Post-verbal *-u* in Taiwanese: A First Look

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Previous studies claim that *u* 'have' can go with situation predicates, as shown in (1), respectively. *U* in (1) can truth-conditionally trigger the emphatic interpretations and execute event realization (Wu & Zheng, 2018; Cheng, 2021).

(1) a. David u   tsit-bun tsheh.
         PRN   have one-CL   book
         'David has a book.'
     b. Mary u   {sui/kah'i} David.
         PRN   HAVE beauty/like David
         'Mary {is very beautiful/does like David}.'
     c. David u   {khi Taitung/tsia-hun}.
         PRN   HAVE go   PRN/smoke
         'David {did go to Taitung/does smoke}.'

Little existing research looks at *-u*, which can follow a predicate. When *-u* follows a predicate, it denotes a resultative reading in (2), respectively. However, the research did not compare (2) to (3) without *-u*, where (3a&b) indicate the non-emphatic and non-resultative readings only.

(2) a. Tom bue-u   tsheh.   (3) a. Tom tsau   tsukhi.
         PRN   buy-HAVE book   PRn   run   out
         'Tom did buy the books.'   'Tom escaped (from) here.'
     b. Tom tsau-u   tsukhi.   b. Tom tsau tsit kongtsioh.
         PRn   run-HAVE   out   PRN   run one meter
         'Tom did escape (from) here.'   'He ran a meter.'

In wake of den Dikken's (2006) linker theory, I propose that *-u* is a linker and takes Relator Phrase (RP). First, the subject and the predicate are base-generated under RP, and R^0 can be realized by any head element. Second, RP can be a complement of a functional head (F^0), regarded as a linker. I also view RP as small clause. Thus, I assume that *-u* is a linker in that the complement that *-u* takes is to modify an event of the agent doing; namely, the interpretation of (2b) indicates that the agent Tom managed to escape, and the result of the event was that Tom did escape successfully. Additionally, a linker can be syntactically categorized as either a complementizer (Liu, 2011) or an aspectual head (Chen, 2010). This is sketched in (4).

(4)   [FP [F' F^0 LINKER=ASP/C [RP DP SUBJECT [R' R^0 [XP PREDICATE]]]]]

Assuming that (2b) and (3a) are structured in (5a), and after FP, headed by *-u*, is projected, R^0 (i.e., *bue/tsau*) adjoins to F^0 as a V-*u* predicate, as shown in (5b), and thus, the subject in RP moves out to the Specifier of FP.

(5)   a. [RP=SC Tom SUBJECT [R' R^0 bue/tsau [tsheh/tsukhi]]
       b. [FP Tom SUBJECT [F' R^0 bue/tsau + F^0 -u LINKER=ASP/C [RP=SC <Tom> SUBJECT [R' R^0 <bue/tsau> [tsheh/tsukhi]]]]]

Another piece of evidence shows that *-u* behaves like an aspectual head in that it only triggers a past temporal reading and it is incompatible with a future temporal adverbial, as shown in (6).

(6)   Frank {tsahng/*bin'a}   bue-u   sann-bun tsheh.
       F   {yesterday/tomorrow} buy-have 3-cl   book
       'Frank {yesterday/*tomorrow} did buy 3 books successfully.'

To sum up, *-u* should be analyzed as a linker as to explain its function of aspect and complementizer. The future study investigates its modal construal, addressing an event result beyond the speaker's expectation, and investigates its negation *-bo* 'not-have' as well.

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