10.   The Benefactive and Adversative Functions

Summary

The action of a transitive, intransitive, or transfer sentence may occur to the advantage of a beneficiary. A sentence with a beneficiary is called benefactive. The outcome of a benefactive sentence is that the beneficiary has a benefit available to him/her. A purpose is benefactive since it is a benefit which is expected to result from another action.

The action of a transitive, intransitive, or transfer sentence may also occur to the disadvantage of a beneficiary. Such sentence has the same structure as a benefactive sentence, and is called adversative. The outcome of an adversative sentence is that the beneficiary experiences a drawback.

A benefactive or adversative sentence may be expressed by means of a link with the beneficiary, or by a benefactive or adversative form of the action verb, or by a specific word for the benefit or drawback. In some languages, a construction is available with the beneficiary as subject, termed a benefactive or adversative receptive, or benefactive or adversative adoptive.

Terms Defined or Introduced

Benefactive, adversative, beneficiary, benefit, adversity, benefactive receptive, adversative receptive, benefactive adoptive, adversative adoptive.

The Benefactive Function

Chapter 6. identified and described five elements of a transitive sentence: agent, verb, patient, resultant, and instrument. A sixth element in many transitive sentences is the person or persons to whose advantage the action occurs, whom we call a *beneficiary*, often marked with the preposition "for" or its equivalent:

> "Henry cooked lunch for his family."
> "Sheila brought the accounts to good order for the Society."
> "The sun warmed Sarah's garden for her."

A sentence which includes a beneficiary is *benefactive*. Similarly, an intransitive or transfer sentence can act to the advantage of a beneficiary:

> "The sun shone on Sarah's garden."
> "We bought Simon a bicycle." "We sold Mary's car for her."

A benefactive sentence can also be existential:

> "There is someone at the door to see you."
> "An email for you has just come in."

Languages generally employ a preposition or postposition which expresses the benefactive concept "for", and is attached to dynamic sentences. In Chinese, the construction is:

> "Jiějie tì wǒ lǐ fà." "My elder sister cut my hair for me." [Elder-sister for me cut hair.]
> "Ménfáng wèi wǒ jiào le yī liàng díshì." "The porter called a taxi for me."
>   [Porter for me call (aorist) one unit taxi.]

In some languages the same word or link can be used for "for" and "to":

> German: "Er hat uns das Leben gerettet." "He saved our lives." [He has to-us the life saved.]
>   "Ich verband dem Kind die Hand." "I bandaged the child's hand."
>   [I bandaged to-the child the hand.]

Spanish: "Te he dejado la camisa en el otro cuarto." "I've left your shirt in the other room."
[To-you I've left the shirt in the other room.]

Italian: "Stringiamo la mano al presidente." "We shake the president's hand."
[We-shake the hand to-the president.]
"Ho rifatto il letto a Paolo." "I've remade Paolo's bed for him."
[I've remade the bed to Paolo.]

Turkish: "Hizmetçiye bir palto alacağız." "We are going to buy a coat for the servant."
[Servant-to a coat we-will-buy.]

In addition to the preposition "for", a benefactive relationship can be expressed in three other ways. One is by a genitive link between the object and the beneficiary:

"Henry cooked his family's lunch" →   "Henry's family's lunch was cooked."
"Sheila brought the Society's accounts to good order."
                        →   "The Society's accounts were in good order."
"The sun warmed Sarah's garden." →   "Sarah's garden was warmed up for her."
"We sold Mary's car for her."   →   "Mary's car was sold."
"The doctor treated James' back pain."
                        →   "James' back pain was eased."

A second is by a specific word with the meaning "availability", which we can call a *benefit*. The word "for" can be understood to mean "for the benefit of". The relationship with the beneficiary may be expressed with the auxiliary verb "have":

"We had the opportunity to see his paintings."
"We had the good luck to arrive on time."
"He had great success as an estate agent."
"This calculation is an example for you."

A benefit can take the form of an attribute of the opportunity or advantage, with the general meaning "available":

"It was easy/simple for him to write the letter."
"It was convenient for him to write the letter."
"The bank account is accessible to John."
"The view was visible to our friends."

This may allow the indirect beneficiary to be in topic position:

Hungarian:
      "Neki könnyű volt válaszolnia." "It was easy for her to answer."
                        [To-her easy was answering-her.]

Or the benefit can be a suffix of the opportunity verb:

Inuit: "Iqqaamajuminarpuq." "It is easy to remember." [Remember-easyto-it.]

This is similar in structure to a modal (see Chapter 11.), of the form "He could write the letter". However, as will be explained, a modal refers to an event which may not occur, while a benefit is an event which has occurred or is expected to occur.

Alternatively, a benefit can be an attribute of the agent who performs the benefactive action:

"You were very kind to answer my letter so promptly."
"She was very generous in allowing him to borrow her car."
"He was very polite to his friend in allowing him to stay."

In these sentences, the conduct of an agent provides a benefit towards a beneficiary. The sentences may be interpreted as:

"You showed kindness to me in your prompt answer of my letter."
"Her permission to him to borrow her car showed great generosity."
"He showed great politeness to his friend in allowing him to stay."

A third benefactive construction is a purpose. A purpose describes a benefit which is expected to result from an action. The principal difference from other benefactive expressions is that the beneficiary may or may not be stated:

"I came to see you" means: "I came to have the opportunity to see you";
"They fought for their freedom" means: "They fought to have the advantage of being free";
"She took the car to be mended" means: "She took the car for the benefit that it is mended".

The benefit in each case is the purpose itself: "see you"; "free"; "be mended". The second example shows that English "for" can be used in two differing ways: to indicate a purpose, and to indicate a beneficiary: "for freedom"; "freedom for them". In Russian, different words are used, "za" and "dlya":

"Oni borolis' za svobodu." "They fought for [their] freedom."
"Ya sdelayu dlya nego vsë, chto mogu." "I shall do all I can for him."
[I shall-do for him all, that I-can.]

In some other languages, the same word is used. It is here translated as "for"; the purpose is a verbal noun:

Arabic: "li-baḥθi l-mawqifi" "in order to investigate the position" [for-study the-position]

"qāʕātun li-l-ʔanšiṭati l-θaqāfiyyati" "halls for cultural activities"
[halls for-the-activities the-cultural]

Turkish: "Dünyayı değiştirmek için ne lâzım."
"In order to change the world, what is necessary?"
[World (object) changing-for what necessary?]
"Bunu yurdun iyiliği için yaptı." "He did this for the good of the country."
[This (object) country-of goodness-its-for did-he.]

Indonesian:
"Saya harus pergi ke kantor pos untuk membeli perangko."
"I have to go to the post office to buy stamps."
[I should go to office post for buying stamp.]
"Sulit untuk kami memperoleh bukti."
"It is difficult for us to get proof." [Difficult for us getting proof].

Japanese:
"Gakusei ga shitsumon o shi ni kita." "A student came to ask questions."
[Student (subject) question (object) doing-for came.]
"Kanojo ni nani o katte agemashita ka." "What did you buy for her?"
[Her-for what (object) buying gave query?]

Benefactive sentences show a similar range of structures as transfer sentences, and a benefit sentence is similar to a possession sentence, as described in Chapter 8. The difference is that a possession is an actual relationship between a recipient and an object, while a benefit is the availability of an opportunity or advantage which may become a possession in the future. This distinction is explicit in Maori:

"Mō tātou ēnei kākahu mā." "These clean clothes are for us." [For us these clothes clean.]
"Nō tātou ēnei kākahu mā." "These clean clothes are ours." [To us these clothes clean.]

It is also explicit in Inuit:

Inuit: "Tunissutissaq niviarsiamut pisiaraara." "I bought a present for the girl."
[Present-(future) girl-to buy-I-it.]

It will also be seen that the words describing a benefit: "advantage", "opportunity", "access", "luck", "ease", "convenience", "kindness", "politeness", "generosity", "purpose", etc are not possessions. A possession is a concrete relationship which is either present or absent: "We lack clean clothes." A benefit is a prospective relationship which is either favourable or (as we shall note) unfavourable.

An agent can perform a benefaction for him/herself, a construction which can be called *benefactive adoptive*:

"She took the opportunity to see the paintings."
"He took advantage of the offer of a loan."
"He accessed his bank account."
"We took the calculation as an example."

Some benefactive adoptives employ the indirect beneficiary construction:

German: "Es ist mir gelungen, zu kommen." "I succeeded in coming."
[It is to-me succeeded, to come.]

Irish: "Éireoidh leo." "They will succeed." [It-will-succeed with-them.]

Hungarian:
"Sikerűlt neked elérned a főnököt?" "Did you manage to reach the boss?"
[Managed to-you reaching-your the boss?]

A sentence may have make something available to more than one person, and so have more then one beneficiary:

"He cooked dinner for his family to provide more free time to his mother."

Some languages possess a benefactive form of the verb, whose direct object is the beneficiary:

Indonesian:
"Dia menjahit rok." "She sewed [a] skirt."
"Dia menjahitkan anaknya rok." "She sewed her child a skirt."
[She sewed-for child-her skirt.]
"Dia membelikan adiknya buku." "He bought his brother a book."
[He bought-for brother-his book.]

Swahili: "Rafiki yangu amenisafishia motokaa." "My friend has cleaned the car for me."
[Friend-my he-has-me-cleaned-for car.]
"Numewanunulia sukari." "I have bought sugar for them."
[I have bought-for-them sugar.]

Inuit: "Atuarpuq." "He read." [Read-he.]
"Atuvvappaa." "He read aloud for him." [Read-for-he-him.]

Japanese constructs a benefactive form of the verb with the auxiliaries "ageru" and "kureru", both meaning "give", attached to a gerund:

"Watashi wa Nobuo-san ni nekutai o katte ageta." "I bought a tie for Nobuo."
[I (topic) Nobuo-Mr-to tie (object) buying gave.]
"Haha wa watashi ni kēki o yaite kureta." "My mother baked a cake for me."
[Mother (topic) me-to cake (object) baking gave.]

A benefactive verb can form a receptive with the beneficiary as subject (a *benefactive receptive*), in the same way as for the transfer:

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Indonesian:
        "Dia membelikan adiknya buku."   (benefactive)
        "He bought his brother a book."
        [He bought-for brother-his book.]
        "Adiknya dibelikannya buku."   (receptive)
        "His brother was bought a book by him."
        [Brother-his was bought-for-him book.]

Swahili: "Numewanunulia sukari." "I have bought sugar for them." (benefactive)
                      [I have bought-for-them sugar.]
        "Wamenunuliwa sukari." "Sugar has been bought for them." (receptive)
                      [They-have-been-bought-for sugar.]

Japanese constructs a benefactive form of the verb with the auxiliary "morau" ("receive"):

Japanese:
        "Watashi wa chichi ni kamera o katte moratta."   (receptive)
        "My father bought a camera for me."
        [I (topic) father-by camera (object) buying received.]

The Adversative Function

In addition to acting to the advantage of someone, a transitive, intransitive, or transfer verb can act to the disadvantage of someone:

        "Henry's wife has run away on him." "Mary had smoke blown on her."

Such a sentence is called *adversative*. The structure is the same as that of a benefactive sentence, in that the person to whose disadvantage the sentence occurs is an additional element. We may therefore use the same term "beneficiary" for that person. An adversative, and its resultant sentence, is again often expressed by a genitive link between the object and the beneficiary:

        "The knife cut him on the hand."   →   "His hand was cut."

In he same way as a benefactive sentence, the beneficiary of an adversative sentence is expressed in some languages with the transfer link "to" or its equivalent:

        Italian: "Morde la mano al professore." "He bites the teacher's hand."
                            [He-bites the hand to-the teacher.]
          "La pentola le scivolò tra le mani." "The saucepan slipped through her hands."
                              [The saucepan to-her slipped through the hands.]

        Irish: "Dhóigh sé an fraoch orm." "He burned my heather."
                      [Burned-he the heather on-me.]

An adversative can again be expressed by a specific word, which we can call an *adversity*:

        "We had the misfortune to arrive late." "He failed as an estate agent."

An adversity can take the form of an attribute of the opportunity:

        "It was hard for him to write the letter."
        "It was inconvenient for him to write the letter."
        "This food is not edible."

        Italian: "Vi stenta consegnare il compito oggi."
              "You'll find it hard to hand in the assignment today."
              [To-you it-is-hard to-deliver the assignment today.]

        Finnish: "Hänen oli vaikea selitää sitä." "It was difficult for him to explain that."

[Of-him it-was difficult to-explain that.]

Or a prefix or suffix of the opportunity verb:

> Indonesian (prefix "ter-"):
>> "Suara dosen tidak terdengar dari sini." "The lecturer can't be heard from here."
>>> [Voice lecturer not audible from here.]
>> "Soal kematecan lalu lintas belum terpecahkan."
>> "The problem of traffic congestion cannot yet be solved."
>> [Problem congestion traffic not-yet solvable.]
>
> Swahili (suffix "-ika"/"-iki"):
>> "Njia hii haipitiki." "This road is impassable." [Road this is-not-passable.]

Alternatively, an adversity can be an attribute of the agent who performs the benefactive action:

> "He was very rude in his behaviour towards his friend."   ("his friend")
> "Hitler was very cruel in his treatment of the Jews."   ("the Jews")

In these sentences, the conduct of an agent provides an adversity towards a beneficiary (stated in brackets). The sentences may be interpreted as:

> "His behaviour showed rudeness towards his friend."
> "Hitler showed great cruelty towards the Jews."

A adversity is therefore not the absence of a benefit, but a disadvantage which prevents a beneficiary from accessing a potential future possession. Examples which are illustrated here are "disadvantage", "misfortune", "failure", "difficulty", "inconvenience", "rudeness", and "cruelty".

Languages can construct a sentence in which the recipient of an adversative action is the topic, an *adversative receptive*:

> Japanese:
>> "Yamada-san wa okusan ni nigerareta." "Mr Yamada's wife ran away on him."
>>> [Yamada-Mr $_{(topic)}$ wife-by fled $_{(passive)}$.]
>> "Tarō wa Haruko ni tabako o suwareta."
>> "Taro had a cigarette smoked by Haruko on him."
>> [Taro $_{(topic)}$ Haruko-by cigarette $_{(object)}$ smoked $_{(passive)}$.]

The beneficiary of an adversative sentence, like a benefactive, can be the same as the agent, in an *adversative adoptive*:

> German: "Er hat sich eine Verletzung zugezogen." "He has incurred an injury."
>> [He has to-himself an injury sustained.]
> Irish: "Theip orm an obair a dhéanamh." "I failed to do the work."
>> [It-failed on-me the work its doing.]