127. Reason Clauses

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1.   Defining the values

This chapter examines the form of the verb in reason clauses. Examples (1) – (3) provide instances of reason clauses in English (throughout the chapter, reason clauses will be enclosed in square brackets in the examples):

(1)   *I couldn't go to Paris last week [because all the trains were booked out]*.

(2)   *[Since it will be raining soon], it's better not to go out*.

(3)   *[Being so busy], I couldn't do anything else*.

As was done for purpose clauses and 'when' clauses (chapters 125 and 126), reason clauses are defined in functional, rather than morphosyntactic, terms. A reason construction is regarded as one encoding a causal relation between two events, such that one of the two (the event coded by the reason clause, or the dependent event) represents the reason for the other event (the main event) to take place.

In Cristofaro (2003: ch. 2, 6), the theoretical implications of the proposed functional definition of reason clauses are discussed at length, and some pragmatic criteria are provided to identify reason clauses under this definition.

The proposed functional definition of reason clauses encompasses both traditional cases of reason clauses (e.g. clauses introduced by specific reason conjunctions, as in (1) – (2), or non-finite clauses, as in (3)) and clauses that might not count as such under traditional morphosyntactic criteria. One

such case is provided by Canela-Krahô (Macro-Ge; Brazil):

(4)   Canela-Krahô (Popjes and Popjes 1986: 139)
       wa   ha   ma   ajcahu,   [i-mã   hũpati]
       1   FUT   away run   1-TEMPRY   3.fear
       'I will run away because I am afraid of it.'

In this sentence, the linked clauses are juxtaposed, and there is no grammatical marker signaling their linkage. The reason relation between the two events must be inferred on contextual grounds. However, the clause expressing the speaker's being afraid is regarded as a reason clause here, because it expresses the same kind of conceptual situation associated with clauses that are explicitly marked as expressing a reason relation between events in other languages.

Verb forms in reason clauses may be either balanced or deranked. The notions of **balancing** and **deranking** were originally introduced by Stassen (1985), and are defined in greater detail in chapter 125. A balanced verb form is one that can occur in an independent declarative clause. A deranked verb form is one that cannot be used in independent declarative clauses. A deranked verb form may lack some or all of the categorial distinctions relevant to verbs in the language (such as tense, aspect, mood, or person agreement distinctions), or display special markers not used in independent clauses, e.g. special tense, aspect, mood, or person markers, nominalizers, case markers or adpositions. The English examples in (1) and (2) provide instances of balanced reason clauses. Another example follows from Panjabi (Indo-European; India and Pakistan):

(5)   Panjabi (Bhatia 1993: 75)
       [cüüki   ó   bamaar   ai],   ó   náïï   aa
       because   he   sick   is   he   NEG   come
       sake-gaa
       able-FUT.3M

'Because he is sick, he won't be able to come.'

In this sentence, the reason clause is introduced by the conjunction *cüüki* 'because', and the verb is fully inflected for the categories relevant to verbs in the language (tense, aspect, mood, and person).

Example (3) above provides an instance of a deranked reason clause: the verb is in the gerund form, and is not inflected for person and mood. Other examples of deranked reason clauses are provided in (6) – (8).

In example (6) from Kolyma Yukaghir (eastern Siberia), the verb in the reason clause is in the result nominal form. It is not inflected for tense, aspect, mood, and person, and bears the prolative case suffix *–gen*, as well as the result nominal affix *–o:l–*:

(6)   Kolyma Yukaghir (Maslova 2003: 432)
        [taŋ   marqil'   eris' ann'-o:l-de-gen]
        that   girl   badly speak-RNR-POSS-PROL
        tabud-ek   lem-mele
        that-PRED   eat-3SG
        'Because that girl had spoken wrongly, he ate her.'

In example (7), from Italian, the verb in the reason clause is in the infinitive form, and is inflected for aspect but not for tense, mood or person. In addition, it is introduced by the preposition *per* 'for':

(7)   Italian
        [Per   av-ere   detto   questo],
        for   AUX-INF   say.PTCP   this
        ha   ricev-uto   molte critiche.
        AUX.PRES.IND.3SG   get-PTCP   many criticisms
        'He was severely criticized for saying that.'

Example (8), from West Greenlandic (Eskimo; Greenland), illustrates the use of so-called dependent moods. These are verb forms that cannot occur in independent declarative clauses, but display all of the categorial distinctions relevant to verbs in the language. However, these distinctions are realized by means of special forms, different from those used in independent declarative clauses. In (8), the reason clause is in the so-called causative mood. The verb is inflected for tense, aspect, mood and person, just like the forms used in independent declarative clauses. Tense and aspect are expressed as in independent declarative clauses, as witnessed by the use of the future affix *-ssa-* in both the main and the reason clause. However, mood and person are expressed by means of the causative affix *-mmat*, which cannot be used in independent declarative clauses.

(8)   West Greenlandic (Fortescue 1984: 65)
        [anurli-ssa-mmat]   *aalla-ssa-nngil-agut*
        be.windy-FUT-3SG.CAUS   leave-FUT-not-1PL.IND
        'Since it is going to be windy, we shan't leave.'

As was observed in connection with purpose and 'when' clauses (see chapters 125 and 126 and references therein), it has been suggested that forms such as the causative mood in West Greenlandic might be regarded as balanced, because they display the same categorial distinctions as the forms used in independent declarative clauses. However, since they cannot themselves occur in independent declarative clauses, they will be regarded here as deranked.

In some cases, the verb forms used in reason clauses are identical to those used in independent clauses, but bear a clitic or an affixed conjunction. This is, for instance, the case in Trumai (isolate; Brazil), where the verb bears the affixed conjunction *-ak*.

(9)   Trumai (Guirardello 1999: 404)

*iyi   pumaţ-e   [kawao-k   iki-n-**ak**]*
3SG   scream-3ABS   wasp-ERG   sting-3ABS-because
'He screamed because a wasp stung him.'

In such cases, one might want to regard the relevant verb form as deranked, because the complex verb + clitic/affixed conjunction could not occur in an independent declarative clause. In (9), however, the verb as such is structurally identical to a form used in independent declarative clauses (in fact, the affix *-ak* is a suppletive form of the independent reason conjunction *iets* 'because': Guirardello 1999: 404). For this reason, it will be regarded here as balanced, and the same criterion will be applied to similar cases in other languages.

The balancing/deranking distinction overlaps with, but is not equivalent to, the distinction between finiteness and non-finiteness. For discussion of the relevant issues, see chapter 125.

For any given language, reason clauses can be coded by deranked verb forms only, by balanced verb forms only, or by either balanced or deranked verb forms. Map 127 shows the distribution of these three types in the world's languages.

@	1.	Balanced		90
@	2.	Balanced/ deranked		37
@	3.	Deranked		42
			total	169

2.   Geographical distribution

Languages with exclusively balanced reason clauses are overwhelmingly dominant in Central America, Africa, Southeast Asia and the Pacific islands.

In North America, most languages have exclusively deranked reason clauses. However, languages with exclusively

balanced reason clauses and languages with both deranked and balanced reason clauses are also relatively frequent.

Languages with both deranked and balanced reason clauses are marginal in both Central and South America. In South America, languages with exclusively deranked reason clauses are approximately as frequent as languages with exclusively balanced reason clauses.

In Europe, most languages display both balanced and deranked reason clauses. The same situation is found in India. In Central Asia, languages with both deranked and balanced reason clauses are approximately as frequent as languages with exclusively balanced reason clauses. Languages with exclusively deranked reason clauses are found in the Caucasus, in Siberia and in India.

In Australia, most languages display exclusively balanced reason clauses, but languages with exclusively deranked reason clauses are relatively common. On the other hand, languages with both deranked and balanced reason clauses are less frequent.

3.   Theoretical issues

Most of the sample languages have exclusively balanced reason clauses. It should, however, be pointed out that languages with exclusively balanced reason clauses are concentrated in a number of geographical areas, such as Central America, Africa, mainland Southeast Asia, Indonesia, and the Pacific islands. Most of these areas are the same ones that display a high concentration of languages with exclusively balanced purpose and 'when' clauses (chapters 125 and 126). In other areas (such as North and South America, Europe, Central and South Asia, and Australia) balanced and deranked reason clauses are both widespread. This suggests that the distribution of languages with exclusively balanced reason clauses is areally and/or genetically biased, and both balanced and deranked reason

clauses are widespread across the world's languages. It should also be observed, however, that the number of areas where balanced clauses are dominant is greater than in the case of other subordinate clause types, such as 'when' clauses (chapter 126). This can be regarded as evidence that on the whole reason clauses display a greater tendency to be coded by means of balanced verb forms than 'when' clauses.

In fact, as is shown in Cristofaro (1998, 2003), an implicational hierarchy exists (the Subordination Deranking Hierarchy) such that if a language uses deranked verb forms for reason clauses, then it uses deranked verb forms for most of the other adverbial clause types, as well as for several types of complement clause and some types of relative clause (see also chapter 125).

In Cristofaro (1998, 2003), a functionally motivated connection is established between some of the structural features of deranked verb forms and the semantic features of reason relations. Like purpose and 'when' relations, reason relations imply that the mood value of the dependent event is predetermined in that the dependent event is presented as factual. As a result, the mood value of the dependent event need not be overtly specified in the dependent clause, which leads to the use of verb forms not marked for mood, i.e., deranked forms. This reflects an **economic motivation**, the tendency not to express what is entailed or recoverable from the context (Haiman 1983, 1985; see also chapters 125 and 126).

Also, reason relations allow the dependent event to be conceptualized as a thing rather than as a process (in Langacker's sense of these terms: see Langacker 1987a, 1987b and 1991, as well as Cristofaro 2003: ch. 6, 9). This may lead to the presence of nominal markers on the dependent verb (such as case markers, see for instance example (6) above), and nominal markers are a deranking device.

On the other hand, the occurrence of deranked forms is also related to semantic integration between events, in that

deranked verb forms iconically reflect semantic integration (Givón 1980 and 1990: ch. 13; see also chapter 125). However, this motivation does not hold for reason relations, because reason relations involve no semantic integration between events.

Also, reason relations do not involve predetermination of the time reference of the dependent event, nor sharing of participants between main and dependent event. This disfavors the occurrence of verb forms not specified for these categories, as is the case with deranked forms not marked for tense or person agreement.

Finally, some deranked verb forms, such as subjunctives or conditionals, are devoted to the expression of non-factuality (see the discussion in chapters 125 and 126). These forms usually do not occur in reason clauses, as the dependent event is presented as factual.

The interaction of the various motivations just described may explain why both balanced and deranked reason clauses are widespread across the world's languages.