# SYNTACTIC CATEGORIES IN TAGALOG

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Professor Kenneth Pike, in his plenary lectur[e] "Matrix Formatives in N-Dimensional Linguistics", spok[e] of the "Eurocentrism" of linguistics. A vivid exampl[e] of such Eurocentrism is provided by various description[s] and analyses of clause structure in Tagalog. Thus Pilipino schoolchildren learn from their grammar book[s] that Tagalog sentences are of the form *subject-copula[-]verb* -- in other words, just like their Englis[h] counterparts. Alas, it is hard to imagine a mor[e] unwarranted imposition of one language's structure upo[n] that of another than is evident in such a statement.

Most linguists now recognize that Tagalog differ[s] from English at least with respect to its basic wor[d] order, which is verb-initial: various subject-initia[l] constructions, in which the copula *ay* is inserted, ar[e] generally considered to be more highly marked variants. Moreover, it is often observed that Tagalog differs fro[m] English also with respect to its inventory o[f] grammatical relations; thus, Schachter (1976, 1977), Gi[l] (1984) and others argue that Tagalog has neithe[r] subjects nor direct objects, its basic sentenc[e] structure consisting of a verb followed by a string o[f] nominals. Such descriptions go some of the way toward[s] freeing the study of Tagalog from its Eurocentri[c] shackles -- but they do not go far enough.

In this paper, I suggest that Tagalog differs fro[m] English and other European languages more radically tha[n] is generally supposed: not only with respect to it[s] basic word order and its inventory of grammatica[l] relations but also with respect to its inventory o[f] syntactic categories, or "parts of speech". Specifically, I propose that Tagalog possesses but [a] single open syntactic category[1]. In other words, Tagalog does not distingush between categories such a[s] noun, adjective, verb and sentence, nor does i[t] distinguish between lexical categories and their phrasa[l]

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[1]In addition to a single open syntactic category, Tagalog als[o] possesses a closed syntactic category of clitics characteristically occurring in Wackernagel's sentence-secon[d] position. Whether Tagalog has additional closed syntacti[c] categories must remain open to future investigation.

projections, that is to say between nouns and noun-phrases, adjectives and adjective-phrases, verbs and verb-phrases, and so forth[2].

In the absence of familiar distinctions such as noun/adjective, noun/verb, and so forth, a new term is needed to denote the single undifferentiated open syntactic category of Tagalog. An opportunity hereby presents itself to redress the Greek and Latin bias of linguistic terminology. Accordingly, I propose the Tagalog term *parirala* "phrase" to denote the single open syntactic category of Tagalog, and, more generally, any open syntactic category that is the only such category in its language.

Any discussion of syntactic categories must be based on a clear understanding of what a syntactic category actually is. By "syntactic category" I shall mean a set of words or phrases exhibiting similar syntactic behaviour. In many instances, members of a syntactic category may also share morphological and/or semantic properties; however, the existence of a syntactic category can only be supported on syntactic grounds. Ideally, a syntactic category will be associated with a substantial array of syntactic rules and principles, each of which applies to every member of the syntactic category in question and to no members of any other syntactic categories. In reality, however, syntactic categories generally contain prototypical members, to which all the relevant rules and principles apply, and also less prototypical members, to which some of the rules and principles may fail to apply. Thus, the viability of a syntactic category is proportionate to the number of rules and principles that make reference to it, and the degree to which these rules and principles apply to coextensive sets.

Thus, in order to show that Tagalog has a single open syntactic category, parirala, it is necessary to demonstrate that there exists no set of syntactic rules and principles converging to define any of the familiar syntactic categories, noun, adjective, verb, and so forth, or any other syntactic category consisting of a proper subset of all words and phrases in Tagalog. Claims of non-existence are risky propositions: one has to look everywhere to be absolutely certain that what one seeks does not exist. I have not looked everywhere

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[2]A number of scholars, for example Schachter and Otanes (1972), Gil (1982, chapter 6), and Shkarban (1992), have claimed that various syntactic categories are less readily differentiated in Tagalog than in other languages. The present claim is more far-reaching in that it expressly denies the viability of such categories altogether.

-- and even if I had, considerations of space would hav
prevented me from reporting on this here.   However,
have looked in what I consider to be some of the mor
likely places, and found no evidence whatsoever fo
distinguishing between two or more open syntacti
categories in Tagalog.   I therefore offer the claim tha
Tagalog has a single open syntactic categeory, parirala
as an interim conclusion, to be supported or perhap
modified by future investigation.

The extent to which Tagalog syntax is unlike that o
English and other European languages is perhaps mos
evident in live texts.   The following passage from th
newspaper *Balita* (18.7.1990, p.2) reports on the rescu
operations following a devastating earthquake[3]:

(1) Sampung "Huey" transport helicopters ang pinapunt;
    kahapon sa Central at Northern Luzon sa utos ni Ai:
    Force chief Maj. Gen. Gerardo Protacio, par;
    tumulong sa paghahanap at pagliligtas sa mga biktim;
    ng lindol.   Siyam na helicopter mula sa Visayas a
    Bicol region ang tutulong din sa malawak na rescu
    operation.
    ten-LIG Huey transport helicopters TOP IA:PT:PFV-go yesterda
    OBL Central and Northern Luzon OBL command PERS:DIR Air Forc
    chief Maj. Gen. Gerardo Protacio, for AT:INF-assist OBL GER
    search and GER-free OBL PL victim DIR earthquake.   nine LI(
    helicopter from OBL Visayas and Bicol region TOP AT:IPFV
    assist too OBL extensive LIG rescue operation.
    "Ten "Huey" transport helicopters were sen
    yesterday to Central and Northern Luzon by commanc
    of Air Force chief Maj. Gen. Gerardo Protacio, tc
    assist in the searching and freeing of the victim;
    of the earthquake.   Nine helicopters from the
    Visayas and Bicol region will assist too in the
    extensive rescue operation."

As evidenced by the morpheme-by-morpheme gloss anc
subsequent translation, the Tagalog passage can be
rendered into grammatical English in such a way that the
linear order of the major lexical items in Tagalog is
perfectly preserved in the English translation
Nevertheless, in spite of such superficial similarity,
the syntactic structures of the Tagalog passage and it:

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[3]In the morpheme-by-morpheme glosses provided in this paper, th
following abbreviations are used: AT "actor topic"; DIR "direct
(case)"; DT "direction topic"; GER "gerund"; IA "indirect action",
INF "infinitive"; IPFV "imperfective"; IT "instrumental topic"; LI(
"ligature"; LT "locative topic"; OBL "oblique"; PERS "personal",
PFV "perfective"; PL "plural"; PT "patient topic"; SG "singular",
STAT "stative"; TOP "topic"; 1 "first person".

English translation could not be more different. In traditional terms, the first sentence would be analyzed as consisting of a nominal predicate *Sampung "Huey" transport helicopters* "Ten "Huey" transport helicopters", plus a topic phrase, marked with *ang*, comprising the remainder of the sentence, and headed by a nominalized verbal form *pinapunta* "were sent"[4]. A similar analysis would be proposed for the second sentence as well. Thus, unlike the English translation, the Tagalog passage appears to display a highly marked construction, in which a nominal phrase functions as predicate, while a verbal complex plays the role of argument. However, the most cursory examination of Tagalog texts, written and spoken, reveals that such constructions are widespread and natural, thereby belying their traditional characterization as more highly marked.

The prevalance of such constructions can be readily explained by abandoning the assumption that Tagalog contains two major syntactic categories: verbs, or verb phrases, typically occurring in predicate position, and nouns, or noun phrases, characteristically occurring in argument position. In general, the primary motivation for syntactic categories is distributional. Thus, in English, verb phrases are what combine with noun phrases to produce sentences: a verb phrase cannot occur in a noun phrase position, and a noun phrase cannot occur in a verb phrase position. However, in Tagalog, there seem to be no such distributional constraints. Rather, the following generalization appears to hold: *anything can go anywhere*. Hence, in the absence of any constraints on the distribution of words and phrases in Tagalog, there is no reason to posit more than a single open syntactic category, namely, *parirala*.

Evidence for the claim that anything can go anywhere is presented in examples (2) – (5) below, illustrating some of the most basic construction types in Tagalog. Examples (2) – (5) provide templates into which words or phrases may be inserted. Under each template, examples are provided of words traditionally assumed to belong to different syntactic categories; these are marked as "E-nouns", "E-verbs" and "E-adjectives" respectively, where the prefix "E-" stands for "English". That is to say,

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[4]Often, such constructions are translated into English with a cleft construction, for example "It was ten "Huey" transport helicopters that were sent ..." However, such a translation is clearly inappropriate in the present context, thereby casting doubt on the traditional characterization of the Tagalog construction as consisting of predicate followed by *ang*-marked topic argument.

these are words whose equivalents in English are nouns, verbs and adjectives respectively, and are commonly assumed to be so also in Tagalog. However, as evidenced in examples (2) - (5), E-nouns, E-verbs and E-adjectives can occur anywhere in the templates: the resulting constructions, listed below each template, are all grammatical[5].

Example (2) illustrates the so-called "predicate-plus-argument" construction, discussed in the context of example (1); this construction is associated with a template of the form *L ang B*, where *L* and *B* are arbitrary parirala, and *ang* is the so-called "topic-marker":

(2) _____ ang _____

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| lolo | bangkero | E-nouns |
| grandfather | boatman | |
| lumabas | bumalik | E-verbs |
| AT:PFV-go:out | AT:PFV-return | |
| malungkot | mabait | E-adjectives |
| STAT-sad | STAT-kind | |

   (a) Lolo ang bangkero
      "The boatman is a grandfather"
   (b) Lolo ang bumalik
      "The one who returned is a grandfather"
   (c) Lolo ang mabait
      "The kind one is a grandfather"
   (d) Lumabas ang bangkero
      "The boatman went out"
   (e) Lumabas ang bumalik
      "The one who returned went out"
   (f) Lumabas ang mabait
      "The kind one went out"
   (g) Malungkot ang bangkero
      "The boatman is sad"
   (h) Malungkot ang bumalik
      "The one who returned is sad"
   (i) Malungkot ang mabait
      "The kind one is sad"

As evidenced by constructions (2a-i), E-nouns, E-verbs and E-adjectives may occur in either position in the template; all nine combinations are grammatical.

Example (3) illustrates the so-called "noun-plus-modifier" construction, associated with a template of

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[5]Some speakers may find some of the constructions more felicitous than others. However, the same is true also for their English translations. The factors involved in such judgements would appear to be semantic or pragmatic rather than syntactic.

the form *L -ng/na B*, where *L* and *B* are arbitrary parirala, and *-ng/na* is the ligature[6]:

(3) _____ -ng/na _____

| lolo | bangkero | E-nouns |
| grandfather | boatman | |
| lumabas | bumalik | E-verbs |
| AT:PFV-go:out | AT:PFV-return | |
| malungkot | mabait | E-adjectives |
| STAT-sad | STAT-kind | |

(a) lolong bangkero
"a grandfather who's a boatman"
"a boatman who's a grandfather"
(b) lolong bumalik
"a grandfather who returned"
"one who returned who's a grandfather"
(c) lolong mabait
"a kind grandfather"
"a kind one who's a grandfather"
(d) lumabas na bangkero
"one who went out who's a boatman"
"a boatman who went out"
(e) lumabas na bumalik
"one who went out who returned"
"one who returned who went out"
(f) lumabas na mabait
"one who went out who's kind"
"a kind one who went out"
(g) malungkot na bangkero
"a sad one who's a boatman"
"a sad boatman"
(h) malungkot na bumalik
"a sad one who returned"
"one who returned who's sad"
(i) malungkot na mabait
"a kind sad one"
"a sad kind one"

Again, as evidenced by constructions (3a-i), E-nouns, E-verbs and E-adjectives may occur in either position in the template; all nine combinations are grammatical. In fact, each of the constructions is ambiguous, and can be interpreted either as head-followed-by-modifer (as in the first translation), or as

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[6]The form of the ligature is determined morphophonemically: a suffix *-ng* if the preceding word ends in a vowel, *-n,* or *-ng*; a free form *na* otherwise.

modifier-followed-by-head    (as    in    the    second
translation)[7].

Example (4) illustrates constructions containing the
marker *ng*, involving a template of the form *P ng L*,
where *P* and *L* are arbitrary *parirala*:

(4) _____    ng    _____

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| pinsan | lolo | E-nouns |
| cousin | grandfather | |
| pinatay | lumabas | E-verbs |
| PT:PFV-kill | AT:PFV-go:out | |
| mapayat | malungkot | E-adjectives |
| STAT-thin | STAT-sad | |

   (a) "pinsan ng lolo"
      "a grandfather's cousin"
   (b) pinsan ng lumabas
      "one who went out's cousin"
   (c) pinsan ng malungkot
      "a sad one's cousin"
   (d) pinatay ng lolo
      "killed by a grandfather"
   (e) pinatay ng lumabas
      "killed by one who went out"
   (f) pinatay ng malungkot
      "killed by a sad one"
   (g) mapayat ng lolo
      "a grandfather's thin one"
   (h) mapayat ng lumabas
      "one who went out's thin one"
   (i) mapayat ng malungkot
      "a sad one's thin one"

In  traditional  terminology,  *ng*  is  characterized,
alternatively,  as  either  a  "case  marker",  mediating
between verb and noun, or a "genitive marker", linking
between    two    nouns.    However,    such    a    dual
characterization  is  an  artifact  of  an  unwarranted
distinction  between  verbal  and  nominal  categories.
Thus, as evidenced by constructions (4a-i), E-nouns, E-
verbs and E-adjectives may occur in either position in
the *ng* template; all nine combinations are grammatical.

Constructions  with  *ang*,  *-ng/na*  and  *ng*  may  be
recursively combined to form more complex constructions;
again, at each stage, anything can go anywhere.  Example
(5) below illustrates one such possibility, involving a
template of the form *P ng L ang B*:

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[7]In some cases, one of these interpretations is more readily
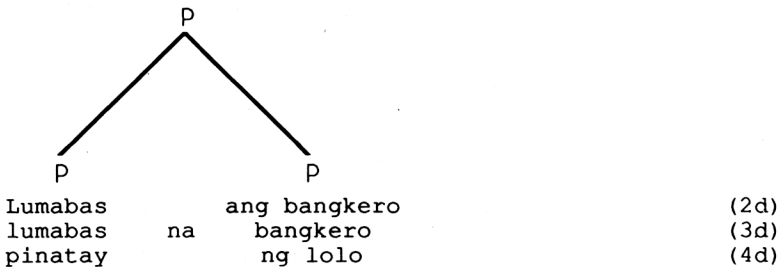available than the other; these factors need not concern us here.

(5) _____ ng _____ ang _____

| pinsan | lolo | bangkero | E-nouns |
| cousin | grandfather | boatman | |
| pinatay | lumabas | bumalik | E-verbs |
| PT:PFV-kill | AT:PFV-go:out | AT:PFV-return | |
| mapayat | malungkot | mabait | E-adjectives |
| STAT-thin | STAT-sad | STAT-kind | |

(a) Pinsan ng lolo ang bangkero
   "The boatman is a grandfather's cousin"
(b) Pinsan ng lolo ang bumalik
   "The one who returned is a grandfather's cousin"
(c) Pinsan ng lolo ang mabait
   "The kind one is a grandfather's cousin"
(d) Pinsan ng lumabas ang bangkero
   "The boatman is one who went out's cousin"
(e) Pinsan ng lumabas ang bumalik
   "The one who returned is one who went out's cousin"
(f) Pinsan ng lumabas ang mabait
   "The kind one is one who went out's cousin"
(g) Pinsan ng malungkot ang bangkero
   "The boatman is a sad one's cousin"
(h) Pinsan ng malungkot ang bumalik
   "The one who returned is a sad one's cousin"
(i) Pinsan ng malungkot ang mabait
   "The kind one is a sad one's cousin"
(j) Pinatay ng lolo ang bangkero
   "The boatman was killed by a grandfather"
(k) Pinatay ng lolo ang bumalik
   "The one who returned was killed by a grandfather"
(l) Pinatay ng lolo ang mabait
   "The kind one was killed by a grandfather"
(m) Pinatay ng lumabas ang bangkero
   "The boatman was killed by one who went out"
(n) Pinatay ng lumabas ang bumalik
   "The one who returned was killed by one who went out"
(o) Pinatay ng lumabas ang mabait
   "The kind one was killed by one who went out"
(p) Pinatay ng malungkot ang bangkero
   "The boatman was killed by a sad one"
(q) Pinatay ng malungkot ang bumalik
   "The one who returned was killed by a sad one"
(r) Pinatay ng malungkot ang mabait
   "The kind one was killed by a sad one"
(s) Mapayat ng lolo ang bangkero
   "The boatman is a grandfather's thin one"
(t) Mapayat ng lolo ang bumalik
   "The one who returned is a grandfather's thin one"
(u) Mapayat ng lolo ang mabait
   "The kind one is a grandfather's thin one"
(v) Mapayat ng lumabas ang bangkero

"The boatman is one who went out's thin one"
(w) Mapayat ng lumabas ang bumalik
     "The one who returned is one who went out's thin on
(x) Mapayat ng lumabas ang mabait
     "The kind one is one who went out's thin one"
(y) Mapayat ng malungkot ang bangkero
     "The boatman is a sad one's thin one"
(z) Mapayat ng malungkot ang bumalik
     "The one who returned is a sad one's thin one "
(&) Mapayat ng malungkot ang mabait
     "The kind one is a sad one's thin one "

As evidenced by constructions (5a-&), E-nouns, E-verbs and E-adjectives may occur in any of the three positions in the template; all twenty-seven combinations are grammatical. Thus, examples (2) – (5) provide prima facie evidence in support of the claim that anything can go anywhere. In so doing, they provide support for the claim that Tagalog has but a single open syntactic category, parirala.
We may accordingly represent the syntactic structures of the above constructions as follows[8]:

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              P
             / \
            /   \
           /     \
          P       P

Lumabas      ang bangkero          (2d)
lumabas  na  bangkero              (3d)
pinatay      ng lolo               (4d)
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[8]A more complete syntactic representation might include a specification of head-modifier relations. Specifically, the constructions represented in (2) and (4) are head-initial, while those in (3) may be either head-initial or head-final. Evidence for such head-modifier relations is provided, inter alia, by the projection of the morphological feature of voice, for example the patient-topic infix -in- in (5j).

```
                        P
                      /    \
                    /        \
                  /            \
                P                \
              /   \               \
            /       \              \
          P          P              P
      Pinatay     ng lolo      ang bangkero    (5j)
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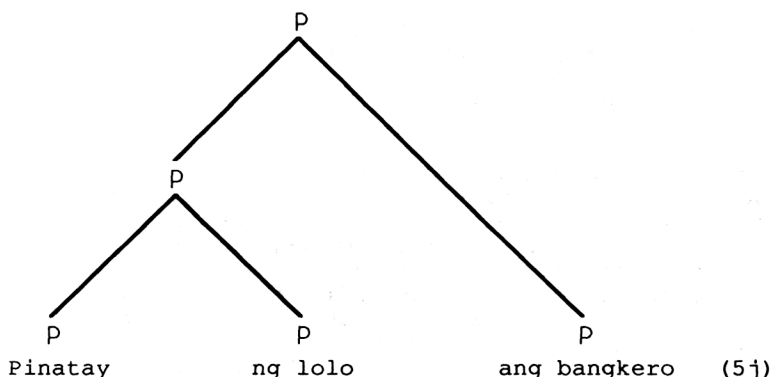
*Figure 1:  Syntactic Structures in Tagalog*

The existence of a single open syntactic category parirala in Tagalog accounts for a wide variety of syntactic properties that are unusual from a cross-linguistic, typological perspective; three such properties are considered below.

The first property is that of free constituent order. Although scrambling of the Warlpiri variety is not possible -- Tagalog provides ample evidence for the existence of hierarchic binary-branching constituent structure -- the relative order of sister constituents is quite unconstrained. Consider the following examples:

(6) (a)  itong        bangkero
         TOP:this-LIG boatman
    (b)  bangkerong ito
         boatman-LIG TOP:this
    "this boatman"

(7) (a)  malungkot   na  bangkero
         STAT-sad    LIG boatman
    (b)  bangkerong malungkot
         boatman-LIG STAT-sad
    "sad boatman"

(8) (a)  nasa bahay na  bangkero
         in   house LIG boatman
    (b)  bangkerong nasa bahay
         boatman-LIG in       house
    "boatman in the house"

(9) (a)  bumalik      na  bangkero
         AT:PFV-return LIG boatman
    (b)  bangkerong bumalik
         boatman-LIG AT:PFV-return
    "boatman who returned"

Examples (6) - (9) illustrate the relative order of E-
nouns and E-determiners, E-adjectives, E-prepositional-
phrases and E-relative-clauses respectively. While in
English and in most other languages, the relative order
of nouns and their modifiers is fixed, in Tagalog, as
shown above, the corresponding orders are quite free.
The reason, of course, is that Tagalog does not have
nouns, determiners, adjectives, prepositional phrases
and relative clauses: they are all parirala.
    The second property of Tagalog resulting from the
existence of a single open syntactic category is the
absence of grammatical relations such as subject and
direct object. Consider the following constructions:

(10) (a)  Sumulat      ang  bata
          AT:PFV-write TOP  child
          "The child wrote"
     (b)  Isinulat     ang  liham
          PT:PFV-write TOP  letter
          "[X] wrote the letter"
     (c)  Sinulatan    ang  pangulo
          DT:PFV-write TOP  president
          "[X] wrote to the president"
     (d)  Pinagsulatan ang mesa
          LT:PFV-write  TOP table
          "[X] wrote on the table"
     (e)  Ipinansulat  ang lapis
          IT:PFV-write  TOP pencil
          "[X] wrote with the pencil"

Example (10) presents a typical paradigm 'in which the
stem *sulat* "write" is marked with five different voice
affixes determining the thematic role of the *ang*-phrase:
actor, patient, direction, locative and instrumental
respectively. Whereas in English and most other
languages, the unmarked voice is that which associates
topic with agent, thereby giving rise to the grammatical
relation of subject, in Tagalog a variety of affixes are
available, and if any is unmarked, it is the patient-
topic rather than the agent-topic affix[9]. Thus, Tagalog
lacks the usual grammatical relations of subject, direct
object, and so forth.

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[9]See, for example, De Guzman (1976, 1979), Cena (1977), and Gil
(1984).

The absence of grammatical relations in Tagalog is a straightforward consequence of the absence of distinct open syntactic categories. Grammatical relatións result from the relationship of government that holds between a verb and its nominal arguments. However, if a language has no verbs or nominal arguments, government cannot hold, and there will be no grammatical relations. The renowned voice affixes of Tagalog may thus be viewed as an alternative means for expressing thematic roles, in the absence of an ordinary nominal case marking system.

The third property of Tagalog resulting from the existence of a single open syntactic category is the absence of NP-movement: with no NPs, there can be no NP-movement. Thus, WH-question words, although usually construction-initial, are actually in situ, in the first, or so-called "predicate" position of the template illustrated in (2) above:

(11)  (a) * Kanino$_i$ ang sumulat     ang bata ng liham [e$_i$]
             OBL-who  TOP AT:PFV-write TOP  child DIR letter
      (b) * Kanino$_i$ ang isinulat    ng bata ang liham [e$_i$]
             OBL-who  TOP PT:PFV-write DIR  child TOP letter
      (c)   Sino    ang sinulatan    ng bata ng  liham
            TOP-who  TOP DT:PFV-write DIR child DIR letter
      "Who did the child write a letter to?"

Similarly, instead of relative clauses, a complex but gapless parirala modifies its head in accordance with the template illustrated in (3) above:

(12)  (a) * pangulong$_i$   sumulat     ang bata ng  liham [e$_i$]
             president-LIG AT:PFV-write TOP child DIR letter
      (b) * pangulong$_i$   isinulat    ng bata ang liham [e$_i$]
             president-LIG PT:PFV-write DIR child TOP letter
      (c)   pangulong    sinulatan    ng bata ng  liham
            president-LIG DT:PFV-write DIR child DIR letter
      "the president that the child wrote a letter to"

In both cases, it is of course the productive voice affixes that prevent massive loss of expressive power, permitting phrases of various thematic roles -- in (11) and (12) above the direction -- to be questioned and relativized.

Although the presence of a single open syntactic category in Tagalog is a syntactic property, it bears morphological and semantic consequences as well. In many languages, morphological word classes may reflect syntactic categories; however, in Tagalog there are no such categories to be reflected, and hence morphological word classes are partly arbitrary, and partly motivated by semantic factors. For example, many descriptions of

Tagalog grammar take the presence of voice and aspect morphology to be characteristic of a syntactic category of verb. Nevertheless, as shown in (2) – (5) above, words with voice and aspect marking, E-verbs, may occur anywhere. Moreover, the class of words that can take voice and aspect morphology is much larger than in most languages, including, among others, characteristically nominal items such as names, eg. *pumasa–Maynila* AT:PFV-at–Manila "went to Manila"; proforms, eg. *suma–akin* AT:PFV-OBL–OBL:1:SG "was mine"; deictics, eg. *pumarito* AT:PFV-OBL:this "came here"; and interrogatives, eg. *umano* AT:PFV–what "did what". Admittedly, not every word in Tagalog can take voice and aspect morphology; however, the class of words that are marked for voice and aspect does not share any syntactic properties that would justify positing a syntactic category of verb.

The existence of a single open syntactic category in Tagalog bears important semantic consequences too. Some logical forms for basic constructions in Tagalog are proposeded in (13) below[10]:

(13) (a) single word: B          B(x)
     (b) template (2): L ang B    L($\lambda$xB(x))
     (c) template (3): L –ng/na B ($\lambda$LL($\lambda$yB(y)))(x)
                                  ($\lambda$BB($\lambda$yL(y)))(x)
     (d) template (4): P ng L     (P/($\lambda$yL(y)))(x)
     (e) template (5): P ng L ang B (P/($\lambda$yL(y)))($\lambda$xB(x))

In accordance with (13a), a single word B has the logical form B(x), a predicate applying to a free variable. For example, *bangkero* means "x is a boatman", *bumalik* means "x returned", and *mabait* means "x is kind". As suggested in (13b-e), larger phrases are associated with more complex logical forms, involving a lambda operator "$\lambda$" (read: "such that") and an associational operator "/" (read: "of"). The above formulae thus make reference to the single open syntactic category parirala, regardless of whether the relevant phrases correspond to nouns, verbs, adjectives, or any other syntactic category in English.

In this paper, I have provided prima facie evidence to the effect that Tagalog has but a single open syntactic category, namely parirala. By abandoning the traditional parts-of-speech distinctions between noun,

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[10]The formulae in (13) are a mere tentative preliminary proposal; their purpose is just to provide some indication as to how the existence of a single open syntactic category in Tagalog may be reflected in its logical forms.

verb, adjective and the like, a further step has been taken towards freeing the description of Tagalog grammar from the confines of Eurocentrism. Nevertheless, in the quest for a global linguistics, it is important not to throw the baby out with the bath water. Although distinctions between syntactic categories play a major role in most current syntactic theories, such theories also provide the necessary apparatus for accomodating cross-linguistic variation when it is encountered. Thus, within generative grammar, some recent work has explored patterns of cross-linguistic variation with respect to inventories of functional categories, such as INFL and DET, under the aegis of parametric variation. The results of this paper raise the possibility that parametric variation may account for differences in the inventories not just of functional categories but of lexical and phrasal categories as well.

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