

Shifting Perspectives: Case Marking Restrictions and the Syntax-Semantics-Pragmatics Interface¹

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1 Introduction

This paper deals with case marking restrictions and case marking gaps in Tagalog, one of the languages on which the development of Role and Reference Grammar was based. The language received attention due to its peculiarity to split subject properties between two arguments, the Actor argument and the argument marked by the particle *ang* (Schachter 1976), therefore showing a clear necessity to draw a distinction between role-related and reference-related syntactic properties, according to Foley & Van Valin (1984). Furthermore the language was noted to make a general distinction between core and non-core arguments, the former marked by the particle *ng* in Tagalog, the latter by *sa*, if they are not explicitly selected as privileged syntactic argument (PSA) and marked by *ang*. Foley and Van Valin (1984) and others have suggested that *ang* was formerly a pragmatic marker signalling the topic, which later on got grammaticalized. Up to this day many Philippinists prefer the term ‘topic’ to PSA for the *ang*-marked argument. The pragmatic origin of the marker *ang* is often evoked to explain why the PSA in Tagalog can be chosen from a much larger array of thematic roles than in

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Indo-European languages (cf. (1a–c)), and why there are referential restrictions on the PSA, i. e. the PSA usually gets a definite or at least specific interpretation, as exemplified in (1b) in contrast to (1a). (Note in the examples given that simple realis verb forms in Tagalog are understood as denoting realized events that are not ongoing at the reference time, here the time of speech, usually resulting in a simple past tense translation.)

- (1) a. *K<um>ha ako ng isda.*²
 K_{stem}<AV>[RLS]take 3SNOM GEN fish
 ‘I took (a) fish.’
- b. *K<in>uha ko ang isda.*
 K_{stem}<RLS>[UV]take 1SGEN NOM fish
 ‘I took the fish.’
- c. *K<in>uh-an ko ng konti ang kaniya-ng letse plan.*
 K_{stem}<RLS>[UV]take-LV 1SGEN GEN bit NOM his-LK leche flan
 ‘I took a little bit away from his leche flan.’

The debate regarding the so-called *Definite Topic Constraint*, which nowadays is rather thought of as a *Specificity Restriction* on the *ang*-marked phrase (cf. Adams & Manaster-Ramer 1988), has been around in various variations and elaborations since Blancas de San José (1610). Two related, but logically independent claims associated with the *Specificity Restriction* are that an indefinite/non-specific theme argument of a two-place predicate can never be *ang*-marked, while definite/specific theme arguments have to be *ang*-marked. Proponents of this idea base their explanation for voice and PSA selection on it. As there can be only one *ang*-marked argument in a basic Tagalog sentence and as the thematic role of this argument is identified on the verb via a corresponding voice affix, the claim is that the respective referential properties of the theme argument ultimately determine voice selection, or put in other words, the semantics of the theme NP is said to determine the morphosyntactic expression of the verb and the marking of the PSA with *ang*. Note that the reverse claim that theme arguments which are not

² Glosses: AV: Actor voice; ACC: accusative; BV: beneficiary voice; GEN: genitive; DAT: dative; DEM: demonstrative; IPFV: imperfective; msc: masculin; LV: locative voice; NMZ: nominalizer; NOM: nominative; P: plural; PAST: past tense; RLS: realis; S: singular; UV: Undergoer voice. Infixes are marked by < > and separate the initial consonant of the stem (C_{stem}) from the rest of the verb stem. Glosses in subscript and square brackets indicate that a feature is not morphologically marked but implicit to the form.

marked by *ang*, but by *ng*, have to be non-specific cannot be upheld and has been shown to be too strong (cf. Himmelmann 1991, Latrouite 2011 among others).

In this paper I draw attention to a subset of the data that pose a challenge to the *Specificity Restriction*: differential object marking (DOM) and so-called case marking exceptions, i. e. Actor voice sentences in which the referential properties of the theme argument would seem to call for Undergoer³ voice to arise, but surprisingly do not. Based on these two phenomena it will be argued that the restrictions we find show that it is not primarily the referential properties of the theme argument that determine voice choice. Case marking exceptions can only be explained if event semantics and information structure are taken into account.

The language-specific issues introduced in sections 2 and 4 of this paper have a bearing on the more theoretic question regarding the relationship between morphosyntax and semantics, namely the question whether it is the semantics that drives morphosyntax or the morphosyntax that determines the semantics? As will be laid out in section 3, with respect to Tagalog, both kinds of approaches to the semantics-morphosyntax interplay have been offered, so there is still no consensus as to whether the semantics determines morphosyntax or the morphosyntax determines the semantics with respect to the phenomenon at hand. RRG promotes the idea that linking takes place from the syntax to the semantics (hearer perspective) and vice versa from the semantics to the syntax (speaker perspective), doing justice to the fact that a form may be attributed more than one meaning by a hearer and that a meaning may be conveyed via more than one form or even be left unexpressed by a speaker, only to be derived via certain lines of reasoning on the part of the hearer. Sense disambiguation strategies depending on context as well as implicature calculation obviously fall into the realm of pragmatics, so that this domain also plays a crucial role in such an approach to language. Within RRG the theoretic question asked above would have to be reformulated as ‘How do the semantics and the morphosyntax influence each other, and what is the role of pragmatic considerations within this interplay?’

In the last section of the paper, I argue that it is precisely the interaction of the three domains (morphosyntax, semantics, pragmatics) which helps to get a grasp of the Tagalog data, the exceptions and the resulting interpretation of sentences (for the latter see also Latrouite 2014). In line with Latrouite (2011), I suggest

³ Among Austronesianists it has become common to use the notion ‘Undergoer’ in the sense of ‘Non-Actor’, so the notion is used in a slightly different sense than in RRG.

that a close look needs to be taken at the different levels at which semantics plays a role: the level of referentiality, the level of event structure and the level of information structure respectively. My main claim is that PSA-selection is a choice based on prominence considerations and that the levels mentioned above are ordered. In short, voice- and PSA-selection is then the result of a number of comparative prominence calculations at different levels which are ranked. It is obvious that the semantic properties which would lead one to judge an argument as comparatively more prominent than another based on the referential properties are not the same as the properties that may lead one to consider an argument as the most prominent one at the level of event structure or the level of information structure. In this sense, the degree of referentiality of an argument is just one out of many criteria that are important for argument linking decisions, and may eventually be ignored if an argument is more prominent on a different level, explaining the case marking and differential object marking patterns that we find.

2 The Specificity Restriction

Bloomfield (1917) is regularly quoted for the observation that in Tagalog Actor voice sentences the logical object (Undergoer) tends to be lacking or ‘undetermined’. In Objective/Undergoer voice sentences, however, it is said to be definite (Naylor 1975), specific (Bell 1979, Adams & Manaster-Ramer 1988, Machlachlan 2000, Rackowski 2002, Aldridge 2004b) or individuated (Nolasco 2005, Saclot 2006), as shown in sentence (2b) in contrast to (2a). If the theme argument in an Actor voice sentence is expressed by a demonstrative pronoun, a partitive reading is usually given in the translation, as exemplified in (2c). The partitive reading of the demonstrative pronoun is often taken to be further evidence that definite/specific theme arguments in Actor voice sentences are dispreferred, if not banned.

- (2) a. *K<um>ain ako ng isda.*
 $K_{\text{stem}} <AV>_{[RLS]} \text{eat } 3\text{SNOM GEN fish}$
 ‘I ate (a) fish.’
- b. *K<in>ain ko ang isda.*
 $K_{\text{stem}} <RLS>_{[UV]} \text{eat } 1\text{SGEN NOM fish}$
 ‘I ate the fish.’

- c. *K<um>ain niyan ang bata.*
 $K_{\text{stem}} <AV>_{[\text{RLS}]}$ eat DEM.GEN NOM child
 ‘The child ate (some of) that.’

The observation with respect to the theme argument in Actor voice sentences seems to be true regardless of the semantics of the verb, i. e. a transfer verb like /*bili*/ ‘to buy’ in (3) shows the same interpretational pattern as the incremental theme verb /*kain*/ ‘to eat’ in (2).

- (3) a. *B<um>ili siya ng libro.*
 $B_{\text{stem}} <AV>_{[\text{RLS}]}$ buy 3SNOM GEN book
 ‘She bought a/some book.’
 b. *B<in>ili niya ang libro.*
 $B_{\text{stem}} <RLS>_{[\text{UV}]}$ buy 3SGEN NOM book
 ‘(S)he bought the book.’
 c. *B<um>ili niyan ang bata.*
 $B_{\text{stem}} <AV>_{[\text{RLS}]}$ buy DEM.GEN NOM child
 ‘The child bought (some of) that.’

The question as to what exactly is meant by definiteness or specificity is often answered in rather vague terms in the Austronesian literature. The strongest definition of definiteness would certainly be that the referent of the argument in question is existentially presupposed and uniquely identifiable by both the speaker and the hearer, e. g. via previous mention or due to context and common background. Given that Tagalog happily marks arguments introducing new participants into a story with *ang*, it is more common for Austronesianists to recur to the weaker notion of specificity, e. g. as put forward by Heim (1991) and others. Heim (1991) views specific arguments as those carrying the presupposition of existence (in a given world), without having to have unique reference. This may help to understand the difference between the sentences in (2a) and (2b). Note, however, that based on this definition in terms of presupposed existence, it is difficult to motivate or explain the coerced partitive reading of the Undergoer demonstrative pronoun. If one presupposes the existence of an entity, then one also presupposes the existence of the parts of this entity. In order to explain the coercion, one may have to add Nolasco’s (2005) notion of individuation to the definition of specificity. The specific Undergoer in Undergoer voice

sentences would then be said to be presupposed and individuated, while it would be less individuated in Actor voice sentences. Stating that the Undergoer argument has to be non-individuated in an Actor voice sentence would be too strong. It would suggest that *Bumili siya ng libro* in (3a) should best be translated as ‘she book-bought’, indicating that the book cannot be taken up again. However, this claim is too strong; the *ng*-marked participant can easily be taken up in further discourse.

- (4) *B<um>ili siya ng libro at b<in>asa niya.*
 $B_{\text{stem}<AV>[\text{RLS}]}$ buy 3SNOM GEN book and $b_{\text{stem}<RLS>[\text{UV}]}$ read 3SGEN
 ‘She bought a book and read it.’

There are examples in which demonstrative pronouns do not necessarily receive a partitive reading when expressing a theme argument in Actor voice sentences. Note, however, that in these cases the antecedent very often refers to an abstract concept or a mass concept, i. e. a less individuated concept, as in (5).

- (5) a. *Love? Li-limita-han ka lang niyan.*
 Love? IPFV-limit-LV 2SNOM only DEM.GEN
 ‘Love? You will just limit it/this!’
 (<https://tl-ph.facebook.com/BFLBTPYMNK/posts/318315468216409>)
- b. “*K<um>ain ka tapos inum-in mo ito.*
 $K_{\text{stem}<AV>[\text{RLS}]}$ eat 2SNOM later drink-UV 2SGEN DEM.NOM
Buti nag-dala ako niyan.“
 Good AV.RLS- carry 1SNOM DEM.GEN
 (*Sabi ni Mommy sabay lagay ng gamot sa tabi ko.*)
 ‘Eat and afterwards drink this. Good thing I brought it/that.’ (Said Mommy placing (the) medicine beside me.)
 (<http://www.wattpad.com/23018761-marriage-deeply-in-love-with-my-best-friend-chapter#.UjHPHRzwOQY>)

More corpus work on the distribution and interpretation of demonstrative pronouns is certainly desirable and necessary, but the current data clearly point to the fact that theme arguments in Actor voice sentences are preferably understood as less specific, i. e. either as not presupposed or, if presupposed, as less individ-

uated. In other words, theme arguments in basic Actor voice sentences tend to be referentially less prominent.

The question that arises in the face of the examples above is: do the referential properties of the theme argument enforce the choice of Undergoer/Actor voice affixes or is it the voice form of the verb that determines and delimits the interpretation of the theme argument as (+/-specific). In short, is it the semantics that determines morphosyntax or the morphology that determines the semantics?

Note that there are clear and well-known exceptions to the pattern in (2) and (3). In Actor voice cleft sentences, the *ng*-marked Undergoer argument may be understood as either non-specific or specific/definite, as shown in (6a). According to my consultants, the Undergoer may even be explicitly marked as specific/definite by the dative marker *sa*, as shown in (6b). Consequently, it is hard to claim that the case marker *ng* or the voice marking fully determine the resulting reading of the theme argument.

- (6) a. *Sino ang k<um>ain ng isda?*
 who.NOM NMZ $k_{\text{stem}} <AV>_{[\text{RLS}]}$ eat GEN fish
 'Who ate a/the fish?'
 b. *Siya ang k<um>ain sa isda.*
 3SNOM NMZ $k_{\text{stem}} <AV>_{[\text{RLS}]}$ eat DAT fish
 'She was the one who ate the fish.'

Another set of data that seems to prove the same point comes from Aldrige (2003), who rightly observes that *ng*-marked themes in subordinate sentences may be interpreted as specific. Section 4 provides more examples of Actor voice forms in basic main clauses with specific and even definite theme arguments marked by *ng*. All of the examples just mentioned are viewed as exceptions to the overall pattern, and they all point to the fact that the case form and the voice affix – at least in the case of the Actor voice form – do not by themselves enforce a certain reading of the Undergoer argument. The questions are then: (i) what is the nature of the exceptions we find and how can they be accounted for?, as well as (ii) what is their implication for an analysis of the Tagalog linking system, and more generally for the initially raised question as to the relationship between semantics and morphosyntax?

3 Previous approaches

Rackowski (2002) develops an account in which semantics drives morphosyntax. She views specificity of the theme argument as the driving force for the morphosyntactic patterns in Tagalog. The main idea is that the feature (+specific) triggers object shift. The first step is for *v* to agree with the specific object. As *v* is said to carry an EPP (or occurrence) feature (to ensure the right semantic interpretation of the object as specific), the object has to move to the edge of *vP* to check this feature. Once *T* merges with *vP* and the object argument is the closest DP to agree with, the corresponding voice affix on the verb is triggered, i. e. Undergoer voice.

Rackowski's explanation of exceptions like (6) is as follows: In cleft sentences, that is in *A'*-extraction contexts, *T* carries one more operator in addition to the case feature and both have to be checked by the same DP. If the object argument were to shift due to its specificity, it would prevent *T* from checking its operator feature with the operator in the external argument position. Therefore it is blocked from moving and may stay in place despite its specific interpretation. However, this explanation cannot be extended to specific non-subject Undergoers in sentences without *A'*-extraction of the Actor argument, as in (7). Note that a non-specific or partitive reading is not available nor appropriate in the given example.

- (7) *Mag-alis ka ng (iyon-g) sapatos bago p<um>asok ng bahay.*
 AV-leave 2SNOM GEN (2S-LK) shoe before p_{stem}<AV>[RLS]enter GEN house
 'Take off (your) the shoes before you enter the house.'
 (<http://www.seasite.niu.edu/Tagalog/.../diction.htm>)

Therefore Rackowski suggests that specific readings may also arise belatedly, e. g. through context-induced 'bridging' in the sense of Asher & Lascarides (1998), thereby introducing a second type of specificity, which renders her analysis that the specificity of the object drives morphosyntax a little less compelling and attractive.

Aldridge (2005) takes the opposite approach. In her theory morphology drives syntax, and syntax drives semantic interpretation (SS-LF Mapping). Hence, specificity or the lack thereof is a by-product of the syntactic position an element appears in and results from its LF-mapping. With respect to Tagalog, this means

that in a first ‘morphology drives syntax’-step the voice affix determines whether a DP raises out of VP or not. Transitive verbal morphology (i. e. the Undergoer voice affix) checks absolutive case and has an EPP feature drawing the object to its outer specifier where it receives absolutive case. Intransitive *v* (i. e. a verb marked by Actor voice) has no EPP feature, so that the ‘direct object’ in an antipassive (Actor voice sentence) does not raise out of VP. Based on Diesing (1992), Aldridge assumes for Tagalog that absolutive (*ang*-marked) DPs receive a presuppositional – and thus a specific – interpretation, because they are located outside the VP and mapped to the restrictive clause at LF. Oblique (*ng*-marked Undergoer) DPs, on the other hand, receive a nonspecific interpretation because they remain within VP and undergo existential closure. Note that a very strict version of Diesing’s approach would mean that definites, demonstratives, proper names, specific indefinites, partitives and pronouns, i. e. all NPs that are presuppositional, should be located outside of VP. The next section will show that these inherently presuppositional NPs stay in situ depending on the semantics of the verb.

Within this framework, Aldridge’s analyses the clefted phrase (*sino, siya*) in (6) as the predicate and the remaining headless relative clause as the subject. The subject is said to raise out of VP and map to the matrix restricted clause at LF; the *ng*-marked Undergoer argument as part of the restricted clause, i. e. as part of the presupposition, may therefore receive a presupposed interpretation at LF. This idea is also inspired by Diesing (1992). ‘A DP which remains inside VP prior to spell-out can still undergo QR (Quantifier Raising) at LF and escape existential closure, if it is specific or quantificational. Therefore a specific interpretation should still be possible for an oblique DP in Actor voice’ (ibid., p.8). However, this should only be possible if the *ng*-marked Undergoer argument is embedded in the subject phrase which receives the presuppositional interpretation. Based on the examples in (8), Aldridge claims that this is the case: while in (8a) the Undergoer ‘rat’ in the relative clause receives a specific (even definite) reading, because it specifies the subject and is thus part of the restricted clause (i. e. of the presupposition), it may not be interpreted as specific in (8b), in which the relative clause does not modify the subject and is thus not part of the restricted clause and the presupposition. While this is an interesting example, the judgments are not confirmed by my consultants who find a non-specific reading equally plausible for (8b).

- (8) a. *B<in>ili ko ang pusa-ng k<um>ain*
 B_{stem}<RLS>_[UV]buy 1SGEN NOM cat-LK k_{st}<AV>eat
ng daga sa akin-g bahay.
 GEN rat DAT 1S-LK house
 ‘I bought a cat which ate the rat in my house.’
- b. *B<um>ili ako ng pusa-ng k<um>ain*
 B_{stem}<AV>_[RLS]buy 1SNOM GEN cat-LK k_{st}<AV>eat
ng daga sa akin-g bahay.
 GEN rat DAT 1S-LK house
 ‘I bought a cat which ate a/*the rat in my house.’

(judgments according to Aldridge 2005)

Intuitions and judgments may differ with respect to complex sentences. However, there are also well-known and clear cases of Undergoers in Actor voice sentences that are explicitly marked as specific or presupposed due to their proper semantics without being part of the restricted clause. A first example was shown in (7).

Sabbagh (2012) takes exceptions like these into account and builds on Rackowski (2002). He suggests that in addition to the outermost specifier of vP, there is another intermediate derived object position located above VP, but below vP to which non-pronoun/non-proper name specific themes may move. Objects expressed by pronouns and proper names are said to move to the higher location. His syntactic trees thereby mirror the often-evoked definiteness hierarchy of DPs. Just like Rackowski’s and Aldridge’s account, Sabbagh’s account is purely syntactic. None of them deal with semantic differences beyond the domain of degrees of referentiality. In the next section I give an overview of the types of exceptions to the rule of thumb that AV-forms take non-specific Undergoer arguments and UV-forms specific Undergoer arguments, showing that while referentiality of Undergoer arguments plays a role in the way arguments are case-marked in Tagalog, event structural considerations may overrule referentiality considerations.

4 Exceptions to the Specificity Restriction

In (7) we saw a first example of specific Undergoer in an Actor voice sentence, i. e. an Undergoer modified by a possessive pronoun referring back to the Actor.

The sentences in (9a-c) show similar examples of specific, possessed Undergoer arguments.

- (9) a. *K<um>a-kain sila ng kanila-ng sandwich.*
 $k_{\text{stem}} <AV>_{[\text{RLS}]}$ IPFV~eat 3PNOM GEN 3P-LK sandwich
 ‘They are eating their sandwich/ their sandwiches.’
 (http://www.rosettastone.co.jp/.../RSV3_CC_Filipino)
- b. *Nag-dala siya ng kaniya-ng band.*
 $AV.RLS$ -bring 3SNOM GEN 3S-LK band
 ‘He brought his band.’ (Bloomfield 1918)
- c. *Agad-agad ako-ng t<um>akbo sa banyo at nag-hugas ng akin-g mukha.*
 At once 1S-LK $t_{\text{stem}} <AV>_{[\text{RLS}]}$ run DAT bath and $AV.RLS$ -wash GEN 1S-LK
 face
 ‘At once I ran to the bathroom and washed my face.’
<http://flightlessbird.blogdrive.com/comments?id=1>

As pointed out in Latrouite (2011) similar sentences are a lot less acceptable with verbs like *tumakot* ‘to frighten’, *pumatay* ‘to kill’ or *sumira* ‘to destroy’, as exemplified in (10) and marked by #.

- (10) a. #*P<um>a~patay siya ng kaniya-ng anak.*
 $P_{\text{stem}} <AV>_{[\text{RLS}]}$ IPFV~kill 3SNOM GEN 3S-LK child
 ‘He is killing his child.’
- b. #*T<um>akot siya ng/sa kaniya-ng band.*
 $T_{\text{stem}} <AV>_{[\text{RLS}]}$ fear 3SNOM GEN/DAT 3S-LK band
 ‘He frightened his band.’
- c. #*S<um>ira ako ng akin-g banyo.*
 $S_{\text{stem}} <AV>_{[\text{RLS}]}$ hash 1SNOM GEN 1S-LK bath
 ‘I destroyed my bathroom.’

Latrouite (2011) argues that the verbs in (10) clearly denote Undergoer-oriented actions. The verbstems themselves do not give information on the specific activity on part of the Actor, but only on the result with respect to the Undergoer, here patient arguments. Comparing the verbs in (9) and (10), we can see that the former in (9) denote specific manners of action in contrast to the latter, so that

one can conclude that on the level of event semantics the Actor is more prominent than the Undergoer for the events expressed in (9), while it is the other way around in (10). With verbs that denote clearly Undergoer-oriented events, AV-forms with specific theme arguments seem to be limited to sentences in which the Actor is more prominent than the Undergoer on the level of information-structure, as shown in (11). The Actor in (11a) appears in the pragmatically and syntactically marked sentence-initial position in front of the topic marker *ay*, while the Actor in (11b), parallel to the example given in (11b), appears sentence-initially in the contrastive focus position.

- (11) a. *Kung ang Diyos ng mga Kristiyano ay p<um>a~patay*
 If NOM god GEN PL christian TOP p_{stem} <AV>[RLS]IPFV~kill
ng kanya-ng
 GEN 3S-LK
 'If the God of the Christians kills his
mga kaaway bakit hindi ang mga tagasunod niya.
 PL enemies why NEG NOM PL follower 3SGEN
 enemies, why not his followers.'
<http://www.topix.com/forum/world/philippines/T8G3JRRR4NPDIV3UU>
- b. *Siya ang t<um>akot sa kaniya-ng band.*
 3S.NOM NMZ t_{stem} <AV>[RLS]fear DAT 3S-LK band.
 'He is the one who frightened his band.'

The conclusion for these data seems to be that specific Undergoers in Actor voice sentences are only acceptable if the Actor can be considered more prominent than the Undergoer on some other level than that of referentiality, i. e. either on the level of event or on the level of information structure.

It is not surprising therefore that verbs that allow for differential object marking are all of the activity-denoting type and do not characterize a property of or a result brought about with respect to the Undergoer.

(12) Verbs allowing for *ng/sa*-alternation

- a. *Ba~basa ang bata ng/sa libro.*
 AV.IPFV~read NOM child GEN/DAT book
 'The child will read a/the book.'

(DeGuzman 1999, cited from Katagiri 2005: 164)

- b. *Nag-ti~tiis ang mga babae ng/sa hirap.*
 AV.RLS-IPFV~bear NOM PL woman GEN/DAT hardship
 ‘The women bear hardship(s)/the hardship.’
 (cf. English 1986: 1014 simplified)
- c. *Nang-ha~harana ang binata ng/sa dalaga.*
 AV.RLS-IPFV~serenade NOM young man GEN/DAT lady
 ‘The young man serenades ladies/ the lady.’ (Bloomfield 1917)
- d. *D<um>a~dalo ako ng/sa meeting.*
 $d_{\text{stem}} <AV>_{[\text{RLS}]}$ IPFV~attend 1SNOM GEN/DAT meeting
 ‘I attend meetings/the meeting.’ (Bowen 1965: 222)
- e. *Nag-da~dala siya ng/sa libro.*
 AV.RLS-IPFV~carry 3SNOM GEN/DAT book
 ‘He is carrying a/the book.’ (cf. Bowen 1965: 221, modified)
- f. *T<um>uklaw ang ahas ng/sa ibon.*
 $t_{\text{stem}} <AV>$ peck NOM snake GEN/DAT bird
 ‘The snake attacked a/the bird.’ (cf. Saclot 2006)

The data seem to show a case of classic differential object marking (DOM) (cf. Dalrymple & Nikolaeva 2006), regulated by the semantic feature of specificity/definiteness. If *sa*-marking in these cases is motivated by a specificity contrast between *ng* and *sa*, with *sa* being explicitly associated with the information (+specific), the following data come as a surprise. Here we are faced with arguments expressed by clearly definite proper names that are neither marked by *sa* nor turned into the PSA, as might be expected.

(13) **Proper Names (of inanimate objects), possible with NG instead of SA**

- a. *Na-nood si Alex ng Extra Challenge.*
 MA.RLS-watch NOM Alex GEN Extra Challenge
 ‘Alex watched the Extra Challenge.’ (Saclot 2006: 10)
- b. *Hindi naman puwede-ng p<um>unta ng Maynila*
 NEG really can-LK $p_{\text{stem}} <AV>_{[\text{RLS}]}$ go GEN Manila
ang kapatid ni Tita Merly.
 NOM sibling GEN TM
 ‘Tita Merly’s sibling really could not go to Manila.’
 (Aagawin Kita Muli 1998: 10, modified)

- c. *D<um>ating* **ng Saudi Arabia ang mga muslim**
 d_{stem}<AV>[RLS] arrive GEN S.A. NOM PL muslim
 ‘The muslims arrived in Saudi Arabia
para l<um>ahok *sa paglalakbay sa banal na Mekka.*
 for l_{stem}<AV>[RLS]participate DAT pilgrimage DAT sacred LK Mekka
 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*)
- d. *D<um>ating* *kami* **ng Malolos Crossing.**
 d_{stem}<AV>[RLS]arrive 1PL.NOM GEN Malolos Crossing
 ‘We arrived at Malolos Crossing.’
 (<http://www.tsinatown.com/2010/06/see-you-in-paradise.html>)
- e. *Nag-ba~basa* *ako* *sa kanila* **ng Bibliya.**
 MAG.REAL-IPFV~read 1SNOM DAT 3PL.NONACT GEN Bible
 ‘I was reading the Bible to them.’

The examples so far show that the specificity of nouns does not trigger, but merely licenses possible marking with *sa* in certain cases. Note that all of the goal arguments in (13b)–(13d) would be good with *sa*-marking as well. This does not hold for the non-goal arguments in (13a) and (13e). The sentences in (14) show some further restrictions we find with respect to *ng/sa* alternation in basic sentences.⁴ (14a)–(14b’) exemplify that some verbs like perception verbs select exclusively for genitive marked Undergoer arguments, therefore even a clearly definite proper name Undergoer argument has to be marked by genitive in an Actor voice sentence. (14c) and (14c’), on the other hand, show that personal names and pronouns require dative marking, even if the verb otherwise selects for genitive case. For personal names and personal pronouns dative marking is the only option in Undergoer position, it is obligatory.

(14) Restrictions on *ng/sa*-alternation

- a. *Siya ang na-nood* **ng Extra Challenge.**
 3SNOM NMZ POT.AV.RLS-watch GEN Extra Challenge
 ‘He is the one who watched (the TV show) Extra Challenge.’
 (Saclot 2006: 10; modified)

⁴ Some consultants allow for *ng/sa*-alternations more freely in cleft sentences than in basic sentences.

- a. *Siya ang na-nood ??sa Extra Challenge.*
 3SNOM NMZ POT.AV.RLS-watch DAT Extra Challenge
 ‘He is the one who watched (the TV show) Extra Challenge.’
- b. *Siya ang naka-kita ng kaniya-ng anak.*
 3SNOM NMZ POT.AV.RLS-visible GEN 3s.NONACT-LK child
 ‘(S)he is the one who saw her(his) child.’
- b. *Siya ang naka-kita *sa kaniya-ng asawa.*
 3SNOM NMZ POT.AV.RLS-visible DAT 3s.NONACT-LK spouse
 ‘S(h)e is the one who saw her(his) spouse.’
- c. *Siya ang naka-kita *ng/sa akin.*
 3SNOM NMZ POT.AV.RLS-visible GEN/DAT 1s.NONACT
 ‘He is the one who saw me.’
- c. *Siya ang naka-kita *ni/kay Lena.*
 3SNOM NMZ POT.AV.RLS-visible GEN/DAT L
 ‘He is the one who saw Lena.’

Table 1 gives a summary of our finding: dative obligatorily marks Undergoers expressed by personal 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.

TYPE OF OBJECT	PROPERTIES	DATIVE MARKING		
		Obligatory	Optional	Dispreferred
Pronoun/personal name	[+animate] [+specific]	✓		
Common noun	[+ specific] [+/-animate]		✓	
common noun in possessive phrase	[+/-animate] [+specific]			✓
proper name	[-animate] [+specific]			✓

Table 1: Summary of dative marking of objects (cleft sentences)

Based on these observations, the questions (i) what are the licensing conditions for alternations?, and more specifically, (ii) why is *sa* marking dispreferred with NPs denoting possessed objects, if specificity is at the core of DOM in Tagalog?, and (iii) why is the marker *ng* licensed with Goal arguments realized as proper names? can be addressed. The latter phenomenon is especially intriguing as the marker *sa* should be the default marker for two reasons, the specificity of the

argument and the fact that goals are usually marked with *sa*. The next section develops answers to these questions.

5 Explaining the pattern

Before we can turn to the exceptions that require explanation a word on the case markers and their distribution is in line, e. g. as described in Foley & Van Valin (1984) and Kroeger (1993). The marker *ang*, called nominative case here, can mark Actor and Undergoer and is not an unmarked case in the sense that the argument marked by it necessarily gets a presuppositional reading. The genitive marker *ng* may also mark Actors and Undergoers, as well as possessors, instruments etc. Due to its wide distribution it is often viewed as the unmarked marker. Out of the three markers, only the dative marker *sa* is exclusively restricted to non-Actor arguments. I take voice marking to serve the function of selecting the perspectival center based on prominence (cf. Himmelmann 1987). Borschev & Partee (2003) put forward the idea of the PERSPECTIVAL CENTER PRESUPPOSITION, namely ‘Any Perspectival Center must normally be presupposed to exist.’ This can be used to explain why the PSA, as the perspectival center, is always understood as specific.

With respect to dative marking we need to distinguish obligatory from non-obligatory dative marking. Among the obligatory dative marking cases there is once again a distinction to be drawn between verb-based and property-based assignments, i. e. cases in which dative is required by the verb (cf. 15 a-b, 16 b) as object case, and those where it is required by the nature of the NP, e. g. if the theme argument is expressed by a personal name or pronoun (cf. 14 c-c’), or if the NP has the status of a locative adjunct (cf. 16 a).

(15) Obligatory *sa*-marking verbs requiring animate Undergoers

- a. *T<um>ulong ako *ng/sa bata.*
 $t_{\text{stem}} <AV>_{[\text{RLS}]}$ help 1SNOM GEN/DAT child
 ‘I helped a/the child.’
- b. *B<um>ati siya *ng/sa bata.*
 $b_{\text{stem}} <AV>_{[\text{RLS}]}$ greet 3SNOM GEN/DAT child
 ‘He greeted a/the child.’
- c. *Um-ahit ako *ng/sa lalaki.*
 $AV_{[\text{RLS}]}$ shave 1SNOM GEN/DAT man.
 ‘I shaved the man.’

(16) **Obligatory *sa*-marking on locative adjuncts and indirect object arguments of ditransitive verbs**

a. *Nag-luto ako ng isda sa kusina.*

AV.RLS-COOK 1SNOM GEN fish DAT kitchen

'I cooked fish in the kitchen.'

b. *I-b<in>igay niya ang libro *ng/sa bata.*

UV-b_{stem}<RLS>[UV]give 3SGEN NOM book GEN/DAT child

'He gave the book to a/the child.'

The cases of non-obligatory dative marking (cf. 12–13), on the other hand, can be divided into default and not-default cases. The former comprise goal arguments of directed motion verbs, which – as we have seen – may happily be coded by *ng* instead of *sa* for reasons that need to be given. The latter comprise theme arguments of manner of action verbs that may be coded by *sa* rather than *ng* as well as all verbs with theme arguments coded by possessive pronouns. For the latter group *sa*-marking is clearly rejected by native speakers. As we can see DOM is restricted to the goal argument of directed motion verbs and the specific theme argument of manner of action verbs, abbreviated and designated as Undergoers (UG) in the graph below.

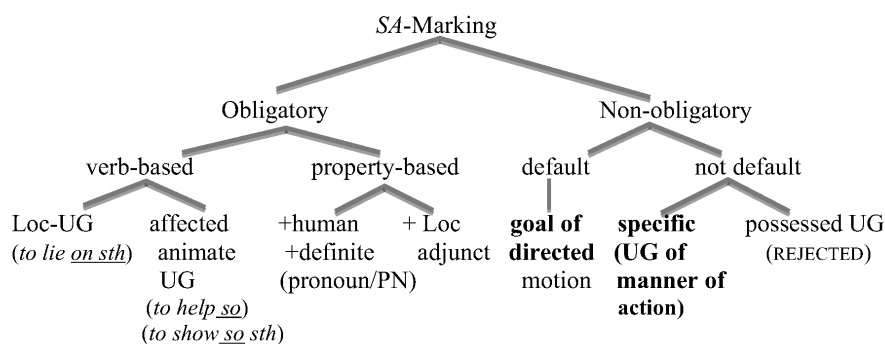


Figure 1

Given this rather complex situation, how can we model the distribution of *ng* vs. *sa*? One possibility is via constraints in an OT-like model. The functional explanation of **obligatory *sa*-marking of animate non-PSA Undergoers** parallels the findings in many languages around the world. It is often suggested that the AVOIDANCE OF ROLE AMBIGUITY (cf. Comrie 1979, deSwart 2007) is the reason for a special morphosyntactic treatment of personal pronouns and per-

sonal names. 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, in this sense we are dealing with an expressivity constraint. Recall that *ang*-marking is neutral with respect to thematic roles and that agents and patients/themes are equally good candidates for PSA-choice. One possible objection could be that in Tagalog the thematic role of the *ang*-marked argument is clearly discernable due to the voice affix on the verb. Note, however, that *ang* and *ng* (spoken ‘nang’) sound very similar, that the *ang*-marked phrase tends to come at the end of the sentence and that voice affixes are quite frequently left out in spoken language. Besides a general tendency of the language to give a special status to animacy (cf. Drossard 1984) these factors may have played a role in the development of obligatory differential object marking.

Expressivity Constraint 1

>**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].

As for the functional explanation of **optional *sa*-marking of specific inanimate Undergoers**, Comrie (1989), Aissen (2003), Primus (2011) and others have stressed the empirical observation from discourse studies that Actors tend to be topical and higher on the referential hierarchy, while Undergoers tend to be non-topical and thus lower on the referential hierarchy. They suggest 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. The constraint would then be related, in that the explicit marking of the Undergoer role is required to facilitate processing.

Expressivity Constraints 2

>**Mark Undergoer Role**/[+spec]’(✓UR/[+spec]): Mark the role of the Undergoer argument morphosyntactically, if it is definite/specific.

However, we also have to explain the opposite case, i. e. the case of clearly definite Undergoers: (a) proper nouns marked by *ng* (rare) and (b) possessed NP marked

by *ng* (obligatory). I suggest that the functional explanation **optional proper noun marking with *ng*** could be as follows: from a functional perspective, the fact that proper names of inanimate entities are not *sa*-marked⁵ could be argued to follow from an interaction of the *ambiguity avoidance* constraint with an economy constraint banning (excessive) morphosyntactic marking. The reference of proper names is specific/definite per se, so 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, Primus 2011), then it is understandable that – in contrast to common nouns – easily identifiable inanimate arguments expressed by proper names do not require *sa*-marking.

Last but not least we need a functional explanation for the **unavailability of *sa*-marking for possessive UG-NPs**. Can possessive marking count as an alternative means to eliminate role ambiguity? There is a point in assuming that the reference of Undergoers is tightly linked to 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 positions in a tree. For the data in (14), 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).

Economy Constraints 1 and 2

>Avoid marked linkers (*Marked Linker)

>*Redundancy: Avoid the marking of role information that is deducible from overt morphosyntactic markers.

It is clear that the two constraints that are responsible for obligatory *sa*- and *ng*-marking need to be ranked above the other constraints. The tables in (17) and (18) show how the ranking of the constraints yield the correct results for obligatory case marking.

⁵ 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.

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

UG: personal name [+spec] [+anim]	*Redundancy	*Role Ambig.	*Marked Linker	✓UR/[+spec]
FDAT	✓	✓	*	✓
GEN	✓	*!	✓	*

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

UG: CN (PossP) [+spec][+anim]	*Redundancy	*Role Ambig.	*Marked Linker	✓UG/[+spec]
DAT	*!	✓	*	✓
FGEN	✓	*	✓	*

In order to explain free *ng/sa-* alternations the two constraints AVOID MARKED LINKERS and MARK SPECIFIC UGs need to be on a par, as exemplified in the table in (19).

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

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

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

(20) **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 the previous section has shown, DOM is more freely available in information-structurally marked sentences like contrastive focus or topic sentences than in basic VSO sentences, where it is clearly restricted to certain verb classes. In this sense, the availability of DOM is regulated by more

than just the semantic features of the noun phrases and certain processing considerations in terms economy and expressivity. The availability of DOM also crucially depends on verb semantics and on the respective information-structural prominence of arguments, i. e. on the same aspects that have been identified as important for subject marking in Latrouite (2011). So far we have only hinted at the answer to the question as to why the very prominent theme argument does not turn into the PSA in the cases given above. In the next section we will take a look at how different verb classes and aspects of meaning play a key role in both, DOM and subject marking.

6 Subject marking and DOM in Tagalog:

With certain verbs, Actor voice is not possible at all regardless of the referential properties of the Undergoer argument, as exemplified in (21)–(23a). As we can see these verbs are once again clearly Undergoer-oriented verbs denoting a resultant state of the Undergoer. In basic sentences native speakers insist on Undergoer voice forms as the one in (23b). Actor voice forms seem to be only licensed if the Actor is overtly information-structurally prominent, e. g. in a cleft structure as in (23c).

- (21) a. *S*<um>*ira* *siya* (?)*ng* / **sa* *bahay* / **ng* *kaniya-ng* *bahay*.
 $S_{\text{stem}} <AV>_{[RLS]}$ destroy 3SNOM GEN/DAT house/GEN 3SNONACT-LK house
 ‘(S)he destroyed a/*the/ *her(his) house.’
- b. *S*<in>*ira* *niya* *ang* *bahay* / *ang* *kaniya-ng* *bahay*.
 $S_{\text{stem}} <RLS>_{[UV]}$ destroy 3SGEN NOM house/ NOM 3SNONACT-LK house
 ‘(S)he destroyed the house/ her(his) house.’
- (22) *G*<um>*ulat* *siya* **ng* / **sa* *bata* / **ng* *kaniya-ng* *bata*.
 $G_{\text{stem}} <AV>_{[RLS]}$ surprise 3SNOM GEN/DAT child/GEN 3SNONACT-LK child
 Intended: ‘(S)he surprised /*the/ *her(his) child.’
- (23) a. **T*<um>*akot* *siya* *kay* *Jose*.
 $T_{\text{stem}} <AV>_{[RLS]}$ fear 3SNOM DAT Jose
 Intended: ‘He frightened Jose.’ (cf. Schachter & Otanes 1972: 152)
- b. *T*<in>*akot* *niya* *si* *Jose*.
 $T_{\text{stem}} <RLS>_{[UV]}$ fear 3SGEN NOM Jose
 ‘He frightened Jose.’

- c. *Siya ang t<um>akot kay Jose.*
 3SNOM NMZ t_{stem} <AV>[RLS]fear DAT Jose
 'He is the one who frightened Jose.'

Interestingly, however, it is possible to find sentences like those (24).

- (24) a. *T<um>a~takot ng mga negosyante ang rallies.*
 t_{stem} <AV>[RLS]IPFV~fear GEN PL entrepreneur NOM rallies
 'The rallies are frightening (the) entrepreneurs.'
 (simplified from Pilipino Star Ngayon, December 12, 2000, *Mag-rally or tumahimik*)
- b. *Mag-ta~takot kay Ina ang abortion ng kaniyang baby.*
 AV-IPFV~fear DAT Ina NOM abortion GEN 3S-LK baby
 'The abortion of her baby will frighten Ina.'
 (blog, December 12, 2000, *Mag-rally or tumahimik*)

Some speakers only like the Actor voice form in (24b), some also like the Actor voice form in (24a). Note, however, that the sentences have something crucial in common: the verbs are marked for imperfectivity and thus denote an ongoing event, and secondly we have an unexpected reversal of animacy, the Actor is inanimate and the Undergoer is animate. Furthermore the context of both sentences is such that the text is not about the people but about the events, that is the rallies and the abortion respectively. I have nothing to say about the animacy reversal at this point, which may turn out to be coincidental. However, it is fairly well-known fact that imperfective forms tend to put the spotlight on the Actor. Latrouite (2011) lists more examples of basic sentences with Undergoer-oriented AV-verbs that become more acceptable once the verb is marked for imperfective. Why should this be so? I suggest that this is linked to the very general licensing conditions for Actor voice. There are certain contexts and conditions that license or favor the realization of a verb in Actor voice:

- 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 analysed 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 argument and, therefore, favors Actor-orientation.
- Thirdly, in the absence of realis marking, as in (24), the imperfective verb form is understood in the sense that the event has not yet occurred (but 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.⁶ This is not surprising, as in the former case we focus on the starting point and the phase prior to the 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. 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

⁶ Examples (Himmelmann 1987: 165 ff.)

(iv) *Um-uwi na tayo, Daddy! Uwi na tayo!*
 AV:um-go_home already we.NOM D ! Go_home already 1PL.NOM

‘Let us go home, Daddy! Let us go home!’

(v) *Hampas na kayo, mga bata, sa mga langgam!*
 beat already 2PL.NOM PL Kind DAT PL ant

‘(You) beat the ants, children!’

(vi) *Hawak ni Mary ang libro.*
 hold GEN M NOM book.
 ‘Mary held/holds the book.’

(vii) **Hawak ng libro si Mary*
 Hold GEN book NOM M.
 ‘Mary held/holds a book.’ (Schachter 1995: 42-43)

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 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. This is to be expected, since (as argued in Latrouite 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 if the Actor is 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 could be seen above (23). Actor voice is only found, if the Actor is event-structurally prominent or information-structurally prominent (i. e. in focus).

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 (26) 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.

- (26) a. ***Naka-kita** ako sa aksidente.
 POT.AV.RLS-visible 1SNOM DAT accident
 Intended: ‘I saw the accident.’
- b. **Naka-kita** ako ng aksidente.
 POT.AV.RLS- visible 1SNOM GEN accident
 ‘I saw an accident.’
- c. **Na-kita** niya ang aksidente.
 POT.UV.RLS-visible 3SGEN NOM accident
 ‘He saw the accident.’ (cf. Schachter & Otnes 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 (27a) still hesitate to accept sentences like the one in (27b):

- (27) a. *T<um>u-klaw* *ang ahas ng/sa ibon*.
 $t_{\text{stem}} <AV>_{[RLS]}$ peck NOM snake GEN/DAT bird
 ‘The snake attacked a/the bird.’
- b. **T<um>u-klaw* *ang ahas ng/sa bata*.
 $t_{\text{stem}} <AV>_{[RLS]}$ peck NOM snake GEN/DAT child
 Intended: ‘The snake attacked a/the child.’ (cf. Saclot 2006)

In contrast to the example in (27a), where both arguments are animate but non-human, the sentence in (27b) exhibits a human Undergoer and non-human Actor. According to my consultants, this leads to the judgment 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 an-

imacy (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.

7 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 > the level of event structure > the level of referentiality. Once the preconditions for Actor voice selection 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.

In terms of the initially raised question regarding the relation between morphosyntax and semantics, the data seem to speak in favour of a non-trivial answer. The way the function of the morphosyntactic markers *ng* and *sa* in Tagalog was described here, we cannot simply come up with a lexical entry consisting of one or two semantic features to account for either their distribution or the readings they yield. Moreover, we have got three dimensions of morphosyntactic marking that need to be taken into account: syntactic marking in terms of preposed arguments in focus (or as contrastive topic cf. Latrouite 2011), morphological marking on the verb in terms of voice marking and morphosyntactic marking in terms of the case markers. The choice of a particular information-structurally marked sentence structure opens up a larger choice of voice forms

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than acceptable in basic sentences as well as a larger array of interpretations in terms of referentiality for the theme argument in situ. Without special IS structures, the choice of voice forms in basic sentences is more limited, as verbs fall into three classes, two of which tend to come with a certain default. We can distinguish verbs that predicate primarily over the Actor and tend to be AV, those that predicate primarily over the Undergoer and tend to be UV, and those that are neutral with respect to Actor and Undergoer; in the former and the latter case, high referentiality and/or animacy of the Undergoer may influence voice choice; similarly with Undergoer-oriented verbs special properties of the event marked on the verb via imperfective or irrealis markers may influence a deviation from the default voice choice. In this sense, we end up with a system in which morphosyntactic marking licenses an array of interpretations, while at the same time semantic features constrain morphosyntactic options. As there is no simple one-to-one mapping from form to meaning, it seems indeed advantageous to think of language in the RRG-sense as consisting of different layers of structure, which need to be mapped to one another. Given the importance of information structure and verb meaning for the Tagalog linking system more comprehensive corpus work with respect to both domains is certainly desirable.

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