

The polysemy of CV marking in Formosan languages: An event structure analysis

The traditional thematic approach to Philippine-type voice systems has suffered serious criticism because of several empirical findings regarding “thematic mismatches”, including (a) the lack of one-to-one mapping between the voice marker and the thematic role of the pivot, (b) the “lexical gaps”, namely unavailability of certain voice forms for some roots, and (c) the lexical idiosyncrasies of voice-marked verbs.

Following the “Austronesian voice as derivation” claim (Starosta 2002; see also Foley 1998 and Huang 2005), I argue that symmetrical voice marking provides both a constructional meaning and a syntactic template to the root, thereby determining the argument realization of the derived verb. An illustration, this study establishes the “polysemy” pattern of circumstantial (or conveyance) voice (CV) marking across Formosan languages, and unifies the multiple thematic roles this marker targets (e.g. instrument, transported theme, beneficiary, stimulus) under an event structure analysis. I demonstrate, in particular, how the causal theory (e.g. Figure 1; Croft 2012, 2014) can be implemented to account for event lexicalization in the context of CV-marked verbs, as opposed to their locative voice counterparts.

(1) *Sue broke the coconut for Greg with a hammer.*

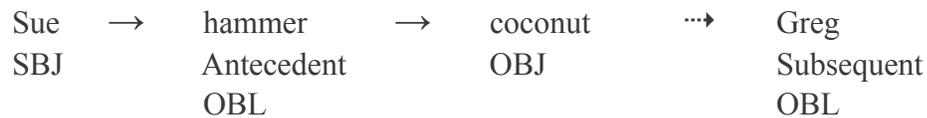


Figure 1. Causal chain representation of example (1).

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