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Another look at subjecthood in Tagalog

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0. Introduction¹

A wide variety of analyses have been proposed for the system of voice marking (or "verbal focus") in Tagalog and other Philippine languages. The positions most commonly adopted by these analyses with respect to the status of grammatical subjecthood in Tagalog can be characterized as belonging to one of the following general types:

- a. ang marks grammatical subject (Bloomfield, 1917; Blake, 1925)
- b. Tagalog has no subject; ang marks the Topic (Foley and Van Valin, 1984)
- c. Actor = subject
 1. ang marks the Topic (Carrier-Duncan, 1985)
 2. ang marks the absolutive argument (Gerdt, 1988)

I will not attempt in the present paper to offer a formal account of the apparent "split-subjecthood" properties in Philippine languages. My purpose is rather to discuss what kinds of data will be relevant to evaluating each of these analytical positions. Schachter (1976, 1977) laid out the problem and defined the central issues in a very clear way, but too much of the debate since his papers appeared has been restricted to re-analyzing the set of facts presented in those papers. By considering a broader range of data I will try to show that, at least on language-internal grounds, the identity (and existence) of the grammatical subject in Tagalog is far less problematic than many linguists currently assume.

If Tagalog has a subject, there are two candidates: the Actor (as in hypothesis (c)) and the NP which carries the nominative case-marker ang (as in (a)). In order to decide between these two alternatives, I will compare the syntactic properties of Actors to those of the ang-phrase. If Tagalog has no subject, or if the Actor is the subject, we need to say something about the status of the ang-phrase, which obviously plays a central role in Tagalog syntax. Most commonly it is assumed to be a "Topic". So in order to evaluate hypotheses (b) and (c1), we must ask what is meant by "Topic".

My basic assumption is that grammatical relations such as subject and object are syntactic notions, and must be identified by syntactic properties, rather than by semantic roles or discourse functions. Moreover, grammatical relations need not be reducible to specified positions in surface phrase structure. Under these assumptions I will argue that (a) is the correct analysis, i.e. that the argument cross-referenced by the verb's voice marker is the grammatical subject. At the very least, I hope to establish that Tagalog grammar is compatible with such an analysis, i.e. that Tagalog does not, as has sometimes been claimed,

¹An earlier version of this paper was presented at the 6th International Conference on Austronesian Linguistics held in Honolulu, 20-24 May, 1991.

force us to abandon the notion of grammatical subjecthood as a cross-linguistically relevant concept. (These issues are discussed in greater detail in Kroeger, 1991.)

1. Topic and Focus

“Topic” means many things to many people. In order to evaluate the hypothesis that the ang-phrase is a Topic, I will discuss the properties of this argument with respect to two notions of topichood which make empirically testable predictions. First, I will report the findings of Cooreman, Fox and Givon (1984), who used various measurements to test for topic-continuity in Tagalog discourse. Second, I will briefly illustrate the kinds of tests that can be used to distinguish the pragmatic functions of Topic (salient old information) and Focus (crucial new information), following the assumptions of Bresnan and Mchombo (1987).

1.1. Discourse topicality

Cooreman, Fox and Givon (1984) report the results of a study by Barbara Fox based on some of the Tagalog texts from Bloomfield’s (1917) corpus. They define discourse topicality in terms of predictability, recurrence, and continuity of reference. They use various measurements to test for topic-continuity, of which I will mention three here. The first, Referential Distance, is a measurement of the distance (in clauses) since the last mention of the current topic. Thus lower values indicate higher topicality. As the following table indicates, they found that Actors on the average have a much lower value for Referential Distance (and thus are much higher in topicality) than patients, both in active (i.e., “Actor-Focus”) and non-active clauses:

(1)	<u>voice category</u>	AGENT		PATIENT	
		<u>N</u>	<u>average RD</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>average RD</u>
	Active	37	1.62	37	19.02
	non-Active	140	2.88	166	10.01

Table 1: Referential Distance for agents and patients in non-inverted² transitive Tagalog clauses (from Cooreman, Fox and Givon, 1984, p. 19).

Topic Persistence measures “the number of contiguous subsequent clauses in which the participant NP remains a semantic argument of the clause” (Cooreman, Fox and Givon, 1984, p. 7). Thus highly topical arguments will tend to have higher values for Topic Persistence. Once again, this measurement shows Actors to be more topical than non-Actors, regardless of which argument is the ang-phrase:

(2)	<u>voice category</u>	AGENT		PATIENT	
		<u>N</u>	<u>avg TP</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>avg TP</u>
	Active	37	1.68	37	0.06
	Non-Active	140	1.22	166	0.56

²I have separated out the measurements for clauses which involve ay-inversion, because of the special pragmatic force of that construction, as discussed below.

Table 2: Topic persistence for agents and patients in non-inverted transitive Tagalog clauses (from Cooreman, Fox and Givon, 1984, p. 21).

The last measurement which we will note relates to the use of “high-continuity NP-marking devices”, i.e. zero-anaphora and overt pronominal forms. These devices are always used to refer to participants which are highly topical or salient at that point of the discourse. Even in non-active clauses,³ Actors were far more likely than non-Actors to be encoded via pronominalization or zero-anaphora, even though the non-Actor is the ang-phrase. These results are shown in Table 3.

<u>voice category</u>	<u>AGENT</u>			<u>PATIENT</u>		
	<u>N</u>	<u>pro</u>	<u>percent</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>pro</u>	<u>percent</u>
Non-Active	134	101	.75	169	55	0.33

Table 3: Pronominal reference (overt or zero) for agents and patients in non-inverted transitive Tagalog clauses (from Cooreman, Fox and Givon, 1984, p. 17).

By every measurement of topic continuity, it is clear that Actors are far higher in topicality than patients, even though the patient is the preferred choice of ang-phrase. In spite of the strong tendency for the ang-phrase to be definite, there seems to be essentially no correlation between the ang-phrase and the discourse topic.

1.2. Pragmatic Topic and Focus

Bresnan and Mchombo (1987) use the terms “topic” and “focus” to designate grammaticized pragmatic functions. Topic and focus encode different types of information. The topic is “what is under discussion, whether previously mentioned or assumed in discourse” (p. 746), and therefore must represent given or presupposed information. Focus “expresses CONTRAST, in the sense of Chafe 1976; it designates something that is NOT presupposed (relative to some context).” Thus a focus must be understood to refer to new or unpredictable information. Topic and focus are therefore mutually incompatible categories, since the same bit of information cannot be both old and new at the same point in a discourse.

According to this theory, if the ang-phrase is a grammaticized Topic, it should not be possible for it to bear pragmatic focus. Thus one way to test the “grammaticized Topic” hypothesis is to investigate whether or not the nominative argument is in fact incompatible with pragmatic focus.

In this section we will use content questions to create contexts in which a particular element must bear a particular pragmatic function. In the answer to a WH- question, the phrase which corresponds to the WH- word provides the crucial new information, and thus should carry pragmatic focus. Individuals named in the body of the question, e.g. “Mary” in “What is Mary up to these days?”, can be assumed to bear the Topic function in the answer. We will apply these tests for pragmatic focus and topic both to the ang-phrase and to other

³Unfortunately, Cooreman et al. do not give the corresponding data for active clauses. But in view of the fact that pronouns are necessarily definite, and that active clauses in unmarked word order rarely if ever contain definite patients, it seems safe to assume that the difference would be far more extreme in active clauses.

arguments of the clause, as well as to pre-verbal NP's in the ay-Inversion and Cleft constructions.

1.2.1. Focus

The following question requires an answer in which the patient (the thing bought) will bear pragmatic focus. Some possible answers to this question are shown in (a) - (d):

(4) Ano ba ang binili mo sa pamilihan?
 what QUES NOM OV-buy you(GEN) DAT market
What did you buy at the market?

a. Binili ko ito=ng damit.
 OV-buy I(GEN) this(NOM)=LNK dress
I bought this dress.

b. Bumili ako ng gatas.
 AV-buy I(NOM) GEN milk
I bought some milk.

c. Ito=ng damit ang binili ko.
 this(NOM)=LNK dress NOM OV-buy I(GEN)
This dress is what I bought.

d. #Ito=ng damit ay binili ko.
 this(NOM)=LNK dress INV OV-buy I(GEN)
This dress, I bought.

The answers in (4a-b) show that both the ang-phrase and arguments with other case markers may bear pragmatic focus. The cleft construction (4c) is also acceptable as an answer, showing that a clefted NP is compatible with pragmatic focus. But ay-Inversion (4d) is not possible in this context; an inverted NP is not compatible with pragmatic focus.

1.2.2. Topic

Elements mentioned in the question are often omissible from the answer since they can be assumed to be known and salient, i.e. topical. In fact, totally elliptical answers consisting of just one word are perfectly acceptable for most questions. Alternatively, proper names mentioned in questions may be pronominalized in answers for similar reasons. These processes can be used as a test for pragmatic topichood. In the following question, only one participant is mentioned (Linda), so she is necessarily the pragmatic topic of the answer:

(5) Ano ang ginagawa ni Linda?
 what NOM IMPERF-do-OV GEN Linda
What is Linda doing?

- | | |
|------------------------------------|--|
| a. Bumabasa ng diyaryo. | <i>Reading a newspaper.</i> |
| b. Binabasa ang diyaryo. | <i>Reading the newspaper.</i> |
| c. Siya ay nagbabasa ng diyaryo. | <i>She is reading a/the newspaper.</i> |
| d. #Siya ang nagbabasa ng diyaryo. | <i>She is the one reading a/the newspaper.</i> |

The pragmatic topic Linda is omitted in (5a-b) and pronominalized in (5c-d). These examples show that the pragmatic topic may be the ang-phrase (5a), another post-verbal argument (5b), or an inverted NP (5c). However, the pragmatic topic may not be clefted (5d). In other words, ay-Inversion is compatible with pragmatic topichood but Clefting is not.

To summarize, the Question-Answer pairs in the preceding examples show that the ang-phrase is essentially neutral with respect to the pragmatic functions of topic and focus; it accepts either function, provided that other factors (e.g. constraints on subject selection in the presence of a definite patient) do not interfere. Clefted NP's also accept pragmatic focus but are incompatible with topic. Ay-Inversion, on the other hand, is incompatible with pragmatic focus but does accept pragmatic topichood. Thus the ay-inversion construction has the properties we would expect of a grammaticalized Topic position, but the ang-phrase does not.

One cannot explain the uniqueness of the Tagalog voice system by asserting that Tagalog is a “topic-prominent” language without assuming some prior notion of what a topic is. There is little to be gained by calling the ang-phrase a Topic, rather than a subject, if it does not exhibit the properties which some particular theory of topichood would predict. We have seen that the ang-phrase has neither the discourse properties nor the pragmatic properties normally associated with the term “topic”.

2. Properties of the ang-phrase

A large number of syntactic processes in Tagalog apply only to the ang-phrase. Some of these patterns, such as quantifier float and the extraction facts, are so well known as to require little comment. Others, such as Raising and number agreement, have been noted in the literature but are often ignored. Still others, such as secondary predication and conjunction reduction, have not been previously pointed out to my knowledge.

2.1. Quantifier Float

Floated quantifiers must be interpreted as referring to the ang-phrase:

- (6) (from Schachter, 1976, p. 501)
- | |
|---|
| a. Sumusulat lahat ang mga bata ng mga liham |
| AV-write all NOM PL child GEN PL letter |
| <i>All the children are writing letters</i> |
| (* <i>The children are writing all the letters.</i>) |
| b. Sinusulat lahat ng mga bata ang mga liham |
| OV-write all GEN PL child NOM PL letter |
| <i>The/some children write all the letters.</i> |
| (* <i>All the children are writing letters</i>) |

2.2. Extraction

Only the ang-phrase can be relativized, clefted, or undergo ay-inversion.⁴ The restriction on relativization is illustrated below with examples adapted from Foley and Van Valin (1984, p. 141-2):

- (7) a. isda=ng i-b-in-igay ng lalake sa bata
 fish=LNK IV-PERF-give GEN man DAT child
the fish which was given to the child by the man
- b. bata=ng b-in-igy-an ng lalake ng isda
 child=LNK PERF-give-DV GEN man GEN fish
the child which was given fish by the man
- c. *isda=ng nag-bigay ang lalake sa bata
 fish=LNK AV-PERF-give NOM man DAT child
- d. *lalake=ng b-in-igy-an ng isda ang bata
 man=LNK PERF-give-DV GEN fish NOM child

2.3. Number agreement

When the ang-phrase is plural, verbs and adjectives may optionally be marked for plurality. This marking takes various morphological forms, depending on the particular predicate. But the marking is always impossible when the ang-phrase is unambiguously singular:

- (8) (from Schachter and Otnes, 1972, p. 336)
- a. Nagsi-pangisda na sina Ben.
 AV.PERF.PL-fishing already NOM.PL Ben
Ben and the others have gone fishing.
- b. *Nagsi-pangisda na si Ben.
 AV.PERF.PL-fishing already NOM Ben
 (for: *Ben has gone fishing.*)
- (9) (Aspillera, 1969, p. 123)
- Pinagbu-buks-an niya [ang lahat ng mga bintana].
 PERF.PL-open-DV 3.SG.GEN NOM all GEN PL window
She had opened all the windows.

⁴Certain adverbial phrases can undergo ay-inversion, as pointed out by Schachter and Otnes (1972), but the pragmatic function of this construction seems different from the ay-inversion of subjects. Cena (1979) has pointed out several apparent exceptions to the generalization about relativization. For example, certain possessors can be relativized, e.g. “Iyon ang babaeng may sakit ang anak” (thanks to Paul Schachter for providing this example). This pattern is clearly related to the Possessor Ascension construction discussed below. The other cases mentioned by Cena are much less clear, and in many cases his examples only seem to be grammatical if interpreted as finite complement constructions rather than relative clauses.

2.4. Raising

As pointed out by Dell (1981), only the ang-phrase can undergo Raising:⁵

- (10) a. Inasah-an ko=ng halik-an ni Linda ang pangulo.
 expect-DV I(GEN)=COMP kiss-DV GEN Linda NOM president
I expected (for) Linda to kiss the president.
- b. Inasah-an ko ang pangulo=ng halik-an ni Linda.
 expect-DV I(GEN) NOM president=COMP kiss-DV GEN Linda
I expected the president to be kissed by Linda.
- c. *Inasah-an ko si Linda=ng halik-an ang pangulo.
 expect-DV I(GEN) NOM Linda=COMP kiss-DV NOM president

2.5. Control of secondary predicates

Only the ang-phrase can control secondary predication:

- (11) a. Naghain na lasing si Maria ng isda.
 AV.PERF-serve LNK drunk NOM Maria GEN fish
Maria served the fish drunk. (Maria was drunk.)
- b. Inihain na hilaw ni Maria ang isda.
 IV.PERF-serve LNK raw GEN Maria NOM fish
Maria served the fish raw. (The fish was raw.)
- c. #Inihain na lasing ni Maria ang isda.
 IV.PERF-serve LNK drunk GEN Maria NOM fish
Maria served the fish drunk. (The fish was drunk.)

2.6. Possessor Ascension

As pointed out by Bell (1983) for Cebuano, only the possessor of the ang-phrase can undergo Possessor Ascension.⁶

- (12) a. Si Juan, kinagat ng aso ang anak.
 NOM Juan PERF-bite-OV GEN dog NOM child
Juan, a dog bit the (i.e., his) child.

⁵I am distinguishing here between true Raising and “Copy Raising”. DeGuzman (1988) gives examples of Actor-Raising, with an optional resumptive pronoun in the complement clause. For my consultants, the resumptive (or “copy”) pronoun is obligatory when the Actor is raised and impossible when the subject is raised. Donna Gerds (p.c.) reports a similar pattern in Ilocano. There are a number of languages which allow Copy Raising of non-subjects, e.g. Irish, Arabic, Javanese, etc. True Raising is almost always restricted to subjects; direct-object raising in Niueian (Seiter, 1983) is the only counter-example to this claim which I am aware of.

⁶Example (12b) is unacceptable because of semantic constraints on Possessor Ascension which are still poorly understood. This construction is allowed primarily in cases of inalienable possession, and it may be this fact which blocks the only grammatically possible reading of (12b), namely ‘*John’s dog bit the child’; but there seem to be other semantic restrictions as well.

- b. *Si Juan, kumagat ang aso sa anak.
 NOM Juan PERF.AV-bite NOM dog DAT child
 **Juan, the dog bit the child.*

2.7. Conjunction reduction

Only the ang-phrase can be deleted through conjunction reduction:

- (13) a. Huhugasan ko at pupunasan mo ang mga pinggan.
 wash-DV 1.SG.GEN and dry-DV 2.SG.GEN NOM PL plate
I will wash and you dry the dishes.
- b. ?*Niluto ang pagkain at hinugasan ang mga pinggan ni Josie.
 cook-OV NOM food and wash-DV NOM PL plate GEN Josie
The food was cooked and the dishes washed by Josie.
- c. ?*Nanghuhuli ang ama ko, at nagtitinda ang ina ko ng isda.
 AV-catch NOM father my and AV-sell NOM mother my GEN fish
My father catches and my mother sells fish.

It is important to distinguish Conjunction Reduction from zero anaphora (or “pro-drop”), since Tagalog allows the latter to apply quite freely. A crucial distinction between the two is that zero anaphora requires that the antecedent actually precede the null pronoun, whether in the same sentence or in discourse context, while Conjunction Reduction places no special requirements on linear order. Thus if the order of the conjuncts were reversed in the above examples, all will be grammatical. Virtually any argument can be referred to with zero anaphora, including oblique recipients as in the following example:

Pro-drop:

- (14) (from Martin, 1981, p.313)
 Kung makikita ko siya, ibibigay ko ang sulat mo.
 if IMPERF.OV-see I(GEN) 3.SG.NOM IMPERF.IV-give I(GEN) NOM letter your
If I see him, I will give (him) your letter.

Shibatani (1988) points out that in sequential narrative clauses conjoined by “and then” in Cebuano, a null pronoun in Actor position takes an Actor as its antecedent if one is available in the preceding context, regardless of case marking. The same is true in Tagalog, as shown in the following example:

- (15) Hinalikan ni David si Linda at.saka umalis.
 PERF-kiss-DV GEN David NOM Linda and.then PERF.AV-leave
Linda was kissed by David and then left. (i.e., David left)

This phenomenon is very different from the type of coordination reduction exemplified in (13). It is not strictly speaking a syntactic constraint, since the same constraint holds across sentence boundaries. It is rather a fact of discourse grammar, a manifestation of topic continuity, obviously consistent with the high topicality of Actors demonstrated in

section 1.1. Foley and Van Valin (1984), Cooreman et al. (1984), Verhaar (1988) and other writers have used ellipsis in coordinate structures as a test for subjecthood in various languages. However, such studies are suspect because the authors often fail to distinguish between “logical coordination” and temporal sequence coordination. The former is more likely to be governed by syntactic constraints, the latter by discourse considerations.

3. Actor properties

There are two main properties of Actors which are often cited as evidence for subjecthood: reflexive binding and Equi “deletion”. In this section I will show that neither of these two properties are unique to Actors, and that in both cases the special status of Actors in these constructions is due to semantic prominence, rather than grammatical relation.

3.1. Reflexive binding

Schachter (1976, 1977) never claimed that the Actor is the only possible antecedent for a reflexive pronoun. However, most linguists who read his papers seem to assume that this is what he intended. What he actually demonstrated was that the Actor, regardless of case marking, is always a possible antecedent for a reflexive pronoun in the same clause, and that an Actor may never itself be expressed by a reflexive pronoun.

Non-Actors can also be antecedents for reflexive pronouns, as in the following (somewhat figurative) example:

- (16) (from Martin, 1990, p. 22)
 Bakit ba kailangan=ng itago mo sa kaniya ang kaniya=ng sarili?
 why Q need=COMP IV-hide 2.SG.GEN DAT 3.SG NOM 3.SG=LNK self
Why do you have to hide her from herself?

The non-uniqueness of Actors as antecedents of reflexives was pointed out by Andrews (1985) for Tagalog, and by Bell (1976) for Cebuano. They used sentences like the following, which are just as ambiguous in Tagalog as in English:

- (17) Sinabi ni Juan_i kay Maria_j ang katotohanan tungkol sa sarili niya_{i/j}.
 tell-OV GEN Juan DAT Maria NOM truth about DAT self 3.SG
John told Mary the truth about him-/her-self.

Bell (1976) stated that reflexive binding in Cebuano is governed by the thematic hierarchy of Jackendoff (1972): a reflexive must be lower than its antecedent on the thematic hierarchy. Andrews (1985) suggested that the same holds true in Tagalog. If this analysis is correct, then the binding properties of Actors in Tagalog reflect their status as logical subjects, rather than providing evidence about their grammatical relation. In any event, it is clear that reflexive binding is not unique to Actors (or to any other class of arguments), and thus not a diagnostic property of subjects in Tagalog.

3.2. Equi

The most common and productive Equi pattern in Tagalog is that noted by Schachter (1976, p. 505). He stated: “... it is always the actor that is absent in structures analyzable as

involving equi-noun-phrase deletion.” Given the near-universal requirement that Equi targets be subjects, this seems to be a powerful argument in favor of analyzing the Actor as the grammatical subject. However, Schachter himself (1985, p. 458) noted that the facts are actually more complex than he realized at the time his earlier papers were written. Under certain circumstances, the ang-phrase may also be the Equi target. There are two specific constructions in which this is possible.

A few Equi predicates (e.g. himukin persuade, matakot be afraid to, masanay get used to, and magpilit insist on) allow the controllee in a transitive complement clause to be either the Actor (regardless of case marking) or the ang-phrase. The following examples illustrate the second of these possibilities:

- (18) a. (adapted from Ramos, 1971, p. 132)
 Nagpilit si Maria=ng bigy-an ng pera ni Ben.
 PERF.AV-insist.on NOM Maria=COMP give-LV GEN money GEN Ben
Maria insisted on being given money by Ben.

- b. (from Miller, 1988, p. 232)⁷
 H-in-imok ni Maria si Juan=ng suri-in ng bago=ng doktor.
 persuade-OV GEN Maria NOM Juan=COMP examine-OV GEN new=LNK doctor
Maria persuaded Juan to be examined by the new doctor.

A second construction which allows the ang-phrase to be the Equi target arises when the embedded verb is marked for non-volitional (or aptative) mood (referred to by Dell (1983), following Schachter and Otones (1972), as “ability/involuntary action” (AIA) verbs). In this case the controllee MUST be the ang-phrase of the complement clause, rather than the Actor.

- (19) (from De Guzman, 1988, p 338)
 Iniwasan ni Pedro=ng [ma-huli ng pulis __nom].
 PERF-avoid-DV GEN Pedro=COMP NONVOL-catch-OV GEN police
Pedro avoided being caught by the policeman.

Thus not all Equi targets are Actors. But given the fact that in most languages the Equi target must be a grammatical subject, we need to explain why the preferred Equi target in Tagalog is the Actor. I suggest that the reason Actors CAN be Equi targets in Tagalog is a consequence of their syntactic status: they are always terms (non-oblique arguments). While a detailed motivation of this claim is beyond the scope of the present paper, at least one argument in its favor will be mentioned in the following section.

The reason why the Actor is the preferred Equi target in Tagalog follows from a semantic constraint which has been noted by several authors (Farkas, 1988; Fodor, 1974; Dixon, 1979). Essentially, this constraint says that the controllee in an Equi complement must be viewed as bearing responsibility for bringing about the situation described by the

⁷Some participants at the 6ICAL questioned the grammaticality of (18b); I include it here in hopes of eliciting a wider sampling of native-speaker reaction to the example.

complement clause. That is, the controllee must have some measure of “control” over the described event. (This constraint holds primarily for Equi predicates of the “commitment” (e.g. *promise, plan*, etc.) and “influence” (*persuade, command* etc.) types.) The same semantic analysis explains why Actors are always the addressee of an imperative in Tagalog: imperatives presuppose that the addressee has some potential for volitional action which will bring about a particular state of affairs.

In summary, we have seen that neither reflexive binding nor Equi deletion are uniquely properties of Actors, and thus neither can be taken as a simple diagnostic of grammatical subjecthood in Tagalog. Moreover, we have argued that the special status of Actors in these constructions is due to their semantic prominence rather than their grammatical relation. Actors, as the “logical subject” of the clause, bear the most prominent semantic role in the argument structure of the verb. Thus processes which are defined on argument structure will naturally reflect the special status of the Actor.

4. Theoretical/typological challenges

I have argued that on language-internal grounds, there is good reason to analyze the ang-phrase as the grammatical subject of the clause. However, this analysis of Tagalog raises several theoretical and typological problems. First, Tagalog presents a problem for theories which assume that grammatical relations can be defined in terms of surface phrase-structural configurations. Syntacticians working in such theories have made various proposals to account for grammatical relations in non-configurational languages, most recently by assuming that no language is truly non-configurational (Speas, 1990).

Second, the non-demotion of Actors in non-active clauses presents a problem for linking theories which assume that the logical subject must always be demoted before any argument lower on the thematic hierarchy can be selected as subject (e.g. Bresnan and Kanerva (1989); Kiparsky (1987)). This same problem was raised by Schachter (1976) as an argument against Bell’s (1976) passive analysis of Cebuano, since analyzing the Actor as a chomeur predicts that it should have the syntactic properties of an oblique argument or adjunct.

Third, the analysis supported here leads to the claim that the patient is the unmarked choice of subject in Tagalog. Again, this is a problem for most linking theories which assume that subject selection is largely determined by the thematic hierarchy. The “patient-preference” of Tagalog has been one of the motivations for analyses by Gerdtts (1988), Payne (1982), DeGuzman (1988) and others which treat Philippine languages as being morphologically ergative. These analyses assume that the Actor is the grammatical subject, and that ang marks the “absolute” argument, i.e. the subject of an intransitive clause or the object of a transitive clause.

Aside from the arguments given above against treating the Actor as the grammatical subject, it is not easy to decide on empirical grounds between my analysis (treating the ang-phrase as the grammatical subject) and the ergative analysis (treating the ang-phrase as the absolute argument). But the two analyses do make different predictions about the status of the patient in active (i.e., Actor-Focus) clauses. The ergative analysis treats Actor-Focus as

an anti-passive construction, which demotes the patient to a chomeur relation. But I know of no clear evidence for calling the patient a chomeur. On the contrary, to the extent that one can construct tests for termhood (as distinct from subjecthood) in Tagalog, these patients seem to be terms.

I will mention only one test here. Schachter and Otones (1972) describe a construction which they call “Emphatic Inversion”. This construction is distinguished from other fronting processes (e.g. “Contrastive Inversion”) in at least two ways: first, by the placement of clitic pronouns (underlined in example (20)) immediately following the fronted element; and second, because no intonation break is possible between the fronted element and the body of the clause. Some examples are given below. These examples show that Emphatic Inversion can apply to adverbs (20a), PP’s (20b) and oblique NP’s (20c) but never to subjects (21a) or Actors (21b).

(20) (from Schachter and Otones (1972, p. 497-498)

a. Bukas siya aalis.
tomorrow 3.SG AF-leave
It’s tomorrow that he’s leaving.

b. [Para kay Pedro] ko binili ang laruan.
for DAT Pedro I(GEN) PERF-buy-OV NOM toy
For Pedro I bought the toy.

c. [Sa akin] nila ibinigay ang premyo.
DAT me they(GEN) IV-PERF-give NOM prize
To me they gave the prize.

(21) a. *Si Pedro ko binigyan ng laruan.
NOM Pedro I(GEN) PERF-give-DV GEN toy
(For: *Pedro I gave this toy to.*)

b. *Ni Pedro ako binigyan ng pera.
GEN Pedro I(NOM) PERF-give-DV GEN money
(For: *By Pedro I was given (the) money.*)

I suggest that the correct generalizaion is that Emphatic Inversion can apply only to non-terms. If this is correct, then the construction provides us with a test for termhood vs. obliqueness, and the following examples show that the patient in an Actor-Focus clause is a term, rather than an oblique or chomeur:

(22) a. *Ng balot siya kumain.
GEN duck.embryo 3.SG.NOM AV.PERF-eat
(For: *(The) balot he ate.*)

- b. *Ng isda siya hindi makakakain.
 GEN fish 3.SG.NOM not AV.INVOL.FUT-eat
 (For: *Fish he cannot eat.*)

If the generalization proposed above is the correct one, these facts provide the strongest kind of evidence against the ergative analysis.

ABBREVIATIONS USED:

AV	active voice	NOM	nominative case
BV	benefactive voice	NONVOL	non-volitive mood
COMP	complementizer	OV	objective voice
DAT	dative case	PERF	perfective aspect
DV	dative/locative voice	PL	plural
EXCL	exclusive	SG	singular
FUT	future (“contemplated”) aspect	STAT	stative
GEN	genitive case	1	first person
IMPERF	imperfective aspect	2	second person
INCL	inclusive	3	third person
INV	inversion marker	x-y	morpheme boundary
IV	instrumental voice	x=y	clitic boundary
LNK	linker	x.y	word boundary

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