

The Paradox of Subject-Oriented Resultative Compounds in Taiwan Southern Min

Huei-Ling Lin

Department of Foreign Languages and Literature
National Chung Cheng University, Taiwan
folhll@ccu.edu.tw

Abstract

Adopting Control Theory, this paper proposes that subject-oriented resultative compounds in Taiwan Southern Min (TSM) have a biclausal structure with PRO as the subject of the second verb. According to the Principle of Minimal Distance (Rosenbaum 1967, 1970), PRO should be controlled by the closest c-commanding antecedent. Therefore, the closest NP, even if it is not the object, can also control the PRO. Subject-oriented resultatives thus should not be considered exceptional. The syntactic derivation proposed in this paper can not only explain the orientation of the resultatives in TSM but also account for their syntactic behavior of allowing other syntactic elements in between.

1 Introduction

“A resultative attribute describes the STATE of an argument resulting from the action denoted by the verb” (Simpson 1983: 143). For English resultatives, the resultative phrase is predicated of the object. For example, the resultative in (1a) is predicated of the object *the car*. When the sentence involves an intransitive change-of-state verb, the resultative is then predicated of the subject as in (1b). According to the Unaccusative Hypothesis (Perlmutter 1978), since (1b) involves an unaccusative verb, the surface subject is actually an object in the underlying structure. Therefore, the resultative in (1b) is also predicated of the object underlyingly. That is, the resultative in (1b)

modifies the subject *he*, which is the underlying object. As Simpson (1983) states, “resultative attributes in English are subject to the SYNTACTIC constraint that they must be controlled by an OBJECT, whether underlying or surface” (p. 148), which is referred to as the Direct Object Restriction (DOR) by Levin and Rappaport Hovav (1995). Subject-oriented resultatives are thus often considered exceptions or ungrammatical as in (2). In consequence, Mateu (2005) argues that DOR is strictly observed in English.

- (1) a. I painted the car yellow.
(Simpson 1983: 143 (1))
b. He flushed/blushed red.
(Simpson 1983: 144 (9a))
(2) *I danced/laughed/logged/walked/worked tired.
(Simpson 1983: 145 (15))

Chinese resultatives are manifested in two forms—*de* construction as in (3) and V-V compound as in (4).

- (3) Zhangsan zhui de Lisi hen lei.
Zhangsan chase DE Lisi very tired.
'Zhangsan chased Lisi and as a result Lisi got tired.'
(4) Zhangsan da-po-le beizi.
Zhangsan hit-break-ASP cup
'Zhangsan broke the cup.'

In (3) the resultative *lei* 'tired' is predicated of the object *Lisi*, and the resultative in (4), *po* 'broken', is also predicated of the object *beizi* 'cup'. It seems that the two types of resultative do follow DOR. However, there exist other types of resultative in Chinese, as in (5) and (6). The resultative *lei* in (5)

is predicated of the subject *Zhangsan*, and the resultative in (6), *ni* ‘tired’, is also predicated of the subject *Zhangsan*.

- (5) Zhangsan zhui Lisi zhui de hen lei. (cf. (3))
 Zhangsan chase Lisi chase DE very tired.
 ‘Zhangsan chased Lisi and as a result Zhangsan got tired.’
- (6) Zhangsan ting-ni-le na shou ge.
 Zhangsan listen-tired-ASP that CL song
 ‘Zhangsan got tired of listening to that song.’

These two types of resultative seem to imply that DOR is not applicable in Chinese. As pointed out by Huang (2006), Control Theory can account for resultative constructions in Chinese better than DOR. Examples (3-6) all involve Pro, and according to the Principle of Minimal Distance (Rosenbaum 1967, 1970), Pro is controlled by the closest potential antecedent which c-commands it. Huang (2006) cites (7), which is proposed by Tang (1997), to be the structure for resultatives in Chinese. In *de* construction F is occupied by *de*, while in compounds F is empty. In (7), when the main verb is transitive, Pro is controlled by the object, and when the main verb is intransitive, Pro is then controlled by the subject. Examples (3-4) are well accounted for by Control Theory. In (5) the verb is reduplicated and the object does not c-command Pro, and thus it is the subject that c-commands Pro. Example (5) is also accounted for by Control Theory.

- (7) [_{VP} Subject [_{v' v} [_{VP} Object [_v V1 [_{FP} F [_{Result} Pro V2]]]]]]

However, example (6), where the resultative is predicated of the subject, is still not accounted for. Moreover, the ambiguity of (8) is also a problem.

- (8) Zhangsan zhui-lei-le Lisi.
 Zhangsan chase-tired-ASP Lisi
 ‘Zhangsan chased Lisi and as a result Lisi got tired.’
 ‘Zhangsan chased Lisi and as a result Zhangsan got tired.’

Subject-oriented resultative compounds such as (6) are always an issue. There also exist subject-oriented resultative compounds in Taiwan Southern Min (TSM), a Chinese language spoken

by more than 80% of people in Taiwan (Cheng 1985), as in (9-10).

- (9) [i] tsiah-pa tioh tng-lai a.¹
 he eat-full then return PRT
 ‘As he got full after eating, he returned.’
- (10) i soah ko-su-khi.
 he unexpectedly sue-lose
 ‘He unexpectedly lost the lawsuit.’

In comparison with Chinese, subject-oriented resultative compounds are relatively rare in TSM because cause-result relation is often expressed by *kah* construction in TSM. To illustrate, *jiok-thiam* ‘chase-tired’ is not available in TSM; instead, *kah* construction is adopted as in (11). Subject-oriented resultative compounds in TSM have not aroused much discussion. Lin (2007) mainly discusses object-oriented resultative compounds. Therefore, this paper aims to look into subject-oriented resultative compounds in TSM, discussing their derivation.

- (11) i jiok kah cin thiam.
 he chase KAH very tired
 ‘He got tired from chasing someone.’

2 Literature Review

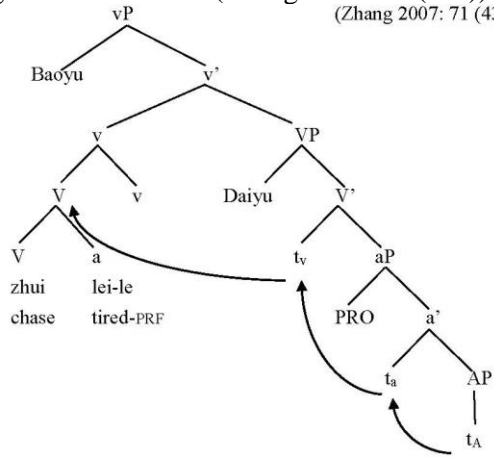
2.1 Zhang (2007)

Adopting Zou (1994) and Sybesma (1999), Zhang (2007) proposes that the V-V resultative constructions in Chinese are derived via head movement in syntax. To illustrate, (12) has (13) as its deep structure, and *zhui-lei* ‘chase-tired’ is derived after *lei* adjoins to *zhui*. According to equidistance theory of Chomsky (1993, 1995), the control domain is extended to vP after the movement, and within the extended domain, Baoyu and Daiyu are of equal distance to PRO and both can control PRO. The ambiguity of (12) is thus explained.

- (12) Baoyu zhui lei le Daiyu.
 Baoyu chase tired PRF Daiyu

¹ The romanization used in this paper for Taiwan Southern Min examples is according to the Taiwan Southern Min Romanization Proposal (臺灣閩南語羅馬字拼音符號方案), which was promulgated by the Ministry of Education in Taiwan in 2006.

- (13) ‘Baoyu chased Daiyu and as a result Daiyu got tired.’
 ‘Baoyu chased Daiyu and as a result Baoyu got tired.’ (Zhang 2007: 71 (42a))
 (Zhang 2007: 71 (43a))



Zhang’s proposal wrongly predicts that as long as there is no semantic anomaly, the V-V resultative construction should all be ambiguous. However, only the object-oriented meaning is allowed in (14).

- (14) Baoyu zhuang dao le Daiyu.
 Baoyu collide fall PRF Daiyu
 ‘Baoyu collided with Daiyu and as a result Daiyu fell.’
 ‘*Baoyu collided with Daiyu and as a result Baoyu fell.’

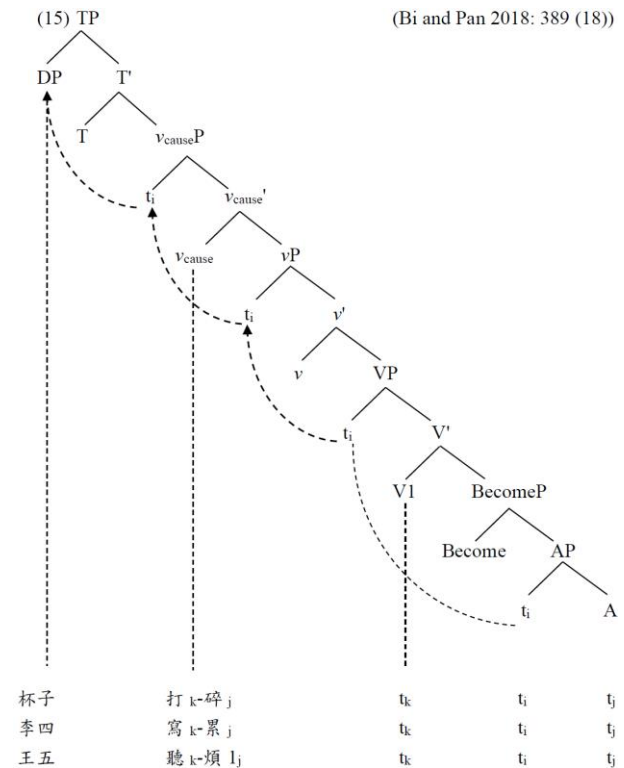
2.2 Bi and Pan (2018)

Bi and Pan (2018) classifies subject-oriented resultatives in Chinese into three types according to three criteria—agentivity of the subject, stativity of the complement, and causal relation between V1 and V2. *Xie-lei* ‘write-tired’ type has all three features, while *kan-dong* ‘read-understand’ type has none of the three features. As to *ting-fan* ‘hear-annoyed’ type, it is ambiguous. The following table summarizes the results of the tests:

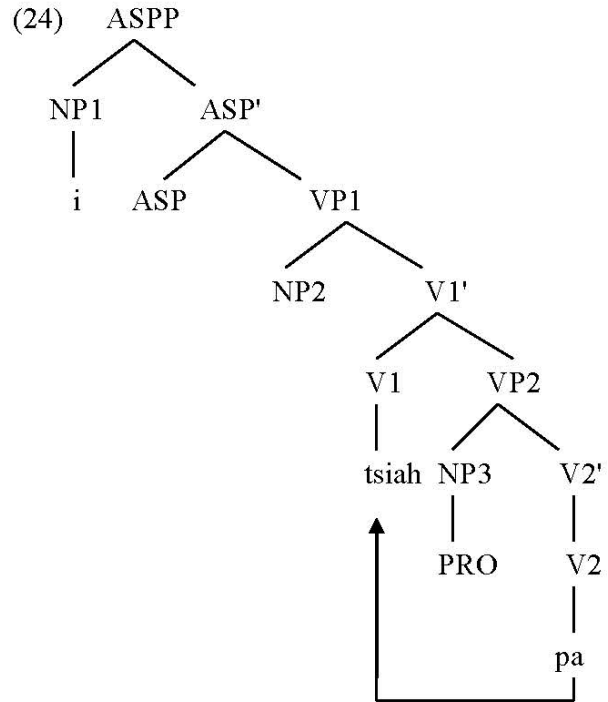
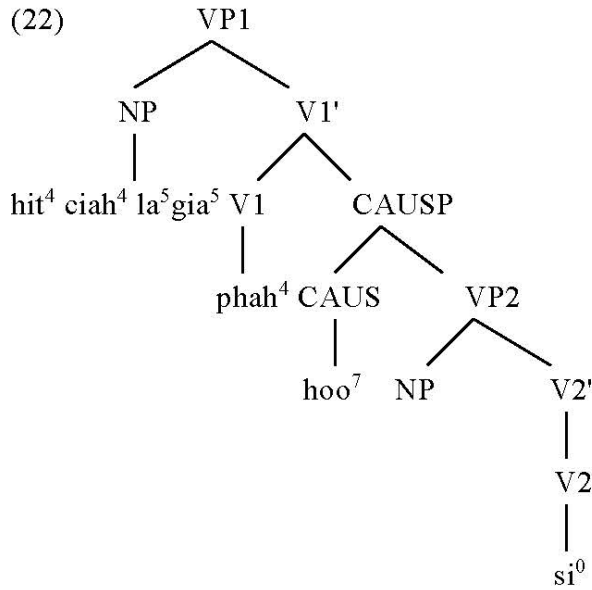
	<i>xie-lei</i> ‘write-tired’	<i>kan-dong</i> ‘read-understand’	<i>ting-fan</i> ‘hear-annoyed’
agentivity of the subject	✓	✗	?
stativity of the	✓	✗	?

complement			
causal relation between V1 and V2	✓	✗	?

Among the three types, Bi and Pan only regard *xie-lei* ‘write-tired’ type as resultative, which is derived from its object-oriented counterpart with biclausal meaning. Adopting Pykkänen (2002), Bi and Pan proposes (15) as the deep structure of *xie-lei* ‘write-tired’, where the surface subject *Lisi* takes the object position and then is raised to the subject position. Since the resultative is predicated of the object in the deep structure, DOR is observed.



Under Bi and Pan’s unaccusative analysis, (15) has (16) as its causative counterpart. They further conclude that in Chinese all resultative constructions have corresponding subject-oriented resultative construction as derived constructions.



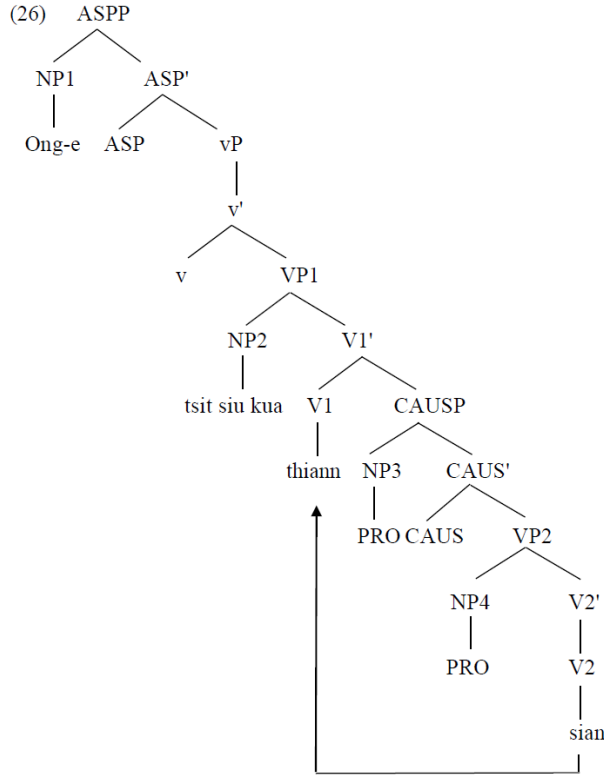
3 The Proposal

According to Huang (2006), Control Theory can better account for the orientation of the resultative. Adopting Lin's (2007) syntactic approach for the derivation of object-oriented resultative compounds in TSM, this paper proposes that subject-oriented resultative compounds in TSM such as *tsiah-pa* 'eat-full' in (23) are derived in syntax and have a bi-clausal structure with PRO as demonstrated in (24). According to the Principle of Minimal Distance (Rosenbaum 1967, 1970), PRO should be controlled by the closest c-commanding antecedent. Therefore, the closest NP, even if it is not the object, can also control the PRO. Subject-oriented resultatives thus should not be considered exceptional.

- (23) i tsiah-pa a.
 he eat-full PRT
 'He was full after eating.'

For a subject-oriented resultative compound which takes an object such as (25), its structure is proposed to be (26). A subject-oriented resultative compound such as *thiann-sian* 'listen-tired' involves a psychological verb *sian* '(mentally) tired, fed up' as the resultative verb; a causative phrase is thus proposed to be the structure for *sian* '(mentally) tired, fed up'. The meaning represented by (26) is that he listened to this song so often that this song caused him to become tired. For the PRO in NP3 in its control domain ASPP, it is controlled by the closest c-commanding antecedent, *tsit siu kua* 'this song'. As to the PRO in NP4, it does not have an overt controller, and its reference is determined by pragmatic consideration. Since it is only reasonable that the subject of the sentence *i* 'he' is the one affected, *sian* is predicated of the main subject. The proposal that a causative phrase is involved is supported by the possible overt occurrence of the causative marker *hoo* as in (27).

- (25) tsit siu kua Ong-e thiann-sian a.
 this CL song Ong-e listen-tired PRT
 'Ong-e got tired of listening to this song.'



- (27) li tsit siu kua tloh it-tit thiann,
 you this CL song then continuously listen
 thiann hoo sian.
 listen CAUS tired
 'You may keep listening to this song until you
 get tired of it.'

Resultative compounds in TSM are also peculiar in that extra syntactic elements can be inserted between V1 and V2 as shown in (28), where the syntactic element *be* 'not' is inserted between *thiann* and *sian*. The current proposal can also account for the syntactic property of resultatives in TSM by proposing that an extra syntactic phrase is projected above CAUSP in (26).

- (28) tsit siu kua cin ho thiann, thiann be sian.
 this CL song very good listen listen not tired
 'This song is pleasant to hear, and you will not
 get tired of listening to it.'

The syntactic derivation proposed in this paper can not only explain the orientation of the resultatives in TSM but also account for their syntactic behavior of allowing other syntactic elements in between.

In addition to *e*, *be*, and *hoo*, other syntactic elements seem to be able to intervene between V1

and V2 as in *tsiah-png-pa* 'eat-meal-full' and *lim-tsiu-tsui* 'drink-wine-drunk'. However, it seems that no other nouns can be inserted between V1 and V2 as demonstrated in (29), where the noun phrase *tsit siu kua* 'this song' cannot occur between V1 and V2 in the compound *thiann-sian* 'listen-tired'. This paper proposes that *tsiah-png* 'eat-meal' and *lim-tsiu* 'drink-wine' are actually V-O compounds, which function as a verb. Therefore, in (24) *tsiah-png* is inserted under V1 node and then *tsiah-png-pa* is derived after *pa* moves up to incorporate with *tsiah-png*.

- (29) *Ong-e thiann tsit siu kua sian a.
 Ong-e listen this CL song tired PRT
 'Ong-e got tired of listening to this song.'

Moreover, as mentioned in Introduction, subject-oriented resultative compounds in TSM are relatively rare because cause-result relation is often expressed by *kah* construction in TSM. Transitive subject-oriented resultative compounds must involve a psychological verb such as *sian* '(mentally) tired, fed up' as V2. *Long-to* 'collide-fall' in TSM does not involve a psychological verb as V2. As such, *long-to* 'collide-fall' is only object-oriented as shown in (30).

- (30) Ong-e long-to Li-e. (cf. (14))
 Ong-e collide-fall Li-e
 'Ong-e collided with Li-e and as a result Li-e
 fell.'
 *Ong-e collided with Li-e and as a result
 Ong-e fell.'

4 Concluding Words

Subject-oriented resultative compounds in TSM are rare because cause-result relation is often spelled out through *kah* constructions. The data collected show that transitive subject-oriented resultative compounds in TSM involve a psychological verb as V2. A syntactic account as proposed in this paper can account for their derivation and also the possibility of allowing other syntactic elements between V1 and V2.

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