

About a redundancy feature in East Asia: psy-collocations and beyond

Marc Duval (Universität Zürich)

A specific subtype of noun-predicate collocations describing psychological states or personalities has been pinpointed by Matisoff as constituting an areal feature of South East Asian languages. Among those “psy-collocations”, some are particularly worth noticing because the nominal constituent appears as semantically redundant with respect to the predicate, e.g. Thai *caj-klàad* “heart-cowardly = cowardly” (Matisoff 1986: 11). In such a construction, the predicate applies to an individual X through the mediation of a body part, although this predicate would be appropriate to describe X without mediation.

A similar strategy can however be observed (i), in collocations describing other kinds of physical states or processes, and (ii), in other East Asian languages that do not belong to the South East Asian Sprachbund. Compare the following ‘body-big’ constructions:

- | | | |
|-----|----------------------------------|---------------------------|
| (1) | Japanese: <i>karada.ga ookii</i> | Vietnamese: <i>to xác</i> |
| | Korean: <i>momcip.i khuta</i> | Thai: <i>tua-jàj</i> |

Note that in many cases, the ‘redundant mediated strategy’ is the unmarked construction. Even if this strategy, due to its stylistic or lexical nature, may only concern dozens of units per language, it is interesting to idealize in the following way the opposition between ‘typical’ European-type languages and ‘typical’ Asian-type languages, in terms of use of a mediated (a) or a non-mediated (b) strategy when describing an individual:

	European-type	Asian-type
(2a) <i>Harry is tall.</i>	+	–
(2b) <i>Harry(’s) size is tall.</i>	–	+
(3a) <i>*Harry is long.</i> (when referring to Harry’s legs)	–	–
(3b) <i>Harry(’s) legs are long / Harry is long-legged.</i>	+	+

Now we find a very similar opposition in numeration, where Asian languages make a generalized use of a mediated strategy¹ when counting entities for which, from a Western point of view, the numeral could apply directly to its target.

	European-type	Asian-type
(4a) <i>three dogs</i>	+	–
(4b) <i>three animals (of) dog</i>	–	+
(5a) <i>*three waters</i> (when referring to quantity)	–	–
(5b) <i>three bottles (of) water</i>	+	+

In this talk, we shall first discuss the semantic and referential basis for a potential typological correlation between an extensive use of redundant collocations and the use of classifiers. Then it will be shown that the areal congruence is not strong, but... but that it becomes a lot nicer if we take into account the grammatical encoding of the ternary pattern displayed by the two phenomena, so as to understand the ‘redundancy feature’ as a grammatical one as well.

¹ In this case of grammatical nature.

References

- Baasanjavyn (Lkhagvaa) & Choi, Keeho. 2004. *Hankwukewa mongkoleuy kwanyonge taysacen* [Big dictionary of Korean/Mongolian idioms]. Kwukhakcalyowen.
- Besnier, Niko. 2000. *Tuvaluan: A Polynesian language of the Central Pacific*. Routledge.
- Beyer, Stephan V. 1992. *The Classical Tibetan language*. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Chappell, Hilary M. 1996. Inalienability and the personal domain in Mandarin Chinese discourse. In: Chappell, H. & McGregor, W., eds., *The grammar of inalienability*. 465–527.
- Clark, Marybeth. 1996. Where do you feel? Stative verbs and body-part terms in Mainland Southeast Asia. In: Chappell, H. & McGregor, W., eds. 529–564.
- Diller, Anthony V. N. & Juntanamalaga, Preecha. 1999. ‘Full hearts’ and empty pronominals in Thai. *Australian Journal of Linguistics* 10:2. 231–256.
- Fauconnier, Gilles. 1985. *Mental spaces: aspects of meaning construction in natural language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. [= 1984. *Espaces mentaux*. Paris: Seuil.]
- Fu, Maoji. 1997. A descriptive grammar of Lolo. *Linguistics of the Tibeto-Burman Area* 20:1. 1–242.
- Jaisser, Annie. 1990. DeLIVERing an introduction to psycho-collocations with SIAB in White Hmong. *Linguistics of the Tibeto-Burman Area* 13:1. 159–178.
- Juntanamalaga, Preecha. 1992. On the semantics of Thai compounds in /hua/ ‘head’. In: Compton Carol J. & Hartmann, John F., eds., *Papers on Tai languages, Linguistics, and Literatures*. 168–178.
- Kim, Chang-Sop. 1996. *Kwukeuy tanehyengsengkwa tanekwuco yenkwu* [A study on word formation and word structure in Korean]. Thayhaksa.
- Kim, Jeong-Eun. 1995. *Kwuke tane hyengsengpep yenkwu* [A study on Modern Korean word formation]. 박이정.
- Klamer, Marian. 1998. *A grammar of Kambara*. Berlin/New York: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Klamer, Marian. 2001. Phrasal emotion predicates in three languages of Eastern Indonesia. In: Booij, Geert & van Marle, Jaap, eds. *Yearbook of Morphology 2000*. Kluwer. 97–121.
- Klamer, Marian. 2002. Typical features of Austronesian languages in Central/Eastern Indonesia. *Oceanic Linguistics* 41:2. 363–383.
- Kleiber, Georges. 1991. *Paul est bronzé* versus *La peau de Paul est bronzée*. Contre une approche référentielle analytique. In: Stammerjohann, Harro, ed., *Analyse et synthèse dans les langues romanes et slaves*. Tübingen: Narr. 109–134.
- Kang, Hyoun-Hwa. 1998. Cheyen+yongen kkoluy yene kwusengey tayhan yenkwu [Investigation of collocations with a [noun + verb] structure]. *Sacenphyenchanhakyenkwu* 8. 191–224.
- Lam Thang, Khoi. 2002. Conceptual analysis of Tedim Chin “heart” idioms. *Mon-Khmer Studies* 32. 163–174.
- Langacker, Ronald W. 1984. Active zones. In: Brugman, C. & Macaulay, eds., *Proceedings of the tenth annual meeting of the Berkeley Linguistic Society*. Berkeley: Berkeley Linguistic Society. 172–188.
- Li, Charles N. & Thompson, Sandra A. 1981. *Mandarin Chinese: A functional reference grammar*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Matisoff, James. 1986. Hearts and minds in South-east Asian languages and English: an essay in the comparative lexical semantics of psycho-collocations. *Cahiers de linguistique Asie Orientale* 15:1. 5–57.
- Musgrave, Simon. 2006. Complex emotion predicates in eastern Indonesia: evidence for language contact?. In: Matras, Y., McMahon, April; Vincent, Nigel, eds. *Linguistic Areas*. Houndmills & New York: Palgrave Macmillan. 227–243.
- Na, Younghee. 1986. The conventionalization of semantic distinctions. In: *Papers from the 22nd Regional Meeting Chicago Linguistic Society*. 166–178.
- Nam, Jee-Sun. 1996. *Classification syntaxique des constructions adjectivales en coréen*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Oey, Eric M. 1990. ‘Psycho-collocations’ in Malay: a Southeast Asian areal feature. *Linguistics of the Tibeto-Burman Area* 13:1. 141–158.
- Tubplang/Thamprasert, Rosakon. 2007. *Étude comparative de l’adjectif en français et en thaï*. Ph.D. dissertation, Université Paris-Sorbonne.
- Turpin, Myfany. 2002. Body part terms in Kaytetye feeling expressions. *Pragmatics & Cognition* 10:1/2. 271–305.
- Wälchli, Bernhard. 2005. *Co-compounds and natural coordination*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- WALS = Haspelmath, Martin; Dryer, Matthew S.; Gil, David; Comrie, Bernard, eds. 2008. *The world atlas of language structures*. Munich: Max Planck.
- Wierzbicka, Anna. 1976. Mind and body. In: McCawley, J. D., ed., *Syntax and semantic 7: Notes from the linguistic underground*. New York: Academic Press, 129–157.
- Williams-van Klinken, Catharina Lumien; Hajek, John; Nordlinger, Rachel. 2002. *Tetun Dili. A grammar of an East Timorese language*. Canberra: Pacific Linguistics.