# FOCUS, TOPIC, AND CASE
# IN THE PHILIPPINE VERBAL PARADIGM

JOSEPH F. KESS

The one salient feature which sets Philippine languages off from
other languages and which has consequently received a great deal of at-
tention in linguistic descriptions has been the verb morphology and the
relationship of the affixed verb to other parts of the sentence. The
relationship of the affixed verb to the grammatical subject, or topic,
of the sentence is an area which has been elaborated on by most descrip-
tions of Philippine languages and an area which has labelled and re-
labelled. The relationship between the sentence constructions so pro-
duced have been variously termed *voice*, active and passive (with three
or more passive construction types being indicated), or *focus* construc-
tion types. The affixed verbs themselves have been referred to as
having been marked by *focus-affixes*, and the relationship of the focus-
affixed verb to the *subject* or *topic* complement has been taken to con-
stitute a case relationship. In fact, it has been suggested that the
case relationship is one indicated by these focus or case-marking af-
fixes on the verb, such that the affixed verb indicates whether the
topic is agent or actor, object or goal, location or referent, or instru-
ment of the action indicated by the semantic content of the verb. Some
descriptions, it might be added, have elaborated the basic set of four
into more, including, for example, a beneficiary focus construction, an
aptative construction, and so forth.

Furthermore, this basic schema has been suggested as implying a
relationship between sentence types with the various sentential comple-
ments in one sentence construction able to be realigned with another
sentence construction merely by a change in the focus- or case-marking
affixes on the verb and a shift in the sentential complements with the

now-to-be focused sentential nominal complement moved to the topic
position and marked by the topic-marking particle ang.  For a more
complete treatment of this type of description in the history of Phil-
ippine studies, see Constantino (1971) and McKaughan (1971), and for an
appraisal of the manner of description, see Kess (1967, 1972, 1975, and
1976).

Certainly one typical illustration of this point of view and the way
in which focus has been taken to operate by some can be seen in the fol-
lowing excerpt from Thomas' (1958) discussion of Mansaka sentence struc-
ture.  "One of the most striking and important features of Mansaka and
many other Malayo-Polynesian languages is the ability to put in the
limelight a noun in any of the major sentence spots.  The whole sentence
polarizes toward that noun.  This feature we are calling 'focus'.  The
form of the verb indicates which of the noun spots is being focused, and
the noun occupying the spot is marked by" the topic-marking particle.
The implication clearly is that the topic is far from just another sur-
face structure noun phrase.  It bears a special relationship to the verb.
Moreover, one expects that any substantive phrase can become the topic
of a sentence, according to shift in focus affix markers in the verb and
the case-marking particles.

Some, like McKaughan (1958), instead chose to stress the syntactic
aspects of the verb-topic relationship.  Nevertheless, the relationship
was singularly unique in some respect, and this state of affairs was
noted in numerous Philippine languages and was taken as the cornerstone
to ensuing descriptions of many Philippine languages.  As a result, the
description of many Philippine languages are easy to translate one to
the other, perhaps as much a result of the fact of the relatively close
relationships of the languages involved as well as the relatively close
parallelism in the format of the description of the languages concerned.
For example, note McKaughan's classic and highly influential description
of Maranao.  McKaughan (1958:18) notes that "The case-marking particles
indicate the syntactic relations between any substantive phrase and the
verb.  The ... syntactic relations between the topic (always introduced
by the particle so) and the verb are marked by verb inflection ..."
One could simply replace the Maranao particle with the appropriate
Tagalog particle and the statement could stand largely unamended in
terms of the way in which such descriptions have been worded and elabor-
ated.

The notion of focus in the description of Tagalog, and of Philippine
languages in general, has been an interesting linguistic tradition.  In
fact, one must certainly agree with Constantino's (1971:118) observation
that "the history of Philippine linguistics is largely the history of

the study of the major Philippine languages, especially Tagalog".  The
earliest descriptions were largely of Tagalog and many subsequent theo-
retical formulations in linguistics in one form or another were applied
to Tagalog by reason of its status as one of the major languages of the
Philippines as well as its status as one of the more accessible ones.
By and large, my concern in this article has been with the past history
and future treatment of the notions of topic, focus, and case in the
Tagalog verbal paradigm, but by analogy many of the considerations can be
extended to similar problems in other languages of the same verbal para-
digm typology.  This interplay has been a characteristic of past discus-
sions, and there is little reason to discontinue this tradition - it is
the nature of other traditions that are argued for or against in the
following pages.

The earliest linguistic works on Tagalog, not including the work of
the Spanish grammarians of several centuries past who recorded their
observations on Tagalog after the Spanish conquest of the Philippines,
date from the turn of the century with the work of Frank R. Blake and
Leonard Bloomfield.  Obviously, Bloomfield's name is familiar enough to
most linguists, regardless of generation or intellectual inclinations.
Blake's is not, and in some ways this is unfortunate, for Blake published
articles on Tagalog and Philippine studies in general from the turn of
the century until only several decades ago.  Blake's use of familiar
terminology in the description of the particular verbal construction
network that characterises Tagalog and other languages of the area make
Tagalog seem less exotic and its grammatical features not quite as
dramatically different from other languages of familiar acquaintance.
Thirdly, Blake's notion of the relationship between specific verbal af-
fixes and construction types and the underlying case relationships of
items in the sentence was often both more tolerant and more accurate
than his contemporaries'.

It is true, however, that Blake was somewhat ambiguous in his treat-
ment of the concept of case relationships and their expression in the
surface structure of sentences.  On the one hand, in an early article
on the expression of case by the verb in Tagalog, Blake gives the im-
pression that the "case-indicating function of the verb is developed to a
high degree" in Philippine languages (Blake, 1906:183).  Although Blake
noticed the overlap between some forms and their corresponding verbal
construction types, as for example, the fact that for him "the locative
and ablative are expressed by the an passive" (Blake, 1960:185) and the
triple overlap in the use of the i- construction (1906:188), this article
leaves in general a somewhat different impression.  The impression is
that case relationships are expressed in the verbal inflections employed

in the verbal construction.  Secondly, that the noun complement which
appears as subject (*topic* is the more common term in current linguistic
parlance for Philippine studies) appears as such because of its having
been singled out for emphasis or as a focus of attention on the part of
the speaker, thus underlining for the listener that nominal complement
in the sentence which might be considered uppermost in the mind of the
speaker.

Thirdly, one is enticed to the unwarranted conclusion that any given
verb may be inflected for the various case relationships and the cor-
responding syntactic construction types by merely employing the appro-
priate verbal inflections and then re-arranging the nominal complements
of the sentence to correspond with the particular verbal construction.
There is a fourth implication, but one which is not overtly stated.
This is that the verbal affixes in question only and always represent a
single case relationship of the verb to the subject (*topic*) and a single
syntactic construction type.

Here it may be best to let Blake speak for himself on the expression
of case by Tagalog verbs.

> "In Tagalog in a verbal sentence, that adjunct of the verb
> which is of most importance in the eyes of the speaker or
> writer is made the subject of the sentence, and the rest of
> the sentence is conformed to the character of this subject,
> the other adjuncts of the verb, which for the time being are
> of minor importance, having their case relations expressed
> by means of inflection.  The verb might thus be said to ex-
> press the case with emphasis; the various inflected forms,
> without emphasis.  The sentence 'he looked for the book with
> the light in the room,' may be expressed in four different
> ways according as the agent, the object, the instrument, or
> the place, are specially emphasized.

> If the idea is 'he, and no one else, was the one that did
> the looking,' the active of the verb would be used with the
> agent as subject, e.g., *siyá ang hungmánap nang libro nitó-ng
> ilaw sa silíd*.

> If the book is uppermost in the mind of the speaker or
> writer, the book, the object of the action, is made the
> subject of the *in* passive, e.g., *ang libro ay hinánap niyá
> nitó-ng ilaw sa silíd*.

> If the idea is that 'this light, and no other' was used,
> the light, the instrument of the search, stands as the
> subject of the *i* passive, e.g., *itó-ng ilaw ay ihinánap niyá
> nang libro sa silíd*.

> If the idea is that 'the room and no other place' is where
> the search was made, the room is made the subject of the *an*
> passive, e.g., *ang silíd ay hinanápan niyá nang libro nitó-ng
> ilaw*."

One notes in passing Blake's use of **hungmanap** instead of **humanap**.
Where Bloomfield used a single speaker for his 1917 work, Blake instead
relied heavily on the work of the earlier Spanish grammarians, checking

out his assumptions with Tagalog texts and more current data.  As a
result, some of his lexical items and grammatical usage citations are
rather dated, and Constantino (1971:125) has justly criticised him for
this.  On the other hand, since Blake's terms are often those used by
the early Spanish grammarians, obviously extensions of European tradi-
tional grammar, the grammatical treatment is cast in a less exotic and
more familiar mould.  The point is that conflicting terminology is one
sure way to insure that languages will look different and allow of little
or no comparison.  At least this feature is relatively absent in Blake's
work, while in Bloomfield's description it was the keystone of the
description, and in fact, part of the underlying philosophy of science
Bloomfield and later descriptions brought to their investigations.  The
corollary was that each language was to be described in terms as unique
entities, without reference to traditional models, European or other-
wise.

   Blake's assessment of case was more accurate in another article
(1930) in which his analysis of the notion of case and the expression of
case relationships in surface structure is rather akin to more modern
versions of case grammar in syntactico-semantic discussions.  In fact,
Fillmore (1968) points out this article of Blake's as noteworthy and
comments that some of his observations are inspired by or parallel to
those of Blake.  It is all the more poignant a commentary by Blake, for
this point of view is opposed to some of the impressions which may have
been generated by his own earlier work and Bloomfield's work in Tagalog.
It does, however, present a better picture of what Blake must have had
in mind, and raises considerations which are crucial to the considera-
tion of focus, case, topic, and related topics in Philippine linguistic
studies.

   Curiously, in this publication, Blake provides a perfectly clear ex-
planation of the notion of underlying case.  The implication is that
case as an underlying universal set of grammatical concepts is one thing,
and the manner in which languages express various forms of surface
relationships (also often called grammatical case in Indo-European) are
different and need to be considered separately.  Thus, Fillmore (1968:21)
adopts the usage first provided by Blake in this (1930) discussion and
uses:

> "the term *case* to identify the underlying syntactic-semantic
> relationship, and the term *case form* to mean the expression
> of a case relationship in a particular language – whether
> through affixation, suppletion, use of clitic particles, or
> constraints on word order."

Even in earlier discussions of the case relations of the verb to the
topic complement, Blake (1906:188) was careful to note that while such

cases did "not conform exactly in their scope to any of the cases com-
monly recognized in Indo-European grammar; sometimes two forms are used
to express what is ordinarily considered one case, sometimes one form
expresses two or more cases".  Moreover, Blake was careful to point out
that surface case expression was not limited to verbal forms alone.
After all, the Tagalog sentential particles ang, nang, and sa are case-
marking particles too.  Blake's terms for their case functions are
exemplified in his christening of them by the traditional terms *nominat-
ive, genitive,* and *oblique.*  Compare Bloomfield's terms *subjective, dis-
junctive,* and *local.*  The important thing to note here is that in as-
signing unique and unmistakable relations between the affixed verb and
the topic complement, insufficient attention was paid to the obvious
fact of ambiguity in the use of the sentential particles ang, nang, and
sa.  Certainly the function of nang and sa is highly ambiguous; indeed,
Blake's choice of the term *oblique* for the particle sa attests to this.
Thus, one rarely notes in the literature an attempt to unambiguously
assign one and only one case function to sa, but one finds over and over
again the attempt to assign, say, an instrumental case focus to the i-
affix or an actor focus to the -um- affix.

Others, as for example, Scheerer's early (1905) description of the
Nabaloi "dialect", had also noticed these characteristics of the
Philippine verbal paradigm, but it was Bloomfield who contributed
greatly to the differentiation of terminology and underlined the unique-
ness of the syntax of Philippine languages.  As has been pointed out
elsewhere, it may have been that the underlining was too forceful.
Blake (1919) in fact criticised Bloomfield for just this in his review
of the latter's 1917 monograph *Tagalog Texts with Grammatical Analysis.*
In at least five instances Blake criticises Bloomfield's introduction of
"unfamiliar" and "unusual" terms and the disappointment of "obscure"
explanations.  At one point, an apparently exasperated Blake could not
resist translating one of the longer and less transparent explanations
by a single word, "verb".  Note Bloomfield's definition followed by
Blake's single word substitution in parentheses.

> "These last categories are the following, viz., I) static and
> transient words, a transient being word expressing "an element
> of experience viewed as impermanent, i.e., belonging to some
> limited portion of time" (or somewhat more simply, a verb-F.R.B.)"
> (Blake, 1919:90).

Incidentally, Capell (1964) has also called attention to the diffi-
culty "found in the delineation of verbal ·systems in the languages of
the Philippines and similarly structured languages in neighboring areas".
However, Capell's re-analysis of the verbal paradigm in Philippine lan-
guages is for quite different reasons and does not clear up the confusion

regarding the nature of focus, though he does call attention to the fact that there are varying degrees of focus and that these can be expressed in other ways.

Indeed, as McKaughan (1970:291) observes, Bloomfield found Philippine languages "so different that he avoided the use of familiar grammatical terminology to explain them in favor of new designations" in his analysis of Tagalog (1917) and Ilokano (1942). But it may be more to the point to say that he made them so very different by his avoiding the use of familiar terminology. McKaughan's other conclusion is indeed true to fact; in this latter feature, Bloomfield has been followed by most Philippine linguists up to the present time.

The net result of Bloomfield's influence was that his description inevitably became, as Constantino (1971:127) points out, the "model of the starting point of almost every modern descriptive study of any of the Philippine languages and dialects ... As a result of Bloomfield's influence, Philippine linguistics has become thoroughly descriptive and classificatory or taxonomic, and to a certain extent non-intuitive". If one may add to this last observation, non-intuitive to the degree that certain obvious considerations have been overlooked, in fact neglected, in the drive to make verbal constructions fit into a symmetrical network of focus or voice types, which unambiguously and uniformly comprises the verbal system of the language. However, as every student of Tagalog has learned, as soon as one moves from quoted examples into attempting to generate random sentences with verbal predicates, the process quickly moves from the realm of the systematic to trial and error.

Once again, one wonders how this could have been overlooked by those descriptions following Bloomfield's work. As Constantino (1971:139) notes, "many Philippine languages distinguish in the morphological shape of their verbs more than three passives". Ilokano, for example, which Bloomfield also worked on and published an outline (1942) of has at least five passives shown by the different affixes -en, i-, -an, i-an, and pag-. The singling out of only three passive constructions (signalled by -in-, i-, and -an) in Tagalog seems unreasonable in view of the fact that the closely related and highly parallel grammatical systems of the Philippine languages differ in the number and manner of their so-called passives.

The reason is obviously to be found in Bloomfield's position within the development of modern descriptive linguistics in the sense in which Kuhn (1970) outlines the development of theoretical paradigms in scientific disciplines. One need only speculate momentarily on the effect of this work on the course of Tagalog studies, and Philippine studies in general during the ensuing decades. It is only when the paradigm changes

and the new avenues of research are opened that new concerns in the
description of Philippine languages begin to emerge.  Actually, two
separate and distinct paradigms, generative theory and case grammar,
may be considered at this juncture as calling for different approaches
to the treatment of Tagalog syntax.

Obviously, in line with the generative transformational press for an
understanding of linguistic universals in the light of a universal
theory of language, the uniqueness of the Philippine verbal paradigm no
longer need be underscored, for we are told that languages will invari-
ably differ in their surface manifestations.  It is in their deep struc-
ture origins that we are assured that we can expect to find similarities.
Methodologically, the nature of the syntactic theory of language that we
bring to bear in our linguistic investigations will also posit parallels
and universals in all the languages of the world, Philippine languages
included.

Moreover, there is a crucial difference here, in that the switch
from taxonomic observations to generation of grammatical sentences pro-
vides the impetus, in fact, necessity, for considering the Philippine
verbal paradigm in new ways.  One can no longer entertain the notion
that the verbal construction types in Tagalog alternate with one another
in completely predictable ways, as does the passive for active transitive
verb sentences in English.  Some descriptions have tried to coerce Taga-
log verbal constructions into this mould, indicating that perhaps the
active sentence (the actor-focus) verbal construction was the kernel
from which other sentences of the goal-, locative-, or instrumental-
focus type could be derived.  This, of course, has been an implicit as-
sumption, either pedagogical or descriptive, on the part of many descrip-
tions ever since Blake and Bloomfield.  However, as soon as the task
turns from one of listing to rule formulation with the express concern
of generating grammatical sentences and avoiding ungrammatical sentences,
it becomes obvious that this position is untenable.  However, it would
appear that some descriptions cling to this notion, in spite of the ob-
vious evidence to the contrary that this is simply not so (Buenaventura-
Naylor, personal communication).

It may be that what has been termed focus is the syntactic manner in
which Philippine languages keep track of new information introduced into
the conversation or narrative.  Buenaventura-Naylor (1973) hints at this
in her dissertation, and it would appear that this line of investigation
promises to be most rewarding.

What can focus be taken to mean then?  One may disagree with Hidalgo's
(1970:27) claims that focus is such that "a constituent is brought into
sharp perspective so that the attention of the listener is drawn closer

to that constituent which is presumably in the speaker's mind.  This
element which is in sharp perspective, or which is in focus, we call
topic".  However, one is reluctant to deny that focus equates with the
question of emphasis entirely, for there are obviously ways of indi-
cating emphasis which are not co-extensive with this syntactic phenom-
enon.  One of these is the use of intonational features to call atten-
tion to or place emphasis upon a particular sentential complement.
Certainly another method is the pre-position of the item singled out
for such emphasis.  For example, compare the following pairs:

Mayroon akong pera.          *'I have some money.'*
Ako'y may pera.              *'I'm the one who has some money.'*

Wala akong anak.             *'I don't have a child.'*
Ako'y walang anak.           *'I'm the one who doesn't have any children.'*

Nasa bahay ang dalaga.       *'The girl is in the house.'*
Ang dalaga ang nasa bahay.   *'The one in the house is the girl.'*

Here one is tempted to speculate on how such obviously mentalistic
considerations could have possibly entered into a tradition conceived
and engendered in a period of anti-mentalistic methodology and descrip-
tion.  Such descriptions employing concepts like emphasis, focus of at-
tention, and so forth, are patently mentalistic, and the labelling of
the verbal construction types by the focus labels clearly relates to the
attempt to label the semantic content of topic complements and their
functions.

In the past, most analyses have treated this nominal complement as
standing in a special relationship with the verbal predicate and have
termed this nominal complement *topic* in place of *subject*.  Moreover,
those verbal constructions which were the result of the limited number
of verbal affixes which were thought to correspond to particular syntac-
tic arrangements and specially related topics were consequently termed
focus construction types and the corresponding affixes focus affixes.
The traditional view, of course, had attempted to portray that special
relationship in largely semantic terms, and this is reflected in the
names given to the construction types.  For example, actor-focus con-
structions were constructions in which the actor or agent was the topic;
in goal-focus constructions, it was the goal or object which was taken
as topic; in locative constructions the location, direction, or person
to or from which the action was oriented; in instrument-focus construc-
tions, the instrument or means by which the action was performed; in
benefactive-constructions, the beneficiary for whom the action is per-
formed.  When even such broad labels did not seem to cover the semantic

range of the items covered in the topic positions, some resorted to
broader labels which would attempt to cover the category of lexical
items which fit into the topic position more fairly, if not as neatly.
Such considerations obviously underlie the use of terms like referent-
focus, accessory-focus, and implicative-focus by some descriptions.

It would have seemed that a simple cross-classificational listing
along the lines suggested by Chomsky's *Aspects* (1965) treatment would
have been one way to proceed with the problem at hand. This approach
would have required that verbs would have been marked for some kind of a
*focus index*, as suggested by Kess (1967) and Buenaventura-Naylor (1973),
which gave the information appropriate to triggering transformations
which would have led to the formulation of grammatical strings for each
verb in the lexicon. Actually, this focus index was to have included
three kinds of features: focus affix, subcategorisational restrictions,
and semantic features. Thus, each verb would have listed for it those
verbal focus affixes which can co-occur with it. Secondly, it is neces-
sary to include restrictions similar to the subcategorisational restric-
tions suggested by Chomsky (1965), for it is obvious that verbal affixes
are not an entirely reliable clue to the privileges of occurrence of
various nominal complements in the sentence. For example, while the
-um- infix has been taken to indicate the so-called actor-focus, it does
not unambiguously provide *a priori* information as the number, type, and
semantic relationship of the various nominal complements which may share
the sentence with it. For example, compare the roots ulan *'to rain'* and
bili *'to buy'* in their appearance with -um-.

Umulan sa Maynila.                    *'It rained in Manila.'*

Bumili siya nang bigas sa tindahan    *'He bought rice at the store for*
  para sa nanay.                     *his mother.'*

Other semantic counter-evidence to the case-marking abilities of such
verbal affixes have been noted in stative or ambient sentences of a
meteorological nature. For example, in sentences like the following,
there is no suggestion of what could possibly be the actor of such
actor-focus sentences (the -um- infix has been taken as one of the
primary markers of actor-focus sentences).

Umulan kahapon sa Maynila.            *'It rained yesterday in Manila.'*
Humangin nang malakas.                *'The wind blew strongly.'*
Lumindol.                             *'There was an earthquake.'*

Moreover, in a sentence like Uuwi sana ang binata pero umulan *'The
bachelow was about to go home but it rained'* the two verbs uwi *'to go
home'* and ulan *'to rain'* do not have the same topic complement although

they occur in the same sentence construction and are marked by a form
of the -um- infix.  One intuitively knows that no deletion rules re-
moving identical subjects here has applied, for ulan has none.

It is intriguing that a school of linguistic thought which had its
parallels in the behaviorism which overtook the psychology of the period
never made any attempt to ascertain whether focus was in fact emphasis,
focus of attention, or whatever, on the basis of behavioral evidence
from experimental investigation.  It is true that a fair number of more
recent psycho-linguistic investigations have pointed out that the rela-
tionship between the active and passive in English is not meaning-
preserving and that the active is not equated with the passive in terms
of performance variables by speakers of the language.  Moreover, some of
the studies suggest that the function of the passive is in fact that of
highlighting or emphasising the logical object, now moved to grammatical
subject position and initial in the sentence.

There is some indirect support for this interpretation of focus in
psycholinguistic investigations of differences for the active and pas-
sive sentence types in English.  Such investigations have shown that
sentence types like passive may be more appropriate to some contexts
than others, being used in performance to call attention to or to em-
phasise certain topics rather than others.  Turner and Rommetveit (1968)
discovered that the function of the English passive is to place emphasis
on the object of the action, thereby taking similar emphasis away from
the logical (but not grammatical) subject of the sentence.  As recall
prompts they employed pictures of situations, and found that passives
were elicited by showing pictures of the objects in such situations.
Conversely, active sentences would be elicited by pictures of the agen-
tive subject, as would pictures in which the entire situation was re-
presented.  This is congruent with Johnson-Laird's (1968) suggestion
that the choice of the passive voice is directly related to placing em-
phasis on the underlying object by the overt means of having it appear
in the sentence-first position, as happens with logical objects in the
passive frames.

Other studies have reported similar findings.  Clark (1965) found
that subjects provided different responses to active and passive sen-
tence types when required to fill in words missing in the two syntactic
patterns.  Animate nouns apparently figure more importantly in passive
sentences in which the grammatical subject (but logical object) position
is the slot to be filled.  These responses were almost double the number
given for transitive verb active sentences in which the grammatical ob-
ject (still logical object) was to be filled in.  Similarly, Johnson
(1967) also found differences for the active and passive sentence types

in an experiment on syntactic position and meaning rated according to
the semantic differential technique. Subject and object functions in
passive sentence types were evaluated as more similar in terms of their
semantic differential ratings than the corresponding subject and object
function slots in active sentence types. Olson and Filby (1972) found
differences in the comprehension of active and passive sentences under a
variety of circumstances. These experiments unfortunately do not tell
exactly what the differences between active and passive sentence types
are, but they do graphically underline the fact that differences between
the two sentence types do exist and that they cannot be taken as equi-
valent and meaning-preserving in any real sense. What then of the
various Tagalog passives?

There is also striking evidence from Wason's (1961, 1965) psycholin-
guistic work with the negative in which he finds the "context of plau-
sible denial" the most likely and appropriate function of negative con-
structions in English. It is likely that some such similar function may
turn out to be true for Tagalog passives, or non-actor-focus-construc-
tions, but to my knowledge this has not been adequately surveyed, and
certainly was not surveyed during this period, in spite of claims that
this was how speakers operated and that this was how such sentences
functioned.

Under the previous kind of approach, it would have even made per-
fectly good sense to investigate the selectional feature restrictions of
the topic complement to the verbal predicate. However, with the intro-
duction of a fresh new approach of case grammar, entirely new perspec-
tives are possible, and they do in fact present the researcher with
perspectives that are more likely to reflect the case-marking situation
in Tagalog verbal constructions. Actually, some of this was foreshadowed
in the presentation of the dichotomy between deep structure and surface
structure, but not with sufficient departure from the notion of syntax
as central. It is only with Fillmore (1968, 1971), Chafe (1970), and
Bever (1970, 1971) and their approach to the concept of meaning as the
central point of departure in language that competent description of
case becomes possible. This paper restricts itself to Fillmore's discus-
sion of case, for it touches in essence most closely to the problem at
hand. Moreover, it also touches terminologically closely to the problem
at hand and the way in which it has been treated and labelled since the
turn of the century.

Thus, focus is now construed as entirely a surface structure phenom-
enon. The relationship of the topic complement is a special one, but
not one defined in unambiguous semantic terms or in unambiguous surface
case grammar terms. The relationship is as special as the fact that

sentences in Tagalog have a subject or topic complement, and different kinds of verbal constructions correlate highly with particular syntactic arrangements. But nothing more can be made of this fact. One must, nevertheless, continue to mark focus potential (we may as well keep the term focus, and now use it in the sense of a particular set of verbal affixes which correlates significantly with syntactic arrangements for verb roots). Why? Because these affixes as marked for verbs will give some clue as to which transformational rules will apply in the grammar and which will not. For example, a verb marked for -um-, mag-, -in, and i- will trigger just those transformational rules which will provide strings generated by those rules. Or if one operates on the insertion principle, then verbs listed with appropriate features in the lexicon may appear in certain syntactic slots.

The key difference now is that such verbs must also be marked for their case propositions. In specific, one must mark verbs for the particular case relationship that the topic complement does bear to the verb in question. The case functions will obviously overlap with the surface manifestations in some sentences, and differ in others; this is no longer troublesome, for we have already dismissed these as being totally reliable guides as to which case relationships verbs do in fact take as their constellation of case relationships. A complete analysis would thus include both the surface structure information discussed above as well as a complete semantic description of the possible cases that a given verb will admit. Obviously, the two are separate concerns.

Various strategies have been taken to remedy the problem posed by either verb classification or by a generative treatment of the Philippine verb. The most common strategy has been some overlap of the taxonomic aspects of listing and verb classification and the problem of generation. Some descriptions have taken the verbal affixes as the basis of the verbal classification, acknowledging that verbs may admit of different behaviours in respect to their occurrence with the various affixes chosen by each verb. However, the notion often implicit in such descriptions is that the verb itself, with its voice affix, is in itself the key to the remainder of the syntactic construction. The work done by Miller (1964) for Mamanwa, Kerr (1965) for Cotobato Manobo, and Llamzon (1966) for Tagalog center around investigation of such verbal affixes.

Miller's and Kerr's results both provide the basis of verb classification, but are relatively weak generational devices and do not offer clear statements of the case relationships of the case structure of the verb. Llamzon's investigation of the verbal affixes in Tagalog is, like Kerr's and Miller's results, most instructive of the *focus potential* of

the verb. Llamzon took Bloomfield's 397 transients (verbs), listed in
his lexical index, and tried them out for a battery of seven such af-
fixes (-um-, mag-, man-, -in, i-, -an, and ma-).

There are several interesting things to note about Llamzon's findings
for the verb and the affixes. First, one notes that there is overlap
between the affixes in several ways. There are several actor-focus af-
fixes, -um-, mag-, and man-, with no apparent single clear-cut boundary
able to be drawn between them. The ma- affix would appear to go both
ways, being at times what looks like an actor-focus (Natutulog ang bata
'The child is sleeping') and at other times what looks like a goal-focus
(Nakuha niya ang bata 'He took the child.').

Secondly, it was hard to find clear-cut unambiguous semantic char-
acterisations for the noun phrases which occurred as topic complements
for the verbal constructions which were the result of such verbal af-
fixation. This would appear to confirm the fact that the notion of
focus discussed previously as having been commonly used was a handy
mnemonic device, by no means covering the entire array of phrases which
occurred as topic complement with a specific verbal affix. Thirdly, if
there is a single concept which can be construed as actor-focus, why
more than one actor-focus construction? One could at least have hoped
for some kind of complementary distribution between the various actor-
focus affixes, -um-, mag-, and man- (or mang-), such that where one
occurred the other two did not, but such is far from the case.

It is obvious that the 397 verbs vary greatly in the co-occurrence
with just these seven affixes. There is no *a priori* way of knowing ex-
actly and accurately which verbs will co-occur with which affixes. The
enterprise is one in which *a posteriori* information appropriately
labelled and marked in the lexicon entry for each verb is the only
guarantee to the generation of grammatical sentences in Tagalog or other
Philippine languages. For example, Llamzon found that of the 397 verbs,
only 305 could occur with -um-, 51 with man- (mang-), 331 with ma-, and
so forth.

On the other hand, another popular strategy of the last decade has
been to investigate what Chomsky (1965) called sub-categorisational re-
striction, that is, which noun phrase complements are obligatory for
certain verbs. Some work has also been done on which noun phrase
complements are optional to certain verbs, thus providing a configura-
tion of sentential complements which are then to be marked as optional
or obligatory for the verbs in the lexicon. Thus, for example, see Kess
(1967) and Constantino (1965). Forster and Barnard (1968) have provided
a classification of Dibabawon verbs on the basis of their occurrence
with obligatory situational slots like actor, goal, instrument, and

site.  Reid (1966) employs the tagmemic criteria of potential clause
expansion and of nuclear grammatical slots with the possibility of
clause transformation.  However, it should be noted that any attempt at
verb classification in a purely taxonomic fashion is no guarantee of
generativity beyond the sample class, and can only be valuable when a
by-product of the information *a posteriori* cross-classificationally
marked for verbs is in the lexicon entries.  The sequence of information
is clear, the latter is a primary consideration and is first and fore-
most.

Constantino (1965) has provided just such a valuable constituent
analysis and transformational analysis of the major sentence patterns
of twenty-six Philippine languages.  Interestingly, his approach in-
cludes the specification of complements which may occur with verbs in
sentences containing verbal predicates.  For example, Constantino notes
that active verbs are to be subdivided into six subclasses on the basis
according to which complements occur with them obligatorily or optionally.
For active verbs alone, Constantino considered seven different kinds of
complement: the indefinite goal complement, the definite goal comple-
ment, the locative complement, the benefactive complement, the instru-
mental complement, the reciprocal actor complement, and the agentive
complement.

Here it should be pointed out that an amalgamation of the two con-
cerns is essential.  Just as a listing of what has been termed focus
potential is insufficient, so also is a simple notational listing of the
various nominal complements that various verb roots may take.  It is
possible to link the two up, and in fact, this is likely the best ap-
proach to employ.  Obviously, one cannot expect a focus affix by itself
to be predictive of the syntactic construction's optional or obligatory
nominal complements accompanying the verb.  For example, we have already
noted the syntactic constructional possibilities the actor-focus -um-
infix may participate in.  For example, contrast the following sentences:

| | |
|---|---|
| Umulan. | *It rained.* |
| Bumili siya nang bigas. | *She sold rice.* |
| Tumaba si Maria. | *Mary got chubby.* |

Or for example, contrast the following sentences with the actor-focus
nag- prefix (from mag-):

| | |
|---|---|
| Naglinis siya nang sapatos. | *He cleaned the shoes.* |
| Nagtiis sila. | *They suffered.* |
| Naglagay siya nang tubig sa baso. | *He put the water in the glass.* |

(Obligatory locative complement)

Thus, verbs will have to be marked for focus affixes as well as for
those nominal complements which appear obligatorily or optionally in
the syntactic construction in which the resultant affixed verbal con-
struction appears.  See Kess (1967), Buenaventura-Naylor (1973), or
Ramos (1973) for suggestions as to how various aspects of the problem
may be projected.

This still does not provide us with a sufficient basis to freely
generate grammatical sentences containing verbal predicates beyond those
accounted for in the lexicon accompanying the description.  This is
still a basic inescapable problem and one that is crucial to the descrip-
tion of Philippine languages, if we are to move beyond the stage we now
find ourselves at.  McKaughan's (1971) rhetorical question as to whether
the verbs can be grouped by semantic criteria is one possible line of
approach.  However, this line of approach must be clearly defined as to
what is semantic and what is not?  What is grammatical and what is not?
What is focus and what is not?  What is the relationship of the topic to
the verb and what is not?  First, it must be assumed that Tagalog verbs
must be marked for a variety of surface syntactic features in the manner
described in the preceding pages.  Secondly, one must now incorporate
semantic considerations in the description of the Philippine verbal
paradigm, and more than likely, in a way which is not necessarily di-
rectly related to surface features in the syntax of Philippine verbs.
At least several approaches have suggested themselves as being capable
of providing both the descriptive machinery and philosophical basis to
handle the problem effectively.

Here it may be best to survey two of these approaches and what their
contributions, potential and actual, may be construed as their resolu-
tion of the stalemate described in the previous paragraphs.  The first
of these is the method of incorporating semantics into generative theory
presented by Katz and Fodor (1963), Katz and Postal (1964), and institu-
tionalised by Chomsky (1965).  The second of these approaches is case
grammar as a means of answering fundamental questions of the case rela-
tionships inherent and unchanging in related sentences containing verbal
constructions as well as to a description of verbs which allows both
generativity and predictability of both syntactic and semantic relation-
ships.  Other similar approaches will be bypassed for obvious reasons
of space and their lack of overt clearly defined representatives in
Philippine verbal formulations as yet.  It should be sufficient to say
that the parallel thread which runs through Fillmore's argument as well
as Chafe's, Bever's, and others', is the primacy of semantics or whatever
one wishes to call that level of language which underlies the conceptual
framework which language is but one reflection of.

The third kind of approach which has been taken up to this point has been one in which selectional features have been charted for the several part of speech categories.  By and large, this has been restricted to the part of speech categories of noun and verb in Philippine studies, and in fact, usually even more restricted to the selectional restrictions which operate between the noun head in the nominal complement taken as topic in the grammatical sense and the verb of the major verbal predicate of the sentence.  For example, one notes the collocational privileges apparent in sentences like the first pair and the collocational privileges apparently violated in the second pair of sentences.

| | |
|---|---|
| Namutla ang pasyente. | *The patient got pale.* |
| Nalungkot ang dalaga. | *The girl became sad.* |
| *Namutla ang hangin. | *\*The wind got pale.* |
| *Nalungkot ang basura. | *\*The rubbish became lonely.* |

The question of the place of metaphor, puns, modern prose, beat poetry of the Ginsberg and Ferlinghetti type, and modern rock music genres notwithstanding, the obvious way to treat such facts are to assign certain features to one or the other part of speech class, noun or verb, and then assign commensurate, potentially matching features to the other part of speech class.  What has most often been done is to assign such semantic or lexical features to the noun and have the collocational relationships of other parts of speech classes, like verbs and adjectives, be defined in respect to these inherent noun features. Though this approach borders on the notion of underlying semantic properties, in essence it is purely an attempt to account for the surface properties of certain classes of grammatical sentences as opposed to other kinds of ungrammatical sentences.  In the development of generative theory in the last decade, it was of course the way in which the semantic level was both introduced into a theory of language and the way in which the domain of semantics was defined to make it amenable to the kind of linguistic theory then available.

It would appear that to the degree that case grammar formulations, the fourth approach, are fruitful in their application to the Philippine verbal paradigm, the information provided by the case relationship of a nominal complement to the verb may in effect answer any necessary questions about the semantic feature surface relationship of the noun and verb involved as well.  If, as Ramos (1973:30) observes in her discussion of those cases conceptually inherent to the basic sense of the Tagalog verb, "the roles actants may perform are grouped in Tagalog into five inherent case relationships in the deep structure: the agentive case (A), the objective case (O), the directional case (Dir), the

locative case (L) and the instrumental case (I)", then one can expect
some degree of semantic predictability as to the semantic status of the
nouns which fill a given role with a given verb.  Indications from
Ramos' work and others point to this, but this is only offered here as a
suggestion of possible advantageous by-products of a case-like approach
to the Tagalog verb.

This fourth and last approach is derived from Fillmore's recent
arguments (1968, 1971) for the inclusion of the grammatical notion case
in the base component of the grammar of every language.  Fillmore sees
such case relationships as primitive terms in the grammatical theory of
language even though such categories may in fact be covert categories,
not necessarily expressed in the surface structure.  In fact, he notes
that any attempt to restrict the notion of case to surface structure
alone must fail.  Here it may be added that the attempt to handle surface
structure in Tagalog as the only kind of possible case grammar has re-
sulted in the most counter-intuitive descriptions and a convoluted type
of logical taxonomy which has coerced constructions into a tidy set of
classes, but at great intuitive cost.  The question of case in Tagalog
is no different than that in Latin; in its underlying conceptualisation,
the various cases should be universal relationships possibly expressed
in different ways by the surface structures of various languages.  Thus,
it is not at all surprising to find that Latin employs inflectional
endings (traditionally referred to as case, but different from Fillmore's
underlying cases), nor is it surprising to find that Tagalog has verbal
predicates with syntactic complements, with verbal predicates exhibiting
certain surface relationships between the verb and its topic complement
(traditionally referred to as focus-marking or case-marking relation-
ships, but again different from Fillmore's sense of underlying cases).

Fillmore's analysis (1968:21) suggests that "the sentence in its basic
structure consists of a verb and one or more noun phrases, each associ-
ated with the verb in a particular case relationship".  The implication
is that the various permitted arrays of distinct cases occurring in
simple sentences may express a notion of sentence type that may possibly
have universal validity, with the result a classification of verbs in a
language which again may have some universal validity.  The crucial con-
sideration is that one is here considering underlying cases, not the
various types of mechanisms by which surface case is, was, or may be
shown in languages.  As soon as this is the important consideration,
languages may be allowed to become as different as is conceivably pos-
sible by the surface mechanisms available to language in the sense noted
by Greenberg's (1966) statistical inventories.

Such semantic primacy positions, like those of Fillmore and Chafe, have adopted the position of the verb being in some way central or primary; this is in contrast to selectional feature notations where nouns were described by means of a small number of inherent features and other part of speech classes, like verbs and adjectives, were defined in terms of their collocational possibilities. This shift in position is reflected in Ramos' (1973:23) case grammar treatment of the Tagalog verb in which it is assumed that "the verb is central to the Tagalog sentence. Nouns are peripheral and tied to the verb center by relations such as agentive, objective, instrumental, directional, locative, and the like".

Fillmore (1968:24-5) has recognised at least the following case notions as a set of possible universal concepts to be designated for inclusion in the grammar. The cases are as follows: agentive (A), the animate instigator of the action identified by the verb; instrumental (I), the inanimate force or object casually involved in the action or state identified by the verb; dative (D), the animate being affected by the state or action identified by the verb; factitive (F), the object or being resulting from the action or state identified by the verb, or understood as a part of the meaning of the verb; locative (L), the location or spatial orientation of the state or action identified by the verb; and the objective (O), the case of anything representable by a noun whose role in the action or state identified by the verb is identified by the semantic interpretation of the verb itself. Other cases, Fillmore implies, may have to be added, and this is in fact what does happen in later expansions of case grammar. See, for example, Fillmore's later discussion cum expansion of the same topic (1971), in which several new cases are added and several terminological changes are to be noted.

What Fillmore's approach suggests is that the focus paradigm of Philippine verbal constructions is best treated as a surface structure manifestation which may or may not provide clues as to the underlying case relationships. In some cases, it apparently does, as for example, in Fillmore's illustration from one of McKaughan's Maranao examples in which the focus construction types and their corresponding verbs in this particular instance do appear to overlap nicely with the cases in question. In this instance, the traditional focus or voice or case-marking labels given the several verbal constructions appear to fit the actual underlying cases nicely, and better than that, appear to give a correct indication of what the case relationship of topic to verb happens to be. However, it may be asking too much to ask this of all such verbal construction types, as the following examples from Ramos' (1973) Tagalog discussion indicate:

| | |
|---|---|
| Itago mo ang bola. | *Keep the ball.* |
| Ibili mo siya nang kotse. | *Buy a car for him.* |
| Ipunas mo ang trapo. | *Use the rag to wipe it.* |

Here is an instance of a single verbal affix, a so-called focus-marking affix in some descriptions and a so-called case-marking affix in other descriptions, marking three separate and distinct grammatical relations between the verbal construction and the nominal complement in the topic position. The i- prefix has been used in sentences in which the object, the beneficiary, and the instrument respectively appear at the topic complement.

Schachter (1961) noticed this early on, pointing out that the same sentence Binayaran ng lalaki ang alipin had two different readings, stemming from two different derivational histories. On the one hand, the sentence can read as *'The man paid for the slave'*; on the other, the sentence reads as *'The man paid the slave'*. The first has alipin as the object in the topic position, the second reading has alipin as indirect-object in the topic position. Thus, while it is true that underlying every topic phrase in verbal predicate sentences there must be a case distinction of some sort, one cannot agree with McKaughan and others in saying that "that case distinction is overtly carried by an affix in the verb" (McKaughan, 1970:295).

Moreover, there is also the question of sentences without verbal predicates. Such sentences still have grammatical subjects marked by ang and sentential syntactic position. Such sentences offer a variety of non-topic sentential complements, none of which can be said to overtly and unambiguously mark the topic. But such sentences nevertheless do have a topic which may stand in a particular case relationship the rest of the sentence. Consider for example the following:

| | |
|---|---|
| Ang dalaga ang maganda. | *It is the girl who is pretty.* |
| Ang bulaklak ang para sa dalaga. | *It is the flower which is for the girl.* |
| Sa Maynila ang bahay. | *The house is in Manila.* |
| Binata ang abogado. | *The lawyer is a bachelor.* |
| May pera ba ang titser? | *Does the teacher have any money?* |

Here it should be noted that in some quarters the characterisation of the verbal paradigm is changing in just this direction, the direction of case grammar formulations. As has been pointed out by Kess (1975), one cannot help but be struck by the changing semantics of focus, such that previous characterisations of the concept of focus seem to be in the process of being rethought and more and more influence of the case grammar and/or primacy of semantics approach is to be seen. For example, see the recent work published by Miller and Miller (1973) for

Mamanwa (in contrast to Miller (1964)), West (1973) for Amganad Ifugao, and others.

McKaughan's (1971) rhetorical question as to whether there may yet be some key to the Philippine verbal paradigm may in some ways be answered by the application of case grammar notions to the problem. However, the answer is of a larger order of magnitude, for if we answer such questions we really answer such questions for the human verbal paradigm repertoire. Take, for example, Ramos' (1973:25) observation that "the role types are themselves unanalyzables corresponding to elementary perceptions on the part of human beings concerning matters relative to an action. The roles include relations to actions such as who did it, who experienced it, where it happened, what the result was, and a few others. A number of these role notions may be universal, and can be grouped in each language into a limited number of cases, namely, agent, instrument, object, directional, location, and so forth". I would disagree with the observation that such role notions may be universal; rather, they *must* be construed as universal if the theory is to be meaningful in any linguistically universal sense. The point is that if we solve the problem of roles and verbal case-argument constellations for a given language or closely related set of languages, we should have solved the core of the problem for all languages. The problem is now one of validating what we have found, or rather what we have hypothesised, for languages. The evaluation and validation problem now hinges on the seemingly unanswerable question which underlies the basic rift between the current revival of rationalism in certain sciences like linguistics and empiricism. The very means by which results of the former can be proved is ruled out by the philosophical foundations of the former and by the chasm separating what is taken as legitimate concerns and the data exhibiting or supporting those concerns by rationalistic speculation and empiricistic verification. For a lengthier discussion of the basic psycholinguistic problem of the relationship between linguistic theory and psycholinguistic investigations directed at testing the psychological validity of such linguistic constructs, see Kess (1976).

Thus, McKaughan's (1971) suggestion that there may yet be a key to the Philippine verb's full paradigm, something like the four principal parts for Latin verbs in classical studies, has not to date been fulfilled and does not appear to be immediately answerable by the approaches we have taken up to this time. However, what is essential is that what we have accomplished by way of investigation of the verbs is appropriately charted. This paper suggests using the terms *focus* only to refer to the type of focus-marking affix seen in the discussion up to this

point and *case* to relate to the actual underlying case relationship of
complements to the verbal predicate.  This is a necessary departure
from the previous view of focus often held, but essential to an adequate
description of the case-relationship of verb to topic.  Moreover, the
use of the affixes as listed in the lexicon entry for each of the verbs
may be taken as only suggestive of, but not entirely reliable and pre-
dictive of the appearance of syntactic complements that may appear in
the same sentence frame with the verbal predicate and its topic comple-
ment.  Such other sentential complements, like the locative complement,
the benefactive complement, the objective complement (specific and non-
specific), and so forth, would have to be specified as to their obli-
gatory or optional status with each verb in the lexicon.

The question is now one of what we have learned and we shall do with
the information we have amassed in respect to the nature of the verbal
paradigm.  It is apparent that a complete syntactico-semantic descrip-
tion of the Tagalog verb must include each of the four types of informa-
tion discussed in the paper.  Each type of information, incidentally,
almost coincides with different periods of theory development in lin-
guistic science theory, and each is valuable and essential to a complete
understanding of how the Tagalog verb operates and how it may be gener-
ated and how it fits in with linguistic universal constructs.

It should suffice to say that a complete description must at least
include generative information regarding the co-occurrence potential of
such so-called focus affixes, the co-occurrence potential of the various
syntactic complements in sentences with each of the verbal constructions
resulting from the affixation of such verbal affixes, the selectional
feature restrictions between the verb and the topic complement (as well
as the other syntactic complements), and lastly, a statement of the ac-
tual underlying case relationship between the noun phrase standing as
topic in relation to a specific verbal predicate.

Moreover, it might be best if descriptions of the verbal paradigm
restrict themselves to the psycholinguistic evidence at hand, before
phrasing descriptions which have profound ramifications which cannot be
supported by the present state of our knowledge.  This also implies that
continuing psycholinguistic inquiry into such problems is much to be
desired and that this field of endeavour is one which will likely pro-
vide us with a metric device for evaluating some aspects of linguistic
description and possibly for choosing one portrait of the verbal
paradigm over another.

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