Since Talmy’s typology of verbal patterns is essentially concerned with different semantic relationships between the main verb and the satellite in the realization domain, it can be used as a framework to account
for the semantic relationships that the resultative predicate bears on the causative one in this study.

3. Semantic types of resultative predicate

An investigation of the semantic types of resultative predicates is tantamount to an analysis of the semantic relationships between causative and resultative predicates. The resultative predicates in Thai can be classified into two main types, namely, subject-oriented resultative predicates, and object-oriented resultative predicates. In the first type, the resultative phrase is predicated of the subject of the sentence, whereas in the second type, the resultative phrase is predicated of the object of the main verb. The object-oriented resultative predicate can be further classified into subtypes. These semantic types of resultative predicates are described below.

3.1 Subject-oriented resultative predicate

The subject-oriented resultative predicate describes the resulting state of the subject of the main verb after the action expressed by the main verb has been carried out. It has been found that resultative predicates of this type are rare in discourse. The sentences below illustrate this type of resultative predicate.

(1) ทะงกินข้าวเต็ม กิจ อยุนาญ
you eat rice full question particle
‘Have you eaten your fill yet?’

(2) ข้าวดื่มแอลกอฮอล์ไม้
he drink alcohol drunk
‘He drank alcohol and became drunk as a result.’

Note that there is no time span between the actions and the resulting states in the examples above; the latter takes place immediately after the actions performed by the agent. It seems to be the case that a pragmatic relationship between the transitive verb and the following stative verb plays a crucial role in determining whether the resultative phrase is predicated
of the subject or not. Some native speakers of Thai may find the examples more natural with the linker *con* 'until' occurring immediately before the resultative predicates. However, the sentences above without *con* 'until' sound natural to many Thais. It has been found that instantiations of subject-oriented resultative constructions which express conventionalized cause-result scenes are felt to be appropriate. Conventionalized scenes tend to be culture- and language-specific. Sentences in which the main verb is durative and which express nonconventionalized cause-result scenes, such as writing a letter and becoming hungry, and reading a book and becoming tired, are not acceptable without *con* 'until' linking the two events. This explains why subject-oriented resultative predicates are not found frequently in discourse.

3.2 Object-oriented resultative predicate

This type of resultative phrase is predicated of the object of the transitive verb. The object-oriented resultative predicate can be subclassified based on whether it describes the changed location or the changed state of the object as below.

3.2.1 The object-oriented resultative predicate indicating a change of location

This type of resultative predicate describes a changed location of the patient object after the agent subject performs an action which affects the patient. The location can be physical, abstract, or figurative. The changed location of the patient indicates that the agent has been successful in performing an action. This type of resultative predicate is manifested as one of six directional verbs, namely, *khûm* 'ascend', *løŋ* 'descend', *khâw* 'enter', and *êk* 'exit', *pay* 'go', and *maa* 'come'. These words can occur in isolation as main verbs and as the first verb in serial verb constructions. As an isolated verb and the first verb in a serial verb construction, each of these verbs conflates a motion event with a direction. When these verbs accompany other verbs, it is debatable as to what syntactic category they fall into. If they follow other verbs and do not take an object, they may be termed serial
verbs, directional verbs, or adverbs. If they follow other verbs and take objects, they may be called serial verbs, coverbs, or prepositions. Syntactically, these words which occur as a resultative predicate and which indicate the success of a causing action do not take an object. To refer to the words with this function in this paper, we will adopt Bisang’s term “directional verb” (Bisang 1996). This is defined as a verb indicating a direction which occurs in the postnominal position and which does not take an object in a serial verb construction.

Directional verbs occurring as resultative predicates and indicating the success of a causing action are found to occur more frequently in negative and interrogative sentences than in affirmative, and non-interrogative sentences. Therefore, all examples given below are negative sentences for the sake of pragmatic felicity.

(3) khăw yok klôn mây khuṁ
    he   lift   box   not   ascend
    ‘He tried to lift a box up but was not successful.’

(4) khăw kót pûm mây loŋ
    he   press   button   not   descend
    ‘He tried to push the button down but was not successful.’

(5) khăw có? kampʰæŋ mây khăw
    he   pierce   wall   not   enter
    ‘He tried to pierce the wall but was not successful.’

(6) khăw láŋ kh restarted sôkkaprot mây čōk
    he   wash   stain   dirty   not   exit
    ‘He tried to wash the stain out but was not successful.’

(7) khăw khĕn rôt mây pay
    he   push   car   not   go
    ‘He tried to push the car away but was not successful.’

(8) cháñ taam tamruāt mây maa sâk thii
    I   call upon   police   not   come   even   time
'I kept calling upon the police but they did not show up (even once).'

The actions denoted by the transitive verbs in the sentences above affect the patient in some way and result in a change of the patient's location. The change of location can be a displacement or a change in the patient's size or shape. If the action performed by the agent is considered successful, it must result in a change of the patient's location. In most of the examples above, the direction of the motion is incorporated in the semantics of the transitive verb. The incorporated direction of the motion thus governs the choice of the directional verb functioning as the resultative predicate. The examples above indicate only a physical change in the patient's location. As mentioned above, the change of location of the patient can be abstract or figurative. Because of a lack of space in this paper, the abstract change of location will not be examined here.

3.2.2 The object-oriented resultative predicate indicating a change of state

This type of resultative predicate indicates a change of state of the patient after undergoing an action performed by the agent. It can be further classified into three subtypes as discussed below.

3.2.2.1 Resultative predicate indicating an intended and an unintended state of the patient

The meanings of the transitive verbs in Thai appearing in this verbal pattern correspond to those of two types of verbs postulated by Talmyn (2000), namely, the implied-fulfillment verb and the attained-fulfillment verb. Unlike the implied-fulfillment verb in English, the Thai verbs having meanings corresponding to this type of verb in English can take a resultative predicate, or a satellite in Talmyn’s terms, which indicates both an intended and resulting state of the patient, as shown in (9) and (10).
(9) khāw sāk stūa sàʔaʔat / sòkkaprok
    he wash shirt clean / dirty
    ‘He washed the shirt clean. / He washed the shirt but it came out dirty.’

(10) khāw huŋ khāaw sùk / dip
    he cook rice cooked / not fully cooked
    ‘He cooked rice (and the rice became fully cooked). / He cooked rice but it was not fully cooked.’

Each sentence above exemplifies two realization patterns. In the first one, the stative verb to the left of the slash confirms that the agent’s intention in performing the action denoted by the transitive verb has been fulfilled. In the second pattern in (9), the stative verb to the right of the slash, which is the antonym of the one to the left of the slash, indicates the unintended state of the patient. A resultative predicate with this semantic effect is termed an “antifulfillment satellite” by Talmy (2000: 276). On the other hand, the stative to the right of the slash in (10) indicates another kind of unintended state of the patient which is an insufficient fulfillment of the agent’s full intention. Since the state of being not fully cooked is on the way to the fully cooked state, the resultative predicate indicating the former corresponds to Talmy’s “underfulfillment satellite”.

Unlike attained-fulfillment verbs in English, Thai verbs with corresponding meanings can take a resultative predicate confirming the fulfillment of the agent’s intended goal inherent in the verbs, and can also take a resultative predicate indicating the non-fulfillment of such a goal as shown in (11) and (12).

(11) a. khāw khâa plaα (mây) taay
    he kill fish (not) dead
    ‘He killed the fish (dead).’ (affirmative)
    ‘He tried to kill the fish but it did not die.’ (negative)

(12) a. khāw chiik krâdâat (mây) khâat
    he tear paper (not) be torn
‘He tore a piece of paper (torn).’ (affirmative)
‘He tried to tear a piece of paper but it was not torn.’
(negative)

In each of the affirmative sentences above, the stative verb confirms the attainment of the agent’s intended goal, which is semantically inherent in the transitive verb. Unlike in English, the presence of such a confirming resultative predicate with the attained-fulfillment verb is not regarded as redundant in Thai. In each of the negative counterparts, the same stative verb is negated to indicate that the agent’s goal was not attained. This type of realization pattern is termed by Talmy (2000: 277) “nonfulfillment,” which suggests a failure of fulfillment in the case of an attained-fulfillment verb. The other two types of unintended resulting states in the case of implied-fulfillment verbs shown in (9) and (10) are antifulfillment and underfulfillment, respectively. Notice that there seems to be a more obvious “path” leading to the agent’s intended state in the case of an implied-fulfillment verb than in the case of an attained-fulfillment one. In other words, the agent’s intended state in the latter seems to be reached more punctually than in the former.

Note that the transitive verbs expressing the meanings corresponding to the attained-fulfillment ones and the implied-fulfillment ones in English are categorized as “non-alternating transitive verbs with inherent effects” in Thepkanjana (2000: 272). A non-alternating transitive verb is defined as opposed to an alternating transitive verb in this work. An alternating transitive verb refers to transitive causative verbs which have identical intransitive variants, such as khlutam (roi) ‘move (car)’, phlik (kradat) ‘turn over (paper)’, døp (thian) ‘blow out (candle)’, cøt (roi) ‘stop (car)’, pit (pratuu) ‘close (door)’, and phag (baan) ‘demolish (house).’ In other words, these verbs can appear in both transitive and intransitive constructions (Thepkanjana 2000: 265). When these verbs occur intransitively, they may express (a) activities, such as (roi) khlutam ‘(car) move’, (b) processes or inchoativeness, such
as (thian) dâp ‘(candle) go out’, and (c) resulting states, such as (kîymây) hâk ‘(twig) be broken.’ A non-alternating transitive verb refers to a transitive verb which does not have an intransitive form, such as chiîk ‘tear’, làan ‘wash’, bôt ‘grind’, khâa ‘kill’, tât ‘cut off’, and phâa ‘cut in half’. It follows that an intransitive verb form which expresses a resulting state incorporated in its alternating transitive counterpart is homophonous with the latter, whereas that of the non-alternating transitive counterpart is not. In the former case, it is therefore not possible to use a homophonous intransitive verb form as a resultative predicate indicating confirmation of the fulfillment of the agent’s intention as in (13) since it will result in obvious redundancy. It is not possible either to use a negated homophonous intransitive form to indicate nonfulfillment as in (14) since it will result in contradiction.

(13) *chân hâk kîymây mây hâk
    I break twig not broken

(14) *chân khoôn tônmaî mây khoôn
    I fell tree not collapse

In the case of alternating verbs as in (13) and (14) above, nonfulfillment of the agent’s intention must be expressed by means of a directional verb, as exemplified below.

(15) chân hâk kîymây mây dêk
    I break twig not exit
    ‘I tried to break a twig but was not successful.’

(16) chân khoôn tônmaî mây lôn
    I fell tree not descend
    ‘I tried to fell a tree but was not successful.’

In the case of non-alternating transitive verbs, it is possible for them to take a resultative predicate in the form of a stative
verb, such as in (9)-(12). Moreover, some of them can take a directional verb as a satellite, as in (17) below.

(17) khāw  
    chǐik   
    krāḍāat  
    māy  
    ḍok

he  
tear  
paper  
not  
exit

‘He tried to tear a piece of paper but was not successful.’

3.2.2.2 Resultative predicate indicating an “other-event” state of the patient

A transitive verb which occurs in combination with a resultative indicating an “other-event” state of the patient constitutes a further realization pattern which Talmy (2000) claims does not exist in English. Note that in all the cause-result relations that we have discussed so far, the resulting state expressed falls somewhere along the conceptual axis leading to the agent’s goal in the semantics of the verb. Therefore, the state expressed by the resultative predicate can be before the starting point, at the starting point, almost at the goal, or past the goal. In addition to these states, a resultative predicate can also express a state that does not lie on the conceptual axis leading to the agent’s goal. Such a resultative predicate is termed an “other-event” predicate (Talmy 2000: 277). The other-event resultative predicate can occur in Thai; however, it must be appropriately contextualized in order to be pragmatically acceptable.

(18) yāa  
    sāk  
    suāa  
    khāat  
    na? 

do not  
wash  
shirt  
torn  
sentence-final particle

‘Don’t wash the shirt in such a way that it came out torn.’

(19) yāa  
    lāan  
    kāæw  
    tææk  
    na?

do not  
wash  
glass  
broken  
sentence-final particle

‘Don’t wash the glass in such a way that it comes out broken.’

The transitive verbs sāk ‘wash (clothing)’ in (18) and lāan ‘wash (non-clothing objects)’ in (19) are both implied-fulfillment verbs. The states lying on the conceptual axis
leading to the agent’s goal are sâ?åat ‘clean’, sôkkaprok ‘dirty’, and khåaw ‘white’ in the case of sâk ‘wash (clothing)’, and sây ‘clear, transparent’ in the case of lâañ ‘wash (glass)’. The resultative predicates appearing in (18)-(19) lie outside the conceptual axis. They can be considered resulting states even though they are accidental or unexpected.

3.2.2.3 Resultative predicate indicating a “further-event” state of the patient

A transitive verb which co-occurs with a resultative predicate indicating an further-event state of the patient is an intrinsic-fulfillment verb, in which the agent’s intention is exactly fulfilled by carrying out the action referred to by the verb itself. The agent’s scope of intention does not go beyond the action as far as the meaning of the verb per se is concerned. This type of verb semantically corresponds to the verb called “non-alternating transitive verb with potential effect” in Thepkanjana (2000: 275). A non-alternating transitive verb refers to a transitive verb which does not have a homophonous intransitive alternant, and which designates a volitional as well as nonvolitional action. An action denoted by this type of verb may or may not produce an effect in the patient; it only has the potential to have an effect. If it produces an effect, the effect can be actualized in many forms depending on the situational context. According to Thepkanjana (2000), this type of transitive verb includes most “surface-contact” or “hitting” verbs, such as tìi ‘hit’, tòy ‘punch’, tòp ‘slap’, tè? ‘kick’, krà thâek ‘hit strongly’, and chon ‘collide with, bump against’. Since the effect, if produced, can be actualized in many forms depending on the situational context, the effect can be said to be unpredictable. This type of resultative predicate does not have any semantic relationship with the transitive verb with which it co-occurs. In other words, the meaning designated by the resultative predicate is neither inherent nor implied by the transitive verb it co-occurs with. The sentences below illustrate this type of resultative predicate.
(20) khāw tii mææw taay
he beat cat dead
‘He beat the cat to death.’

(21) khāw te? cæækan tææk
he kick vase broken
‘He kicked the vase and it became broken.’

(22) khāw chon ruá ?iaŋ
he collide with fence lean
‘He collided with the fence and the fence leaned to one side as a result.’

5. Conclusion

It is obvious that transitive verbs in Thai can take a relatively wide range of semantic types of resultative predicates. Can we say that the transitive-based resultative construction in Thai has relatively few constraints concerning the semantic relationships between causative and resultative predicates? We want to point out that the seemingly few constraints on the co-occurrence between causative and resultative predicates are due to the fact that the resultative construction in Thai is linguistically realized by means of verb serialization, a widely used device in Thai syntax. It is argued in this paper that the so-called resultative construction is in fact a type of serial verb construction which primarily aims at narrating events in the order in which they occur in the real world. In light of this, a diversity of semantic types of resultative predicates is naturally possible in Thai as long as the resulting events denoted by these predicates can be imagined as taking place after the causing actions in the real world.

Notes

1. A satellite is “the grammatical category of any constituent other than a noun phrase or prepositional-phrase complement that is in a sister relation to the verb root. It relates to the verb root as a dependent to a head” (Talmy 2000:102).
2. We adopt the theoretically neutral term "implication" instead of "implicature" as used by Talmy (2000) to avoid confusion. The term "implicature" is originally a pragmatic term which is defined as a kind of pragmatic inference which is not part of the semantic or conventional content of a linguistic expression, and which is thus non-truth-conditional (Levinson 1983). However, what is implicated in the verb which is being investigated here seems to be part of the semantic content of the verb.

3. The linker *con* 'until' is found to be appropriate in a complex sentence in which the main verb is durative and in which there is no time span between the main and the resulting events.

4. Many native speakers of Thai do not interpret sentences (18) and (19) as resultative sentences but rather as simple sentences with the stative verbs functioning as the modifier modifying the head noun on the left side. Such interpretation is also likely because the modifier follows the head noun in Thai. However, it is still possible for Thai speakers to interpret (18) and (19) as resultative sentences, especially in colloquial speech. This provides justification for including such sentences as (18) and (19) in our data.

References


