Object-control Deficiency and Causative Compensation in Some Formosan Languages*

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SUMMARY

In this paper, I revisit a peculiar phenomenon attested in some Formosan languages where object-control is construed as subject-control, with the embedded verb causativized. Chang & Tsai (2001) attributed the peculiarity to a thematic effect called Actor-sensitivity. In this paper, I propose an alternative analysis based on novel evidence from Tsou and Kavalan, suggesting instead that the embedded causativization serves to compensate for the lexical deficiency of object-control verbs in the investigated languages, intended to create a controller-controllee relation needed for a manipulation event. In this view, the language variation regarding object-control is understood as resulting from a lexical rather than thematic parameterization.

RÉSUMÉ

Dans cet article, je reviens sur un phénomène curieux observé dans quelques langues formosanes dans lesquelles on considère le contrôle d'objet comme un contrôle de sujet, le verbe intégré devenant causal. Chang & Tsai (2001) attribuent cette particularité à un effet thématique appelé « sensibilité de l'acteur » (Actor-sensitivity). Dans cet article, je propose une autre analyse basée sur de nouvelles preuves de Sou et Kavalan, lesquelles suggèrent que la causativité sert plutôt à compenser le manque de verbes à contrôle d'objet dans les langues étudiées ; elle vise à créer une relation contrôleur/contrôlé, ce qui est nécessaire à la réalisation de manipulations. De ce point de vue, les variations entre langues concernant le contrôle d'objet viendraient du lexique plutôt que du paramétrage thématique.

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INTRODUCTION

Chang & Tsai (2001) make an interesting observation about the grammar of control in Kavalan: object-control is construed as logical subject-control, with the embedded verb causativized, as illustrated in (1a-b).

(1) Kavalan (based on Chang & Tsai 2001: 3)

a. *pawRat a tina-na tu sunis pa-qaynep*
force ABS mother-3SG.GEN OBL child CAUS.INTR-sleep
lit. 'His mother forces her child such that she causes him/her to sleep.'

b. *pawRat-an-na$_i$ ni abas$_i$ aiku pa-'tung tu taquq*
force-TR-3SG.ERG ERG PN 1SG.ABS CAUS-kill OBL chicken
lit. 'I was forced by Abas such that she caused me to kill a chicken.'

As in (1a-b), the embedded verbs *qaynep* 'sleep' and *'tung* 'kill' are prefixed with a causative morpheme *pa-*. For expository purposes, I dub the embedded causativization as late causativization (LC).

Chang & Tsai also note that LC is not attested when the matrix predicate is a subject-control verb. Compare:

(2) Kavalan (based on Chang & Tsai 2001: 4-5)

a. *m-paska=isu me-'tung tu taquq*
INTR-try=2SG.ABS INTR-kill OBL chicken
'You tried to kill a chicken.'

b. *paska-an-na=pa me-'tung tu taquq*
try-TR-3SG.ERG=FUT INTR-kill OBL chicken
lit. 'A chicken will be tried by him such that he kills (it).'

Furthermore, Chang & Tsai observe that LC is found in some other Formosan languages, despite slight grammatical variation. Two Formosan languages, namely, Saisiyat and Tsou, are brought up for the present discussion. In Saisiyat, LC is tied up with the reading of the sentence to which it applies. As in (3a), the sentence is interpreted as an object-control with LC. By contrast, the sentence would be construed as a reflexive subject-control without LC, as in (3b).

(3) Saisiyat (based on Yeh 1997: 98)

a. *'oya' 'i'ibih pa-si'ael ka pazay ka korkoring*
mother force CAUS-eat ACC rice ACC child
'Mother forced the child to eat.'

b. *'oya' 'i'ibih hi nonak s-om-i'ael ka 'alaw*
mother force ACC self eat-INTR ACC fish
'Mother forced herself to eat the fish.'

In Tsou, however, LC occurs only when the matrix control verb is in its transitive form. Consider the contrast of grammaticality in (4a-b).

(4) Tsou (based on Chang & Tsai 2001: 9)

a. *i-'o 'ahxy-a pa-bon-x na taini*
TR-1SG.ERG force-TR CAUS-eat ABS 3SG.ABS
'I forced him to eat.'

b. **mi-'o 'ahxy-x taini pa-bon-x*
INTR-1SG.ABS force-INTR 3SG.OBL CAUS-eat

Based on the above observations, Chang & Tsai propose that LC be attributed to a thematic constraint, i.e., Actor-sensitivity. In their analysis, control is exclusively sensitive to the Actor (agent or experiencer) and hence thematically conditioned—in other words, it is invariably the Actor of the matrix verb that controls the reference of the missing subject in the infinitival complement. Under this analysis, example (1b) can be schematized as follows:

(5) Control schema in Kavalan (Chang & Tsai 2001: 4)

pawRat (*abas*$_i$, *aiku*$_j$, *pa-* (PRO$_i$…
force Actor Patient Cause Actor

In spite of its descriptive appeal, Chang & Tsai's thematic account is empirically and theoretically inadequate. It leaves an important question unaccounted for. Why is the so-called Actor-only restriction on control attested in the investigated Formosan languages but not in familiar languages such as English and Chinese? An Actor normally ranks high in syntactic operations cross-linguistically, witness its prominent position in a thematic hierarchy. It is puzzling why an Actor figures prominently only in Formosan control but not in English control. This paper aims to fill the gap and attempts to answer this important question on the basis of new data drawn from Tsou and Kavalan.

This paper is organized as follows. In section 2, I attribute LC to the lexical lack of object-control verbs based on novel evidence from Tsou and Kavalan. Section 3 concludes the paper by placing my proposal in a larger context of linguistic typology/theory.

OBJECT-CONTROL DEFICIENCY AND CAUSATIVE COMPENSATION

PROBLEMS WITH CHANG & TSAI'S THEMATIC ACCOUNT

Regarding linguistic typology and theory, Chang & Tsai's thematic account is not well-motivated. Typologically, both Kavalan and Tsou are known to be ergative and hence expected to favor the direct object over the logical subject in their syntactic operations, the most renown one of which being A'-movement in transitive sentences (Chang 1997, 2015). Chang & Tsai's Actor-sensitivity account is arguably not consistent with this widely observed typological trait of the languages in question. Empirically, their account is not without problems either. Note, in particular, that in addition to the so-called "Actor"-control, the direct object must also control a missing subject in the causative complement when the matrix verb is transitive, as already shown in (1b) and (4a). It remains mysterious in such cases why LC is redundantly attested. It becomes evident that an alternative analysis is in order.

A DEFICIENCY-AND-COMPENSATION ACCOUNT

In this section, I develop my proposal that the peculiar LC makes up for the deficiency of object-control verbs in the languages under discussion, serving to secure a controller-controllee relation necessary for an event of manipulation. My major evidence is drawn from Tsou and Kavalan. Let's first consider Chang & Tsai's example (4a), repeated below as (6).

(6) Tsou (based on Chang & Tsai 2001: 9) (=4a)

i-'o	*'ahxy-a*	*pa-bonx*	*na*	*taini*
TR-1SG.ERG	force-TR	CAUS-eat	ABS	3SG.ABS

'I forced him to eat.'

Notice that in (6), the matrix verb *'ahxya* is regarded as being comparable to an object-control verb in English and glossed as 'force'. However, a closer look at the verb indicates that Chang & Tsai's interpretation of the verb is dubious. In its grammatically intransitive form, the verb normally patterns with an activity verb and functions as a subject-control verb instead, meaning 'insist on doing something despite objection'. Compare:

(7) Tsou

mi-ta	*'ahxyx*	*supihi*	*ta*	*c'oeha.*
INTR-3SG.ABS	insist.INTR	cross.INTR	OBL	river

'He insists on crossing the river despite our objection.'

In the reading of (7), it is the third party himself that insists on crossing the river despite objection, not someone else that is forced by him to do so. In other words, there is no causee or controllee present in the situation. This explains why the above-mentioned sentence in (4b) is

ungrammatical, where a controllee occurs with the matrix verb *'ahyxux* unlicensed. This account is applicable to the example under discussion. Sentence (7) would be ruled out if it takes a controllee, as shown in (8) below.

(8) Tsou

**mi-ta*	*'ahxyx*	*tu*	*mo'o*	*supihi*	*ta*	*c'oeha.*
INTR-3SG.ABS	insist.INTR	OBL	PN	cross.INTR	OBL	river

Intended for 'He forced Mo'o to cross the river.'

Accordingly, it is undesirable to treat the intransitive verb *'ahxyx* as a verb of object-control.

Likewise, in its transitive form, namely, *'ahxya*, the alleged object-control verb observes a similar pattern with the same reading as its intransitive form. For instance:

(9) Tsou

i-ta	*'ahxy-a*	*pat-vaveivei-a*	*'o*	*e'e-taini.*
TR-3SG.ERG	insist-TR	say-RED-return-TR	ABS	words-3SG.GEN

'He insists on repeating his words despite objection.'

In this case, the verb should be also of a subject-control rather than an object-control. Note that there is no controllee here. What functions as the topic of the sentence is the patient of the embedded verb. This is left unexplained under an object-control analysis. Interestingly, in the alternative subject-control analysis, what appears to be a case of object-control in (6) might turn out to be a case of subject-control instead. The sentence, which Chang & Tsai interpret as 'I forced him to eat' might literally mean 'I insisted on causing him to eat against his will'. In other words, the manipulation reading can be derived from the combination of the controller's insistence and coercion.

This analysis receives support from examples comparable to (6). Consider:

(10) Tsou

i-ta	*'ahxy-a*	*e'vo'h-i*	*'o*	*'o'oko.*
TR-3SG.ERG	insist-TR	take.away-LA	ABS	children

'He insists on taking away the children against their will.'

As in (6), one might regard (10) as an object-control based on his interpretation of the sentence as 'He forced the children to leave'. Nevertheless, the sentence actually has a literal meaning of subject control. Here, the matrix verb *'ahxya* is immediately followed by a lexically causative verb *e'vo'hi* 'take away'. Again, an apparent object-control reading turns out to be compositionally derived from the matrix subject-control verb plus its embedded causative verb.

In (6) through (10), the matrix verbs maintain the same reading, namely, 'insist on doing something despite objection/resistance', irrespective of their different voice forms and complement clauses. This semantic invariance suggests that they are of a lexical semantic

category with the identical argument structure. It follows that if *'ahya* in (9) is a subject-control verb, its counterpart of the same form in (6) should undoubtedly be a subject-control verb as well. This leads to the conclusion that the topic DP in (6) which looks like the controllee of the matrix verb should come from somewhere else, presumably from the complement clause. It is reasonable to assume that the sentence in (6) has undergone a syntactic derivation such as the one schematized in (11):

(11) Syntactic derivation for (6)

[*i-'o* *'ahxy-a* [t_i *pa-bonx*] *na* [*taini*]$_i$]

In this sense, the matrix verb *'ahya* in (6) is comparable to the English ECM verb *believe* in its passive form and (6) is structurally comparable to an ECM construction, as in (12) below.

(12) Syntactic derivation for passive ECM in English

[[*The body of a missing woman*]$_i$ *is believed* [*to have been found* t_i] *in the river.*

Crucially, what looks like a matrix argument turns out to be originated from an embedded argument.

A similar reflection can carry over to the so-called object-control constructions observed in Kavalan. Let's re-examine (1), repeated below as (13).

(13) Kavalan (based on Chang & Tsai 2001: 3)

a. *pawRat* *a* *tina-na* *tu* *sunis* *pa-qaynep*
force ABS mother-3SG.GEN OBL child CAUS.INTR-sleep
lit. 'His mother forces her child such that she causes him/her to sleep.'

b. *pawRat-an-na*$_i$ *ni* *abas*$_i$ *aiku* *pa-'tung* *tu* *taquq*
force-TR-3SG.ERG ERG PN 1SG.ABS CAUS-kill OBL chicken
lit. 'I was forced by Abas such that she caused me to kill a chicken.'

Actually, the matrix verb *pawRat/pawRatan* in (13), which is glossed as 'force' by Chang & Tsai, turns out to mean 'insist on doing something despite objection' instead—it should occur as a subject-control rather than an object-control verb, behaving on a par with *'ahxyx/'ahxya* in Tsou, as evidenced by the fact that it can be used in a scenario without any controllee involved. Consider:

(14) Kavalan (based on Li & Tsuchida 2006: 501)

pawRat-a	*kita*	*m-ara*	*ya*	*qilus-na.*
insist-TR	1PL.ERG	INTR-take	ABS	clothers-3SG.GEN

'We shall insist on taking away his clothes despite objection.'

If there was a controllee present with the matrix verb allegedly meaning 'force', the controllee should occur as the topic of the sentence, given that the matrix verb is transitive and that the controllee is supposedly closer to the topic position. This prediction is not borne out though. As a matter of fact, it is the theme of the lower verb that surfaces as the topic of the sentence. This renders the object-control interpretation of the matrix verb doubtful.

On the basis of the above observations, I propose an alternative analysis to Chang & Tsai's thematic account, namely, a deficiency-and-compensation account, as stated as follows:

(15) A deficiency-and-compensation account

a. Object-control verbs are either impoverished or totally missing in Tsou and Kavalan

b. To express a manipulation meaning comparable to object-control, a causative morpheme is added to the embedded verb, intended to introduce a causer/controller and a causee/controllee into the control event.

c. In the control sentence, the introduced controller in the embedded clause resumes the matrix agent in covert pronominal and the introduced controllee antecedes the embedded agent in an overt determiner phrase.

The elements of the account can be summed up and roughly schematized as follows.

(16) Object-control Schema in Tsou and Kavalan

$[\text{agent}_i\ V_1\ [\ PRO_i\ CAUS\ DP_j\ [PRO_j\ V_2]]]$.

As illustrated in (16), an object-control construal turns out to be an agent-control. This seems to accord with Chang & Tsai's characterization of the phenomenon. Nevertheless, it is important to point out that agent-control is the outcome, not the cause, of embedded causativization. What really motivates embedded causativization is the lack of object-control verbs—the embedded causativization is intended to make up for the manipulation sense which is expected to be represented by a matrix object-control verb but fails to do so in Tsou and Kavalan.

This deficiency-and-compensation account has the following advantages. First, it explains nicely why embedded causativization is attested in Tsou, Kavalan, and some other Formosan languages, but unattested in familiar languages like English and Chinese. As is well-known, English and Chinese have a rich set of object-control verbs. There is no room for embedded causative compensation in their object-control construal. Second, it also accounts for why embedded causativization is not observed in the subject-control construal. A subject-control construal does not involve any controller-controllee relation and hence doesn't paves way for

causative compensation. Third, it additionally gives an account for the transitivity restriction on the matrix verb. Recall that in Tsou, object-control construal is possible only when the matrix verb is grammatically transitive. Why is this so? It is likely that this is due to the strong ergative orientation attested in Tsou (Chang 2011). As is well-established in ergative languages, a direct object outranks a subject in grammatical operations (Dixon 1977, Aldridge 2004). It follows that a controllee should outrank a controller in ergative object-control. As schematized in (16), the controllee occurs as an overt DP but is merged in an infinitival complement. It should thus be raised to the matrix topic to get case-licensed. And this is possible only if the matrix verb is grammatically transitive with an EPP feature. This is why the matrix verb should be grammatically transitive in Tsou object-control.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

My proposal suggests that object-control is causative. This is a welcome result, in line with the generative treatment of object-control. Notice that object-control is decomposed into a causative plus an undetermined effect in Jackendoff (1990), as indicated below:

(17) Object-control as causative in English (Jackendoff 1990: 131)

Harry forced Sam to go away.

[CAUSE ([HARRY], [GO ([SAM], [AWAY]))]
[AFF ([SAM],)]
[AFF ([HARRY], [SAM])]

What is parameterized is the position where the causative meaning is grammatically realized. In familiar languages like English, the causative is typically built into the matrix control verb, though LC is by no means impossible, as shown below.

(18) Object-control vs. Subject-control with LC in English

a. I permit him to take a break.

b. I agree to <u>let</u> him take a break.

In Tsou and Kavalan, however, the causative is required to occur late on the embedded verb, given their lexical deficiency in object-control verbs. What looks like a mysterious grammatical variation turns out to be due to a widely-observed principle of lexical parametrization.

ABBREVIATIONS

ABS	absolutive	ACC	accusative
AFF	affect	CAUS	causative
DP	determiner phrase	ECM	exceptional case marking
ERG	ergative	FUT	future
GEN	genitive	INTR	intransitive
LA	locative applicative	LC	late causativization
OBL	oblique	PL	plural
PN	personal name	RED	reduplication
SG	singular	TR	transitive
V	verb		

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