

Languages of Southeast Asia: a stake for linguistic theories

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1. In descriptions of Southeast Asian languages, the notion of **grammaticalization** occupies an important place: grammati(cali)zation is a semantic process whereby a ‘root morpheme’ with a full lexical meaning assumes a more abstract ‘grammatical’ meaning.

The notion of grammaticalization raises the problem of the distinction between lexicon and grammar. Among researchers specialists of the Southeast Asian languages, this distinction does not have the same status. It is interesting to compare the respective positions of W. Bisang and N. Enfield.

1.1. Bisang (2009 : 2-3)

“In a large number of languages in East and mainland Southeast Asia, grammaticalization is characterized by the following characteristics:

- *Lack of obligatory categories and predominance of pragmatic inference even in the case of highly abstract grammatical concepts such as tense and or definiteness*
- *Existence of rigid syntactic patterns(word-order patterns)*
- *No or limited coevolution of form and meaning*

The definition of obligatoriness adopted in this paper is that of Lehmann (1995). A category is obligatory if the speaker is forced to specify that category by selecting a marker that belongs to it. (...)

The lack of obligatoriness is particularly remarkable in cases where the concept inferred is an abstract grammatical concept that is expressed by obligatory categories in Indo-European languages. While these functions are conventionalized in Indo-European, they are the product of pragmatic inference in many markers of East and mainland Southeast Asian languages. This is corroborated by the fact that in a number of cases one and the same marker may express different grammatical concepts in different situations or in different constructions”.

Assimilating grammatical to obligatory (usually in reference to Indo-European languages) is an old view: Jakobson (1963): « *being obligatory is specific to the grammatical categories contrary to lexical meanings* » (p. 197) and « *The real difference between languages does not lie in what they can express or not, but in what the locutors must or must not convey. (...) Grammar is a genuine ars obligatoria (...) It imposes to the locutor a yes or no type of decision.* » (p. 201)

Such a position comes back to holding the Indo-European languages as a model, since in Indo-European languages, the distinction between lexicon and grammar has a certain **empirical** base, especially due to the importance of morphology. But such a distinction has definitely no theoretical ground, and any attempt to generalization to other types of languages proves highly uncertain.

1.2. Enfield (2003)

“Despite the standard methodological assumption of a distinction between ‘grammatical’ and ‘lexical’ meaning, there is no evidence of such a distinction being a qualitative one, at least not in semantic terms. (...) I hold the view that lexicon and grammar do not contain different kinds of meaning” (p. 36).

1.3. From one language (or group of languages) to another, the boundary between lexicon and grammar is unsettled, and can hardly be defined. If such a boundary does make sense on the empirical ground in indo-european languages, this is not the case in the SEA languages where many units prove to have both lexical **and** grammatical uses. As a matter of fact, this problem is not limited to categories, as is shown by the two lexical series below, where the same notion/cognate can be expressed by a lexical unit (French/English), by a prefix attached to the verb (Russian), or even by a serial construction (Khmer):

French, English :	<i>tuer</i>	<i>to kill</i>		
Russian :	<i>u</i> (prefix) – <i>bit'</i>	(‘to beat’)		
Khmer :	<i>koat</i>	<i>vay</i>	<i>vie</i>	<i>ηoap</i>
	3sg	hit	3sg	dead
French, English :	<i>trouver</i>	<i>to find</i>		
Russian :	<i>na</i> (prefix) <i>idti</i>	(‘go’)		
Khmer :	<i>ɾɔk</i>	(‘look for’) + <i>baan</i>	(‘acquire’)	
	<i>ɾɔk</i>	(‘look for’) + <i>khəəŋ</i>	(‘see’)	

1.3. The fact that SEA languages display a large number of units with both « lexical » and « grammatical » uses leads to question the relation between those two types of uses, whether referring or not to the notion of grammaticalization. Two types of answers can be distinguished at this level :

1. It is possible to identify a basic lexical meaning giving rise through grammaticalization to the grammatical meaning(s) ;
2. There is a basic semantic identity, and the grammatical meaning(s) stem(s) from pragmatic inferences ;
3. It is possible to define a semantic identity at a level above both lexical and grammatical meanings. This position is being discussed by Enfield (2006) as a precategorical characterization, the various meanings and uses of a given unit depending on the syntactic constructions integrating this unit.

2. We will illustrate these three approaches through a first example fully dealt with in the literature : that of the verbs meaning something like ‘acquire’ in a large number of SEA languages : *baan* (Khmer) *duo’c* (Vietnamese), *dâaj* (Thai), *dâj* (lao), *tau* (hmong), *kɾ?* (mon) etc. (cf. in particular Enfield, 2003, 2004, Bisang 2009, Hayman 1999, Jenny (2005), Lebaud & Vogel, 2009).

We will limit to a confrontation between positions 2 and 3 (position 1 is supported by Hayman (1999) and criticized by Enfield (2001)).

Enfield defines the verbs meaning ‘acquire’ in the SEA languages as showing the following features :

- (a) means ‘come to have’ (among other meanings) as a main verb ;
- (b) has a modal function (notably ‘can’) as a post verb
- (c) marks postverbal complementation or clause coordinating structures;
- (d) has an aspectual function (‘finite’, ‘attained’) as a preverb (2003 : 42)

Bisang (2009) adopts these hypotheses, however insisting on the fact that “*the different interpretations of baan* (Khmer) *should not be treated in terms of polysemy or semantic change.*”

The precategorial identity hypothesis is supported by Paillard (2009).

baan implies the existence of a **path** between to positions **e1** and **e2**; **e2** is the relevant position (to be attained) and **e1** is *a priori* a position which gives **access** to **e2**.

attainment e2

path

e1 can

The nature of **e2** is specified by the term on the left of *baan*: N, V or 'Adverb'. In some cases *baan* means that there is a path between two propositions **p** and **q**.

The central notion is that of a 'path' which implies taking into account a **distance** between **e1** and **e2**.

3. We will illustrate our approach with two other examples which prove to be relevant not only in Khmer but also in other SEA languages

A. About *trəv* (Paillard & Thach : 2009, Thach : 2010)

trəv in Khmer as well as *təh* in Mon has a lexical value 'to hit' on the one hand, and a large series of other uses on the other hand. Let's quote here Jenny : "In modern Mon, *təh* has a number of translations including 'hit a mark, a target, touch, be correct, be cheap' as a full verb, 'have to, must; undergo, PASSIVE (ADVERSATIVE)' as preverbal auxiliary (...)" (2006 : 231)

Paillard & Thach (2009) put forward a unitary characterization of *trəv* :

- (a) given a term (entity, event, state of affairs, etc.) E2 located / actualized ;
- (b) a term (entity, event) E1 put into relation with E2 ;
- (c) This relation between E1 and E2 does not come from E1.

This semantic identity is at work in the various meanings and uses of *trəv*; the variation comes from what E1 and E2 mean and stand for, on the one hand, and from the syntactic constructions including *trəv*.

Necessity / prediction / need

- (1) *knom trəv tɨw p^hsaa*
1sg trəv go market
« I must go to the market » (necessity/ obligation)

Conformity

- (2) *moat trəv cnaot*
"He hit the jackpot" "he won the lottery"
- (3) *mhoop nih trəv moat knom nah!*
dish deict. trəv mooth 1sg very

« I like this dish very much indeed! »

Detrimental value

(4) *nieŋ trəv snæ kee haəy*
girl trəv love 3sg part.
« somebody must have cast a spell on her »

(5) *msəlməŋ kɲom trəv moat ʔəv kɲom*
Yesterday 1sg trəv mooth father 1sg
« Yesterday, I was told off by my father! »

Passive : Cf Thach (2010)

(6) *wiɛ trəv(V1) ba:n(V2) tək hɔo(V3) nɔam(V4)*
3sg to hit to get water flow lead
təi(V5) dal(V6) k^htɔm
to go to reach hut

« He was carried away by the stream down to the hut (of the God) ».

(7a) *Phnom Penh trəv kmaŋ vay bæk thnay tii*
Phnom Penh trəv enemy attack break date
‘ Phnom Penh was taken by the enemy ’

(7b) *Phnom Penh trəv baan kmaŋ vay bæk thnay tii*
Phnom Penh trəv baan enemy attack break date
‘ Phnom Penh was taken by the enemy... ’

(7c) *Phnom Penh baan trəv kmaŋ vay bæk thnay tii*
Phnom Penh baan trəv enemy attack break date
« Phnom Penh was taken by the enemy... »

Valeur lexicale de *trəv*

(8a) *koat vay trəv kbaal kɲom*
3sg hit trəv head 1sg

« He hit in the head »

(8b) *koat vay kbaal kɲom*
3sg hit head 1sg

« he punched my head » (voluntary punch)

B. A propos de *ʔaɔy* (Paillard : 2011)

A recent article (Paillard, 2011) shows that the basic meaning of *ʔaɔy* is not ‘transfer’. *ʔaɔy* can actually be defined as a metapredicate meaning that a state of affairs E2 is started by a state of affairs / event E1. The annex 1 gives a synthetic presentation of the ten uses of *ʔaɔy*

4. TAM and the SEA languages

One of the fields where the notion of grammaticalization is most resorted to in the descriptions of SEA languages is the TAM (time / aspect / modality). Cf. for example what M Jenny writes about Mon : “The categories of tense, aspect and modality are not obligatorily expressed in Mon (...) When marked, both aspect and modality usually make use of grammaticalised verb forms although clauses particles may take over aspectual and modal

functions as well.(...) We may take the word aspect in Mon to have a broader meaning than the one commonly used as ‘different ways of viewing the internal constituency of a situation’ (Comrie 1995 : 3)”. (Jenny 2005 : 153).

4.1. Comrie and the notion of perfective et d'imperfective.

Comrie’s book (1976) about the notion of aspect has been a reference for over 30 years in the studies of “aspect” in various languages. The first distinction is that between perfective and imperfective.

Note that in his book, no reference is made to the SEA languages (save two short references to the Chinese). The I /P distinction is based on Russian :

Perfective : Perfective : “The (second) verb presents the totality of the situation referred to without reference to its internal temporal constituency : the whole of the situation is presented as a single unanalysable whole, with beginning, middle and end rolled into one ; no attempt is made to divide the situation up into various individual phases that make up the action of ‘entry” p. 3.

Imperfective : “explicit reference to the internal temporal structure, viewing a situation from within” (p. 24).

4.2. Comments on the distinction Imperfective / Perfective in Russian

Prefixation is the main means to derive a perfective from an imperfective base. Note that there are very few morphologically simple perfective verbs (about 20). Apart from this little set of simple perfective and of semelfactive verbs, a perfective verb thus results from a combination of a verb and a prefix (there are 18 prefixes which can be combined with a base).

The same base can combine with a pretty large number of prefixes¹.

Last, a prefix combined with the same base can take quite different values: *za* (préf.) + *govorit* ‘speak’ can mean “speak to”, but also with a C1 (/human/ complement) : “to make dizzy with words”

Taking for granted the link between perfective and imperfective comes back to restrain to the uses in the past time, whereas this distinction is at work in all the uses, whatever the time or the mode (indicative, imperative, infinitive) of the verb.

Following other authors, we characterize the perfective as a complex predicate in every case, including those where the perfective is presented as forming an aspectual pair with a simple imperfective. This excludes resorting to the desemantization of the prefix and leads to argue that the notion of perfective (and imperfective) is not aspectual. According to the base, the prefix changes : *pisat* ‘(write) – **na** (préf.) *pisat*’, *chitat* ‘(read) – **pro** (préf.) – *chitat*’.

Forming a perfective through the prefixation of an imperfective base gives rise to a set of values listed in the literature : **aktionsart** (imperfective : ‘activity’ / perfective : ‘completion’), focus on a given **phase of a process** (inchoative, durative or terminative values), **quantification / qualification** of the process, creation of a **new lexical unit**.

¹ Dans Paillard (2006) on trouvera une étude de la base *kaz-* ‘sembler / paraître’ : *kaz - : pokazat* ‘(« montrer », « témoigner ») / *nakazat* ‘(« punir », « mandater ») / *skazat* ‘(« dire ») / *dokazat* ‘(« démontrer ») / *prikazat* ‘(« ordonner ») / *vykazat* ‘(« exprimer », « manifester ») / *zakazat* ‘(« commander ») / *ukazat* ‘(« indiquer ») / *otkazat* ‘(« refuser ») / *okazat* ‘(« fournir », « faire preuve de »), *okazat’sja* ‘(« se trouver », « s’avérer »).

4.3. Similarities and differences

- simple verbs : state /activity
- complex set of determinations of simple verbs using various means differing from one language (or set of languages) to another : verbal morphology, and /or prefixation and or SVC

- Jenny's book (2005) on the verbal system of the Mon shows the all the different ways to express an event in the past) :
 - *resultatives compounds* *klay* 'look for' *chx* 'meet'
 - *thɔʔ* 'throw away': "to express a completed event with a connotation of undeliberatness, sometimes definitness or irreversibility";
 - *tɛh* 'hit': "to express a completed event with a connotation of unvoluntariness / inadvertence";
 - *ʔa* 'go': "to express a completed event as well as the move away from the point of reference";
 - *klɔŋ* 'come': "usually has perfect meaning";
 - *lɜ* 'keep': "perfective aspect"
 - *kɔʔ* 'get, acquire': "resultative meaning";
 - *toθ* 'finish': "resultative → completive, experiential".

"In combination with activity verbs ʔa 'go' and klɔŋ 'come' express an ongoing action /situation, i.e. they lead to (or at least favour) an imperfective/progressive reading, while with statives, the (perfective) inchoative/ingressive reading is preferred" (Jenny, 2005 :72)

5. About the CVS

- the « doxa » about the CVS (Aikhenvald & Dixon (2004), Bisang (2008)) ;
- The following table taken from Bisang (2008) shows that grammaticalization is given an important role

SVCs without grammaticalization / lexicalization	
Juxtaposition (coordination, purpose) Modification	
SVCs with grammaticalization <ul style="list-style-type: none">- <i>take</i>-constructions- causative and pivotal constructions- resultative constructions- serial units consisting of<ul style="list-style-type: none">o TAM markerso Directional verbso Coverbs	SVCs with lexicalization <ul style="list-style-type: none">- bisyllabic verbs

An important question is: how many V are there in a SVC ? According to Aikhenvald & Dixon, only V keeping the same meaning as the one they have as a single V in a

proposition must be held as full V. In his review of this book, Enfield (2009) points out the problems raised by such a criterion

3.1. A 'Davidsonian' approach of the SVC (Davidson, 1967): the notion of complex event

- the **event** expressed in the SVC is a variable **e** which gets its content from the succession of the verbs forming the CVS;
- the event **e** expressed by a SVC is described as the combinatory of the scenarios of the verbs forming the SVC.
- the reading of a SVC (V1 ... Vi ... Vn) proceeds from the left (V1) to the right (Vn)
- there is no so called 'main verb';
- in the SVC a verb Vi (more precisely its scenario) specifies the frame of the following verb Vi + 1;

(a) *Brutus murdered César*

(b) *Brutus stood up, took his dagger, got nearer, brandished his dagger and hit Cesar right in the heart.*

(c) *neak cəh muk tək cəh tɪw sraŋ ɣɔk niɛŋ*
person know swim water go down go lift up take girl
laəŋ mɔk # baan dɔc bamnaŋ
laəŋ come baan as intend

'The one who could swim went down and took the girl out of the water' # He acted as had been planned

(d) *wiɛ trəv(V1) baan(V2) tək hɔɔ(V3) nɔam(V4)*
3sg to hit to get water flow lead
teɪ(V5) dal(V6) kʰtɔm
to go to reach hut

« He was carried away by the stream down to the hut (of the God)».

(e) *tʰwee mɛc baə rɪɛŋ baan kaət laəŋ tɪw haəy*
do how if story get be born laəŋ partic. partic.

« What is to be done, since this story (a love affair between two young people) is over for good (...) ?»

The particles *teɪ* and *haəy* contribute to mean that the event is irreversible

Example: the case of the verb *laəŋ* ('to climb, to rise')

Scenario of *laəŋ* : following S. Seng (2008), *laəŋ* implies two ordered points **p1** and **p2** (**p1** and **p2** can be points in space / degrees of a property / states). *laəŋ* disqualifies **p1** in favour of **p2**, which becomes predominant.

laəŋ as **V1** : taking into account **p1** and **p2**

(1a) *kmeɛŋ pii neak laəŋ banhoot tuŋciɛt*
child two person laəŋ raise flag

« Two children run the flag up the pole»

(1b) *kmeen pii neak banhoot turciet*
 child two person laəŋ raise flag

« Two children run the flag »

(2) *koat laəŋ cie mee kee haəy*
 3sg laəŋ to be leader 3sg part.

« He became their leader »

(3) *dey laəŋ t^hlay*
 land laəŋ be expensive

« The price of land increases »

laəŋ as **Vi** :

(4) *borah muəy caol laəŋ trəv ʔaoy p^hlaə sway nuh c^hruh*
 guy one throw laəŋ hit give fruit mango dem. to fall off
coh mək
 to go down come

« A guy throws a stone so that the mango and falls (in the right place) »

(5) *laəŋ klaŋ*

laəŋ be strong

« To get stronger and stronger / worse and worse » (for ex. an illness getting worse)

laəŋ introduces a variation in intensity.

laəŋ as **V2** : stabilisation of the process in **p2**.

(6) *klaŋ laəŋ*
be strong laəŋ

« get stronger » (for ex. get a sound louder, turn the sound up: from one level of intensity to a higher one)

(7) *c^hap laəŋ*
 fast laəŋ

« Faster ! »

(8a) *ʔaasanrək kaət laəŋ niw prateh cən* (Huffman)
 cholera be born laəŋ in country Chinese
daoyasa kvah ʔaʔnaamay
 because of lack hygiene

The cholera spread all over China owing to the sanitary problems

(8b) *ʔaasanrək kaət niw prateh cən*
 cholera be born in country Chinese

« A cholera epidemic broke out in China »

(9) *t^hwee mɛc baə riəŋ baan kaət laəŋ tei haəy*
 do how if story get be born laəŋ partic. partic.

« What is to be done, since this story (a love affair between two young people) is over for good (...) ? »

(10) *kraabey haa moat laəŋ haəy*
 buffalo open mouth laəŋ part.

« The buffalo open his mouth wide »

(11) *p^hteah nih trəv baan kee saəŋ laəŋ pii c^hnam 1980*
 house deict. hit get 3sg pl build laəŋ from year 1980

« This house was built in the year 1980 »

(12) *plallɔttaʔp^hal trəv baan kaən laəŋ bey daəŋ pii c^hnam mun*
 production hit get increase laəŋ three time from year before
 « Production increased three times compared to last year »

baan in SVC

baan as V1 implies the existence of a path which defines the domain of the verb following baan

- **e1** salient: the process expressed by the verb (V2) is only virtual:

(1a) *baə baan ʔaɛŋ mɔɔk kɲom saʔbay mɛɛn tɛɛn*
 if baan 2sg come 1sg happy true
 “Should you happen to come, I would be very happy”

(2b) *baə ʔaɛŋ baan mɔɔk kɲom saʔbay mɛɛn tɛɛn*
 if 2sg baan come 1sg happy true
 “If you manage to come, I’ll be very happy”

(3) *trey samboo nah craən mɛɛn tɛɛn taə ʔat baan hoop tee*
 fish abundant very much true but neg baan eat part.
 “There is plenty of fish, really plenty, but we are not allowed to eat it (NE)”

- **e2** salient: certainty about the realization of the process expressed by the verb (V2)

(cf. “The basic aspectual function of preverbal ACQUIRE, in particular conveying the meaning that the event predicated by the main verb has occurred as a result of some unspecified prior other event” Enfield, 2003: p. 291)

(4) *kɲom baan riepkaa taam prapeynii k^hmae*
 1sg baan marriage follow custom khmer

“(Although being in France), I managed to get married following the Khmer custom” (NE)

(5) *kɲom baan tɨw pii daŋ*
 1SG. baan go two times

« I managed to go there twice »

(6) *bey t^hnay tiet baan koat mɔɔk saalaa*
 three day more baan 3sg come school

« In three days he will be able to come to school »

baan as Vn specifies the verb on its left as corresponding to a path with one salient position:

(7) *sdap ʔaŋ baan tee*
 listen 1sg baan part.

(a) Can you listen to me (**e1**)

(b) Have you understood what I said? (**e2**)

- **e1** salient: possibility, permissive, be able to (the process often is depending on the addressee):

(8) *tɨw taə kluən baan haəy*
 go only corps baan part.

« You can go without taking anything »).

(9) *koat cuəy mɪn baan tee*
3sg help neg *baan* part.
'he fails helping me (even when he wants to)'

- **e2** is salient: 'to succeed'

(10) *prahael cie məp^həy neak rɔt ceɛŋ baan*
About be twenty persons run go out *baan*
'About 20 people managed to escape (NE)'

(11) *koat baŋ baan tʊnsaɪ muəy*
3sg fire *baan hare one*
He killed a hare

(12) *koat baŋ sat ʔat baan muəy kbaal sah (LV)*
3sg fire animalneg. *baan* one head (classif) part
He came back empty handed (he failed shooting one single animal)'

(13) *kɲom baan riən niw salaə nəŋ pontəə tɪw riən ʔat baan tee*
1sg *baan* study in school deict. but go study neg *baan* part
'I enrolled in that school but I was not able to go and study'

- *baan* is always a verb with its own semantics;
- in SVC *baan* is neither a modal nor an aspecto-temporal marker: 'possibility' and 'attainment' are inferred from the salience of one of the two positions given by the path;
- The interpretation of *baan* in a given utterance involves a two level process:
 - o a level where the abstract scenario of *baan* is considered through the interaction with the items making the co-text;
 - o a syntactico –semantic level.

Conclusion

- diversity of the languages and polysemy (polyfunctionality) of the units as two main challenges in linguistics
- no language (of set of languages) can stand as a "model"
- for a given unit, the notion of basic meaning must be replaced by that of semantic identity

Promotion of an approach based on invariance defined as showing what varies and what does not

- categories and cross linguistic descriptions.

Haspelmath (2010: 665): "Comparative concepts are necessary for the formulation of cross-linguistic generalizations (...). The comparative concepts must not contain language-specific components."

A category is viewed as a set of concepts and abstract operations that define invariable formal properties. Through a selection and a combination of such properties, various groupings can be formed that lead to a multiplicity of possible realizations according to the languages in question. From this perspective, a strict distinction between grammar and lexicon cannot be maintained. Depending on the markers at stake, each language can be considered a particular realization of such and such category. Taking into account the diversity of possible

realizations contribute in return to the enrichment of general reasoning regarding the status of the category at stake.

Double relation : category \rightarrow Li

And not a relation category \leftrightarrow Li

category \leftarrow Li

Category (comparative concept)

L1

Li

Ln

F1

Fi ... Fn

F1 ... Fi ... Fn

F1

Fi ... Fn

In a given language, the forms which appear (F1 Fn) are **possible** forms coming from the category. If a form Fi expressed the category, this means that this form has something to do, is connected with the category

The notion of invariance is again required to account for the polysemy (polyfunctionality) of a unit ;

Any grammar is lexical / any unit has functional properties ;

« On explique moins en revanche que les langues changent au point qu'elles se transforment et qu'on en vienne à ne plus les comprendre. La grammaticalisation l'explique : les langues se sont bien transformées quand le lexical est devenu grammatical, quand l'intraprédicatif est devenu outil discursif, quand les locutions se sont figées et ne sont plus comprises, quand tel sens premier ou telle valeur première se sont perdus. Dans la théorie de l'invariance, il n'y a pas de valeur première qui ensuite varie. C'est la variation qui est première : l'identité est variation. Mais cela signifie dès lors que cette identité se maintient, au fil de la variation. D'un certain point de vue les langues sont alors invariantes, ne cessant de varier dans le cadre des invariants qui les constituent. Tout était toujours là, et on ne cesse de tenter d'approximer ce qui a toujours été là, et qui était à dire. » Sarah de Voguë, « Invariance contre grammaticalisation : à propos des variations dans le champ de la condition » (manuscrit)

Annex I

Paillard, D. (2011) "about វាច្យ in contemporary khmer", *Mon - Khmer Studies*, 2011.

"This presentation of ten large classes of uses of វាច្យ has made it possible to show that each use can be characterized by a set of specific syntactic properties grounding the interpretation of the utterance with វាច្យ. This presentation has also made it possible to bring out a characteristic feature at work in all the uses of វាច្យ: the partial autonomy of the sequence

coming after *ʔaɔy*. As a rule, this autonomy of the sequence following *ʔaɔy* comes together with the - possible or necessary - presence in this sequence of a V different from *ʔaɔy*. Owing to this verb, the sequence can refer to an event which is part of the complex event expressed by the whole utterance. As regards the presence of a V in the sequence before *ʔaɔy*, it should be noted that this is the case with the following uses: benefactive, delegative, jussive, P1 *ʔaɔy* P2 and criticize/rebuke.

We hereafter resume the ten types of uses in reference to the autonomy of the sequence coming after *ʔaɔy*.

- **Transfer** is characterized by the possibility to introduce a verb after *ʔaɔy*. The presence of a V (normally *tʂɨ* 'to go'), which is not compulsory, means that the transfer is not considered as the mere passage of an entity from a subject S1 to a subject S2 (S1 being the active part in this passage). With a postposed V, putting this entity in relation with S2 is considered as prior, and taking S1 into account is subordinated to this relation.

(1) *koat ʔaɔy baaj cʰkaε maɔŋ pɔnman*
3sg ʔaɔy rice dog hour how many

"At what time does he give the dogs their meal?"

- **Benefactive** comes with a V standing both on the left and of the right of *ʔaɔy*. The one on the right is not compulsory contrary to the transfer case. Benefactive means that the process referred to by the verb standing before *ʔaɔy* is not considered only from the point of view of the subject agent (S1) of this process, but from the point of view of another subject S2 standing on the right of *ʔaɔy*. The presence of *tʂɨ* on the right of *ʔaɔy* reinforces the subordination of the process achieved by S1 to the interest of S2.

(2) *ɔɔm ɔɔh tʰlaj ʔaɔy kɲom*
ask descend cost ʔaɔy 1sg

"Reduce the price for me"

- **Permissive** and **causative**: the compulsory presence of a verb after *ʔaɔy* means that the subject-agent of *ʔaɔy* is taken into account as it allows the event referred to by the V to be possible or achieved.

(3) *ʔaɔy kɲom tiw pʰa:ŋ*
ʔaɔy 1sg go also

"Let me come with you!"

(4) *peel koat mɔɔk dal ʔaɔy koat cam kɲom bantec*
time 3sg come arrive ʔaɔy 3sg wait 1sg a little

"When he gets there, tell him to wait for me a little!"

- **P1 *ʔaɔy* P2** is characterized by the compulsory presence of a V both on the left (P1) and on the right (P2) of *ʔaɔy*. The V of P1 has a causative value and is understood as the achievement of the event referred to by the V in P2. However, when the subject of the V in P2 comes back to the left of *ʔaɔy*, the event referred to by P1 gets its own autonomy as an event.

(5) *kɲom cie neak noam wiɔ ʔaɔy (*∅) skoal caowaaj kʰaεt*
1sg. be person lead 3sg. ʔaɔy know chief province

"I 'm the one who did introduce him to the province governor"

- **Jussive** and *ku3*: alternative \emptyset / $\lambda\alpha\gamma$. The mere possibility of a construction without $\lambda\alpha\gamma$ means that the event is referred to mainly by the verb other than $\lambda\alpha\gamma$. This V is on the left in the jussive case, on the right in the *ku3* case. In the jussive case, the predicate on the right of $\lambda\alpha\gamma$ is not interpreted as a mere determination of the process, but as a goal to be reached - the validation of the process being considered regarding the achievement of this goal.

(6) *n#w* $\lambda\alpha\gamma$ *snizm* (*lec tu:k ?eyley haay*)
remain $\lambda\alpha\gamma$ *still* (*sink boat at this time PART.*)
 "Keep still! Or you'll make the boat sink!"

(7) *baan* *miznɔp* *ciwɔt* *baan* *kamsat* *mɛɛn* *ku3* $\lambda\alpha\gamma$ *ʔaanɔt* *nah*
older *name* *life* *older* *miserable* *true* *ku3* $\lambda\alpha\gamma$ *take* *very*
sibling *sibling* *pity*
 "Meanup, you have an unhappy life inspiring me compassion"

- **Delegative**: the impossibility to have a V in the sequence coming after $\lambda\alpha\gamma$ and the compulsory presence of a V before does not make an exception of the delegative. As shown above, the validation of V by a subject S1 is not at stake for itself: it matters only in regard with the substitution of S1 to a subject S2 standing on the right of $\lambda\alpha\gamma$. The delegative implies a verb, but this verb is not explicit, being the same as in the left sequence, or already present in the left context.

(8) *knom* *baək* *laan* $\lambda\alpha\gamma$ *nizyuɔ?* *yuunnesko*
1sg *drive* *car* $\lambda\alpha\gamma$ *manager* *UNESCO*
 "I drive the UNESCO manager's car as his driver"

- **Optative**: no sequence at all before $\lambda\alpha\gamma$: the only thing which matters is the (actual or aimed at) achievement of the only event referred to by the sequence coming after $\lambda\alpha\gamma$.

(9) *wie* *sɔkcɔt* *t^hwee* *taam* $\lambda\alpha\eta$ *tɛaŋʔah* \emptyset $\lambda\alpha\gamma$ *taə* $\lambda\alpha\eta$
3sg. *agree* *Do* *follow* *2sg.* *all* \emptyset $\lambda\alpha\gamma$ *tae* *2sg.*
niyizy *ʔʔaa* *nɔŋ* *wiɔ*
speak *well* *with* *3sg.*

"He agrees to do anything you want, on the only condition that you speak kindly to him"

- **Criticize – rebuke**: the impossibility to have a V coming after $\lambda\alpha\gamma$ lies on a mechanism comparable to that described in the delegative case, but for one difference: the V which is not explicit on the right of $\lambda\alpha\gamma$ is present in the left context and not directly in the sequence before $\lambda\alpha\gamma$. But the V has not the same interpretation in the two positions. In the left context, it refers to an event (which is considered as having a negative value); in the utterance with $\lambda\alpha\gamma$ preceded by the verbs *t^haa* and *sdɛy*, it corresponds to something that is said (meaning a predication): the agent of the process on the left is resumed by the N coming after $\lambda\alpha\gamma$ as a subject of whom is said that he is responsible for a process.

(10) *mɔn* *nɔŋ* *t^haa* (**sdɛy*) $\lambda\alpha\gamma$ *kee* *məl* *k^hluɔn* $\lambda\alpha\eta$ *sɔn*
before *PART.* *t^haa* **sdɛj* $\lambda\alpha\gamma$ *people* *look* *oneself* *2sg* *first*
 "Before criticizing the others, just look at yourself!" (Someone criticizes the people around him about what they wear)

3. Characterization of *ᲗᲗᲃ*.

As indicated before, it is not possible to account for these ten uses of *ᲗᲗᲃ* basing on a central value called transfer. It appears that *ᲗᲗᲃ* is not just a verb like any other, but justifies its definition as a "metapredicate", with the following characterization: its function is to put in relation two events **E1** and **E2**, the first one being introduced as the trigger of the second one:

$$\mathbf{E1} \ \mathbf{ᲗᲗᲃ} \ \mathbf{E2}$$

The relation thus established between **E1** and **E2** gives *ᲗᲗᲃ* a causative dimension, but this relation should not be reduced to a mere causal relation. In 2. the autonomy of the sequence coming after *ᲗᲗᲃ* has been pointed out; in the above notation, this sequence corresponds to **E2**. This autonomy of **E2** leads to the assumption that **E2** comes first, and that **E1** is only taken as the trigger of **E2**. This primacy of **E2** means that **E2** is introduced independently of **E1**, even though the realization of **E2** interacts with that of **E1**.

An event can be minimally defined as involving a subject (**S**) and a predicate (**p**). Our hypothesis on the semantic core of *ᲗᲗᲃ* can therefore be schematized as follows:

$$\mathbf{S_1} \quad \mathbf{p_1} \quad (\mathbf{E1}) \ \mathbf{ᲗᲗᲃ}^2 \quad \mathbf{S_2} \quad \mathbf{p_2} \quad (\mathbf{E2}).$$

This semantic function is at work in all the uses of *ᲗᲗᲃ*. All these uses correspond to various modes of realization coming from the specific units embodying the sequences **S1 p1** and **S2 p2**. The sequence corresponding to the use **P1 ᲗᲗᲃ P2** gives the largest extension: **S1 p1** and **S2 p2** correspond each to a clause formed on the pattern **N V (XY)**. The transfer value corresponds to the minimal extension, *ᲗᲗᲃ* being the only verb, **S1 p1** and **S2 p2** reducing to Ns.

From this viewpoint, describing such or such use of *ᲗᲗᲃ* consists in interpreting the different constituents of the utterance as framed by the **S1 p1 ᲗᲗᲃ S2 p2** pattern. We hereafter present a table showing the organization of the ten uses of *ᲗᲗᲃ* with an indication of the element of the abstract pattern realized by each constituent³. When an element of the abstract pattern is not realized, we use the \emptyset symbol. An element of the abstract pattern can be realized by more than one constituent. When the materialization of an element of the abstract pattern is optional, we put the corresponding element into brackets.

Uses	S₁	p₁	<i>ᲗᲗᲃ</i>	S₂	P₂
Transfer	N	\emptyset	<i>ᲗᲗᲃ</i>	N	N
	N	\emptyset	<i>ᲗᲗᲃ</i>	N	V + N
Benefactive	N	V + N	<i>ᲗᲗᲃ</i>	\emptyset	N

² Keeping *ᲗᲗᲃ* in the notation of its semantic characterization comes from the fact that it works as what we called a "metapredicate": it does not express an event as such, but plays a central role in the complex event corresponding to the relation established between **S1 p1 (E1)** and **S2 p2 (E2)**.

³ In this table, we only mention the constituents in direct relation with the abstract pattern **S1 p1 (E1) ᲗᲗᲃ S2 p2 (E2)**.

	N	V + N	ᳵᳵᳵ	∅	V + N
Delegative	N	V + (N)	ᳵᳵᳵ	N	∅
<i>ku3</i>	N	<i>ku3</i>	ᳵᳵᳵ	(N)	V
Jussive	the addressee	V	ᳵᳵᳵ	∅	PRED
Permissive	(N)	∅	ᳵᳵᳵ	N	V
Causative	(N)	∅	ᳵᳵᳵ	N	V
P1 ᳵᳵᳵ P2	N	V	ᳵᳵᳵ	N	V
	N	V + N (= S ₂)	ᳵᳵᳵ	∅	V
Optative	∅	∅	ᳵᳵᳵ	N	V
Criticize / Rebuke	N	<i>t^haa</i>	ᳵᳵᳵ	N	∅
	N	<i>sdey</i>		N	∅

Conclusion

This approach of ᳵᳵᳵ leads to stating that the various uses and values of this verb are always constructional. It makes it impossible to consider one of the values (that of transfer in the present case) as more basic than the others. It breaks the widely spread idea according to which the lexical units « encode » entities or events of the world (a central hypothesis in Newman's works on GIVE). It brings forward the unity and coherence of ᳵᳵᳵ in its various uses.

The semantic identity of ᳵᳵᳵ is to be found in everyone of its uses, through variations coming from the other constituents of the utterance. The characterization we have put forward appears as a *schematic form*. This means that the interaction between ᳵᳵᳵ and some of the items of the context is double: a. as a scheme, it organizes the elements of the context, framing them in a given pattern; b. as a form, it gets its substantial value (its content) from the lexical units embodying this abstract form in a given construction.

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