GIVE constructions in Zhuang and Maonan: A comparative study

The multifunctionality of the verbs for GIVE has been the subject of investigation across various languages over the past decades. This study examines both the polysemous status and syntactic derivation of GIVE constructions in two understudied Tai-Kadai language varieties spoken within southern China, namely, Zhuang and Maonan. The GIVE-corresponding morphemes in Zhuang and Maonan are *hawj* and *ʔnaːk⁷* respectively.

The aims of the study are two-fold: (i) empirically, to provide a descriptive account of *hawj* and *ʔnaːk⁷* in both pre-verbal and post-verbal domains, and identify their convergent and divergent uses; (ii) theoretically, to postulate a unified and consistent syntactic analysis for *hawj* and *ʔnaːk⁷* constructions.

I show that *hawj* and *ʔnaːk⁷* can assume a rich array of uses as attested in other Southeast Asian languages. The similarities in usage between *hawj* and *ʔnaːk⁷* include (1) the ditransitive use, (2) the goal use, (3) the causative use, (4) the permissive use, (5) the benefactive use, and (6) the purposive use, while their differences lie in (1) the malefactive use (in Zhuang), and (2) the passive use (in Maonan).

Syntactically, I argue, following Lin & Huang (2010), that *hawj* and *ʔnaːk⁷* remain a lexical verb throughout and their multiple uses can be derived from a generalized ditransitive structure and the sense of a transferring event despite different syntactic positions. Lin & Huang's (2010) proposal for GIVE constructions is adopted in this study with minor modification.

Examples[1]

Zhuang					**Maonan**					

[1] ditransitive

a. De hawj gou song bonj saw.   c. fie² ʔnaːk⁷ man² pən³ lɛ¹ ʔdeu²
   3SG give 1SG two CL book   1SG give 3SG CL book one
   'S/he gave me two books.'   'I gave him/her a book.'

b. Daxmeh hawj nganz gou.
    mother give money 1SG
    'Mother gave me money.'

[2] goal

a. De cawx dauq buh ndeu hawj gou.   b. te¹ jiːŋ¹ pən³ lɛ¹ ʔdeu² ʔnaːk⁷ fie²
   3SG buy CL clothes one give 1SG   3PL lend CL book one give 1SG
   'S/he bought me a piece of clothing.' 'They lent a book to me.'

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[3] causative

a. Mwngz hawj bohmeh causim lai loh.
 2SG give parents worry much PART
 'You make your parents worried too much.'

b. $ŋ^2$ $gə^5$ $ʔna:k^7$ wa^5 $ʔwa^5$ $sɛu^5$ $pa:i^1$
 2SG always give trousers dirty completely PART
 'You always make your trousers dirty all over.'

[4] permissive

a. Daxmeh hawj gou bae haw.
 mother give 1SG go market
 'Mother let me go to the market.'

b. man^2 $ʔna:k^7$ $ɦe^2$ $pa:i^1$ $ja:n^1$ man^2
 3SG give 1SG go house 3SG
 'S/he let me go to her/his house.'

[5] benefactive

a. De guh hong hawj dicuj.
 3SG do work give landlord
 'S/he worked for the landlord.'

b. $dɛ^2$ $ʔna:k^7$ $la:k^8$ $vɛ^4$ $ja:n^1$
 father give offspring make house
 'The father was building a house for his child.'

[6] purposive

a. Gyongde gap giup hawj vunz byaij.
 3PL set.up bridge give people walk
 'They built a bridge for people to walk through.'

b. man^2 $vɛ^4$ $kɔŋ^1$ $ʔna:k^7$ k^hje^1 $ju:n^3$ $ŋgai^1$ man^2
 3SG do work give other all like 3SG
 'S/he worked so (well) that the others all like him/her.'

[7] malefactive

Dik hawj mbat ga ndeu!
kick give CL foot one
'Give you a kick!'

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[8] passive

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mu^5 $ʔna:k^7$ man^2 ha^3 $li:u^5$
pig give 3SG kill PART
'The pig was killed by him.'

Selected References

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