

On Null Clausal Complements in Taiwan Southern Min

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Abstract

This paper aims to investigate the less discussed null argument—null clausal complement in Taiwan Southern Min (TSM). The discussion issues include the derivation, status, and replacement of null clausal complements in TSM. This paper proposes that being either syntactically or pragmatically controlled, the null clausal complement in TSM is a type of deep anaphora, which is not derived through deletion. Moreover, possessing features such as not being A-bound, and possibly being but not required to be \bar{A} -bound, the null clausal complement in TSM is argued to have the status of an epithet. While null clausal complements are not allowed with all kinds of verbs, in some cases where null clausal complements are prohibited, an obligatory pro-S *an-ne* ‘so’ is then required.

1 Introduction

Null arguments are common among languages. In the literature discussing null arguments, null objects are often the topic of discussion. As demonstrated in (1-3), Mandarin Chinese, Japanese, and Korean all allow null objects.

- (1) Zhangsan bu xihuan [guanyü ziji-de yaoyan];
Zhangsan not like [about self-Gen rumor
Mali ye bu xihuan [_{NP} e]. (Mandarin Chinese)
Mary also not like (Kim 1999)
‘Zhangsan doesn’t like rumors about himself,
and Mary doesn’t, either.’
a. Mary does not like rumors about herself,
either
b. Mary does not like rumors about Zhangsan,
either

- (2) John-wa [zibun-no tegami]-o sute-ta;
John-Top [self-Gen letter-Acc discard-Perf];
Mary-mo [_{NP} e] sute-ta. (Japanese)
Mary-also discard-Perf (Kim 1999)
‘John threw out his letters, and Mary did too.’
a. Mary threw out her (= Mary’s) letters, too
b. Mary threw out his (= John’s) letters, too
(3) a. Jerry-nun [caki-uy ai]-lul
Jerry-Top self-Gen child-Acc
phal-ul ttayli-ess-ta. (Korean)
arm-Acc hit-Past-Ind (Kim 1999)
‘Jerry hit his child on the arm.’
b. Kulena Sally-nun [_{NP} e] tali-lul ttayli-ess-ta.
But Sally-Top leg-Acc hit-Past-Ind
i) But Sally hit her (= Sally’s) child on the
leg
ii) But Sally hit his (= Jerry’s) child on the
leg

In addition to NP objects, clauses are often subcategorized for by verbs. However, null clausal complements are much less discussed in the literature. This paper aims to discuss the derivation, status, and replacement of null clausal complements in Taiwan Southern Min (TSM), a Chinese language spoken by more than 80% of people in Taiwan (Cheng 1985). To illustrate, as shown in (4), the verb *tsai-iann* ‘know’ is subcategorized for a clausal complement, which is spelled out as *sin-long pai-kha* ‘the bridegroom is crippled’ in the first half, but in the second half of the sentence the clausal complement is null, marked as [_{CP} e]. This paper discusses how the null clausal complement is derived, what its status is, and whether it can be replaced by other syntactic elements.

- (4) sin-niu tsai-iann sin-long pai-kha,
 bride know groom crippled
 mue-lang-po ma tsai-iann [_{CP} e].¹
 matchmaker also know
 ‘The bride knows that the bridegroom is
 crippled, and the matchmaker also knows.’

2 Literature Review

Hankamer and Sag (1976) have specified two anaphoric processes: surface anaphora, which results from “deletion under identity with antecedent forms”, and deep anaphora, which is not derived via deletion and allows pragmatic control. They have argued that null complement anaphora demonstrates no sign of syntactic deletion and thus should be taken as deep anaphora, which can be either syntactically controlled or pragmatically controlled. To illustrate, the omitted clausal complements in (5-6) should be taken as deep anaphora. In (5) the antecedent is syntactically controlled, while that in (6) is pragmatically determined.

- (5) We needed somebody to carry the oats down to the bin, but nobody volunteered.
 (Hankamer and Sag 1976)
- (6) [Indulgent father feeds baby chocolate bar for dinner]
 Mother: I don’t approve. (Hankamer and Sag 1976)

More recently, some scholars such as Huang (1991) and Saito (2007) take sloppy reading as evidence of deletion. To illustrate, a Mandarin Chinese example such as (7) seems to involve a missing object. However, Huang (1991) argues that as its English counterpart (8) shows, (7) actually involves VP-ellipsis for the reason that both (7) and (8) are ambiguous with strict and sloppy readings. That is, (7) and (8) have both the strict reading that John saw John’s mother and Mary also saw John’s mother and the sloppy reading that John saw John’s mother and Mary saw Mary’s mother. Since strict/sloppy ambiguity is

typical of constructions involving VP-ellipsis, both (7) and (8) are argued to involve VP-ellipsis.

- (7) John kanjian-le tade mama, Mary ye kanjian-le.
 John see-PERF his mother Mary also see-PERF
 ‘John saw his mother, and Mary did, too.’
 (Huang 1991)
- (8) John saw his mother, and Mary did [_{VP} e], too.
 (Huang 1991)

However, Hoji (1998, 2003) and Kasai (2014) argue that deep anaphora may demonstrate sloppy reading as well. For instance, the null object as in (9) is allowed when no linguistic antecedent is available. This is often a case of deep anaphora (Hankamer and Sag 1976).

- (9) Bill-ga *e* tataita. (Kasai 2014)
 Bill-NOM hit
 ‘Bill hit *e*.’

In (10) the null argument as an empty pronoun without a linguistic antecedent allows sloppy reading. That is, (10) could be interpreted as Hanako hits his arm or Hanako hits her arm.

- (10) [Watching a boy hitting his arm] (Kasai 2014)
 Taroo: Hanako-mo *e* yoku tataiteru yo.
 Hanako-also often hit PARTICLE
 ‘Hanako also often hits *e*.’

Likewise, null clausal complement is allowed when no linguistic antecedent is available as in (11), where the null clausal complement refers to Mary’s flirting with someone else. The null clausal complement thus should be taken as deep anaphora.

- (11) [John suspects that Mary, who is his girlfriend, flirts with someone else. John and his friend happen to watch Mary’s flirting with someone else.]
 John: Zituwa *pro* mae-kara *e*
 in-fact before-from
 omottetanda yonaa. (Kasai 2014)
 thought-be PARTICLE
 ‘In fact, I have long thought *e*.’

Even for example (12), which involves sloppy reading, the null clausal complement is also argued to be a *pro*.

¹ The romanization used in this paper for Taiwan Southern Min examples is according to the Taiwan Southern Min Romanization Proposal (臺灣閩南語羅馬字拼音符號方案), which was promulgated by the Ministry of Education in Taiwan in 2006.

- (12) Hanako-wa [_{CP} zibun-no teian-ga
TOP self-GEN proposal-NOM
saiyoosareru to] omotte iru ga,
accepted-be that think though
Taroo-wa _____ omotte inai
TOP think not (Saito 2007)
‘Hanako thinks that her proposal will be
accepted, but Taroo does not think that her/his
proposal will be accepted.’

3 The Proposal

3.1 Derivation

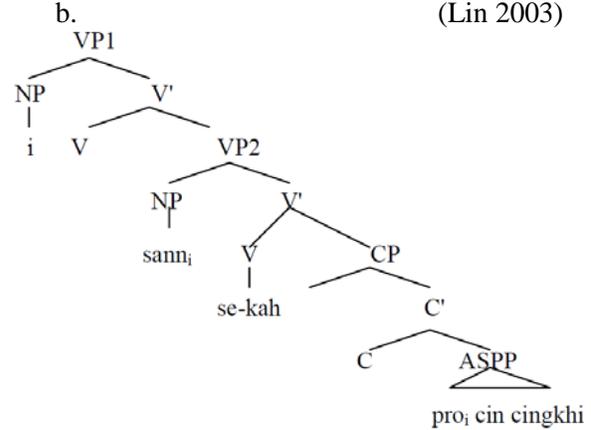
Null clausal complements in TSM can be either syntactically or pragmatically controlled. Therefore, following Hankamer and Sag’s (1976) proposal, this paper argues that null clausal complements in TSM are deep anaphora, which are either syntactically or pragmatically controlled. To illustrate, in (4) the antecedent of the null clausal complement can be identified to be *sin-long pai-kha* ‘the bridegroom is crippled’ in the previous clause; that is, the null clausal complement is syntactically controlled in (4).

Clauses can serve as complements after predicative verbs such as *tsai-iann* ‘know’ in (4); in addition, they can be complements subcategorized for by *V-kah* in TSM as in (13).

- (13) Ong-e huan-lo-kah long be tsiah,
Ong-e worry-kah all not eat
Li-e m huan-lo-kah [_{CP} e].
Li-e also worry-kah
‘Ong was so worried that he couldn’t eat
anything, and Li was also so worried.’
(syntactically controlled or
pragmatically controlled)

Before the null clausal complement in (13) is discussed, a few words on *kah*-constructions in TSM are in order. As discussed in Lin (2003), *V-kah* can take three types of secondary predicate, expressing result, state, or extent. Example (14a) involves a resultative *kah*-construction, where the clause after *kah*, *cin cingkhi* ‘very clean’, expresses the result of the event *i se sann* ‘he washed clothes’. The resultative *kah*-clause as argued for by Lin (2003) is a clausal complement subcategorized for by *V-kah* with a structure as in (14b).

- (14) a. i ciong sann se-kah cin cingkhi.
he CIONG clothes wash-KAH very clean
‘He washed his clothes clean.’ (Lin 2003)
b. (Lin 2003)



In the second half of (13), the missing element after *kah* can be understood to be syntactically controlled as the case in (4); that is, the null clausal complement is understood to refer to *long be tsiah* ‘cannot eat’ in the first half of (13). It can also be construed as being pragmatically controlled, and the missing element is understood to be something similar to the second half in (15), *be khun tsit* ‘cannot sleep’.

- (15) Ong-e huan-lo-kah long be tsiah,
Ong-e worry-kah all not eat
Li-e m huan-lo-kah be khun tsit.
Li-e also worry-kah not sleep can
‘Ong was so worried that he couldn’t eat
anything, and Li was also so worried that
he couldn’t sleep.’

As to example (16), the null clausal complement can only be pragmatically controlled, and its antecedent is understood through the context. A possible antecedent could be something like the second half of (17), *be kui-a king tshu* ‘by several houses’.

- (16) Ong-e tso-sing-li than-tsinn than-kah [_{CP} e].
Ong-e do-business make-money make-kah
‘Ong made so much money out of doing
business.’ (pragmatically controlled)
(17) Ong-e tso-sing-li than-tsinn than-kah
Ong-e do-business make-money make-kah
be kui-a king tshu.
buy several CL house
‘Ong made so much money out of doing

business that he bought several houses.’

It should be noted that resultative *kah*-constructions in TSM can be further classified into subject-oriented and object oriented. In a subject-oriented resultative *kah*-construction, the pro in the resultative clause is predicated of the subject of the main clause. To illustrate, in (13) the resultative clause *long be tsiah* ‘cannot eat’ is predicated of the subject Ong-e. On the other hand, in an object-oriented resultative *kah*-construction, the resultative clause is predicated of the object of the main clause. For instance, in (14), the resultative clause *cin cingkhi* ‘very clean’ is predicated of the object *sann* ‘clothes’. The two types of resultative *kah*-construction still differ in that only the subject-oriented ones allow null clausal complements as in (13) and (16); object-oriented ones do not as the ungrammaticality of (18) shows.

- (18) *i ciong sann se-kah. (cf. (14a))
 he CIONG clothes wash-KAH
 ‘He washed his clothes as a result...’

Discussing anaphora types, Kasai (2014) argues that deep anaphora, which does not involve deletion, may involve sloppy reading. Sloppy reading can also be identified in TSM examples such as (19), where the second half has the sloppy reading in which Li knows that Li’s plan is good as well as the strict reading in which Li knows that Ong’s plan is good. Sloppy reading thus does not argue against the deep anaphora analysis proposed in this paper.

- (19) Ong-e tsai-iann kati-e ke-ue tsin ho,
 Ong-e know self-GEN plan very good
 Li-e m tsai-iann [CP e].
 Li-e also know
 i. ‘Ong knows that his (= Ong’s) plan is good,
 and Li also knows that his (= Ong’s) plan is
 good.’ (Strict Reading)
 ii. ‘Ong knows that his (= Ong’s) plan is good,
 and Li also knows that his (= Li’s) plan is
 good.’ (Sloppy Reading)

3.2 Status

This paper argues that the null clausal complement in TSM is a null epithet as it has the four properties of an epithet as mentioned in Huang (1991): (a) it may not be A-bound, (b) it may be \bar{A} -bound, (c) it

need not be \bar{A} -bound, and (d) it may be coindexed with an argument as long as the argument does not c-command it (pp. 61-62). To illustrate, the null clausal complement may not be A-bound as shown in (20); the antecedent of the null clausal complement cannot be in an argument position, such as the subject position.

- (20) *tse sin-long pai-kha ma tsai-iann [CP e].
 this groom crippled also know
 intended meaning: ‘*That this bridegroom is
 crippled also knows (that this bridegroom is
 crippled). (cf. (4))

As shown in (21), the null clausal complement may be \bar{A} -bound, that is, referring to the topic.

- (21) tse sin-long pai-kha mue-lang-po
 this groom crippled matchmaker
 tsai-iann [CP e] a. (cf. (4))
 know PRT
 ‘As to the fact that this bridegroom is crippled,
 the matchmaker knows.’

However, it is not necessary for the null clausal complement to be \bar{A} -bound as in (22),

- (22) mue-lang-po tsai-iann [CP e]. (cf. (4))
 matchmaker know
 ‘The matchmaker knows.’

Furthermore, it may be coindexed with an argument as long as the argument does not c-command it as in (13), where the antecedent occurs in the first half and does not c-command the null clausal complement.

3.3 Replacement

As pointed out by Kennedy and Merchant (2000), not all verbs allow null clausal complements as illustrated in (23-24).

- (23) The missile test had failed, but only the brass
 knew. (Kennedy and Merchant 2000)
 (24) *The missile test had failed, but only Prof.
 Hicks {said / thought / expected / predicted /
 admitted / wanted}. (Kennedy and Merchant
 2000)

Likewise, in TSM some verbs such as *tsai-iann* ‘know’ in (19) allow null clausal complements, while others such as *lin-ui* ‘think’ in (25) don’t.

- (25) *Ong-e lin-ui kati-e ke-ue tsin ho,
 Ong-e think self-GEN plan very good
 Li-e m lin-ui [_{CP} e].
 Li-e also think
 ‘Ong thinks that his plan is good, and Li also thinks [that his plan is good].’

What is also intriguing about null clausal complements in TSM is that some ungrammatical sentences with null clausal complements such as (25) turn grammatical after the word *an-ne* ‘so’ is added as in (26). The clausal complement cannot be omitted in (25), and the addition of *an-ne* turns the ungrammatical sentence (25) into a grammatical one (26).

- (26) Ong-e lin-ui kati-e ke-ue tsin ho,
 Ong-e think he-GEN plan very good
 Li-e m lin-ui an-ne. (cf. (25))
 Li-e also think so
 ‘Ong thinks that his plan is good, and Li also thinks so.’

Among the various usages of *so* in English, *so* in (27) functions similarly as *an-ne*. Ross (1972) argues that this *so* is a pro-S. However, against Ross’s proposal, Hankamer and Sag (1976) propose that unlike regular clauses, *so* cannot take the subject position, and thus *so* should be a surface anaphora.

- (27) Is the moon out? -I believe so.
 (Hankamer and Sag 1976)

In fact, unlike *so* in English, TSM *an-ne* can take the subject position as in (28). Cheng (1989) has proposed that in addition to being an adverb as in (29), *an-ne* can function as a proform to refer to a certain action or method. Being a pro-S, *an-ne* is obligatory, and thus a sentence that does not allow null clausal complement such as (25) would be ungrammatical without it.

- (28) an-ne ho-m-ho? (Cheng1989)
 so good-not-good
 ‘Is it ok to do it this way?’

- (29) tsit kiann tai-tsi to an-ne pan looh.
 this CL matter then this-way handle PRT
 ‘This matter then can be handled this way.’
 (Cheng 1989)

An adverb *an-ne*, however, is optional as in (30). Moreover, *an-ne* can co-occur with the recovered missing element as in (31), which proves that *an-ne* in (31) is indeed an adverb, not a pro-S.

- (30) Ong-e huan-lo-kah long be tsiah,
 Ong-e worry-kah all not eat
 Li-e m huan-lo-kah (an-ne). (cf. (13))
 Li-e also worry-kah so
 ‘Ong was so worried that he couldn’t eat anything, and Li was also so worried.’
 (31) Ong-e huan-lo-kah long be tsiah,
 Ong-e worry-kah all not eat
 Li-e m huan-lo-kah (an-ne) long tsiah be loh.
 Li-e also worry-kah so all eat not down
 ‘Ong was so worried that he couldn’t eat anything, and Li was also so worried that he couldn’t eat anything.’ (cf. (30))

4 Concluding Words

This paper has looked into the null argument that has drawn much less attention in the literature—null clausal complement in Taiwan Southern Min (TSM). Not only clausal complements subcategorized for by predicative verbs but also clausal complements peculiar to TSM—those subcategorized by *V-kah* are discussed.

This paper argues that the null clausal complement in TSM is a type of deep anaphora because it does not require a linguistic antecedent. As to the status of the null clausal complement in TSM, it is argued to be an epithet as it possesses the features of an epithet. Lastly, in some cases where null clausal complements are not allowed, the addition of the pro-S *an-ne* ‘so’ turns the ungrammatical sentence into a grammatical one.

Acknowledgments

This research was supported by a grant from the Ministry of Science and Technology in Taiwan (MOST 107-2410-H-194-071 -). I would like to thank the anonymous reviewers for their valuable comments and take sole responsibility for any possible errors.

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