Is Hāy Really a Benefactive-Causative in Thai?

Udom Warotamasikkhadit
Ramkhamhaeng University

0. Introduction.

One of the most troublesome verbs in Thai is hāy '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 hāy 'to give' should appear in a sentence or not. This paper attempts to define the occurrence of hāy 'to give' in different sentence types.

1. Benefactive hāy 'to give'.

A benefactive hāy meaning 'to give' occurs in:

NP₁ V₁ (NP₂) hāy NP₃ V₂ t₂

(1) phóc hāa ṭən hāy lūuk cháy (ṭən)
father seek money give child spend money
A father earns the money for his child to spend.

(2) khāw ści ści hāy māæ say (ści)
he buy blouse give mother wear blouse
He bought a blouse for his mother to wear.

t₂ is a trace of NP₂ where the same NP₂ in the sentence has been deleted. V₂ in (1) and (2) can be further deleted as in:

(3) phóc hāa ṭən hāy lūuk
father seek money give child
A father earns money for his child.

(4) khāw ści ści hāy māæ
he buy blouse give mother
He bought a blouse for his mother.

If the preceding sentence of (1) contains ṭən 'money', and of (2) contains ści 'blouse', NP₂ can be deleted:

(5) phóc hāa hāy lūuk

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father seek give child
    A father earns (it) for his child.

(6) khăw sê hay mâæ
    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 hay 'to give' cannot precede an inanimate
noun.

(7) * phó haa nên hay bårân
    father seek money give house
    * A father earns the money for a house.
(8) * khăw haa khoøy töktæŋ hay bårân
    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
hay 'to give' because bårân 'house' is an inanimate noun.

(9) khăw haa khoøy töktæŋ bårân
    he seek thing decorate house
    He has been looking for something to decorate his
    house.

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

(10) phó hay nên 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 nên 'money' precedes lûuk 'child' but in English
'son' precedes 'money'. The deep structure of (10) is (11):

(11) phó sôn nên hay lûuk
    father hand out money give child
    A father gives a son money.
2. Causative haya in different environments.

2.1 haya preceding a descriptive verb.

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

\[ \text{NP}_1 \ X \ \text{haya} \ t_1 \ \text{V}_{\text{des}} \]

(12) mææ kin yaa haya (mææ) ṭuàn
mother eat medicine caus. mother fat
Mother takes medicine to get fat.

(13) phôm máy yɔɔm cąay ṭen haya (phôm) ṭoo
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 haya and become grammatical as in:

(14) khaw haa khoŋ tōktɛŋ bāan haya (bāan) sūay
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 haya conveys the meaning of causative when it precedes a descriptive verb.

2.2 haya following tham 'to make'.

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

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

(15) nāataa khun tham haya dēk rɔɔŋhâay
face eye you make caus. child cry
Your features make the children cry.

(16) khun tham haya phôm mii khwaamsûk
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 haya 'causative'.

A sentence like (17) is grammatical and one may think that it violates the postulation of 2.2.

(17) mææ tham khånôm hay lûuk kin (khånôm)
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 khånôm 'dessert' is an inanimate noun and it occurs between tham 'to make' and hay 'to give.' If it were to become a causative, the element between tham 'to make' and hay 'causative' must be an empty category.

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

If hay is preceded by a verb of command like bânhkhp 'to force', bôk 'to tell', chây 'to use', sâng 'to order', or other verbs like sõon 'to teach', wâa 'to scold mildly', or others in the following sentence type:

NP₁ V NP₂ t₁ hay t₂ VP
NP₂ must be an animate noun and NP₂ can be placed after hay, for example:

(18) khâw bânhkhp phôm hay tham nâan
he force I caus. do work
He forced me to work.

(19) mææ sâng phôm hay pay
mother order I caus. go
Mother ordered me to go.

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

(20) khâw bânhkhp hay phôm tham nâan
he force caus. I do work
He forced me to work.

(21) mææ sâng hay phôm pay
mother order caus. I go
Mother ordered me to go.

(22) khruu sõon phôm hay wâay nääm
teacher teach I caus. swim water
The teacher teaches me to swim.
(23) luj wâa háy phôm cèp cay
     uncle scold caus. I pain heart
     Uncle scolded me and hurt my feelings.

3. Permissive háy.

     When háy is preceded by a verb like tòkloŋ 'to agree', yindii
     'to be glad', yôom 'to agree', and ?ânûyâat 'to permit' in the
     following sentence type:

     \[ \text{NP}_1 \ V \ \text{PRO} \ \text{hây} \ \text{NP}_2 \ \text{VP} \]
     there must be an empty element between V and háy. \text{NP}_2 must be
     an animate noun.

     (24) phôc yôom hây khâw khâw maa dâay
         father agree let he enter come can
         Father allowed him to come in.

     If \text{NP}_2 is a second person pronoun, it can be deleted, for
     example:

     (25) raw yindii háy (khun) thâam khamt hâam dâay
         we glad let you ask question can
         We are glad to let you ask questions.

4. Preferential háy.

     When háy is preceded by a verb of intention or desire like
     chôop 'to like', mii khwaampràatthanâa 'to have a wish', mii
     khwaamprâsôn 'to have an intention, to have a goal', pràatthanâa
     'to desire, to wish', prasôn 'to wish', tânçay 'to intend', tôngkaan 'to
     want', yàak 'to want, to prefer' in the following sentence type:

     \[ \text{NP}_1 \ V \ \text{PRO} \ (câ) \ \text{hây} \ \text{NP}_2 \ \text{VP} \]
     câ 'will' is optional unless it is preceded by prasôn 'to wish' or mii
     khwaamprâsôn 'to have an intention or to have a goal'. Then câ
     'will' is obligatory.

     (26) phôm yàak háy thiim raw chânà
         I want prefer team we win
         I want our team to win.

     (27) phûi chôop háy khâw maa
         sister like prefer he come
         My sister prefers for him to come.
(28) mææ præson çà hây khaw pen phrá
mother wish will prefer he be monk
His mother wishes for him to be a monk.

5. Conclusion.

The meaning of hây is dictated by the verb preceding it. It can be a benefactive, a causative, a permissive, or a preferential depending on its sentence type and the verb preceding it.

References and Other Resources