# *Proceedings of the Eighteenth Meeting of the Austronesian Formal Linguistics Association (AFLA)*

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## AFLA XVIII
## The Eighteenth Meeting of the Austronesian Formal Linguistics Association

Harvard University
March 4-6, 2011

# DIFFERENTIAL OBJECT MARKING IN TAGALOG

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# Table of Contents

PREFACE

The 18th annual meeting of the Austronesian Formal Linguistics Association (AFLA 18) was held March 4-6, 2011, at Harvard University. A total of 30 presentations representing the work of 43 researchers were given, including three plenary talks by Robert Blust, Marc Brunelle, and Manfred Krifka. In addition to work on the syntax of Austronesian languages, the original focus of AFLA, researchers presented analyses of phenomena from a variety of core linguistics subfields including phonetics, phonology, and semantics, as well as their interfaces. In order to personalize the meeting and highlight the strong historical component of Harvard's Department of Linguistics, we also encouraged the presentation of work dealing with diachronic analyses of language phenomena. The culmination of these efforts appears here in these Conference Proceedings, which include twelve papers presented during the conference.

Throughout this process we have received generous support from a variety of sources within the Harvard Community. Financial support came from the Office of the Dean of the Faculty of Arts of Sciences, the Office of the Provost, Linguistics Circle: A Workshop of Linguistic Interfaces, the GSAS Research Workshop in Indo-European and Historical Linguistics, the GSAS Research Workshop in Language Universals and Linguistic Fieldwork, and the Harvard GSAS Graduate Student Council. Student participants in the volunteer effort include Michael Erlewine, Ruthe Foushee, Laura Grestenberger, Christopher Hopper, Julie Li Jiang, Caitlin Keenan, Louis Liu, Andreea Nicolae, Hazel Pearson, and Cheng-Yu Edwin Tsai. We also gratefully acknowledge the encouragement, endorsement, and assistance of the Harvard Department of Linguistics.

Finally, we would like to thank our reviewers for providing thoughtful commentary on abstracts submitted to the conference: Edith Aldridge, Michael Becker, Loren A. Billings, Marc Brunelle, Sandra Chung, Abby Cohn, Peter Cole, Jessica Coon, Amy Rose Deal, Marcel den Dikken, Mark Donohue, Dan Finer, Edward Flemming, Catherine Fortin, Randall Hendrick, Gabriella Hermon, Arthur Holmer, Hui-chuan Huang, Jay Jasanoff, Peter Jenks, Edward Keenan, Hilda Koopman, Paul Law, Jonathan MacDonald, Diane Massam, Ileana Paul, Hazel Pearson, Matt Pearson, Maria Polinsky, Eric Potsdam, Omer Preminger, Nina Radkevich, Norvin Richards, Joseph Sabbagh, Peter Sells, Lisa Travis, Wei-Tien Dylan Tsai and Elizabeth Zeitoun. Thank you also to the University of Western Ontario for hosting the website where AFLA proceedings are published.

To the groups and individuals who made this conference possible, and to the many researchers who made the event as enriching and stimulating as it was, we offer our sincerest thanks.

Lauren Eby Clemens, Gregory Scontras and Maria Polinsky, Harvard University

# DIFFERENTIAL OBJECT MARKING IN TAGALOG[*]

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In this paper I deal with the mechanisms of differential object marking (DOM) in Tagalog. Certain properties of object arguments have been shown to bring about a split in morphosyntactic coding in more than 300 languages (Bossong 1991). The two most frequent triggers for differential object marking are animacy and specificity of the object argument. As Tagalog has been characterized as an active language, one may suspect that animacy plays a more important role for DOM in Tagalog than specificity, all the more as it is known that specificity is one of the triggers for voice choice, and consequently for syntactic pivot (subject) selection. Specificity-driven differential object marking in this language would necessarily interact and conflict with subject choice. The data in the present paper will show that this is indeed the case. Thus, the principles governing DOM reveal a lot about the nature of Tagalog case marking in general. While it is fairly well known that there are contexts in which *ng* may be replaced by *sa*, it is less well known that we also find cases where *ng* may appear instead of *sa*. In this paper I systemize the data and take a closer look at the contexts in which both alternations are possible in order to determine the licensing conditions for DOM. I argue that economy constraints conflicting with expressivity constraints can account for the patterns and can be captured via OT-constraints.

## 1. Introduction

It has been observed that many case-marking languages tend to mark the object of a transitive verb with a special marker: whether it is animate or specific/definite (Bossong 1985, Aissen 2003, DeSwart 2007). In Tagalog, we find that objects that are at the top of the hierarchy of referentiality and denote animate beings, such as pronouns and personal names, receive a case marker that is different from that of common nouns. While common noun objects are marked by the marker *ng* in Actor voice (AV) sentences, as shown in (1a), personal pronouns (1b) are marked by *sa*. For personal names, we find a third marker *kay* (1c).[2] Note that proper names of inanimate entities are treated like common nouns when it comes to case marking, as shown in (2).

(1) a. <u>Siya</u>    ang    naka-kita               **ng**    aksidente.[3]
       3s.NOM    NMZ    POT.AV:maka.REAL-visible    GEN    accident
       'He is the one who saw a/the accident.'

[2] If not mentioned otherwise, all data are taken from my own set of data provided by my Tagalog consultants.
[3] Abbreviations: AV: Actor voice; DAT: dative; GEN: genitive; IPVF : imperfective; NOM: nominative; NONACT: non-Actor NMZ: nominalization; LK: linker; REAL: realis; PL: plural; POT: potential.

b. <u>Siya</u>      ang    naka-kita                    **sa**      akin.
    3s.NOM    NMZ    POT.AV:maka.REAL-visible    DAT    1s.NONACT
    'He is the one who saw me.'

c. <u>Siya</u>      ang    naka-kita                    **kay**    Jose.
    3s.NOM    NMZ    POT.AV:maka.REAL-visible    DAT    Jose
    'He is the one who saw Jose.'

(2)    <u>Siya</u>      ang    na-nood                  **ng**     Extra Challenge.
        3s.NOM    NMZ    POT.AV:ma.REAL-watch    GEN    Extra Challenge
        'He is the one who watched (the TV show) Extra Challenge.' (Saclot 2006: 10; modified)

The marker *ng* in contrast to *sa* is often called the unmarked case marker (cf. McFarland 1978, Foley & Van Valin 1984, Himmelmann 1991), as it may not only mark object arguments in Actor voice sentences, but also the Actor argument in Undergoer voice sentences[4] (as well as possessors and other phrases).

    While in (1a), the reading of the *ng*-marked object phrase is ambiguous between specific and non-specific, a speaker of Tagalog can make the specificity/definiteness of the object explicit by choosing *sa* instead of *ng*, as shown in (3). This is one of the reasons why *sa* is sometimes called a specificity marker (e.g. Himmelmann 2005).

(3)    <u>Siya</u>      ang    naka-kita                    **sa**      aksidente.
        3s.NOM    NMZ    POT.AV:maka.REAL-visible    DAT    accident
        'He is the one who saw the accident.'

Interestingly, marking the proper name in (2) by *sa* in order to stress the definiteness of the object argument is not well accepted by my consultants, as illustrated in (4). This shows that characterizing the dative marker *sa* as a specificity/definiteness marker is not sufficient to account for its distribution. We will come back to *ng/sa* alternations and proper names of inanimate entities further below (in section 2).

(4)    <u>Siya</u>      ang    na-nood                         ??**sa**    Extra Challenge.
        3s.NOM    NMZ    POT.AV:ma.REAL-watch    DAT    Extra Challenge
        'He is the one who watched Extra Challenge.'

The data in (1) could lead to the assumption that animacy, or a combination of animacy and specificity, triggers the appearance of the marker *sa*. This is not the case, as exemplified in (5).

(5)    <u>Siya</u>      ang    naka-kita                    **ng**     kaniya-ng        anak.
        3s.NOM    NMZ    POT.AV:maka.REAL-visible    GEN    3s.NONACT-LK    child
        '(S)he is the one who saw her(his) child.'

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[4] Example:  (i)  Ang aksidente    ang  nakita                   **ng**  babae.
                 NOM accident    NMZ POT.UV:ma.REAL-visible  GEN woman
                 'It was the accident that the woman saw.'

As mentioned before, *ng*-marked arguments are compatible with a specific reading (especially in cleft-constructions as given in (1)-(5)), so the explicit marking by *sa* is not obligatory. Furthermore, in the particular case of the object in (5), the specificity of the Undergoer argument is morphosyntactically overt due to a possessive pronoun that refers back to the subject, and *sa*-marking is clearly disfavored, as shown in (6).

(6) <u>Siya</u>      ang    naka-kita              **ng/\*sa**     kaniya-ng        asawa.
     3s.NOM    NMZ    POT.AV:maka.REAL-visible    GEN/DAT    3s.NONACT-LK    spouse
     'S(h)e is the one who saw her(his) spouse.'

These data, in addition to the above finding that *sa*-marking of proper names of inanimate entities is also disfavored, show that neither animacy by itself, nor specificity by itself, nor a combination of both can explain the Tagalog case distribution. A summary of the patterns found in the cleft sentences (1)–(6) is given in Table A below.

Table A: Dative marking of objects (cleft sentences)

| TYPE OF OBJECT | PROPERTIES | DATIVE MARKING | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | obligatory | optional | dispreferred |
| personal name/pronoun | [+animate]  [+specific] | ✓ | | |
| common noun | [+ specific] [+/-animate] | | ✓ | |
| common noun in possessive | [+/-animate] [+specific] | | | ✓ |
| proper name | [-animate]  [+specific] | | | ✓ |

Decisive for obligatory DOM in the sentences in (1) is obviously the prominent position of pronouns and proper names on the hierarchy of referentiality (cf. Silverstein 1976, Van Valin & LaPolla 1997, Aissen 1999 a. o.) given in (7). However, the availability or non-availability of optional differential object marking cannot be explained based on the rest of this hierarchy.

(7) Definiteness Hierarchy:
Pronoun > Proper Noun > Definite NP > Indefinite Specific NP > Indefinite Non-specific NP

The examples so far show that specificity of common nouns does not *trigger*, but merely *licenses* possible marking with *sa* in certain cases.

       What seems to be an optional, peripheral phenomenon is intriguing and of interest for the overall system of case marking in Tagalog, because specificity has been shown to play a role in voice choice and subject selection (Schachter 1976, Adams & Manaster-Ramer 1988, Machlachlan 1996, Rackowsky 2002, Aldridge 2004): According to Naylor (1975) specific Patient arguments outrank specific Actor arguments for subject. A proto-typical example is given in (8a) where Actor voice is only accepted by a number of speakers if the Patient argument is clearly non-specific.[5] If the Patient is specific, the only option is Undergoer voice, as seen in (8b).

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[5] In the literature on cross-linguistic differential object marking (e.g. DeSwart 2007), the cut-off point for this kind of marking has been shown to differ across languages. Speakers of Tagalog show different cut-off points (see section 2). I focus on the judgments of the majority of my consultants.

(8) a. S<um>ira       siya       $^{(?)}$**ng** / ***sa** bahay / ***ng** kaniya-ng       bahay.
      s$_{stem}$<AV>destroy 3s.NOM       GEN/DAT house/GEN 3s.NONACT-LK    house
      '(S)he destroyed a/*the/ *her(his) house.'

      s$_{stem}$<UV>$_{[REAL]}$destroy 3s.GEN NOM house/NOM 3s.NONACT-LK house
      '(S)he destroyed the house/ her(his) house.'

With certain verbs, Actor voice is not possible at all regardless of the referential properties of the Undergoer argument, as exemplified in (9a). For these verbs, Undergoer voice is strongly preferred in basic sentences (i.e. non-cleft sentences), as shown in (9b).

(9) a. G<um>ulat       siya       ***ng** / ***sa** bata / ***ng** kaniya-ng       bata.
      g$_{stem}$<AV>$_{[REAL]}$surprise    3s.NOM       GEN/DAT child/GEN 3s.NONACT-LK child
      Intended: '(S)he surprised /*the/ *her(his) child.'
   b. G<in>ulat       niya       **ang** bata.
      g$_{stem}$<UV>$_{[REAL]}$surprise    3s.GEN     NOM child
      '(S)he surprised the child.'

Therefore specific Undergoer arguments in Actor voice sentences are an intriguing finding. If we do find them, the syntactic construction is often a marked one, like the cleft-constructions in (1)–(6) that put special contrastive emphasis on the Actor-subject. Cleft-constructions seem to license DOM rather freely. However, it is not true that cleft-sentences are the only constructions in which we find DOM in Tagalog. The sentences in (10)–(11) show two instances of DOM in basic sentences, while sentence (12) shows an interesting case of a genitive/dative alternation with a proper name in object position without meaning difference.

(10)    T<um>u-klaw       ang       ahas    **ng**/ **sa**       ibon.
      t$_{stem}$<AV>peck       NOM     snake GEN/DAT bird
      'The snake attacked a/the bird.' (cf. Saclot 2006)

(11)    Nag-da-dala       siya       **ng**/ **sa**       libro.
      AV.REAL-IPFV-carry 3s.NOM    GEN/DAT book
      'He is carrying a/the book.' (cf. Bowen 1965: 221, modified)

(12)     D<um>ating       siya       **ng**$^6$/ **sa**       Saudi Arabia.
      d$_{stem}$<AV>arrive    3s.NOM       GEN/DAT    Saudi Arabia
      'He arrived in Saudi Arabia.'

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[6] The sentence is a shortened version of a sentence found at CRI online Filipino, 2010-10-21, *Mga Muslim, dumating ng Saudi Arabia para sa paglalakbay*:
(ii)       D-um-ating    **ng**    **Saudi Arabia**    ang       mgamuslim   para l<um>ahok
      AV.REALIS-arrive GEN    S.A.       NOM     PL    muslim   for l$_{stem}$<AV>$_{[REAL]}$participate
      sa       paglalakbay sa     banal    na    Mekka.
      DAT     pilgrimage DAT    sacred    LK    Mekka
      'The muslims arrived in Saudi Arabia in order to participate in the pilgrimage to sacred Mekka.'

The sentence in (12) differs from the sentence in (4) in that 'to arrive' (*dumating*) in contrast to 'to watch' (*manood*) is a dative-object verb (according to Tagalog dictionaries). However, as we see, genitive marking of the location object is also found. We will see more examples of this in section 2. Based on these data we can summarize three observations:

(i)   The verb class has a bearing on the availability of optional DOM.
(ii)  The relative (information-structural) prominence of the Actor and the Undergoer argument has a bearing on the availability of DOM.
(iii) Dative obligatorily marks Undergoers expressed by pronouns and personal names of animate entities and optionally marks highly referential common nouns and proper names of inanimate entities, if certain licensing conditions are met.

These observations obviously raise a number of questions, with respect to Tagalog but also on a more general level: How can we characterize the verbs which allow for specific/definite Undergoers in Actor voice sentences? Linked to this is the question as to what are general licensing conditions of the genitive-dative alternation in Tagalog? Differential object marking is often explained with reference to functional principles in terms of economy and expressivity (Aissen 2003, DeSwart 2007 etc.), so on a less languauge-specific level, we also have to ask the question how Tagalog fits in with other DOM languages and if DOM marking can be explained along the same lines as DOM-marking in other languages.

In order to determine the licensing conditions and DOM constraints, it is necessary to give an overview of the function of the marker *sa*, the verb classes that allow *ng/sa*-alternations, prominence relations between arguments, and the role of animacy and specificity in all of these processes. This will be done in the following two sections.

## 2.   The Marker *sa* and Constraints on *ng/sa*-Alternations

As has been pointed out repeatedly, e.g. by Ramos (1974) and Himmelmann (1991) among others, *sa* marks locative adjuncts with activity and process verbs, as shown in (13a, b), as well as Goal and Source arguments of motion verbs expressing an inherent direction, as shown in (13c–f). The marker *sa* is never found with Actors; it is confined to Non-Actor arguments.

(13)   ***sa*-marking on spatial adjuncts and directional object arguments**
  a.   Nag-luto              ako          ng        isda     **sa**     **kusina.**
        AV.REAL:mag-cook      1s.NOM       GEN       fish     DAT       kitchen
        'I cooked fish in the kitchen.'
  b.   B<um>asa              siya         ng        libro    **sa**     **kusina**.
        b$_{stem}$<AV>$_{[REAL]}$read       3s.NOM       GEN       book     DAT       kitchen
        'He read a book in the kitchen.'
  c.   D<um>ating            siya         **sa**       **akin-g**               **bahay.**
        d$_{stem}$<AV>$_{[REAL]}$arrive    3s.NOM       DAT       1PL.NONACT-LK          house
        'He arrived at my house.'
  d.   P<um>asok             ako          **sa**       **bahay.**
        p$_{stem}$<AV>$_{[REAL]}$enter     1s.NOM       DAT       house
        'I entered the house.'

e.  L&lt;um&gt;abas                ako         **sa**      **bahay.**
   l<sub>stem</sub>&lt;AV&gt;<sub>[REAL]</sub>leave    1s.NOM      DAT      house
   'I left the house.'
   f.  T&lt;um&gt;awid               ako         **sa**      **kalye.**
   t<sub>stem</sub>&lt;AV&gt;<sub>[REAL]</sub>cross    1s.NOM      DAT      street
    'I crossed the street.'

Likewise, the complement of social interaction verbs that require animate Undergoers is marked by *sa* (e.g. /*tulong*/ 'to help', /*bati*/ 'to greet', /*salubong*/ 'to meet', /*usap*/ 'to converse with', /*laban*/ 'to fight with', etc.), as illustrated in (14a–d). Obviously these Undergoers could also be analyzed as Goals in the sense of 'argument toward which the action is directed.'

(14)    ***sa*-marking verbs with animate Undergoers**
   a.  T&lt;um&gt;ulong              ako         **sa**      **bata.**
      t<sub>stem</sub>&lt;AV&gt;<sub>[REAL]</sub>help    1s.NOM      DAT      child
      'I helped the child.'
   b.  B&lt;um&gt;ati               siya        **sa**      **bata**.
      b<sub>stem</sub>&lt;AV&gt;<sub>[REAL]</sub>greet   3s.NOM      DAT      child
      'He greeted the child.'
   c.  &lt;Um&gt;ahit              ako         **sa**      **lalaki.**
      &lt;AV&gt;<sub>[REAL]</sub>shave   1s.NOM      DAT      man.
      'I shaved the man.'
   d.  S&lt;um&gt;alubong                     siya        **sa**    **mga**   **bata**   sa     paliparan.
      s<sub>stem</sub>&lt;AV&gt;<sub>[REAL]</sub>meet/welcome    3s.NOM      DAT     PL      child    DAT    airport
      'He met/welcomed the children at the airport.'

Just like with pronouns and personal names, dative marking of the object has a non-optional status. Animacy-induced differential object marking is found in many languages and is often described as a means to help the hearer process a sentence (cf. Comrie 1979, deSwart 2007). The basic idea is that if both arguments of a transitive verb are animate, then overt or special marking of the animate Undergoer argument as the direct object helps the hearers avoid the potential confusion or ambiguity that may arise due to the fact that the patient argument exhibits a salient proto-agent property. The explicit Undergoer case marker provides the hearers with morphosyntactic clues to help them map the respective argument to object instead of subject. Psycholinguistic studies (cf. Nieuwland and van Berkum 2006, van Nice & Dietrich 2003, Branigan et al. 2007) render this explanation plausible as animacy of an object can be shown to directly interfere with the comprehension process, a reformulation in terms of an ambiguity avoidance constraint that ensures that 'hearer economy' is possible (cf. DeSwart 2007). As mentioned before, in contrast to the marker *ng*, which may also mark non-subject Actor arguments, the dative marker *sa* is confined to Non-Actor arguments only and is therefore an ideal case marker for role disambiguation, i.e. for making explicit the grammatical role of object.

It is easy to understand why animacy should be considered a property of a prototypical Actor-subject, as animate beings usually exhibit all of Dowty's (1991) proto-agent properties like volition, sentience, as well as the ability to control, cause events and move autonomously. But

can definiteness also be viewed as a prototypical Actor property, i.e. can specificity-induced DOM, as illustrated in (3) in contrast to (1a), and here repeated in (15), also be handled in terms of role ambiguity avoidance?

(15) a. <u>Siya</u>     ang    naka-kita          **ng**    aksidente.
     3s.NOM   NMZ   POT.AV:maka.REAL-visible   GEN   accident
     'He is the one who saw a/the accident.'
   b. <u>Siya</u>     ang    naka-kita          **sa**    aksidente.
     3s.NOM   NMZ   POT.AV:maka.REAL-visible   DAT   accident
     'He is the one who saw the accident.'

Comrie 1989, Aissen 2003, and Primus (in press) among others have stressed the empirical observation from discourse studies that Actors tend to be topical and therefore higher on the referential hierarchy, while Undergoers tend to be non-topical and therefore lower on the referential hierarchy. The basic idea would then be that, just like animacy. specificity/definiteness is an unexpected property of Undergoers, and that role-wise unexpected semantic properties blur the role distinction of the arguments, which is important for processing. For this reason special morphological marking would be required to help the hearer distinguish the arguments. However, to my knowledge there are no studies that show that the specificity or definiteness of objects affects the comprehension process in the same way as animacy does. Thus, there is reason to believe that specificity/definiteness does not have the same status as animacy, all the more as the latter is an inherent property of a noun, while the first is a contextual feature, as also pointed out by deSwart (2007).

    The following set of data support the claim that animacy and specificity/definiteness do not have the same status. We do not find *ng/sa*-alternation with the (necessarily) animate object of social interaction verbs.[7] There is no way to distinguish between specific and non-specific object arguments via case marker alternation with these verbs. This proves deSwart's (2007) point that ambiguity considerations with respect to animacy are strong and may block the possibility for DOM in terms of specificity/definiteness. However, as already mentioned in section 1, *ng*-marking is possible and not rare with achievement verbs of directed motion, as shown in (16).

(16)    ***ng*-marked Goal arguments** (cf. English 1977/1986)

    a.  P<um>asok      ako    **ng bahay.**
        pstem<AV>[REAL]enter  1s.NOM DAT house
        'I entered a/(the) house.'

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[7] In line with the fact that speakers seem to differ with respect to where their cut-off point for DOM is, some speakers also seem to accept *ng*-marking with the social interaction verb /*bati*/ ('to greet'), which seems to be the exception to the rule that social interaction verbs have to assign dative case:
(iii)    B<um>ati      siya    ng    bata.
        bstem<AV>[REAL]greet  3s.NOM GEN    child
        'He greeted a/(the) child.'
It has to be pointed out, however, that the *ng*-argument of /*bati*/ is more often the uttered greeting itself than the Goal argument, as in *Bumati si Lola <u>ng "Hola"</u>* ('Lola said "Hola" (as a greeting)') or in *Bumati si Lola <u>ng magandang araw</u> kay Leni* ('Lola wished Leni a good day').

b.  L<um>abas              ako          **ng  bahay.**
    lstem<AV>[REAL]leave   1s.NOM       DAT house
    'I left a/(the) house.'

c.  T<um>awid              ako          **ng  kalye.**
    tstem<AV>[REAL]cross   1s.NOM       DAT street
    'I crossed a/(the) street.'

The translations show that speakers tend to interpret *ng*-marking in the sentences in (16) as signaling a lower degree of referentiality than those in (13). However, specificity distinctions do not seem to be at the forefront of speaker's considerations when choosing *ng*. Rather, in addition to the constraint above ensuring hearer economy, I propose a constraint that ensures speaker economy. Thus, while we have to assume a weak expressiveness constraint like '*Express Undergoer Role/[+spec]*' (= Mark the role of the Undergoer argument morphosyntactically, if it is definite/specific*) for alternations like (15), the data in (16) suggest that the underspecified linker *ng* is favored, if there is no risk of role ambiguity. Thus it is fair to assume the existence of a constraint '*Avoid Marked Linkers*' that must be ranked lower than the constraint '*Avoid Role Ambiguity*', but on par with the constraint '*Express Undergoer Role/[+spec]*', as the alternation *ng/sa* is optional with objects expressed by simple specific common nouns.

The following set of data supports this idea. Seemingly in contrast to the finding that *sa* may be chosen to overtly signal the definiteness of an Undergoer argument and that it is said to be the preferred object marker per se with the verb class of directed motion verbs, but in line with the observations already discussed in the introduction, the examples in (17) show that *ng*–and not *sa*–is regularly used to mark definite arguments expressed by proper names like *Saudi Arabia* in (17a) or *Malolos Crossing* in (17b), a well-known high-level overpass that crosses over a highway intersection approximately 45 kilometers from Manila. A first example of a *ng*-marked proper name was provided in (2), here repeated as (17c). Rather than being the exception, *ng*-marked proper names are not uncommon for pure activity verbs as well, as (17d) shows.

(17)    ***ng*-marked Goal arguments expressed by proper nouns**
   a.  D-um-ating                    **ng**       **Saudi Arabia**  ang      mga       muslim
       dstem<AV>[REAL] -arrive       GEN          S.A.              NOM      PL        muslim
       para l<um>ahok                    sa           paglalakbay       sa       banal     na Mekka.
       for lstem <AV>[REAL]participate   DAT          pilgrimage        DAT      sacred    LK Mekka
       'The Muslims arrived in Saudi Arabia.'in order to participate in the pilgrimage to sacred
       Mekka.'(CRI online Filipino, 2010-10-21, *Mga Muslim, dumating ng Saudi Arabia para sa  paglalakbay*)
   b.  D<um>ating                 kami           **ng**    **Malolos    Crossing**.
       dstem <AV>[REAL]arrive      1PL.NOM        GEN       Malolos      Crossing
       'We arrived at Malolos Crossing.' (http://www.tsinatown.com/2010/06/see-you-in-paradise.html)
   c.  Na-nood          si       Alex   **ng**    **Extra    Challenge**.
       MA.REAL-watch    NOM      Alex   GEN       Extra      Challenge
       'Alex watched the Extra Challenge.'
   d.  Nag-ba~basa           si      Alex   sa      kanila          **ng**     **Bible**.
       MAG.REAL-IPVF~read    NOM     Alex   DAT     3PL.NONACT      GEN        Bible
       'Alex reads/was reading the Bible to them.'

From a functional perspective, the fact that proper names of inanimate entities are not *sa*-marked[8] could be argued to follow from an interaction of the ambiguity avoidance constraint with the economy constraint that bans (excessive) marking. The reference of proper names is specific/definite per se. No additional marker is needed to signal definiteness. Moreover, proper names of inanimate entities, in contrast to personal names, do not run the risk of causing animacy-driven mapping ambiguities. If we think of differential object marking as a means to provide a processing advantage to the hearer (cf. Aissen 2003 and Primus in press), then it is understandable that, in contrast to common nouns, easily identifiable inanimate arguments expressed by proper names do not require *sa*-marking. As mentioned, McFarland (1978), Foley & Van Valin (1984), and Himmelmann (1991) suggest that *ng* is the unmarked case marker in Tagalog. If this is so, then it is indeed more economical to take this basic marker instead of the marker *sa* in a case where *sa*-marking (i) does not provide any additional information in terms of definiteness and (ii) is not needed to help distinguish the roles of the two arguments.

The question is whether this explanation for proper names of inanimate entities also extends to the cases of common nouns in possessive phrases that receive specific/definite interpretation by means of a possessive pronoun, illustrated in (6) and repeated here in (18).

(18)  <u>Siya</u>      ang      naka-kita                        **ng/\*sa**      kaniya-ng            asawa.
      3s.NOM    NMZ    POT.AV:maka.REAL-visible    GEN/DAT    3s.NONACT-LK    spouse
      'S(h)e is the one who saw her(his) spouse.'

There is an obvious problem here. The *ng*-marking of the animate Undergoer should violate the highest ranked constraint '*Avoid Role Ambiguity*', which requires arguments with the proto-Agent property of animacy to be marked overtly for their non-Actor status, if they are to be mapped to the object/Undergoer position. Still, as we see, *sa*-marking is strongly dispreferred. Obviously, the possessive marking has to count as an alternative means to eliminate role ambiguity. Why should this be so? Primus (in press) suggests that proto-patients (Undergoers) differ from proto-agents (Actors) due to the fact that there is an asymmetric co-dependency relation, which is reflected in a role-semantic and a referential dependency of the proto-patient (Undergoer) on the proto-agent (Actor). She thus coins the notion of a *symmetric co-argument dependenc*y as central for mapping. According to Primus' definition, the prototypical Undergoer (patient) is co-argument-dependent in the sense that "its kind of involvement is dependent on the kind of involvement of another participant, the proto-agent" (ibid. page 9). While this is obvious for the causal affectedness of an Undergoer, which directly results from the causal action of the Actor, Primus states that this is also true with respect to referentiality. She points out that non-specific arguments that tend to be dependent on other arguments for interpretation are not expected to be proto-agents, but proto-patients, and vice versa. Thus, from Primus's point of view, animacy and a definite/specific reference of the Undergoer both lead to a departure from the uniform asymmetric co-argument dependency. As I find it hard to see how the Undergoer's/proto-patient's inherent feature of being animate could depend on the Actor/proto-agent, I believe there is a point in assuming that the reference of Undergoers is tightly linked to

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[8] Obviously, in the case of directed motion verbs, *sa*-marking is available, as illustrated above, due to the spatial uses of the marker *sa* that go well with these verbs.

the reference of Actors (e.g., it has been pointed out by Van Valin & LaPolla (1997) that binding of (possessive) pronouns in Tagalog and other languages is indeed better statable in terms of a dependence of the Undergoer on the Actor rather than in terms of a position in a tree. For the data in (18), it thus seems to make sense to assume a third constraint '*Redundancy*' (= Avoid the marking of (role) information) that is already deducible from overt morphosyntactic markers).

The alternation pattern in this section should thus be accounted for by considering the interaction of all four constraints, here repeated in (19):

(19) **DOM constraints in Tagalog**
Expressivity Constraints
**Mark Undergoer Role/[+spec]'(M UG/[+spec])**: Mark the role of the Undergoer argument morphosyntactically, if it is definite/specific.
**Avoid Role Ambiguity (*Role Ambig.):** Mark the role of the Undergoer argument morphosyntactically, if the Undergoer exhibits the proto-agent properties/logical subject properties [+anim], [+human].
Economy Constraints
**Avoid marked linkers (*Marked Linker)**
**Redundancy**: Avoid the marking of role information that is deducible from overt morphosyntactic markers.

The tableaux in (20)–(23) show the interaction of the constraints based on the assumption that *sa* is classified as the marked case linker for Non-Actors, while *ng* is classified as an unmarked case linker. * marks constraint violations and ! a fatal violation; ✓ marks the lack of violation and "@" the optimal candidate. Constraints that are not ordered hierarchically are separated by a dotted line and do not determine an optimal candidate. Note that in all of these tableaux it is taken for granted that the sentence is in Actor voice. As the specificity/definiteness of the Undergoer has a bearing on whether or not a sentence may appear in Actor voice, and as we have seen in the introduction that not all verbs behave alike, it is clear that we are looking at a simplified scenario. We come back to verb classes, Actor voice selection principles and how they interact with DOM in the next section.

(20) **Undergoer: pronoun (personal name)**

| UG: pronoun [+spec] [+anim] | Redundancy | *Role Ambig. | *Marked Linker | M UG/[+spec] |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| @DAT | ✓ | ✓ | * | ✓ |
| GEN | ✓ | *! | ✓ | * |

(21) **Undergoer: specific common noun (similar to proper name (inanimate))**

| UG: CN [+spec] [-anim] | Redundancy | *Role Ambig. | *Marked Linker | M UG/[+spec] |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| (@)DAT | ✓ | ✓ | * | ✓ |
| (@)GEN | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | * |

(22)    **Undergoer: animate possessive phrase with pronominal possessor**

| UG: CN (PossP) [+spec][+anim] | Redundancy | *Role Ambig. | *Marked Linker | M UG/[+spec] |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| DAT | *! | ✓ | * | ✓ |
| @GEN | ✓ | * | ✓ | * |

This section only dealt with a restricted set of verbs and a set of functionally motivated, conflicting constraints that DOM in Tagalog is sensitive to.

Dalrymple and Nikolaeva (2006) argue that DOM languages can be divided into three types based on the factors that govern the object case alternation.

(23)    **Three types of DOM languages** (Dalrymple & Nikolaeva 2006):
Type 1: Languages where DOM is regulated solely by information structure; correlations with semantic features are only tendencies.
Type 2: Languages where DOM is regulated solely by semantic features; correlations with information structure are only tendencies.
Type 3: Languages where DOM is regulated both by information structure and semantic features.

As the discussion of data in section 1 has shown, DOM is more freely available in information-structurally marked sentences like cleft sentences than in basic VSO sentences, where it is restricted to certain verb classes. In this sense, the availability of DOM is regulated by more than just the semantic features of Undergoer noun phrases; it also depends on verb semantics and on the respective information-structural prominence of arguments. Section 3 takes a look at different verb classes and aspects of meaning that play a key role.

3. *Ng/sa*-Marking, Verb Semantics and Actor Orientation

As above, alternations between *ng* and *sa* are found with verbs of directed motion, as well as activity verbs (e.g. *magbasa* 'to read'). While judgments diverge with respect to the acceptability of Actor voice with perfective forms of pure activity verbs (17c), there is more consensus with respect to sentences like (17d), i.e. sentences with imperfective forms of the activity verb. Data in (24) show that *ng*/*sa*-alternations with common nouns are acceptable if the activity verb is marked for imperfectivity. Note that *ng*-marked Undergoers may receive a plural/generic reading. It is these cases that are meant when the optionality of the plural marker *mga* is mentioned.

(24) a. Ba~basa         ang    bata    **ng/sa**      **libro**.
        IPFV~read       NOM    child   GEN/DAT    book
        'The child will read a/the book.'  (DeGuzman 1999, cited from Katagiri 2005: 164)
    b. B<um>a~basa                  ang    bata    **ng/sa**      **libro**.
        b_stem<AV>_[REAL]IPFV~read    NOM    child   GEN/DAT    book
        'The child is/was reading a/the book.'
    c. Nag-ti~tiis           ang    mga    babae    **ng/sa**      **hirap**.
        MAG.REAL-IPFV~bear    NOM    PL     woman    GEN/DAT    hardship
        'The women bear hardship(s)/the hardship.'

d. Nang-ha~harana      ang    binata    **ng/sa**    **dalaga**.
   MANG.REAL-IPFV~serenade    NOM    young man    GEN/DAT    lady
   'The young man serenades ladies/ the lady.'

e. D<um>a~dalo      ako    **ng/sa**    **meeting**.
   d$_{stem}$<AV>$_{[REAL]}$IPFV~attend    1s.NOM    GEN/DAT    meeting
   'I attend meetings/the meeting.'    (Bowen 1965: 222)

Note that *sa*-marking of the object argument in the corresponding perfective sentences is often considered not acceptable. Recall that definite Undergoers tend to turn into the subject of the sentence in Tagalog, which is one of the reasons why this language has been called a patient primacy language (cf. Cena 1979). As discussed in Latrouite (2011), voice marking and subject choice in Tagalog is prominence marking, and specificity/definiteness is one domain in which an argument may be more prominent than another. However, it is not the only domain in which an argument may exhibit prominence. As the examples in (24) show, Actor voice with definite Undergoers is possible if the Actor can be construed as prominent on a different level; the sentences in (24) facilitate the construal of the Actor as more prominent than the Undergoer with respect to the event. Three reasons can be given why the Actor is perceived as event-structurally prominent in the examples above so that *sa*-marking of the Undergoer is acceptable:

➢ Firstly, the verbs themselves describe activities that characterize the Actor □ and not the Undergoer, i.e. not the result with respect to the Undergoer. The Undergoer does not undergo a change of state and no result is implied with respect to the Undergoer. Therefore, the verbs can be analyzed as inherently Actor-oriented. Note that this argument also holds for the verbs of directed motion above, which denote a change of location of the Actor and imply no change with respect to the Undergoer.

➢ Secondly, the imperfective form of the verb focuses on the repetition, iteration or continuation of the activity initiated and pursued by the Actor and favors Actor-orientation.

➢ Thirdly, in the absence of realis marking as in (24a), the imperfective verb form is understood in the sense that the event has not yet occurred (and will occur in the future). It is not uncommon in conversational Tagalog to use bare verb stems and still have nominative marking on one of the arguments. Himmelmann (1987) has shown that this marking depends on whether the context is understood as a realis or an irrealis context. In irrealis contexts, i.e. in contexts in which the event has not yet manifested itself, the Actor is viewed as prominent and receives nominative marking, while in realis contexts, it is the Undergoer.[9] This is not surprising, as in the former case we focus on the starting point and the phase prior to the

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[9] Examples (Himmelmann 1999):

(iv)    Um-uwi      na      <u>tayo</u>,    Daddy!    **Uwi**      na      <u>tayo</u>!
     AV:um-go_home   already   we.NOM   D !    Go_home   already   1PL.NOM
     'Let <u>us</u> go home, Daddy! Let <u>us</u> go home!'

(v)    **Hampas**    na      <u>kayo</u>,    mga    bata,    sa      mga    langgam!
     beat         already   2PL.NOM   PL    Kind    DAT    PL   ant
     '(<u>You</u>) beat the ants, children!' (Himmelmann 1987:165)

(vi)    **Hawak**   ni    Mary    ang    libro.    (vii) **\*Hawak**    ng    libro    si      Mary
     hold    GEN    M.      NOM    book.       Hold      GEN   book    NOM    M.
     'Mary held/holds <u>the book</u>. '              'Ma<u>ry</u> held/holds a book.'(Schachter 1995: 42-43)

starting point, both of which are more closely related to the Actor than the Undergoer, while in the latter case we focus on the development or end-phase of the event, which is mostly characterized by processes involving a change in the Undergoer and its properties.

Note that for *sa*-marking of the Undergoer to be possible, i.e. for definite Undergoers to be acceptable in Actor voice constructions, we need "counter-weights" that justify the higher degree of prominence of the Actor in these cases, so that the definite Undergoer does not "enforce" Undergoer voice. Inherent Actor-orientation of the verb, imperfectivity and irrealis contexts represent such counter-weights that render the Actor event-structurally more prominent (Latrouite 2010, 2011). From all that has been said so far, it follows that event-structural prominence is a matter of degree and the result of a rather complex evaluation process. Therefore speakers feel very certain of the acceptability of *sa*-marked Undergoers in basic sentences whenever the event-related prominence of the Actor is very high with respect to all of the three domains discussed above, but they tend to be less certain if this is not the case.

Given that Actor-orientation and Actor prominence play a role in whether or not a specific Undergoer may be marked by *sa* instead of *ang*, it is not surprising that speakers of Tagalog accept *sa*-marking of Undergoers more freely in focused Actor constructions than in basic sentences, as was shown in (1). This is to be expected, since (as argued in Latrouite 2010, 2011) prominence in terms of focus ranks higher than event-structural prominence, while event-structural prominence ranks higher than referential prominence (information-structural prominence > event-structural prominence > referential prominence). The principles for Actor voice selection are given in (25).

(25)    Principles for Actor voice selection in Tagalog
     **Actor voice** is chosen:
(i)  obligatorily, if the Actor is [+focal];
(ii) preferably, if the Actor is strongly event-structurally prominent (verb-inherently & with respect to mood/aspect);
(iii) possibly, if the Actor is event-structurally prominent or more specific than the Undergoer.
     In all other cases **Undergoer voice** is chosen.

The most essential point here is that Actor-orientation is a precondition for *ng*-marked Undergoer verbs to be able to take *sa*-marking in special contexts. Note that inherent verb orientation is what distinguishes grammatical from ungrammatical cases of DOM in the introductory part. Result-oriented verbs like 'destroy' and 'surprise' do not denote a specific activity and are therefore Undergoer-oriented; they (almost) always occur with Undergoer voice. In the case of the latter verb which selects for an animate Undergoer, this requirement is so strong that even the lack of specificity of the Undergoer does not license Actor voice. Note that an emotion verb like *tumakot* ('to frighten') is also strongly Undergoer-oriented, as *takot* ('fear') denotes the (resulting) property of the animate Undergoer, not of the Actor. Therefore, Undergoer voice is strongly preferred with this verb, as can be seen in (26a) versus (26b). Actor voice is only found if the Actor is event-structurally prominent or information-structurally prominent (i.e. in focus), as shown in (26c) and (26d).

(26) a. **\*T\<um\>**akot     <u>siya</u>     kay     Jose.
　　　t<sub>stem</sub> \<AV\>[REAL]fear     3s.NOM     DAT     Jose
　　　Intended: 'He frightened Jose.' (cf. Schachter & Otanes 1972: 152)
　　b. T\<in\>akot     niya     <u>si Jose</u>.
　　　d<sub>stem</sub> \<REAL\>[UV]fear     3s.GEN     NOM Jose
　　　'He frightened Jose.'
　　c. **T\<um\>**a~takot     ng     mga     negosyante     <u>ang rallies</u>.
　　　t<sub>stem</sub> \<AV\>[REAL]IPFV~fear     GEN     PL     entrepreneur     NOM rallies
　　　'The rallies frighten (the) entrepreneurs.'
　　　(simplified from Pilipino Star Ngayon, December 12, 2000, *Mag-rally or tumahimik*)
　　d. Siya     ang     t**\<um\>**akot     kay     Jose.
　　　3s.NOM     NMZ     t<sub>stem</sub> \<AV\>[REAL]fear     DAT     Jose
　　　'He is the one who frightened Jose.'

Similarly, the perception verb *makakita* ('to see') falls in the category of Undergoer-oriented verbs, given that the stem *kita* means 'visible' and thus denotes a property of the Undergoer, not of the Actor. The example in (27) shows that this verb behaves like a typical Undergoer-oriented verb in that it does not allow for Actor voice in basic sentences if the Undergoer is specific. Hence, we do not find *ng/sa*-alternations in basic sentences with this verb, but only in focus sentences, as shown in (1).

(27) a. **\*Naka**-kita     <u>ako</u>     sa     aksidente.
　　　POT.AV:maka.REAL-visible     1s.NOM     DAT     accident
　　　Intended: 'I saw the accident.'
　　b. **Naka**-kita     <u>ako</u>     ng     aksidente.
　　　POT.AV:maka.REAL- visible     1s.NOM     GEN     accident
　　　'I saw an accident.'
　　c. **Na**-kita     niya     <u>ang aksidente</u>.
　　　POT.UV:ma.REAL-visible     3s.GEN     NOM accident
　　　'He saw the accident.' (cf. Schachter & Otanes 1972: 383)

Contact verbs like 'to peck', 'to hit' or emotion verbs like 'to suffer from (a disease)' cannot be said to be more Actor- or more Undergoer-oriented; they seem to be rather neutral and, according to a good number of speakers (even if not all), allow for the *ng/sa*-alternation in basic sentences. As Saclot (2006) points out, speakers who allow for this alternation, as shown in (10) and here repeated in (28a), still hesitate to accept sentences like the one in (28b):

(28) a. T\<um\>u-klaw     ang     ahas     **ng**/ **sa**     ibon.
　　　t<sub>stem</sub>\<AV\>peck     NOM     snake     GEN/DAT     bird
　　　'The snake attacked a/the bird.'
　　b. \*T\<um\>u-klaw     ang     ahas     **ng**/ **sa**     bata.
　　　t<sub>stem</sub>\<AV\>peck     NOM     snake     GEN/DAT     child
　　　Intended: 'The snake attacked a/the child.' (cf. Saclot 2006)

In contrast to the example in (28a), where both arguments are animate but non-human, the sentence in (28b) exhibits a human Undergoer and non-human Actor, which according to my consultants leads to the judgement that the sentence is awkward, as the human argument should be more prominent than the non-human argument and, thus, should turn into the subject. These fine-grained differences that are often seen as mirroring differences with respect to the hierarchy of animacy (given a human-centered view) only play a role with this small group of verbs.

Finally, we had two classes of Actor-oriented verbs that were discussed more closely in section 2: the first class denoting real activities, the second class denoting results with respect to the Actor (i.e. the change of position of the Actor). Both classes were shown to allow for *ng/sa* alternations in basic sentences in accordance with a number of constraints.

## 4. Conclusion

It was shown in this paper that DOM in Tagalog is constrained by a number of factors–first and foremost by the principles of voice selection. For DOM to be possible, the Actor has to be the most prominent argument in the sentence in order to become the subject of the sentence. The prominence of an argument was argued to be evaluated on three ordered levels: the level of information structure in terms of focus > the level of event structure > the level of referentiality. Once the preconditions for Actor voice choice are fulfilled and the Actor is information-structurally or event-structurally prominent, considerations with respect to the semantic properties of the Undergoer argument in terms of animacy and specificity come into play. Here it was shown that functional considerations constrain the possible patterns and explain why certain contexts did not trigger DOM although the Undergoer was animate or specific. There seem to be different cut-off points for DOM within the Tagalog community. However, a survey of these language-internal differences must be left to future research.

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