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On the scope and position of Tagalog clitic adverbs

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Abstract

We investigate the scope-taking behavior of second-position clitic adverbs in Tagalog. As second-position clitics, these adverbs always linearly appear following the first element in a clause, and therefore do not immediately reflect their interpreted (LF) structural positions. We show that many of these clitic adverbs exhibit rigid scope relative to other scope-taking elements, reflecting fixed LF positions for each adverb.

1 Background

Austronesian languages of the Philippines, including Tagalog, are well-known for their inventory of second-position clitics, which include both pronouns and adverbial particles. These clitics linearly appear following the first element of the clitic placement domain that they appear in, which we can assume to be the clause for current purposes (see Kaufman 2010 for further discussion). Example (1) illustrates with the clitics *ka*, *na*, *rin*, and *daw*. In (1), these clitics appear in a cluster following the clause-initial verb *umiinom* ‘drink (IPFV)’. However, when the clause is negated as in (1), all of the clitics must instead follow the preverbal negator *hindi*.

- (1) a. Umi~inom *ka* *na* *rin* *daw* ng alak.
 AV.IPFV~drink 2SG.NOM already also EVID GEN alcohol
 ‘You’re also drinking alcohol now (somebody said).’
- b. Hindi *ka* *na* *rin* *daw* umi~inom ng alak.
 NEG 2SG.NOM already also EVID AV.IPFV~drink GEN alcohol
 ‘You’re also no longer drinking alcohol (somebody said).’

The linear order of clitics within the cluster is partially fixed, based on phonological size and syntactic factors: monosyllabic pronouns come first, followed by monosyllabic adverbs, adverbs with two (or more) syllables, and finally bisyllabic pronouns; see e.g. Schachter 1973, Schachter & Otnes 1972 (pp. 411–414). Work such as Richards (2003), Kaufman (2010), and Anderson (2009) have proposed that the linear position of these clitics (both their second-position placement as well as their relative ordering within the cluster) are determined through post-syntactic processes. We therefore cannot rely on the linear positions of clitics adverbs as transparent evidence for their structural positions.

2 The scope of clitic adverbs with respect to negation

Against this background, here we propose to investigate the semantic scope of clitic adverbs as evidence for their logical structural positions. We begin by considering their scope-taking with respect to negation. In this paper, we discuss the clitics listed in (2), which also provides informal translations.

- (2) a. *na* ‘already, now, as of now’ c. *din/rin* ‘also’ ([r] appearing intervocalically)
 b. *pa* ‘still’ d. *lang* ‘only, just’

Of these adverbs, *na*, *pa*, and *din* obligatorily scope over negation. *Na* and *pa* are aspectual particles with semantics that appear to closely match those of similar, well-studied aspectual particles in other languages. *Na* corresponds to German *schon*, Mandarin sentence-final *le*, and certain uses of English *already* (see e.g. Löbner 1999, Krifka 2000, Soh & Gao 2008). We hypothesize that *na* introduces a presupposition that its prejacent proposition was false at a prior time, thereby indicating a change of state: *na*(*p*) presupposes recently $\neg p$ and asserts now *p*. Now consider the interpretation of *na* with negation as in (3) below, a simplified form of (1b). (3) expresses that the addressee used to drink but now does not, reflecting *na* taking scope over negation. If *na* took scope under negation, we predict (3) to deny that the addressee has started drinking, but such an interpretation is unavailable.

- (3) *Hindi ka na umi~inom ng alak.*
 NEG 2SG.NOM already AV.IPFV~drink GEN alcohol
 ‘You’re no longer drinking alcohol.’ (already > not, *not > already)

In contrast, we hypothesize that *pa* introduces a presupposition that its prejacent was true before, similar to German *noch* and English *still* (see e.g. Löbner 1999 and Krifka 2000). When *pa* co-occurs with negation as in (4), we convey that the described negative proposition (here, Gina being unhappy) was true before and persists now; in other words, that *pa* takes scope over negation. The example cannot be used to convey that a previous state no longer holds, as expected from negation taking scope over *pa*.

- (4) a. *Masaya pa si Gina.* b. *Hindi pa masaya si Gina.*
 happy still NOM Gina NEG still happy NOM Gina
 ‘Gina is still happy.’ ‘Gina is still not happy.’ (still > not, *not > still)

For the additive focus particle *din*, (5) shows that combining with negation results in a reading where the subject not buying eggs is asserted to hold in addition to another, previous proposition (= *also* > *not*). That the reverse scope is not possible can be seen in (5), where the intended interpretation is that the additional proposition of him buying eggs does not hold; compare with (5).

- (5) a. *Hindi rin siya b<um>ili ng itlog.*
 NEG also 3SG.NOM <AV>buy[PFV] GEN egg
 ‘He also did not buy [eggs]_F.’
 b. *#B<um>ili si Juan ng isda, pero [hindi rin siya bumili ng itlog (5)].*
 <AV>buy[PFV] NOM Juan GEN fish but ...
 Intended: ‘Juan bought fish, but he did not also buy [eggs]_F.’ (*not > also)
 c. *Hindi b<um>ili si Juan ng isda, at [hindi rin siya bumili ng itlog (5)].*
 NEG <AV>buy[PFV] NOM Juan GEN fish and ...
 ‘Juan didn’t buy fish, and he also didn’t buy [eggs]_F.’ (also > not)

Lang ‘only’ shows different behavior from the other three adverbs in that it allows for variable scope with respect to negation, as shown in (6). (6) shows that *lang* behaves like English *only* in that it presupposes its prejacent *p* while asserting that all relevant focus alternatives to *p* are false. Combining *lang* with negation as in (6) results in a scope ambiguity. With the low scope reading (*not* > *only*), drinking coffee (*p*) is presupposed, and we assert that not all alternatives to *p* (e.g., drinking water, wine,

scope relations are also lexically restricted as well. Consider the interpretation of examples (8a) and (8b), which convey that an individual speaks English, with the clitic adverbs *na* ‘already’ and *lang* ‘only.’ ((8a) involves a predicate *English* inflected with imperfective aspect, whereas (8b) involves focus fronting the *English* theme of ‘know,’ but their interpretational range is equivalent.) Both examples are ungrammatical with the clitic adverbs in *lang na* order.

- (8) a. Nag-i-English *na* *lang* siya. b. English *na* *lang* ang alam niya.
 AV.IPFV-English already only 3SG.NOM English already only NOM know 3SG.GEN
 lit. ‘He only Englishes now.’ lit. ‘It’s only English that he knows now.’

Examples (8a,b) are both felicitous and true in the context in (9a), which supports their interpretation with *na* ‘already’ taking scope over *lang* ‘only’: it’s true now that he speaks only English, but it was false before. In contrast, if *lang* ‘only’ took scope over *na* ‘already’ while associating with the focused ‘English,’ we predict (8a,b) to be able to convey that he now speaks English but did not speak English before, and did not speak other languages before as well. Examples (8a,b) are judged as false in the context in (9b), which should support the truth of such an *only* > *already* interpretation.

- (9) a. Context supporting *na* ‘already’ > *lang* ‘only’ construal:
 This person used to speak several languages, but was in an accident and suffered a brain injury. Because of this, he’s forgotten all those languages except for English. (8a,b) true
 b. Context supporting *lang* ‘only’ > *na* ‘already’ construal:
 This young child is growing up in a multilingual environment. After some time, he is able to speak English, but not yet able to speak any other language. (8a,b) false

We conclude that *na* necessarily scopes over *lang* when in the same clitic cluster. In the framework of our proposal above, this suggests that the logical position for *na* in ① is necessarily higher than the position for *lang* in ①. We explore additional evidence of this form in the talk and in our future work.

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