

A Cognitive Analysis of Japanese Cause/Purpose Expressions: Contrast with English and Thai

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The view of causality as a matter of subjective construal has been gaining ground in recent research (Dancygier 2009). I will rely on this point of view and analyze some Japanese, English and Thai cause/purpose expressions. In what follows, A is a preceding clause and B is a following one on time axis, and C/P stands for Cause/Purpose. Examples are given in the order of Japanese, English and Thai. They are agglutinative, inflectional and isolating languages, respectively. Two types of C/P expressions are examined. One ([1]) is based on the word order along time iconicity and construed as C/P, because B describes a result/purpose. The other ([2]) is without time iconicity and correlates with mental path, tense, etc. Examples [1] / [2] and two types of construal of [2] are shown below.

[1] C/P expressions with the same connective in word order along time iconicity.

(1) C: “-**te**, **and/to**, \varnothing (no connective in Thai because of its serialization)”.

a. “-**te**, **and**, \varnothing ”: Kare-wa furoba-de subet-**te** koron-da. (He-TOP bathroom-LOC slip-**te** fall down-PST). He slipped **and** fell down in the bath. Kháo lûn \varnothing lómlonj nai hônj ?àap-nám (He slip \varnothing fall down in room shower).

b. “-**te**, **to**, \varnothing ”: Kanojo-wa kangekishi-**te** nai-ta (She-TOP be-moved-**te** cry-PST). She was moved **to** tears. Kháo rúusèk prathápcai \varnothing lànj námtaa (She feel emotion \varnothing shed tears).

(2) P: (“-**te**” cannot describe a purpose), **and/to**, \varnothing ”.

I’ll go **and/to** see a movie. Chán pai \varnothing duu năj (I go \varnothing see movie).

(3) C/P (constructed in the same form): “(no expression in Japanese,) **so**, **thǔn**”.

I was saving money for three years **so** I could buy this car. Chán kèp nən yùu 3 pii **thǔn** sùu rôt khan níi dâi (I save money DUR 3 years **arrive/to** buy car CLF this possible).

[2] C/P expressions with the same connective in word order without time iconicity.

<N> “N **tame-ni**, **for** N”: correlates with mental path.

(1) C: Noomu no **tame-ni** nanimo mie-nakat-ta (thick mist GEN **tame** -PTCL nothing could see-NEG-PST). I could see nothing **for** thick mist.

(2) P: Kare wa seikatsu no **tame-ni** hataraiteru (He-TOP life-GEN **tame**-PTCL work). He works **for** his living.

<V> “V **tame-ni**, **phró?** V ”: correlates with tense.

(1) C: Watashi wa ie o kat-**ta** **tame-ni** hataraiteru (I-TOP house-ACC buy-**PST** **tame**-PTCL work). **Phró?** sùu bâan **pai léxo** chán thamñaan (**phró?** buy house **PST** I work). (I work because I bought a house.)

(2) P: Watashi wa ie o ka-**u** **tame-ni** hataraku (I-TOP house-ACC buy-**FUT** **tame**-PTCL work). **Phró?** **ca** sùu bâan chán cunj thamñaan (**phró?** **FUT** buy house I then work). (I work to buy a house.)

<N> is the case of a noun with a connective. “**Ni** (PTCL)” and “**for**” describe the direction of mental path of an answer to “why”, that is, “for (the reason/purpose of) ~”. The mental path has one direction (e.g. a rabbit in the left figure cited from Wittgenstein 1958: 194). When N means “a benefit” to get, it is construed as P in Japanese, and also in English, that is, “Purposes Are Desired Objects” (Lakoff and Johnson 1999: 53). On the other hand, when N doesn’t have such a meaning, it is construed as C. The construal has two ways (as a rabbit/duck in the left figure).

In the case of <V>, when verbs with connectives are marked by “-**ta/pai léxo (PST)**/-**u/ca (FUT)**”, they are construed as C/P. This is the same way of construal as [1].

References

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