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AREAL GRAMMATICALIZATION OF POSTVERBAL 'ACQUIRE' IN MAINLAND SOUTHEAST ASIA[1]

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This paper addresses an intriguing problem in the synchrony and diachrony of mainland Southeast Asian languages, namely the widespread use of a verb meaning 'acquire' ('come to have') as a postverbal resultative and/or modal of 'potential' or 'achievement'. Some examples are Khmer *baan*, Thai *dâaj*, Vietnamese *dược*, Hmong *tau*, among many others (see Matisoff 1991:418-427, Enfield 2001a, 2002). I have examined in detail the polyfunctionality of the Lao verb *dâj* 'acquire, come to have', and have established five distinct main meanings, summarized as follows (see Enfield 2002: Chapter 3 for details):
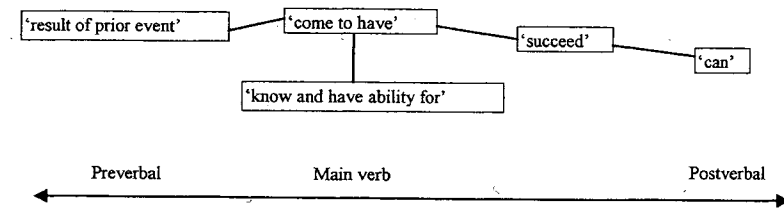

Figure 1. Five meanings of the Lao polyfunctional item *dâj*.

This paper focusses on the three meanings which can appear in postverbal (or V2) position, and investigates the relationship between these, both in synchrony and diachrony:[2]
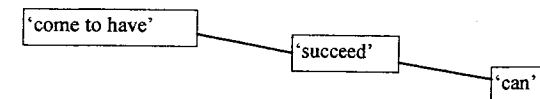

Figure 2. Three postverbal meanings of Lao *dâj*.

My account for the Lao data follows a logic which, I argue, is valid for the many languages of mainland Southeast

Asia which also display this 'acquire'/'can' pattern. Behind this areally consistent grammatical polyfunctionality is a complex process of semantic change. And a proper account must adopt as the basic unit of analysis not a metaphorical 'entity' called 'the language', but real utterances in real time, real usage events (Croft 2000, Iwasaki 2000). A genuine explanation of change requires a plausible and non-metaphorical view of the process, one which recognizes that living, breathing individuals participate directly in effecting the relevant changes, at 'ground level'.

To describe and account for the development of postverbal functions of the Lao verb *dâj* I follow a 'semantic-pragmatic' model of meaning change which puts Gricean inference at the heart of the process (Evans and Wilkins 2000, Enfield 2002; cf. Sweetser 1990, Wilkins 1996). First, it is necessary to assume a clear distinction between semantics ('encoded', 'non-defeasible') and pragmatics ('inferred', 'defeasible'). Fixed meanings of linguistic signs are enriched by pragmatic interpretation, involving inferences based on contextual and background information (Grice 1975, Levinson 2000). Semantic change begins when speakers' use of a word x (meaning 'x') starts to give rise regularly to a pragmatically enriched interpretation 'y'. Then 'bridging contexts' emerge—these are contexts in which an interpretation of x as merely implicating 'y' (on the basis of 'x') or as actually *meaning* 'y' (as distinct from 'x') become functionally equivalent, neutralizing any communicative consequences of two speakers' differing in their interpretation of the respective contribution of encoded semantic content and contingent pragmatic enrichment (Evans and Wilkins 2000:550). Eventually, speakers regard the erstwhile enriched interpretation as a fixed and context-independent *meaning*, with the result that x becomes polysemous, and people use it with distinct meanings 'x' and 'y'. Then the earlier meaning 'x' is free, over time, to fade away or to persist in its own right.

I assume that the original 'source' meaning of the range of modern meanings of Lao *dâj* (and the corresponding element in other languages investigated) is 'come to have' (otherwise glossed as 'acquire', 'obtain', 'get'). The basic argu-

ment is that speakers' use of a verb *dâj* 'come to have' in V2 resultative position has provided the context for an implicature 'succeed', which eventually no longer requires contextual support and becomes a distinct *meaning* for *dâj*; next, speakers' use of *dâj* 'succeed' in V2 position gives rise in certain contexts to an implicature 'can', which eventually no longer requires contextual support, leading to 'can' as a distinct *meaning* for postverbal *dâj*. To date, neither the 'come to have' nor the 'succeed' meanings for *dâj* have disappeared from the language, which means that three distinct meanings for V2 *dâj* now co-exist (with the 'come to have' and 'succeed' meanings also available as main verbs):
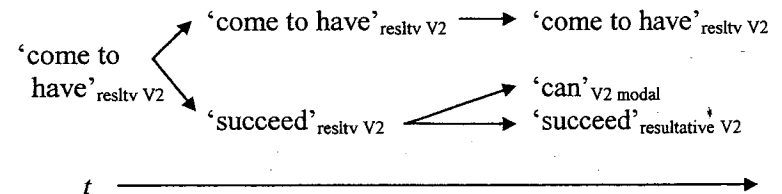

Figure 3. From V2 'come to have' to 'succeed' to 'can'

A key role in this chain of events is played by a feature of resultative constructions in the languages of mainland Southeast Asia, namely an ambiguity between 'realis' and 'potential' readings of V1-V2 resultative expressions. I argue that the languages of mainland Southeast Asia have been collectively 'poised', in terms of their typological structure, to realize the same process of semantic and grammatical change.

This paper is structured as follows. In section 1, I concentrate on Lao *dâj*, establishing the distinct meanings it has in postverbal position and then providing arguments for how the proposed developments could have occurred. In section 2, I provide data from four other languages of mainland Southeast Asia, related to Lao not genetically but areally—Khmer, Kmhmu Cwang, Hmong, and Vietnamese—and show that the same arguments can be used with respect to those languages also. I then provide supporting evidence of a different kind with data from Pacoh, a Mon-Khmer language of Laos and Vietnam which has not developed a 'can' meaning for the 'ac-

quire' word. The paper concludes with some remarks on the nature of language change and its appropriate mode of description, as well as the role of a language's 'typological poise' in facilitating certain changes.

1. Case study: Postverbal functions of Lao *dâj*

1.1 In synchrony: three meanings of postverbal *dâj*

Postverbal *dâj* can have three distinct meanings, the first two of which are not inherently postverbal, but are main verbs appearing in V2 slot of a V1-V2 resultative construction.

First, *dâj* may mean 'come to have (something)' (or more precisely, if '*x dâj y*', then 'something happens, and because of this *x* has *y*'):[3]

(1) *tɛ̄ɛ bɔ dâj   ngán*
Lao   but neg come.to.have money
'But (we) didn't get any money (for the work).' (268.11)

The second relevant main verb meaning of *dâj* is 'succeed' (or more precisely, if '*x dâj*', then '*p* happens, because *x* did something wanting *p* to happen'). This 'succeed, prevail' meaning for intransitive *dâj* is interpreted as 'win' in sporting contexts. In the following example, the speaker is discussing a Lao word *phɛ̂ɛ*, which means 'defeat, be victorious', but which in neighbouring Thai, and increasingly in young people's Lao, means 'lose, be defeated', leading to a confusion often remarked upon by Lao speakers. In clarifying the meaning of *phɛ̂ɛ* intended in the context (i.e. 'win', 'be victorious'), the speaker uses intransitive *dâj* as a gloss:

(2) *khán phɛ̂ɛ han   sǐa — sanā' cang*
Lao if "*phɛ̂ɛ*" tpc.pcl be.lost   "*sanā'*" thus
mɛ̄ɛn dâj
be   succeed
'(In Thai) if (you say) "*phɛ̂ɛ*", that's 'to lose'—"*sanā'*" is 'to win'.' (84.1)

The next example, an observed exchange between a bicycle-owner A and a mechanic B (who had been fixing A's bicycle), shows that *dâj* can have the meaning 'succeed' with no 'win' reading available in the context:

(3) A: *dâj   lɛ̂ɛw bɔ̌ɔ*
Lao   succeed   pfv q
'Is it fixed?' (i.e. 'Have (you) succeeded yet?')
B: *dâj   lɛ̂ɛw*
succeed pfv
'Yes, it's fixed.' (i.e. 'Yes, (I've) succeeded.')

The third relevant meaning of postverbal *dâj*—'can'—is inherently subordinate to a main verb (and has the same vagueness regarding 'ability' or 'permission' interpretations as English *can* and its equivalent in other languages). Here are two examples:

(4) *khɔ̌ɔng nák mɛ-ñíng   bɛ̀ɛk   bɔ dâj*
Lao things heavy f.prfx-woman carry.on.back neg can
'Heavy things, women can't carry.' (579.14)

(5) *bɔ lūk ka   bɔ dâj*
Lao neg arise foc.pcl neg can
'We couldn't not get up.' (701.9) ('We had to get up.')

1.2 Synchronic distinction between V2 *dâj* as modal 'can' and as resultative verb 'succeed'

When *dâj* as a main verb 'come to have' or 'succeed' appears as V2 in a resultative construction, the resulting structure is superficially identical to the VP-*dâj* 'can VP' construction. There are, however, covert distinctions, both grammatical and semantic, between strings of the form 'VP-*dâj*'.

With the available readings of postverbal *dâj* as either 'can' or 'succeed', the following resultative constructions, involving V1 'projected accomplishment' verbs (i.e. verbs such as 'seek' which do not entail a specific outcome, but rather the *intention* to produce one) remain ambiguous. The (i) readings

of the following examples assume *dâj* as postverbal modal 'can'; the (ii) readings assume *dâj* as resultative V2 'succeed':

(6)   *khɔ̀ɔj   fáng   'ăn-n̂i   dâj*
Lao   1   listen thing-this can/succeed
    i. '(I) can listen to this.'
    ii. 'I (can) understand this (from hearing it).'

(7)   *sĕng   bɔ   dâj*
Lao   sit.exam   neg can/succeed
    i. 'I was unable to sit the exam.'
    ii. 'I failed the exam.'

The (i) meanings of (6-7) have the following entailment:

(8)   [V *bɔ dâj*] 'cannot V' entails [*bɔ* V] 'not V'.

Thus, for the (i) meanings of (6-7), 'cannot listen' entails 'not listen' and 'cannot sit the exam' entails 'not sit the exam'. This entailment does not hold for the (ii) meanings—i.e., 'not understand' ('not listen-and-succeed') does not entail 'not listen' and 'not pass the exam' ('not sit-the-exam-and-succeed') does not entail 'not sit the exam'.

The ambiguity of examples like (6-7) is conclusively demonstrated by explicit assertion of one sense, and negation of the other sense of the [V *dâj*] string in a single sentence (with both logical orders as possible interpretations):

(9)   *fáng   dâj   tɛ̄ɛ   fáng   bɔ   dâj*
Lao   listen succeed/can but   listen neg succeed/can
    i. '(I) can understand (it), but (I) can't listen to (it).' (e.g. tape deck is broken.)
    ii. '(I) can listen to (it), but (I) can't understand (it).' (e.g. I don't speak the language.)

(10) *sĕng   dâj   tɛ̄ɛ   sĕng   bɔ   dâj*
Lao   sit.exam succeed/can but   sit.exam neg succeed/can
    i. 'I can pass the exam, but I can't sit it.'
    ii. 'I can sit the exam but I can't pass it.'

1.2.1 Two pragmatic inferences

The two functions of postverbal *dâj*—as a modal 'can', and as a resultative V2 'succeed'—can give rise to distinct (and almost exactly opposite) pragmatic inferences. The result is a pattern of four common readings of a V *dâj* expression:[4]

(11)
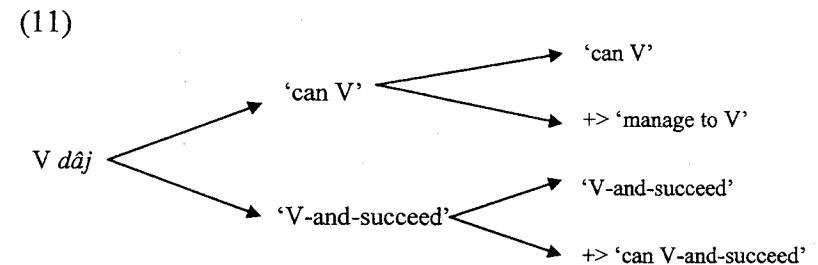
1.2.1.1 From 'can' to 'achieved'

Predication of 'possibility' may receive an 'achievement' interpretation when the expression as a whole is given a 'realis' or 'finite' reading—i.e. in which the expression of 'possibility' is understood as bounded and real. If something is said to be possible *on a given occasion*, this may be interpreted as referring to a real event in which that ability has actually been demonstrated. For example, *John was able to save two boxes from the fire* implies—but does not entail—that he did save two boxes. The implicature is defeasible, as demonstrated by the acceptability of *John was able to save two boxes from the fire, but for some reason he just left them there to burn.*

Here is a text example:

(12) *khăw   ñáng paj   ĵiap   kăn   dâj*
Lao   3   still dir.pcl(go) step.on rcp can
    'They still managed to run over each other.' (10.13)
    (Possible interpretation: 'They still were able to run over each other.' 'They could still run over each other.')

The inference arises out of a shift from non-specificity of the V1 event (for the 'can' reading) to a reading in which a specific event is predicated.

1.2.1.2 From 'succeed' to 'possible'

Dâj 'succeed' as a resultative V2 shows grammatical properties common to regular resultative expressions. One such property is an ambiguity between 'realis' and 'potential' readings. V1-V2 resultative constructions may receive a 'potential' reading if the whole expression is taken in the context to be 'irrealis' or 'non-finite' (i.e. to not refer to a specific real event). Consider alternative readings of the following examples ((13) and (14) are same-subject, and different-subject resultatives, respectively; (14) is a reiterative resultative):[5]

(13) *tók tèɛk*
Lao fall break
    i. '(It has) fallen (and) broken.'
    ii. '(It) can fall (and) break.' ('(It) would break if it fell.')

(14) *khàa tǎaj*
Lao kill die
    i. '(S/he's) killed (it) dead.'
    ii. '(S/he) can kill (it) dead.' ('It would die if killed.')

Accordingly, V2 *dâj* as 'succeed' in a resultative construction may be given either a 'realis' (15i) or 'potential' (15ii) interpretation:

(15) *láaw sùu mán dâj*
Lao 3 fight 3 succeed
    i. 'He has defeated him.' (i.e. '...did fight-and-succeed'.)
    ii. 'He can defeat him.' (i.e. '...can fight-and-succeed'.)

Note that a third meaning 'He can *fight* him' is possible for (15) with *dâj* meaning 'can' (and with no implication of his likely success).

Thus, there are distinct semantic meanings of *dâj* in V2 position (as main verb or modal) with yet further distinctions arising from pragmatic enrichment, as illustrated in (11), above. Depending on the semantic structure of V1, the four readings illustrated in (11) may or may not contrast (see (20-21), below, for further clarification of this point). The distinction of all four readings emerges clearly where V1 is a pro-

jected accomplishment verb such as *hǎa* 'seek' in the following example:

(16) *khɔ̀ɔj ka hǎa ngán dâj*
Lao 1 foc.pcl seek money can/succeed
    i. 'I can look for money.'
    ii. +> 'I managed to look for money.' (i.e. 'I was able to look for money.')
    iii. 'I found money.'
    iv. +> 'I am/was able to find money.' (635.1)

However, in cases where V1 is a verb which entails its own success (such as *khàa* 'kill'), then two bridging contexts arise, causing distinct analyses to be functionally equivalent:

(17) *khɔ̀ɔj ka khàa mán dâj*
Lao 1 foc.pcl kill 3 can/succeed
    i. 'I can kill him.'
    ii. +> 'I managed to kill him.' (i.e. '...was able to...')
    iii. 'I killed him with success.' (= ii)
    iv. +> 'I am able to kill him with success.' (= i)

First, there is equivalence between the 'potential' implicature of the V2 'success' meaning (17i) and the semantics of the V2 'can' meaning (17iv); second, there is equivalence between the 'actual' implicature of the V2 meaning 'can' (17ii) and the semantics of the V2 'success' meaning (17iii).

We now turn to the role of these synchronic relationships between semantic and pragmatic interpretations in a diachronic account of the emergence of 'can' as a distinct meaning of *dâj*.

1.3   In diachrony: A pragmatic-semantic account for the emergence of 'come to have'/'succeed'/'can' polysemy

How did the three meanings 'come to have', 'succeed', and 'can' arise from a single verb *dâj*? I argue that V1-V2 resultative constructions play a crucial role. The proposed path of pragmatic-semantic development is as follows. First, as 'come to have', *dâj* would serve as a resultative V2 wherever V1 were

a verb which results, or is intended to result, in possession (such as 'seek', 'catch', 'dig', 'pick', 'scoop', 'take', etc.):

(18) Construction:
    [VERB which may result in possession]$_{V1}$+[$dâj$]$_{V2\text{-result}}$
    Meaning:
        'V1 and come to have V2' (+>'V1 and succeed')

In this resultative function, $dâj$ basically describes the successful acquisition of something (by whatever means specified in V1). Events of 'getting things' are common and conceptually basic, and it is not difficult to imagine that $dâj$ in this postverbal position became so frequent that the 'success' it pragmatically implicates became unhinged from its less general meaning 'come to have', with the result that the new construction became less restrictive of the semantics of V1:
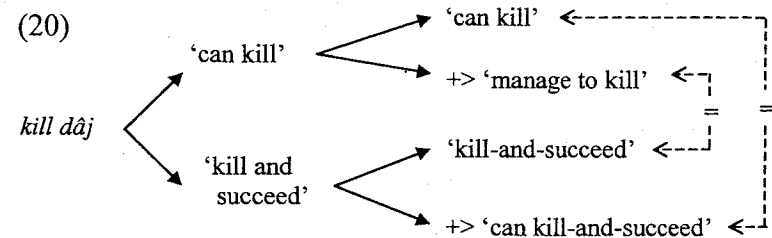
(19) Construction: [VERB]$_{V1}$+[$dâj$]$_{V2\text{-result}}$
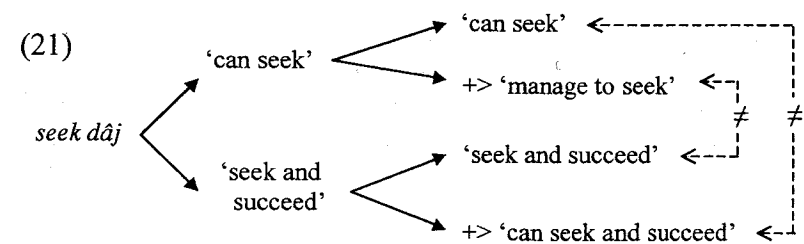   Meaning: 'V1 and succeed' ('Succeed-in-V-ing')

Thus, resultative constructions provide a bridging context from 'come to have' to 'succeed'. 'Coming to have' something, if it results from some acquisition-directed activity, is definitive of 'success', and thus, in such contexts, construals of $dâj$ as meaning either 'come to have' or 'succeed' are functionally equivalent.

Given an established 'succeed' meaning for postverbal $dâj$, a 'can' meaning may now emerge. The bridging context for pragmatic extension of 'succeed' to 'can' is again provided by the resultative construction, specifically, by its openness to a 'potential result' reading. The 'potential result' reading of V2 resultative 'succeed' in combination with a certain type of verb in V1 position (namely, one with a 'built-in' result) is what allows a pragmatic inference to 'can'. For example, if $dâj$ has the meaning 'succeed' in V2 resultative position, then an expression 'kill'+'succeed' with a finite interpretation would mean 'kill-and-succeed', or 'succeed-in-killing'. Note that the result defining the success of killing—namely, the death of the patient—is entailed (or at least strongly implied) by the inter-

nal semantics of 'kill' itself. Now, less finitely—i.e. with a regular 'potential result' interpretation which all V1-V2 resultative constructions are open to in the language—the expression 'kill'+'succeed' may also have the reading 'can/would succeed-in-killing'. Since 'kill' includes its own internal semantic reference to what defines it as 'successful' (i.e. the patient's death), then 'can succeed-in-killing' is contextually synonymous with 'can kill'. The relevant bridging contexts (shown as dotted lines linked by '=') are illustrated as follows (cf. (11), (17), above):

(20)

$$kill\ dâj$$

'can kill'
    'can kill'
    +> 'manage to kill'
'kill and succeed'
    'kill-and-succeed'
    +> 'can kill-and-succeed'

The relevant bridging contexts do not arise when V1 is not an inherently resultative verb. Consider the same semantic and pragmatic relationships where V1 is a projected accomplishment verb 'seek':

(21)

$$seek\ dâj$$

'can seek'
    'can seek'
    +> 'manage to seek'
'seek and succeed'
    'seek and succeed'
    +> 'can seek and succeed'

Thus, the bridging contexts for a pragmatic interpretation 'can' from 'succeed' are restricted to resultative constructions in which V1 is already an inherently resultative verb. At present, 'can' has become a distinct *meaning* which may occur with any verb.

The following figure summarises the proposed semantic-pragmatic relationships between senses of postverbal *dâj* illustrated in Figure 2, above:

A resultative V2 'come to have' is definitive of 'success' where V1 is a verb of acquisition.

As a V2 resultative, 'success' may take a 'potential' interpretation; where V1 is a resultative verb whose internal semantics already entail a particular result, then additional expression of a result of 'success' adds no extra sub-event; 'actual result of success' and 'potential result of success' readings of the V1-V2 string are synonymous with success and potential readings of the resultative V1 verb alone. In such a context, V2 'succeed' with a potential reading is synonymous with 'can'; it then becomes applicable with this meaning to verbs other than inherently resultative verbs.
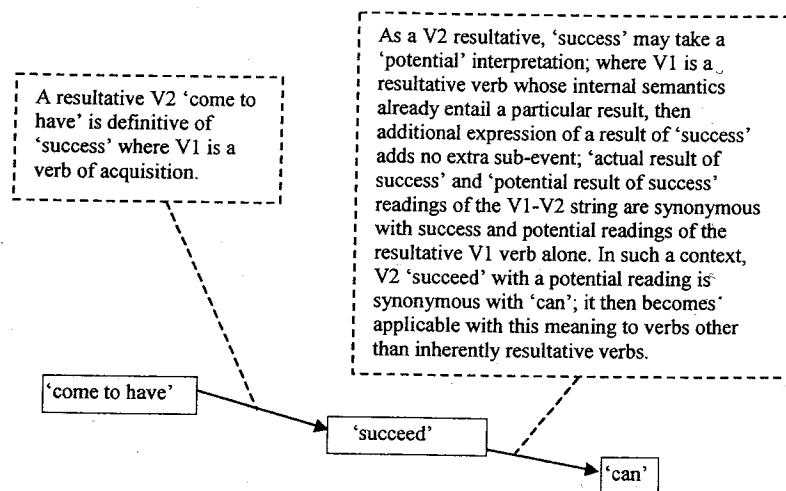
'come to have'

'succeed'

'can'

Figure 4. 'Extensions' between three postverbal meanings of Lao *dâj*.

Section 1.2, above, provides *synchronic* facts which support the hypothesis put forward here about meaning change in Lao. In particular, there are bridging contexts in which the role of postverbal *dâj* in V1-V2 expressions may receive different semantic and structural analyses, which are nevertheless 'functionally equivalent, even if the relative contributions of lexical content and pragmatic enrichment differ' for interlocutors in the same speech setting (Evans and Wilkins 2000:550). The proposed path of development can also be suggested for other Mainland Southeast Asian languages, to which we now turn.

2. An areal pattern of semantic change

Claims have traditionally been made in literature on grammatical change that structural diffusion among neighbouring languages is more likely to occur where the languages are already structurally similar (cf. discussion and references in Harris and Campbell 1995:123), or at least that syntactic borrowings should 'fit with innovation possibilities of the borrowing language' (Harris and Campbell 1995:125). The result is a self-perpetuating process which gives rise to linguistic areas. Structural borrowing or copying naturally increases the structural compatibility of the languages, thereby increasing the likelihood of further common structural borrowing or development, and so on. The 'poise' of a grammar determines the readiness or susceptibility of speakers to make certain pragmatic/semantic extensions. In at least this sense, speakers 'make do with what's historically presented to them' (Lass 1997:xviii). I argue that the systematic 'potential'/'actual' ambiguity of unmarked V1-V2 resultative constructions found across these languages is what has seen them 'poised' to develop a postverbal modal 'can' from a verb meaning 'come to have'. We consider evidence from four mainland Southeast Asian languages—Khmer (Eastern Mon-Khmer), Kmhmu Cwang (Northern Mon-Khmer), Hmong (Hmong-Mien), and Vietnamese (Eastern Mon-Khmer).

The following examples show, firstly, that the 'acquire' verb has a basic main verb meaning 'come to have' in each language:

(22) *tngaj nih qòt baan baaj sòh*
Kh day this neg come.to.have rice at.all
'Today (he) didn't get any rice at all.' (H3)

(23) *Ô' bwan kdong.*
Km 1 come.to.have jar
'I got a jar.'

(24) *Kuv tau peb tug tses.*
Hm 1 come.to.have three clf fish
'I got three fish (e.g. while fishing).'

(25) *Sau khi được sách rồi nó ngồi đọc*
Vn after time come.to.have book pfv 3 sit read
cho tôi nghe.
give 1 listen
'After (he) had got the book, he came and read to me.'

The next examples show that the same word as a main verb may also mean 'win, succeed' in the four languages:

(26) *njèq tùw vaj-baal, khaang naa baan*
Kh 2 go hit-ball side which succeed
'You went and played volleyball, who won?'

(27) A: *Ta' Plav Ta' Ñi ñuut yo'.*
Km title.m P. title.m Ñ. push rcp
'Plav and Ñi played a game of pushing each other.'

B: *Me' bwan?*
who succeed
'Who won?'

(28) *Lao thiab Vietnam ncaws pob.roj.hmab,*
Hm L. and V.N. kick ball
leej.twg tau?
who succeed
'Laos and Vietnam played soccer, who won?'

(29) *Lào và Việt Nam đá bóng, ai được?*
Vn L. and V.N. kick ball who succeed
'Laos and Vietnam played soccer, who won?'

Finally, each language shows a meaning 'can' for the same word in postverbal position:

(30) *rwep còmnuen krwep baaj baan*
Kh count amount grain rice can
'(You) could count the amount of rice grains (there was so little rice in each serve).' (A47)

(31) *Kuv mus tsis tau, kuv muaj hauj.lwm nyob*
Hm 1 go neg can 1 have work be.at
ntawm no.
loc here
'I can't go, I have work here.'

(32) *Ô' 'mook hrlo' kmhmu an ba dé'*
Km 1 tell language K. give 2sg.f dtv
bwan.
can
'I can teach you Kmhmu.'

(33) *Tôi nói tiếng Việt (không) được.*
Vn 1 speak language Vietnamese (neg) can
'I can (not) speak Vietnamese.'

The extension from a resultative V2 'succeed' to 'can' is licensed in each of the languages, along the lines described for Lao in §1, above, by a combination of two common typological features: (a) resultative constructions of the form V1-V2, and (b) context-dependence in assignment of aspectual status to predicates, and associated openness in interpretation of the aspectual/modal relations between V1 and V2 in complex expressions.

V1-V2 resultative constructions in many mainland Southeast Asian languages may be interpreted as either 'realised' or as 'habitual'/'potential':

(34)

$V1_{cause/condition}$-$V2_{result}$

i. realis, on a given occasion '*V1 and as a result V2*'

ii. irrealis, whenever '*can/would V1 with the result that V2*'

The next set of examples shows the 'actual'/'potential' ambiguity of unmarked resultative constructions:

(35) *ròuk mùn kheeñ*
Kh seek neg see
i. '(It) wasn't found.'
ii. '(It) can't be found.' (H133)

(36) *Ô' sook kacèè am guuñ.*
Km 1 seek key neg see
i. 'I didn't find the key.'
ii. 'I can't/wouldn't be able to find the key.'

(37) *Kuv tua noog tuag.*
Hm 1 shoot bird die
i. 'I shot the bird dead.' (on a given occasion)
ii. 'I can shoot the bird dead.'

(38) *Tôi   thi   dỗ.*
Vn   1   sit.exam   pass
   i. 'I passed the exam.'
   ii. 'I can pass the exam.'

When 'succeed' appears in resultative V2 position, it may be interpreted as irrealis/potential (34ii), just as in any resultative construction. The next set of examples shows the ambiguity of the word in postverbal position when V1 is a 'projected accomplishment'—it may mean simply 'can' (in the (i) translations), or may mean 'succeed' (in the (ii) translations):

(39) *ròuk   mùn   baan*
Kh   seek   neg   can/succeed
   i. '(I) can't look for (it).'
   ii. 'I haven't found (/didn't find) it.'
(40) *Ô'   sook   bwan.*
Km   1   seek   can/succeed
   i. 'I can look for it.'
   ii. 'I have found it.'
(41) *Kuv   nrhiav   yamsij   tau.*
Hm   1   seek   key   can/succeed
   i. 'I can look for the key.'
   ii. 'I have found the key.'
(42) *Tôi   bảo vệ   tiên sĩ   được.*
Vn   1   defend   PhD   can/succeed
   i. 'I can do my PhD defence.' (does not entail 'I will pass my PhD defence'.)
   ii. 'I passed (will/can pass) my PhD defence.'

Thus, V1-'succeed' may mean 'V1-and-succeed', or 'can/would V1-and-succeed'. Being the most semantically general expression of result, V2 'succeed' in this function occurs with the widest range of V1 verbs. With this widest distribution, under an irrealis/potential interpretation, postverbal resultative 'succeed' comes to have the simple meaning 'can', the most general expression of 'potential'. As described for Lao in §1.3, above, this process begins in cases where V1 is a

resultative verb which inherently entails its own 'success' event, and thus where 'success' as a V2 merely reiterates this result. Under a 'potential result' reading the whole construction means simply 'V1 can happen'.

2.1 An exception to the pattern: Pacoh

The only mainland Southeast Asian language I have found to lack the 'can' reading for postverbal 'acquire' is Pacoh (Katuic, Eastern Mon-Khmer, Laos/Vietnam), and this language also lacks a 'succeed' meaning for a verb otherwise meaning 'come to have'. In Pacoh, *boon* means 'come to have', and while it may appear with that meaning as a resultative V2 in the construction illustrated in (18), above, it does not have a more generalised meaning 'succeed' (illustrated in (19), above), nor may it appear in V2 position meaning 'can'. This makes Pacoh unusual in the mainland Southeast Asia area, but the facts nonetheless agree with my account for the development of a postverbal 'can' meaning in Lao and other languages.

Recall the stages of pragmatic/semantic development from 'acquire' to 'can' proposed for Lao and other languages:

(43) Stages of process from 'come to have' to 'can':

i. 'come to have' +> 'succeed'
   context: as resultative V2, with acquisition verb in V1 position, 'V1 and come to have' is synonymous with 'V1 with success'.
ii. 'succeed'
   status: distinct meaning, applicable as V2 'succeed' where no 'coming to have' is entailed by V1.
iii. 'succeed' +> 'can'
   context: with resultative verb (i.e. verb which entails its own 'success') in V1 position, 'potential result' interpretation of 'V1-and-succeed' is synonymous with 'can V1'.
iv. 'can'
   status: distinct meaning, combinable as V2 'can' with full range of verbs in V1 position; may contrast with 'succeed' in these combinations.

Pacoh allows the inference in (43i), but has not made step (43ii), so it cannot move on to the further meaning change (43iv). Pacoh is one language among those I have examined for which the pragmatics-fed process described in (43) has not zoomed all the way along. The hypothesised path shown in (43) suggests that if a word meaning 'come to have' in a language did not have a meaning 'succeed', it would also not have a meaning 'can'.[6] Data from Pacoh, the only language in the area which lacks a 'can' meaning for the basic 'come to have' verb, supports this contention.

It is established that Pacoh *boon* performs most of the main functions that the 'acquire' verb performs in other mainland Southeast Asian languages such as Lao, including main verb 'come to have', postverbal adverbial complementizer, and preverbal aspect-modality marker (Enfield 2002:243-6). What is of special interest here is that *boon* 'acquire' cannot express the simple modal meaning 'can' in Pacoh, for which two other verbs *keet* 'be able' (also 'be born') and *hooj* 'can', are used in a familiar postverbal pattern:

(44) (a)   *pooq semuej (lêjq) keet*
Pa   go   S.   (neg) able
                  '(You) are (not) able to go to Samoy.'
      (b)   *pooq semuej (lêjq) hooj*
            go   S.   (neg) can
                  '(You) can (not) go to Samoy.'
      (c)   **pooq semuej (lêjq)   boon*
            go   S.   (neg)   come.to.have
                  ((You) can (not) go to Samoy.)

However, *boon* 'come to have' may appear as a resultative V2, and in that position may indeed take a 'potential result' reading:

(45) *kùù kòòp   kuusêñ boon*
Pa   1   catch   snake   come.to.have
    i. 'I caught a snake/snakes.'
    ii. +> 'I can catch snakes.' *(potential reading in irrealis/non-finite context)*

The (45ii) reading, expressing 'possibility', emerges from a 'potential' reading of the resultative construction as a whole. But in Pacoh, the 'extension' remains a pragmatic implicature only, and *boon* may only have this 'success' interpretation when it is a V2 resultative and when V1 contains reference to 'acquisition' (either projected by a verb such as 'seek' or entailed by a verb such as 'catch').

To summarise, in support of the hypothesis in (43), the Pacoh data show that while certain active pragmatic inferences do take place (e.g. 'come to have'+>'succeed'+>'can'), these have not split into distinct and contrastive *meanings*. In Pacoh, *boon* 'come to have' has not acquired the semantic meaning 'succeed', and so, as the hypothesis in (43) would predict, it has not been able to acquire the semantic meaning 'can' either.

3. Closing remarks

Description of semantic change requires description of both stable semantic meanings and context-dependent pragmatic implicatures. To account for changes in linguistic meaning and structure, one must demonstrate the bridging contexts in which defeasible pragmatic inferences may be functionally equivalent to encoded semantics, allowing speakers to maintain different analyses of certain utterances without compromising communicative function, thus enabling the speaker population to gradually shift towards an analysis of a given pragmatic interpretation as a distinct encoded meaning. This allows a non-metaphorical account of linguistic change, which can be situated in real speech events, involving real individuals, in real time, not putative processes taking place in a hypostatised entity 'the language' (Keller 1994:159 and *passim*, Croft 2000:2-4 and *passim*, Iwasaki 2000).

The mechanisms I have suggested for development of postverbal 'success' and 'can' meanings from a word meaning 'come to have' in mainland Southeast Asian languages have given support to the notion that the 'typological poise' of a language can help to determine a path of semantic/grammatical development. Some linguistic developments which emerge within a system may be licensed and/or encouraged by the ex-

isting structure of that system (Matisoff 1991:444). Typological poise makes borrowing of grammatical innovation from similar languages easier, and makes authorship of particular innovations by individual speakers more likely to happen independently, perhaps to the extent that many individuals in a given community may independently follow the same creative path on many different occasions. Thus, certain patterns of semantic and grammatical development may be closely parallel across entire linguistic areas.

Notes

1. This paper is based on findings reported in Enfield (2002). Some sections are repeated and/or revised from there, as well as from Enfield (2001a). I would like to thank members of the audience at a presentation of this work at the 11th SEALS meeting in Bangkok, May 2000, for helpful input. I also thank Nick Evans for his contribution to the development of ideas in this paper. Support from the University of Melbourne and the Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics is gratefully acknowledged.

2. Limitations of space prevent discussion of the grammaticalised usage of *dâj* in *pre*-verbal position. While some authors suggest that preverbal functions of the 'acquire' word in Southeast Asian languages are part of a single chain of grammaticalisation which includes postverbal functions (e.g. Haiman 1999 on Khmer), there are no convincing arguments for this position (cf. Enfield 2001b).

3. Lao data are from spontaneous spoken texts, recorded in Vientiane, 1996-1997. Khmer data are from spontaneous spoken texts recorded in Phnom Penh in 1999. Numerals after Lao and Khmer examples refer to text location; unmarked examples are elicited/constructed and checked with native speakers. Kmhmu, Hmong, Pacoh and Vietnamese data are elicited (fieldwork conducted in Vientiane (Laos), Salavan (Laos) and Hanoi (Vietnam), 1999-2000). See Enfield (2002: Chapter 2) for comments on transcriptions. Examples are marked Lao (Lao), Kh (Khmer), Km (Kmhmu), Hm (Hmong), Vn (Vietnamese), Pa (Pacoh). Abbreviations in interlinear glosses are as follows: 1 = 1st person; 2 = 2nd person; 3 = 3rd person; clf = classifier; dir = directional; dtv = dative; f = feminine; foc = focus; hon = honorific; loc = locative; m = masculine; neg = negation; pcl = particle; pfv = perfective; pref = prefix; q = question; rcp = reciprocal; sg = singular; tpc = topic.

4. The symbol '+>' means 'conversationally implicates' (Levinson 2000:16). In other words, 'p +> q' means that the utterance of 'p' can give rise in some context to the implicature 'q', but 'q' is not entailed by 'p'.

5. By 'reiterative resultative', I mean a V1-V2 construction in which the resultative V2 explicitly predicates a caused event which is already specified as a caused event in the internal semantics of V1. In example (14), V1 specifies 'die' as a caused event, and this is explicitly reiterated in V2. See Enfield (2002:100) for further discussion.

6. This would be falsified if a language were found in the area which had a polysemous item meaning 'come to have' and 'can', but with no attested 'success' meaning. I have not found such a language. Note that I am referring specifically to languages of mainland Southeast Asia, with the relevant typological profile (i.e. in which V1-V2 resultatives have a regular 'potential result' reading). An extension from 'come to have' to 'can' is perhaps conceivable by some other path, in another typological context.

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