

TAGALOG AND THE MANILA — MT ISA AXIS

Barry J. Blake

1. INTRODUCTION

If a marking system for nuclear grammatical relations identifies the agent of a transitive verb (A) with the intransitive subject (CS), it is described as accusative. If, on the other hand, it identifies the patient (P) with the intransitive subject, it is described as ergative. In English, as in many languages, case, agreement and word order identify A with S and the whole system is unequivocally accusative. In some languages, like Avar, case and cross-referencing agreement identify P with S and such languages can be typed as ergative. A handful of languages scattered around the globe mark agent versus patient in the cross-referencing system irrespective of transitivity. In these active' (Klimov 1973) or 'split-intransitive' (Dixon 1979) languages, A is identified with some intransitive subjects including the more agent-like ones while P is identified with the balance of the intransitive subjects.

Tagalog and other typologically similar languages of the Philippines are sometimes seen as standing outside this classification. They are said to have a 'focus system' which, in a transitive clause, allows the actor, the patient or one of the non-nuclear relations, such as locative, to be 'focussed'. The mechanics of this type of system are easily explained, but the function of the focus alternations and what it means, in Philippinist terms, to be 'in focus' remains obscure in the literature. At this point I will just describe the mechanics. Something of the function will emerge from the interpretation I present (see the discussion at the end of section 4). In Tagalog the system works as follows. A focussed nominal is marked by the preposition *ang*. This preposition replaces the preposition a nominal would have had if it had not been focussed. For each focus there is an affix on the verb to register which case relation has been focussed. The prepositions are as follows:

<i>ng</i>	Actor
<i>ng</i>	Patient
<i>sa</i>	Locative
<i>para sa</i>	Benefactive
<i>ang</i>	Focus

The following three sentences all translate '(The) professor bought (the) book at (the) shop'. In (1) the Actor (*propesor*) is focussed, in (2) the Patient (*libro*) is focussed and in (3) the Locative (*tindahan*) is focussed. All three have the same propositional content, but differ in perspective in much the same way as sets of English sentences differing in voice or object selection (*He provided food for the orphans, He provided the orphans with food*).

- (1) *Bumili ng libro sa tindahan ang propesor*
bought-AF book loc shop professor
'The professor bought the/a book at the/a shop.'
- (2) *Binili ng propesor ang libro sa tindahan*
bought-PF professor book loc shop
'The/a professor bought the book at the/a shop.'
- (3) *Binilhan ng propesor ang tindahan ng libro*
bought-LF professor shop book
'The/a professor bought the/a book at the shop.'

The nominal in focus and the affixes which, according to the grammar book register the type of relation in focus have been highlighted. The infix *-urn-* is describe as marking Actor-focus (AF), *-in-* as marking Patient-focus (PE) and *-an* as marking Locative focus (LF). The *h* in (3) is epenthetic. There is also a prefix *i-* for Benefactive focus (and a compound prefix *ipang* for Instrumental-focus).

In order to classify the focus system as accusative or ergative it is necessary I consider intransitive clauses. (4) is an intransitive with Actor focus and (5) a stative intransitive with no focus marker.

(4) *Tumakbo ang propesor*
 ran:AF professor
 ‘The professor ran.’

(5) *Bilog ang buwan*¹ (Foley & Van Valin 1984:66)
 round moon
 ‘The moon is round.’

The problem is that in the ‘standard’ description each of the focuses (Actor, Patient Locative, Benefactive and Instrumental) is equally marked and it is not possible to choose one as the unmarked alternative for comparison with the intransitive pattern English is classified as accusative on the basis of a comparison of an active transitive pattern with an intransitive one. If the passive of a transitive were used as the basis comparison with the intransitive, English would be classified as ergative. Of course we do not choose the passive since it is clear that the passive is not the unmarked expression for a transitive proposition. The fact that the various focuses seem equally marked in Tagalog is one of the reasons that the language has sometimes been classified as neither accusative nor ergative. This is the position adopted by Ramos (1974) and Schachter (1976) and taken up in some secondary sources such as Mulder and Schwartz (1981) and Mallinson and Blake (1981) (I regret to say).

Some descriptions take the Actor-focus to be active and the Patient-focus to be passive thereby implying an accusative analysis. This is true of Bloomfield 1917, Blake 1925 Wolfenden 1961 and Llamzon 1968. A number of papers written within the framework of Relational Grammar (RG) also take the Actor focus to be active and the Patient focus to be passive. This is true, for instance, of Bell (1983), Perlmutter and Postal (1984) and Johnson (1977). They are writing about Cebuano but the morpho-syntax is parallel with that of Tagalog and the analysis can be taken to hold for that language.

Recently a number of writers have begun to interpret Tagalog as ergative. This means that they take the Patient focus to be unmarked and the basis for comparison with intransitives. These writers include Cena (1979), Payne (1982), De Guzman (1983, 1986), Cooreman *et al.* (1984) and Starosta (1986, 1988). Gerdts (to appear) presents an ergative analysis for Ilokano which could apply to Tagalog. Cena, De Guzman and Gerdts write within or with reference to Relational Grammar.

It is my contention that Tagalog is technically ergative in that the Patient focus is literally unmarked and that a comparison of the Patient focus construction and an intransitive construction shows common marking for P and S (by the preposition *ang*) as opposed to the marking for A (by the preposition *ng* (pronounced *nang*)). This analysis is supported by other aspects of the grammar and if it is adopted various typological oddities vanish.

¹ Drossard (1984) argues that Tagalog is an active language. I do not find any evidence for this beyond active/stative contrasts as in (4) and (5).

2. TAGALOG

Practically all writers on Tagalog misanalyse the focus system and this includes those who analyse the system as accusative, those who interpret it as ergative and those who believe it is neither. The simple fact is that the Patient focus is technically unmarked contra the analysis given in (2) above. As illustrated below, the Patient focus is marked by zero whereas the other focuses are positively marked and therefore it is the Patient focus that should be used as a basis for comparison with intransitives. If this is done, an ergative-absolutive pattern emerges. Compare (2) with (4) and (5) above. It is P and S that are marked alike. The only source to analyse the focus system correctly is Foley & Van Valin 1984. However, they reject the ergative analysis on other grounds which are discussed below.

Table 1 presents a paradigm of an unexceptional verb *sulat* ‘to write’ for four focuses. There are three tense-aspects. The future and imperfective’ are characterised by reduplication of the first syllable of the root. The marker for Actor focus is *-urn-*, for the e benefactive *i-* and for the locative *-an*. At first glance it appears that *-in(-)* is the marker for Patient focus, but that cannot be. In the non-future *-in-* is common to all non-Actor focuses. This means that the Patient focus in the non-future is zero.²

Table 1: *sulat* ‘to write’

	future	perfective	imperfective
Actor focus	<i>susulat</i>	<i>sumulat</i>	<i>sumusulat</i>
Patient focus	<i>susulatin</i>	<i>sinulat</i>	<i>sinusulat</i>
Benefactive focus	<i>isulat</i>	<i>isinulat</i>	<i>isinusulat</i>
Locative focus	<i>susulatan</i>	<i>sinulatan</i>	<i>sinusulatan</i>

The situation in the future is interesting. There is zero marking for Actor focus and since *-in* is exclusive to the Patient focus it is interpretable as a marker of Patient focus. In the future it is the Actor focus that should be compared with intransitives and this yields an accusative schema which means that Tagalog is another example of an aspect split in an ergative language with the normal bias. If there is an ergative/accusative split based on tense or aspect lines, it always turns out that the ergative schema operates in the past or perfect as opposed to the accusative in the future or imperfective. This does not detract from the ergative analysis since the future can hardly be taken to be the unmarked tense-aspect and the zero marking for Actor focus in the future does not occur with those numerous verbs that are prefixed with *pag-*. These take *mag-* (*um* + *pag*) for Actor focus in the future. *Basa* ‘to read’, for instance, a verb which appears in a number of the examples (see (7), (8) and (10)) can take the *pag-* prefix. The actor form is the *magbabasa* in the future. See also (28) below.

If the marker for the Patient focus is zero, then this focus is technically the unmarked one and it is this one that should serve as the transitive counterpart of intransitives for the purposes of establishing the nuclear typology. The following set of sentences include an intransitive, a Patient focus construction and an Actor focus construction respectively.

- (6) *Interesante ang libro*
 interesting book
 ‘The book is interesting.’

² Cena (1979:4) and Starosta (1986:80) refer to certain tokens on *-in-* as ‘aspect marker’ and transitivity marker respectively, but this seems not to play any part in their ergative analysis.

(7) *Binasa ng propesor ang libro*
 perf:PF:read professor book
 ‘A/the professor read the book.’

(8) *Bumasa ng libro ang propesor*
 perf:AF:read book professor
 ‘The professor read a/the book.’

As can be seen the P of (7) is marked in the same way as the S of (6) and A is marked differently yielding the absolutive-ergative schema. At this point I feel like writing ‘Tagalog is ergative. Q.E.D.’ and leaving it at that, but of course the classification of Tagalog as ergative holds only if there is no compelling evidence to the contrary. believe this to be the case. I also believe there is strong evidence to support the classification.

Foley & Van Valin (1984:138) see evidence for an accusative system in the distribution of the verbal affixes *-urn-* and *-in-*. They take *-urn-* to be a marker of Actor focus in intransitive and transitive clauses and hence to have a distribution that follow an accusative pattern. Examples of *-urn-* appear above in (1), (4) and (8). Here are two more. The first is obviously intransitive and the second is an Actor focus construction with a non-focussed patient, a construction that Foley and Van Valin take to be transitive.

(9) *Pumunta ang propesor sa tindahan*
 went:AF professor loc store
 ‘The professor went to the store.’

(10) *Bumabasa ng libro ang pasyente*
 read:imperf:AF book patient
 ‘The patient is reading a book.’

If the Patient focus is unmarked, then, as noted above, a comparison with the one-place intransitive construction reveals that the system is ergative. This means that *ng* is a marker of the ergative relation and *ang a* marker of the absolutive. This in turn suggests that the two-place Actor-focus construction is intransitive since the agent or actor is in the absolutive. In other words a consideration of the marking suggests that the Actor-focus construction is antipassive. If this is so, Foley & Van Valin’s point about *-urn-* having an accusative pattern of distribution dissolves; *-urn-* occurs only with intransitives. Foley and Van Valin are also concerned with the distribution of *-in-*. They see it has marking all focuses except Actor focus with multi-place verbs. This suggests to them that the Actor focus not the Patient-focus is unmarked, but if the Actor-focus is intransitive, then *-in-* becomes a marker of transitivity and its distribution is not relevant to finding which is the unmarked transitive construction. Compare the following sentence with (9) above. It is a Locative-focus construction. In Relational Grammar terms the locative has advanced and become a direct object. The clause is transitive so not only does the Locative-focus suffix occur but the marker *-in-* is introduced as well (example modelled on Foley and Van Valin 1984:138).

(11) *Pinuntahan ng propesor ang tindahan*
 went:LF professor store
 ‘The/a professor went to the store’.

If the ergative analysis is correct, then, as noted above, the prepositional marking in the Actor-focus construction suggests detransitivisation, specifically an antipassive. Cena (1979:21ft) presents an argument that seems to support this. He notes that nominals are

accessible to the movement processes of Inversion and Topicalisation with the exception of patient nominals that are not marked by *ang*. This distribution makes sense if the patient is the unmarked choice for absolutive and *ng*-marked patients are chômeur, i.e. in simple terms, patients that have been displaced from the absolutive by some valency-changing derivation. Cena gives the following examples. (12a) is a Patient focus construction, (12b) demonstrates Inversion and (12c) Topicalisation. Tagalog is a verb-first language. (12b) and (12c) demonstrate exceptional constructions.

(12a) *Binili ni John ang bigas*
 buy:PF:perf John rice
 ‘John bought the rice’.

(*ni* marks the ‘ng’ form of proper names)

(12b) *Si John ay binili ang bigas*

(*ay* marks off the Inverted Nominal from the verb).

The article *si* marks *ang*-form of proper names. *Ày* marks off the Inverted constituent from the clause proper.

(12c) *Si John, binili niya ang bigas*

‘As for John, he bought the rice.’

(*niya* is the *ng*-form of the third person pronoun).

John can participate in Inversion and Topicalisation in the Patient-focus construction since it is in the ergative relation, i.e. it is A or transitive subject. Cena does not give starred (ungrammatical) examples, but he implies that the *ng*-marked patient in the Actor focus construction cannot be put in front of the verb even though an oblique can. This means that *ng*-marked patients are at the bottom of a hierarchy of grammatical privilege. In Relational Grammar two kinds of detransitivisation’ of active clauses are recognised. In one the direct object becomes an indirect object (illustrated in (18b) below). In the other the direct object becomes a chômeur, a chômeur being the relation held by an argument displaced from subject or object status. The marking in Actor-focus clauses suggests intransitivity and the fact that the patient in such a construction lacks grammatical privileges would be consistent with its being a chômeur.³

The RG analysis of Cebuano, however, takes the Actor-focus to be active and the Patient-focus to be passive. The data in Cebuano parallels the Tagalog data point for point.⁴ If this analysis is applied to Tagalog, then the *ng*-marked actor in the Patient-focus construction should be a subject chômeur rather than the *ng*-marked patient in the Actor-focus construction. The RG analysis applied to Tagalog would appear to make the wrong prediction (see also Schachter 1976:51 2).

The focussed argument is normally definite and an indefinite patient must be marked by *ng*. It is a general characteristic of language that formal detransitivisation correlates with less than full semantic transitivity (Hopper and Thompson 1980). If the patient is indefinite, non-specific or generic, then antipassive or direct-to-indirect object retreat is common. The

³ De Guzman (1983: 23-4) claims that any unfocussed patient can be placed in front of the verb if it is contrastively stressed.

⁴ In Cebuano the patient focus appears to be zero. See the table in Bell (1983: 205).

antipassive is used for indefinite patients in Yup'ik Eskimo (Payne 1982) and Indonesian (Postal 1977), direct-to-indirect object retreat in Kalkatungu (Blake 1979) and both constructions in Dyirbal (Dixon 1972:90-91). If the Actor-focus construction in Tagalog is an antipassive as the marking and Cena's movement' argument suggest, then it parallels detransitivised constructions in a number of other languages insofar as it is used with indefinite patients.

Cena also points out that some Tagalog verbs occur only in Patient-focus in main clauses and that those verbs that take no focus marking at all always occur in Patient-focus. But the most important piece of evidence that can be adduced in support of the ergative analysis is the fact that the Patient-focus is clearly the unmarked way of expressing a transitive proposition with a definite patient. Cooreman *et al.* 1984, for instance, report that nearly 60 percent of transitive events are encoded by the Patient-focus construction and another 17 percent by a variation of the Patient-focus with the *ang*-marked patient in front of the verb as in (12b) or (12c) (see also Hopper & Thompson 1980).

3. KALKATUNGU

It is interesting to compare Tagalog with a recognised ergative language especially some of the Australian languages that have a number of valency changing derivations. The following examples are from Kalkatungu, a language formerly spoken in the Mt Isa area of western Queensland. It will be seen that this language has, in Philippinists' terms, Patient-focus, Locative-focus, Instrumental-focus, Benefactive-focus and Actor-focus. (13) illustrates the intransitive clause and (14) the normal transitive. A comparison of the two reveals an ergative-absolutive system since the patient of the transitive clause is marked the same as the intransitive subject. Since the patient in (14) is in the unmarked absolutive case and since, as we shall see below, the absolutive is the most privileged case, we could call (14) a Patient-focus construction. (15b) illustrates Locative-focus, or in RG terms, the advancement of Locative to create a direct object. (15a) shows a Locative complement and the pair match (9) and (11) above. Sometimes, as here, the advancement to direct object imparts a sense of completion or affectedness. (16b) illustrates Instrumental-focus and (17b) Benefactive focus. The registration on the verb, *-nti* for Locative and Instrumental advancement and *-nytyama* for Benefactive advancement, parallel the focus marking on the verb in Tagalog. (18a) is a transitive clause with a patient object like (14). It serves as a basis for comparison with (18b) which is a detransitivised counterpart. In Philippinist terms (18b) is an Actor-focus construction since the actor or agent is in the absolutive. In RG terms (18b) is an example of direct-to-indirect object retreat. I take the dative-marked *thuarrr-ku* in (18b) to be an indirect object rather than a *chômeur*, but the distinction is of no relevance here (Blake 1979,1984).

Patient

(13) *kalpin ingka*
 man go
 'The man goes.'

(14) *marapai-thu nanya kalpin*
 woman-erg saw man
 'The woman saw the man.'

Locative

(15a) *kalpin nu-mi kulapuru-thi*
 man lie-fut blanket-loc
 'The man will lie on the blanket.'

- (15b) *kalpin-tu nu-nti-mi kulapuru*
 man-erg lie-adv-fut blanket
 ‘The man will lie on the blanket.’

Instrumental

- (16a) *kalpin-tu pinytyi-mi thuarr kankari-thu*
 man-erg cut-fut snake knife-erg
 ‘The man will cut the snake with the knife.’
- (16b) *kalpin-tu pinyti-nti-mi kankari huarr-ku*
 man-erg cut-adv-fut knife snake-dat
 ‘The man will use the knife to cut the snake.’

Benefactive

- (17a) *kalpin-tu pinytyi-mi thuarr mangaraan-ku*
 man-erg cut -flit snake doctor-dat
 ‘The man will cut the snake for the doctor.’
- (17b) *kalpin-tu pinytyi-(ny)tyama-mi mangaraan thuarr*
 man - erg cut-adv-fut doctor snake
 ‘The man will cut the doctor some snake.’

Actor

- (18a) *kalpin-tu lha-nytyaaya huarr*
 man-erg kill-purposive snake
 ‘The man is going to kill the snake.’
- (18b) *kalpin lha-yi-nytyaaya thuarr-k u*
 man kill-detrans-purp snake - dat
 ‘The man is going to kill snakes.’

The construction illustrated in (18b) is used where the patient is non-specific or generic, or where the aspect is imperfective.

4. TAGALOG IN TYPOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

Dixon 1972 demonstrated that the Australian language Dyirbal was not only morphologically ergative, but syntactically ergative in that it had syntactic rules that identified the direct object with the intransitive subject. He showed that purpose clauses in Dyirbal were detransitivised to show coreference between the underlying ergative of the purpose clause and the underlying absolutive of the governing clause. He also showed that the head of a relative clause had to be a surface absolutive. Both these properties can be found in Kalkatungu. Tagalog relative clauses are described as having a focussed head. The head, of course, is covert, but the marking on the verb and the prepositional marking of the overt nominals indicate that the head is focussed. If Tagalog is an ergative language, as is claimed here, then Tagalog is parallel with Dyirbal and Kalkatungu in requiring that the head of a relative clause be a surface absolutive, more accurately, in RG terms, a final absolutive.

The following examples are taken from Schachter (1976:500). (19a) is a simple transitive Patient-focus sentence and (19b) the detransitivised Actor-focus equivalent, These serve as a basis of comparison for the relative clauses in (20). In (20a) the coreferent nominal in the relative clause is the patient so the normal transitive clause can be used, i.e. the Patient-focus

construction. In (20b) the coreferent nominal is the actor or agent so the Actor-focus construction is used. The linking particle *ng* marks the beginning of the relative clause in both these examples.

- (19a) *Binasa ng lalaki ang diyaryo*
 read;PF:perf man newspaper
 ‘A/the man read the newspaper.’
- (19b) *Bumasa ang lalaki ng diyaryo*
 read:AF:perf man newspaper
 ‘The man read a newspaper.’
- (20a) *Interesante ang diyaryo=ng binasa ng lalaki*
 interesting newspaper=rel read:PF man
 ‘The newspaper that the man read is interesting.’
- (20b) *Matalino ang lalaki—ng bumasa ng diyaryo*
 intelligent man =rel read:AF newspaper
 ‘The man who read a newspaper is intelligent.’

Naturally where the relative clause is intransitive and S is the coreferent nominal then this nominal is focussed. If an indirect object or oblique is the coreferent nominal, then the appropriate focus is used to advance that nominal to become the direct object (0). The overall generalisation in terms of the ergative analysis is that the covert head of the relative clause must be S or 0, i.e. must be a final absolutive. One significant result of this analysis, which seems to hold for a large number of Philippines-type languages, is that it makes languages like Dyirbal seem less of an oddity. It seems that at least one feature of the ‘ergative syntax’ phenomenon is attested in Austronesian as well as Australian languages.

Tagalog is well known in the typological literature, in fact Drossard says that it has become, along with Dyirbal, a *Modesprache* (1984:preface). The discussion usually revolves around the focus system, the place of the focus system in a typology of nuclear relations and the distribution of subject properties. All of these matters can be seen from a different perspective, if an ergative analysis is adopted. In English, in European languages generally and indeed in numerous other languages grammatical properties such as case, control of verb agreement and position in a clause identify S and A and we call the relation *subject*. This relation also plays a part in the syntax. It is the subject that remains unexpressed with non-finite verb forms. In an ergative language grammatical characteristics identify 0 with S. In Kalkatungu, as can be seen from (13) and (14) above, 0 is identified with S by means of the citation case, which is zero. To this morphological fact we can add the syntactic fact mentioned above that the covert head of a relative clause must be absolutive (S or 0). In light of all this it is tempting to take the relation shared by S and 0 to be the subject. If we do this, we are in fact defining the subject as something like the most privileged grammatical relation manifesting itself in properties such as the citation case. However, this proves unworkable since some grammatical properties may identify A with S while other properties identify 0 with S. In Kalkatungu, in fact, cross-referencing verb agreement identifies A with S. This can be seen in the following set of examples where *-n* marks second person singular subject (S & A) and *-kin* marks second singular direct object.

- (21) *nyini yapatyarra-thati-nha-mpa-n?*
 thou well-become-past-perf-thou
 ‘Are you well again?’

- (22) wili nyin-ti waku ithiti-mpa-n?
 query thou-erg kin throw-perf-thou
 ‘Have you thrown away the skin?’
- (23) itya-nyin-kin nyini munthun-tu
 bite-ing-thee thee bullant-erg
 ‘The bull ants are eating you.’

It seems preferable therefore to consider the subject relation to be one that embraces S and A and the absolutive to be one that covers S and 0. Relational Grammar provides a framework that allows for the nuclear relations to be cross-classified into subject and direct object on the one hand and ergative and absolutive on the other. Thus it can cope with the co-occurrence of the two schemas in the one language. It needs to be pointed out however, that the absolutive usually outranks the ergative in the same way the subject outranks the object and can play a part analogous to the part played by the subject. Early Relational Grammar analyses of Cebuano were misguided, in my view, in their application in that they took the Actor-focus to be a basic, transitive construction. Recent analyses by Gerdts (to appear) for Ilokano and De Guzman (1983, 1986) for Tagalog exploit the notion that the Patient-focus is an ergative, transitive construction and the Actor-focus an antipassive and they demonstrate the adequacy of Relational Grammar to provide an elegant analysis.

In Lexibase, a single level model developed by Starosta, the unmarked case is called nominative irrespective of whether it embraces S and A or S and 0 (1988). An accusative language is seen as one that normally encodes the agent of a transitive proposition in the nominative and an ergative language as one that normally encodes the patient in the nominative. This use of *nominative* for the unmarked case in the two systems capture its common behaviour, in particular the way it outranks other cases. The use of a *Patient* case relation captures the absolutive (S & 0) and a macrorole *Actor* covers the subject relation (S & A). Starosta uses the ergative analysis for Tagalog taking the Patient focus to be transitive and the Actor-focus to be antipassive. In Lexibase, however, there is no chomage. Nominals demoted from nuclear status are reinterpreted as obliques.

If Tagalog is taken to be ergative, then a number of typological peculiarities disappear These concern:

- (a) the target of advancements
- (b) reflexivisation
- (c) imperatives
- (d) indefinite patients

(a) the target of advancements

Many languages provide for indirect objects, benefactives, locatives and instrumentals to be expressed as direct objects. In an accusative language there is usually a passive construction which allows a direct object to be expressed as a subject Advancements to direct object usually feed the passive. Under the traditional analysis Tagalog allows a number of direct advancements to subject. Under the ergative analysis it allows a number of advancements to direct object and it has a detransitivised alternant for transitives, namely the antipassive. Detransitivised alternants (even apart from the passive) are extremely common across languages, possibly universal.

(b) reflexivisation

Discussions of Tagalog syntax such as Schachter 1976 usually revolve around the subject properties of *ang*-marked nominals and it is often pointed out that the *ang* marked nominal can be a reflexive form (Schachter 1976:503)

- (24) *S-in-akt-an* *ng* *babae* *ang kaniyang* *sarili*
Hurt-LF woman her self
'A/the woman hurt herself.'

This of course is quite unsubjectlike. Subjects usually control reflexivisation. The, are not reflexive forms controlled from elsewhere. Schachter concludes that actor control reflexivisation, but from an ergative perspective the construction in (24) is quite unremarkable. *Ng babae* is A and *ang kaniyang sarili* is O. O is subjectlike insofar as it is absolutive in an ergative-absolutive system, but it is not a subject. (24) can be paralleled by a sentence like (25) from a recognized ergative language Warluwara, where it excites no comment (Breen 1971 :176

- (25) *warawurla-wiya-ku* *wula-pa* *anma-rna*
dog-dual-erg they-self bite-past
'The two dogs bit one another.'

Warluwara is an Australian language formerly spoken to the southwest of Mt Isa. It is unusual among Australian languages in having a reflexive/reciprocal pronoun. Reflexivisation in Australia is typically signalled by a detransitivising derivational suffix on the verb.

(c) imperatives

In Tagalog the addressee of an imperative need not be in focus. A sentence such as the following is perfectly normal (Schachter 1976:506)

- (26) *Bigy-an* *mo* *siya* *ng* *kape*
give-LF you him coffee
'Give him coffee.'

In (26) *siya* the recipient is in focus and *mo* is the non-focussed actor form. If this sentence is an example of transitive sentence in an ergative language it is quite unremarkable. If on the other hand, this is some kind of passive, then it is unusual. The same applies to the following example. It is in Patient-focus. If this is passive, then we have a typological oddity, namely a passive imperative that can be used quite freely

- (27) *Abut-in* *mo* *ang* *serbesa*
reach:for-tv you beer
'Get the beer.'

(27) represents the normal construction for a definite patient. If the patient is indefinite, then the Actor-focus is used as in the following. *ka* is the Actor-focus form for second person; *ma* is the non-Actor-focus form,

- (28) *Mag-abot* *ka* *ng* *serbesa*
AF-reach:for you beer
'Grab a beer.'

mag is the Actor-focus form for *pag-* prefixed verbs. *mag-* is a blend of the prefix that otherwise shows up as *-urn* - plus *pag* -.

(d) indefinite patients

This point was mentioned in section 2. In language after language we find that there is an intransitive, active alternant to the normal transitive construction. This alternant can be used to signal a number of different factors, but where its use is related to the nature of the patient then it is invariably used for patients that are indefinite, nonspecific, generic or partitive. In Tagalog Patient-focus is practically obligatory for definite patients and Actor-focus is used when the patient is nonspecific (see (28) above) or else Benefactive-Instrumental focus or Locative-focus (as in (3) above) is used, i.e. focussed patients are associated with definiteness. All of this fits the typological profile if the Patient-focus is a normal unmarked transitive construction and the other focuses involve demoting the patient.

At this point it is worth considering what is meant in Philippinist terminology by talking about ‘focus’. Under the ergative interpretation what we have are alternative valencies involving absolutive selection. ‘Where there is more than one argument in a clause, the unmarked choice is for the Patient to be encoded in the absolutive. If the Patient is non-specific, then the Actor is encoded in the absolutive. The term *focus* is quite misleading. This has been used in different ways in different traditions of linguistics; probably the most common sense involves emphasis. However, there is no sense of emphasis or contrast associated with *ang*-phrases. Some linguists use the term *topic* instead of *focus*. This is equally misleading. *Topic* has also been used in a variety of ways. Commonly, it means ‘what is being talked about’ or what is taken as given and sometimes it is used for nominals that lie outside the clause proper as in (12c) above. However, an examination of texts makes it clear that there is no correlation with what is being talked about, as determined from the context, and *ang*. There is a standard way of demonstrating this by looking at answers to questions since it is normally the case that the form of the question determines what will be taken as given. The following example from Schachter (1976:496) demonstrates that the *ang*-phrase is not employed to express the given argument.

- (29) *Nasaan si Maria*
 where Maria
 ‘Where is Maria?’
- Hinuhugasan niya ang mga pinggan*
 wash:LF she plur dish
 ‘She’s washing the dishes.’

This holds true generally. Indeed it could not be the case that *ang* is used for ‘what is being talked about’ or what is taken as given since cross-language studies of discourse, including my own, reveal that actors are by far the most frequent topics in this sense yet in Tagalog and Philippines-style languages generally the so-called Patient-focus construction is by far the most frequent.

Under the ergative interpretation the terminological problem disappears. There is no need to employ *focus* or *topic* for *ang*-marked constituents; there is no need for any term other than absolutive.

One last loose end I will have to leave as a loose end. The literature does not make it clear what factors are involved in advancing a locative, benefactive or instrumental to the absolutive. Where nominals holding such roles are to be heads of relative clauses the appropriate advancement is used in order to satisfy the constraint on the head of a relative

clause being absolutive. However, what factors play a part in choosing these advancements from oblique in independent clauses is not clear to me. Perhaps the choices involve subtle differences of perspective as with object selection with certain verbs in English (provide X for Y, provide Y with X; present X to Y, present Y with X). One would expect considerations of givenness, specificity and affectedness to play a part, but, sad to say, the literature has little to offer on this point.

5. FINALE

It is becoming fashionable to analyse Tagalog as ergative and this is an analysis I endorse. I believe that the basic morphology gives a clue to its ergative character (table 1) and that this has been overlooked. Of course I have grossly simplified the verb affix system in my presentation and spared the reader a mare's nest of morphological complexity. It is probably a mixture of this complexity and an ethnocentric tendency to equate Actor-focus with European active transitive constructions that have obscured the true character of the language. I have -not adduced all the evidence available. From a reading of Gerds and De Guzman it would appear that there is further evidence for the ergative analysis to be gained from causative constructions and it is likely that a study of rules of control would suggest that the ergative analysis is more likely than an accusative one (see Mulder and Schwartz 1981:256-7).

The affix system on the verb is not the same for all languages of the Philippines type. Certainly in some it would appear that the Patient-focus is unmarked which in turn suggests an ergative analysis, in Bilaan, for instance, (Abrahams quoted in Mulder & Schwartz 1981) and Cebuano (Bell 1983:205). However, even if the morphology does not point in this direction, the arguments raised under (a) - (d) in the previous section hold for most Philippines type languages and suggest that an ergative analysis or at least a non-accusative analysis is likely.

The parallel between Tagalog and Kalkatungu is striking. In choosing Kalkatungu as a recognised ergative language I have perhaps chosen the Australian language that is most like Tagalog, but I could have chosen Dyirbal or one of its neighbours in eastern Queensland or Yalarnnga in western Queensland, all of which have a number of advancements and an antipassive or direct-to-indirect object retreat construction. On the Austronesian side I could have chosen a number of languages from the Philippines or neighbouring areas. It is interesting to see how close certain Australian and Austronesian languages are typologically yet how different they appear as a result of being described from within different traditions.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Bell, S.J. 1983. Advancements and ascensions in Cebuano. In Perlmutter, D.M. (ed.) *Studies in Relational Grammar 1*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. 143- 218.
- Blake, B.J. 1979. *The Kalkatungu Language*. Canberra: Pacific Linguistics.
- Blake, B.J. 1984. Problems for possessor ascension: some Australian examples. *Linguistics* 22.437-453.
- Blake, F.R. 1925. *A grammar of the Tagalog language*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Bloomfield, L. 1917. Tagalog texts with grammatical analysis. University of Illinois, *Studies in Language and Literature*. 3.2-4, Urbana: University of Illinois. Bowen, J.D. (ed.). 1965. *Beginning Tagalog*. Los Angeles: University of California Press.
- Breen, J.G. 1971. *A description of the Wariuwara language*. MA thesis, Monash University
- Cena, R.M. 1979. Patient primary in Tagalog. Paper read at LSA Winter Meeting, Chicago.

- de Guzman, V. 1976. *Syntactic derivation of Tagalog verbs*. University of Hawaii dissertation. Ann Arbor: University Microfilms International.
- de Guzman, V. 1983. Ergative analysis for Philippine languages. Paper presented at the Third Eastern Conference on Austronesian Languages. Ohio University.
- de Guzman, V. 1986. Some consequences of causative clause union in Tagalog. In Geraghty, G., Carrington, L. & Wurm, S. A. (eds.), *FOCAL I: Papers from the Fourth International Conference on Austronesian Linguistics*. Canberra: Pacific Linguistics. 59-72.
- Dixon, R.M.W. 1972. *The Dyirbal language of North Queensland*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Dixon, R.M.W. 1979. Ergativity. *Language* 55. 1-138.
- Drossard, W. 1984. *Das Tagalog als Repräsentant des aktivistischen Sprachbaus* Tübingen: Gunter Narr Verlag.
- Foley, W.A. & Van Valin, R.D. jr. 1984. *Functional syntax and universal grammar* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Gerdtts, D.B. (to appear). Antipassives and causatives in Ilokano: evidence for at ergative analysis. R. McGinn (ed.), *Studies in Austronesian Linguistics*. Ohio: Ohio University Press.
- Hopper, P.J. & Thompson S.A. 1980. Transitivity in grammar and discourse *Language* 56. 251 -299.
- Johnson, D.E. 1977. One relational constraints in grammars. In Cole, P. & Sadock J (eds.). *Syntax and Semantics 8: Grammatical Relations..* New York: Academic Press. 151-178.
- Klimov, G.A. 1973. Očerok Obščej Teorii ergativnosti (Outline of a general theory o ergativity. [Reviewed by B. Comrie, *Lingua* 39:252-260].
- Llamzon, T. 1968. *Modern Tagalog*. PhD dissertation: Georgetown University.
- Mallinson, O. & Blake, B. 1981. *Language typology*. Amsterdam: North-Holland.
- Mulder, J. & Schwartz, A. 1981. On the subject of advancements in the Philippine languages. *Studies in Langziage*5. 7-268.
- Otanes, F.T. 1966. *A contrastive analysis of English and Tagalog yen complementation*. PhD thesis: U.C.L.A.
- Perlmutter, D. & Postal, P. 1984. The 1-Advancement Exclusiveness Law. In Perlmutter D. & Rosen, C. (eds.), *Studies in Relational Grammar 2*. Chicago: Chicago University Press. 81-125.
- Payne, T.E. 1982. Role and reference related subject properties and ergativity in Yup'ik Eskimo and Tagalog. *Studies in Language* 6.75-106.
- Ramos, T.V. 1974. *The case system of Tagalog verbs*. Canberra: Pacific Linguistics.
- Schachter, P. 1976. The subject in Philippines languages: topic, actor actor-topic, or non of the above. In Li, C. (ed.), *Subject and topic*. New York: Academic Press. 491-518.
- Schachter, P. & Otanes, F. 1972. *Tagalog reference grammar*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Starosta, S. 1986. Focus as recentralisation. In Geraghty, P., Carrington, L. & Wurm S.A. (eds.), *FOCAL I: Papers from the Fourth International Conference o Austronesian Linguistics*. Canberra: Pacific Linguistics. 73-95.
- Starosta, S. 1988. *The case for lexibase*. London: Pinter.
- Wolfenden, E. 1961. *A re-statement of Tagalog grammar*. Manila: SIL and Institute of National Language.