



Facets of outcome in Thai complex events



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ABSTRACT

This paper examines two verb-sequencing constructions in Thai, denoting ACTION–OUTCOME events, referred to as ‘evaluation constructions’. It shows that the topic–comment relation has high relevance to the fundamental compositional system of the evaluation construction. Moreover, it is not the syntactic relation (subordinate, coordinate linkage) but the pragmatic relation, together with semantic factors, which plays an important role in connecting verbs.

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1. Introduction

This paper starts with causation in order to set up the account of outcome which follows in Sections 2–3. A causative is popularly considered as consisting of two events (cause and effect) in succession. Indeed, logically, an effect event follows a cause event. It, nevertheless, is not necessarily conceived in an iconic, real-world relation. There are two primary ways in which two events are construed as being connected in a cause–effect relation: “content and epistemic relations” (Noordman and de Blijzer, 2000: 37). Examples of the two types of relations are illustrated below.

(1) Ref: Noordman and de Blijzer (2000: 37)

a. *Because John worked hard, he passed the exam.*

b. *Because John passed the exam, he must have worked hard.*

Example (1a) represents a casual content relation, describing a real-world causality. It simply represents relations in the world. Example (1b), on the other hand, illustrates an epistemic causal relation, which involves epistemic inference or our judgment of the relations in the world.

1.1. Content relation

This causal content relation corresponds to the typical resultative constructions investigated in the literature on Thai (Thepkanjana and Uehara, 2004). It can be further subcategorized into two types in terms of cognitive scanning.

First, a cause event sequentially leads to an effect event (CAUSE → EFFECT). Cognitively speaking, it is conceived in a sequential fashion, by the process known as *sequential scanning* (Langacker, 1987). It iconically encodes two serial events occurring

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in order. This first type is frequently used to encode narrating states of affairs which are in chronological sequence, as shown in (2).

(2) Ref: *Nick and Pim*

ník kɔɔ coon kʰāw cʰon mǎa bāa
Nick TOP leap enter bump dog crazy

lóm loŋ tòk bandaj paj

fall down fall steps go

'Nick then leaped at the crazy dog (and the dog) fell down the stairs.'

The linker *con* 'until' is often found to occur in this construction, as shown in (3).

(3) Ref: writer.dek-d.com/dek-d/writer/viewlongc.php?id=713291&chapter=5

lǎŋcàak tʰi klàp maa càak sǎ kʰɔŋ lɛɛw
after that return come from buy thing already

tʰáŋ kʰāu kɔɔ kin kʰāaw kan con ɔim tʰɔŋ

all pair TOP eat rice together until be full stomach

'After (they) came back from shopping, the pair of them ate together until (they) were full.'

The presence of *con* is important to the completeness of this chronological cause–effect event. In other words, its omission results in an unnatural sentence. The adverbial clause (*lǎŋcàak tʰi*... 'after...') appears to influence the occurrence of *con* 'until'. It creates a temporal template for the situation that is described to be perceived as chronological—the participants performed the action until they reached their satisfaction.

Notice that the resulting event in (3) is idiosyncratic to the causative event 'eat'. The resulting event in (2), on the other hand, is not inherent or implied by the causative event. The effect can be instantiated in different ways (e.g. see 'lose balance', *ŋǎjǎŋ* 'fall back').

The content causation can also be construed holistically—*summary scanning* (Langacker, 1987). It is frequently found in headline news, or an answer to the question 'what happened?' as illustrated in (4).

(4) Ref: news.hansa.com

nūm rootii sàp sòk | tʰúup maʔpʰráaw tèek
male Roti (Indian) strike elbow | smash coconut break

'An Indian man struck with his elbow. (He) smashed (and broke) the coconut

It is also found in narratives, as exemplified in (5), where a sequence of cause–effect events is perceived as a unitary scene.

(5) Ref: *Thai lesson: grade 6*

mǎe kʰɔŋ pʰét tʰùuk ɲuu pʰít kàt taaj
mom POSS Phet PASS snake poisonous bite be dead

'Phet's mom was bitten by a poisonous snake (and) died.'

1.2. Epistemic relation

The sense in which the term 'epistemic relation' is used in this paper will be clarified by comparing examples (6a) and (6b).

(6a)

pìtì sák sǎa con saʔàat

Piti wash cloth until clean

'Piti washed (his) clothes until (they) were clean.'

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