Transitivity and Pronominal Clitic Order in Kapampangan

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In Kapampangan, pronominal marking is almost always obligatory, and the order of clitic pronouns is strictly the ergative followed by the absolutive when both pronouns are present. This paper discusses some issues of transitivity associated with pronominal marking. Clauses with two core arguments show various degrees of transitivity. There are constructions with two core arguments whose predicates are semantically far from transitive (expressing “relations”, not “actions”), and thus low in transitivity. An analysis of such “low transitivity” predicates is presented. Low transitivity predicates also show a kind of mismatch between morphology and semantics, and some examples of the mismatch from other languages are provided.

1. Introduction

This paper deals with issues of transitivity associated with pronominal marking. In section 2, I discuss how transitivity is associated with the presence and absence of clitic pronouns and of full NPs. In section 3, I discuss one particular construction type, which involves an aptative prefix, forming both normal transitive constructions and “low transitive” constructions. In section 4, I introduce a concept of “morphological and semantic mismatch” with which the Kapampangan construction in question is crucially associated, and give some similar cases from Tagalog and Indonesian.

Kapampangan is spoken mainly in Pampanga Province, and also in parts of Tarlac, Nueva Ecija, Bulacan, and Bataan provinces of Luzon, Philippines.

The following tables give a general overview of Kapampangan pronominal clitics (Table 1) and of some fused combinations of two pronominal clitics (Table 2).

2. Transitivity

It is important to distinguish between semantic and morphosyntactic transitivity (e.g., Himmelmann 1999, Ross 2002). A simple definition of semantic transitivity is that clauses denoting an event involving two participants are transitive. There are more fine-grained approaches to semantic transitivity, such as Hopper and Thompson (1980), proposing ten (mostly semantic) parameters.

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* I am grateful to Laurie Reid for his comments on an earlier version of this paper, which made me rethink some of the ideas. Needless to say, all remaining errors and shortcomings are mine. I am also grateful to Mike Pangilinan and Dave Nepomuceno for providing me with rich data and valuable insights. This research is supported in part by a grant-in-aid for scientific research from the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science (No. 17520257).
Table 1. Kapampangan pronominal clitics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Ergative</th>
<th>Absolutive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1SG</td>
<td>ku</td>
<td>ku</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2SG</td>
<td>mu</td>
<td>ka</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3SG</td>
<td>na</td>
<td>ya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1DU.IN</td>
<td>ta</td>
<td>kata</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1PL.IN</td>
<td>ta:mu, ta:</td>
<td>kata:mu, ta:mu, kata:, ta:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1EX</td>
<td>mi</td>
<td>kami, ke</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2PL</td>
<td>yu</td>
<td>kayu, ko</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3PL</td>
<td>da/ra</td>
<td>la</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. Kapampangan fused clitic combinations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ergative</th>
<th>+ Absolutive.3SG (ya)</th>
<th>+ Absolutive.3PL (la)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1SG (ku)</td>
<td>ke, kya</td>
<td>ko, kula</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2SG (mu)</td>
<td>me, mya</td>
<td>mo, mula</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3SG (na)</td>
<td>ne, nya</td>
<td>no, nala</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1DU.IN (ta)</td>
<td>te, tya</td>
<td>to, tala</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1PL.IN (ta:)</td>
<td>tasya</td>
<td>tala:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1EX (mi)</td>
<td>mya, miya</td>
<td>mila</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2PL (yu)</td>
<td>ye, ya</td>
<td>yo, yula</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3PL (da/ra)</td>
<td>de/re, dya/rya</td>
<td>do/ro, dala/rala</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Morphosyntactic transitivity crucially depends on how many core arguments there are in a clause. Typically, transitive constructions have two core arguments (‘A’ and ‘O’), and intransitive constructions have only one (‘S’). Furthermore, there are “extended” transitive constructions, with three core arguments ‘A’, ‘O’ and ‘E’, and “extended” intransitive constructions, with ‘S’ and ‘E’ (Dixon and Aikhenvald 2000). According to Ross (2002), in conventional definitions, there are three conditions for identifying an argument as being “core”. One of the conditions, the only sufficient condition, is that the argument has a morphosyntactic relationship to the verb. This relationship may be marked by coding on the verb (e.g., agreement affixes), by coding on the arguments (e.g., case-marking), or by position in the clause.

In Kapampangan, if there is only one clitic pronoun in a clause, it is usually coreferential with the only argument. If there are two clitic pronouns, they are coreferential with two arguments. These pronouns appear whether the coreferential arguments are overt (i.e., full NPs)
or not. Consider the examples in (1). In (1a), the only argument in a clause (‘S’) is marked by the third-person singular pronoun ya. In (1b), two arguments (‘A’ and ‘O’) are marked by the portmanteau pronoun no, the combination of third-person singular na, and third-person plural la. The pronouns hereafter will be labeled as ergative (for ‘A’) and absolutive (for ‘S’ and ‘O’).

(1) a. Susulagpo = ya ing ayup.
    flying.\text{AV} = \text{ABS.3sg} \quad \text{SPEC.SG} \quad \text{bird}

   ‘The bird is flying.’

b. Pete = no ring tau.
    killed.\text{PV} = \text{ERG.3sg} + \text{ABS.3pl} \quad \text{SPEC.PL} \quad \text{person}

   ‘He killed the people.’

Since clitic pronouns are morphosyntactically not a part of the verb, they cannot be considered to be “agreement marking on the verb.” However, these pronouns are obligatory whether their coreferential full NPs (ing ayup, ring tau) are present or not, so it is possible to regard them as functioning as agreement markers.

In actor voice constructions such as (1a), the pronoun is coreferential with the actor. In undergoer voice constructions such as (1b), the pronouns are coreferential with the actor and undergoer.

Note that there are cases in which an absolutive clitic pronoun does not appear when its coreferential full NP is present, i.e., there is no agreement marking. Mithun (1994:251, 253) shows that indefinite entities in a presentative construction, mass entities, and abstract entities are not cross-referenced by an enclitic pronoun.

Consider the following pair of examples, which are adjectival clauses, behaving just like canonical actor voice constructions. The absolutive ing danum is cross-referenced when a “particular” water is referred to, as in (2a), but it is not when “all” the water that one can find at the moment is referred to, as in (2b).

(2) a. Marimla = ya ing danum.
    cold = \text{ABS.3sg} \quad \text{SPEC.SG} \quad \text{water}

   ‘The water is cold.’

b. Marimla ing danum.
    cold \quad \text{SPEC.SG} \quad \text{water}

   ‘The water is cold.’

In (3a), there is no coreferential pronoun for ing nasi ‘steamed rice’, which is a mass entity, and not so individuated. In (3b), ing asu is much more individuated, and thus is marked by a pronoun.

(3) a. Pengan = na ing nasi.
    ate.\text{PV} = \text{ERG.3sg} \quad \text{SPEC.SG} \quad \text{rice}

   ‘He ate (steamed) rice.’
b. *Pengan ne ing asu.*
   Pengan=ne ing asu.
   ate. PV = ERG.3SG + ABS.3SG
   SPEC.3G dog

   ‘He ate the dog.’

Both clauses in (3) have the same patient voice predicate, but differ in pronominal marking. These examples coincide well with Hopper and Thompson’s (1980) parametric approach to semantic transitivity, more specifically the parameter of “individuation of O” (cf. Mithun 1994:254). Note here that the presence and absence of pronouns has to do not only with individuation of ‘O’ (2), but also with individuation of ‘S’ (1). That is, it is not just a matter of transitivity.

So far, we have seen that the degree of individuation is associated with pronominal marking. The degree of individuation can also be associated with nominal marking. Consider the following: in (4a) and (4b), the predicate is an actor voice predicate, whereas in (4c), the predicate is an undergoer voice predicate. In (4a) there is no undergoer. In (4b) it is expressed as an NP but not case-marked; it is connected to the rest of the clause by a linker. In (4c) it is expressed as an NP and case-marked (i.e., cross-referenced with a clitic pronoun). The degree of individuation (definiteness, referentiality, or concreteness) is lowest in (4a), and highest in (4c).

(4) a. *Maglinis ya (keng mula).*
   Maglinis=ya (keng mula).
   clean. AV = ABS.3G OBL yard

   ‘He will clean up (in the yard).’

b. *Maglinis ya =ng awang.*
   Maglinis=ya=ng awang.
   clean. AV = ABS.3SG = LK window

   ‘He will clean windows.’

c. *Linisan no reng awang.*
   Linisan=no reng awang.
   clean. PV = ERG.3SG + ABS.3PL SPEC.3PL window

   ‘He will clean the windows.’

3. Low transitivity

In this section, we will focus on a particular predicate type in Kapampangan.

3.1. Aptative forms

The aptative indicates “abilitative, accidental or coincidental” actions (cf. Mirikitani 1971, 1972). For actor voice, the aptative prefix is maka-; and for undergoer voices, it is invariant a-.

Mirikitani mentions only the abilitative meaning: “the term aptative refers to the possibility that an action will occur, or the ability of someone to perform an action” (Mirikitani 1971:706–707). Below are some examples with the accidental meaning.
(5)  

a. \textit{A-pate} = \textit{ke}.
\[\text{APT}-\text{kill.}\_\text{PV} = \text{ERG.1SG} + \text{ABS.3SG}\]
‘I killed him unintentionally/accidentally.’

b. \textit{A-buklat} = \textit{ke}.
\[\text{APT}-\text{open.}\_\text{PV} = \text{ERG.1SG} + \text{ABS.3SG}\]
‘I opened it by mistake.’

c. \textit{A-kalingwan} = ku \textit{ne lagiu}.
\[\text{APT}-\text{forget.}\_\text{PV} = \text{ERG.1SG} + \text{ABS.3SG}\]
‘I forgot his name.’

Compare the aptative forms in (5) with the regular perfective forms in (6).

(6)  

a. \textit{Pete} = \textit{ke}.
\[\text{kill.}\_\text{PV} = \text{ERG.1SG} + \text{ABS.3SG}\]
‘I killed him (intentionally).’

b. \textit{Biklat} = \textit{ke}.
\[\text{open.}\_\text{PV} = \text{ERG.1SG} + \text{ABS.3SG}\]
‘I opened it (on purpose).’

c. \textit{Kalingwan} = ku \textit{ne lagiu}.
\[\text{forget.}\_\text{PV} = \text{ERG.1SG} + \text{ABS.3SG}\]
‘I forgot his name (intentionally).’

Native speakers claim that the prefix \textit{a-} gives a sense of “unintentionally,” “accidentally,” “unexpectedly,” and even “apologetically,” which is absent in the regular perfective forms.

3.2. Relational predicates

In this section, we will examine the aptative construction with both ergative and absolutive arguments, in which the base looks, at least semantically, nominal. Consider the following, in which the base is \textit{maestra}.

(7) \textit{A-maestra} = \textit{ke} i Mrs. Diaz.
\[\text{APT-teacher} = \text{ERG.1SG} + \text{ABS.3SG} \quad \text{SPEC.SG} \quad \text{Mrs. Diaz}\]
‘Mrs. Diaz happened to become my teacher.’/ ‘Mrs. Diaz was my teacher.’

\textit{A-maestru/maestra} means ‘to (happen to) become someone’s teacher (male/female).’ Similar examples are shown in (8).
(8)  

a-estudyante  ‘to become someone’s student’  
a-kaklase  ‘to become someone’s classmate’  
a-kayabe  ‘to become someone’s companion’  
a-disipulu  ‘to become someone’s disciple’  

These aptative predicates are far from prototypical as transitive predicates. The ergative argument is not agent-like, nor is the absolutive argument patient-like. Semantically, there is no action involved, going from the agent to the patient. There is no patient being affected by an action.  

These predicates denote relations, not actions, and therefore they are low in transitivity. In this respect, they are similar to nominal predicates denoting a relationship between two participants, such as (9).

(9)  

Kabalen=ke i Mrs. Diaz.  
townmate = erg.1sg + absol.3sg  
Mrs. Diaz  

‘Mrs. Diaz is my townmate.’/ ‘Mrs. Diaz and I are from the same town.’

The predicates a-maestra=ku and kabalen=ku are both “relational” in that they denote a relationship between two participants marked by the ergative and absolutive. Such predicates may be called “relational predicates.”

The aptative prefix a- usually produces more verb-like predicates, such as a-pate above, and thus may be regarded as a verb-forming affix. However it also produces relational predicates.

To summarize, let us schematize the construction types dealt with so far.

(10)  

   ‘He is my child.’ (cf. 9)  
   ‘He became my teacher.’ (cf. 7)  
c. A-pate=ku=ya.  
   ‘I killed him (accidentally).’ (cf. 5a)  
d. Pete=ku=ya.  
   ‘I killed him (intentionally).’ (cf. 6a)  

(N.B. =ku=ya is actually realized as =ke)

(10a) is a typical example of nominal-equational constructions. (10d), on the other hand, is a typical example of verbal-transitive constructions. (10b) and (10c) are aptative constructions. (10b) is similar to (10a) in that both are low in transitivity, but (10c) and (10d) are equally transitive, although the parameter of “volitionality” (Hopper and Thompson 1980) would rank (10d) as higher in transitivity than (10c). The interpretation of the ergative =ku is possessor in (10b), but actor in (10c). The meaning of the prefix a- is shared, however, by both (10b) and (10c): accidentality or unintentionality.

The difference between the two types of aptative constructions may be due to whether the root is inherently nominal or verbal. This discussion concerning the nature of roots can be extended to non-aptative predicates. Thus, if the root is nominal (10a, 10b), the construction is more like nominal-equational, and the ergative is interpreted as possessor. If the root is verbal (10c, 10d), the construction is more like verbal-transitive, and the ergative is interpreted as actor.
3.3. Nominal-equational analysis

Although extremely distinct semantically, (10a) and (10d) have the same pronominal alignment. There is an approach to treat the two extremes in the same way. In the nominal-equational analysis (e.g., Naylor 1995), the clause structure is interpreted as being based on the relations of two appositive NPs. In this type of analysis, (10d) would be interpreted as ‘He is my killed-one,’ which is parallel to ‘He is my child’ in (10a).

For the nominal-equational analysis to work, the ergative form must function both as the possessor in an NP and as the actor in a transitive clause. In most Philippine languages, the ergative form has both functions (Reid and Liao 2004).

Secondly, perhaps it would be preferable that the ergative form should be adjacent to the nominal predicate, since they form a semantically bound unit, an NP with a head and its possessor. In Kapampangan, the order of pronominal clitics is strictly the ergative followed by the absolutive. This ordering seems to prevail in Philippine languages, especially in the Central Luzon subgroup, where it is categorical (Billings and Kaufman 2004).

In predicate-initial order of Kapampangan clauses, which is possibly unmarked and most frequent, semantically bound units are realized syntactically. Then the nominal-equational analysis may be a possible approach to a unified account for the constructions in (10).

4. Morphological and semantic mismatch

In traditional morphological views, clitics are morphologically less bound than affixes. However, the degree of bonding in morphology does not always match up with the degree of bonding in semantics. This is true for prefix-root-enclitic sequences in Kapampangan aptative transitive constructions. Let us examine a-maestra = ku, for example. ([v] represents a verbalizer.)

(11) Kapampangan prefix-root-enclitic sequences
   a. a-maestra  = ku
   b. [word]    [clitic]  morphology
   c. [v]-[‘my teacher’]  semantics

In (11), the prefix-root-enclitic sequence a-maestra = ku can be analyzed both morphologically and semantically. Morphologically, the major division is between a-maestra and ku. Semantically, on the other hand, the major division is between a- and maestra = ku. The prefix a-, which semantically can be characterized as a verbalizer, has as its scope the NP [maestra = ku], not just the word maestra. That is, a- makes the verb ‘to become someone’s teacher’, not ‘to become a teacher’. The phrase a-maestra, without an ergative pronoun, does not make sense. (‘She became a teacher’ in Kapampangan should be Meking = ya = ng maestra or Mig-maestra = ya.)

Such a mismatch between morphology and semantics is attested in other Austronesian languages as well. Rubino (1998:1157) discusses that Tagalog preroot derivational morphemes, although normally classified as prefixes, show some properties characteristic of proclitics. They can attach to polylexemic lexical items and phrases, some of which are shown below (polylexemic lexical items in square brackets; AF = Actor Focus).

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1 Incidentally, this sequence would be written amaestra ku in Kapampangan casual orthography.
(12) Tagalog preroot derivational morphemes
   a. mag-[boda de plata]
      AF-[silver wedding anniversary]
      ‘to celebrate one’s silver wedding anniversary’
   b. mag-[tenedór de libro]
      AF-[accountant]
      ‘to be an accountant’

Take, for example, mag-tenedór de libro. It consists of three words. Semantically, tenedór de libro forms a polylexemic lexical item, and the semantic scope of the prefix mag- is this whole lexical item. Mag-tenedór, without de libro, does not make sense.

(13) Tagalog preroot derivational morphemes
   a. mag-tenedór de libro
   b. [word] [word] [word] morphology
   c. [v]-[‘accountant’] semantics

Another example comes from Indonesian. According to Sneddon (1996:64), many ber-verbs have noun bases which are phrases. For example, the phrase celana pendek ‘short pants’ becomes the base of the verb bercelana pendek ‘wear short pants’. This and other examples are shown below.

(14) Indonesian ber- verbs
   a. ber-celana pendek
      BER-pants short
      ‘to wear short pants’
   b. ber-baju kulit
      BER-jacket skin
      ‘to wear a leather coat’
   c. ber-kaki panjang
      BER-leg long
      ‘to have long legs’
   d. ber-kebun kelapa
      BER-garden coconut
      ‘to have a coconut plantation’
As a case in point, consider ber- + language name combinations, e.g., ber-bahasa Indonesia ‘to speak Indonesian’. Again, ber- morphologically attaches to bahasa, but bahasa Indonesia is a lexical unit, and ber-bahasa, without a country/regional name, does not make sense.

(15) Indonesian ber- verbs  
   a. ber-bahasa Indonesia  
   b. [word] [word] morphology  
   c. [v]-['Indonesian language'] semantics

In this section, we have seen cases of morphological and semantic mismatch in three languages. In morphology, and accordingly in semantics, prefix-root combinations should be tighter than root-enclitic combinations. However, this is not always the case in Kapampangan. I have shown that the prefix-root-enclitic combination consisting of the aptative prefix a-, a nominal root, and an ergative enclitic exemplifies a case of morphological and semantic mismatch.

Finally, it must be stressed that the ideas in this section are based on the traditional morphological view, i.e., the difference between affixes and clitics lies in the degree of bonding. However, this view may not apply to Kapampangan or to Philippine languages. Lawrence Reid (p.c.) suggests that although both affixes and clitics form part of a phonological word, the former form part of the word as a single unit within the syntax, while the latter retain their function as separate words from their heads. Clearly, further investigation is necessary to elucidate the true nature of affixes and clitics in Kapampangan.

5. Conclusions

This paper has attempted to discuss issues of transitivity in Kapampangan associated with clitic pronouns and pronominal marking. I have discussed aptative-prefixed predicates and relational predicates from a perspective of transitivity. I have also discussed the morphological and semantic mismatch, citing examples from Tagalog and Indonesian.

Abbreviations

Abbreviations conform to the Leipzig Glossing Rules (www.eva.mpg.de/lingua/pdf/LGR08_09_12.pdf) with the exception of the following:

| APT   | aptative   | PV     | patient voice      |
| AV    | actor voice| SPEC   | specific noun marker |
| LK    | linker     | V      | verbalizer         |

References


