

Argument apposition in Pangasinan

We investigate an understudied phenomenon in the grammar of Pangasinan (northern Philippines), termed argument “apposition” in the Benton 1971 grammar of the language, supported by original elicitation work. Benton observes that arguments in Pangasinan are frequently introduced not by a run-of-the-mill case-marked nominal (e.g. genitive agent ‘man’ in (1)), but instead by a pronoun followed by a corresponding noun phrase (which we call the *associate*) which “identif[ies] the entity represented by the pronoun” (Benton, 1971: 145), as seen in (2).

- (1) In-sulat [la laki] [su liham]. (2) In-sulat *(=to_i) [may laki]_i [su liham].
 PV-write GEN man NOM letter PV-write GEN.3SG DEM man NOM letter
 ‘The man wrote the letter.’ ‘The man wrote the letter.’

What is the relationship between the pronoun and the corresponding associate phrase? Based on novel evidence from binding and movement, we propose that these associates are not in regular argument positions and are built apart from their corresponding pronouns — thus similar to right dislocation/afterthoughts in other languages and supporting Benton’s “apposition” description — but later syntactically integrated into and linearized within the clause.

More on argument apposition: Common noun associates are always headed by a demonstrative. The marker *may* in (2) derives from (*i*)*man* plus the linker *-y*: (*i*)*man-y* > *may*; there is also the plural (*i*)*ra-may* and distal and proximal variants. The pronoun and associate must agree in number. Argument apposition is also possible with nominative, pivot arguments, but a pronoun appears only if the pivot is plural (3), not singular (4), reflecting the fact that the 3sg nominative pronoun is null.

- (3) Nan-puniti =ra_i [la laki] [ira-may bie]_i. (4) Man-luluto [may laki] [la sira].
 AV-hit NOM.3PL GEN man PL-DEM woman AV-COOK DEM man GEN fish
 ‘The women hit a man.’ ‘The man is cooking a fish.’

The order of the two noun phrases is free in (1–4). We see that the associate can be clause-medial or peripheral, and can be separated from its corresponding pronoun (3). Importantly, associates are not prosodically separated from the clause in any way, e.g. with parenthetical or ‘comma’ intonation.

Evidence from binding: Baseline binding facts: Similar to what has been described for Cebuano (Bell, 1976: 157–158) and Tagalog (Kroeger, 1991/1993: 37), the agent may bind a reflexive theme but not vice versa (regardless of pivot choice), and the antecedent is strongly preferred or required to linearly precede the reflexive: see the word order contrast in (5). With argument apposition, reflexive binding is insensitive to the word order constraint: see (6). (Further data at the talk.)

- (5) Anengneng { ✓[la laki]_i [su sarili=to_i] / *[su sarili=to_i] [la laki]_i }.
 see.PFV.PV GEN man NOM self=GEN.3SG NOM self=GEN.3SG GEN man
 ‘The man_i saw himself_i.’
 (6) Anengneng =to_i { ✓[may laki]_i [su sarili=to_i] / ✓[su sarili=to_i] [may laki]_i }.
 see.PFV.PV GEN.3SG DEM man NOM self=GEN.3SG NOM self=GEN.3SG DEM man
 ‘The man_i saw himself_i.’

We propose that data such as (6) in fact is compatible with the word order restriction as in (5) if we take the true antecedent to be the pronoun *to*, which *does* precede the reflexive in both variants of (6). In contrast, the associate itself is inert for binding purposes. Such facts argue against an approach to “apposition” where associates occupy the same argument positions as their corresponding non-appositional, regular arguments (*la laki* vs *may laki* here), with the clitic pronoun simply reflecting some sort of ϕ -agreement which also licenses the demonstrative marking.

Proposal: Case and voice: For the analysis of case and voice in Pangasinan, we follow existing phase-based theories of voice for related Philippine languages (e.g. Aldridge, 2004; Rackowski and Richards, 2005; Erlewine, Levin, and Van Urk, 2015, 2020): In brief, the pivot is the highest DP in the vP phase — in Actor Voice, the agent in Spec,vP; in Non-Actor Voice clauses, a DP that moves to an outer specifier of vP — and receives the marking here glossed as nominative. Other DP arguments in vP receive genitive or oblique case. (The precise mechanisms for case marking are orthogonal to our core proposal here.) Word order: We adopt the proposal described in Erlewine, Levin, and Van Urk 2020 and citations there, where the grammar allows for all different linearizations of the contents of the vP phase, including its specifiers, as long as the verbal complex is leftmost. (Higher structure and phrases moved out of vP will be linearized to the left, in a more familiar manner. Clitic pronouns will also be linearized based on their own second-position requirements.) This allows all postverbal constituents to in principle be ordered freely. Argument apposition: We analyze argument apposition as akin to right/left dislocation in other languages. Specifically, it is a “*low, integrated dislocation*”: “*integrated*” because the associate is adjoined into the clause, rather than something like an interpolated parenthetical, and “*low*” because that point of adjunction must be the vP phase edge, rather than a higher CP-level projection (such as TopicP) as in other theories of right/left dislocation in other languages. We sketch the derivation of example (2) above:

- (7) a. Build the PV vP phase (hierarchical): [vP letter_{pivot}(NOM) [*pro*_{agent}(GEN) [PV-write ...
 b. Adjoin and coindex: [vP [DEM man]_i] [letter_{pivot}(NOM) [*pro*_{i,agent}(GEN) [PV-write ...
 c. Linearize entire vP: ⇒ “PV-write=GEN.3SG_i [NOM letter] [DEM man]_i” **or**
 ⇒ “PV-write=GEN.3SG_i [DEM man]_i [NOM letter]” =(2)

This correctly predicts the associate to be linearized and prosodically phrased just like any other postverbal constituent: with flexible word order, without parenthetical/‘comma’ intonation.

Movement evidence for low integration: An alternative account might hypothesize that the associate can be adjoined at any point in the structure where it can bind the pronoun. We argue against this view from the island-sensitivity of the relationship between the pronoun and its associate.

- (8) * [Si John]_i, binmatek =ak [adjunct dahil pinuniti =to_i su aso ___].
 PN John run.AV NOM.1SG because hit.PV GEN.3SG NOM dog
 literally: ‘John_i, I ran [because he_i hit the dog].’

The ungrammaticality of (8), in contrast to grammatical examples of movement across no islands (at the talk), shows that associates adjoin local to their corresponding pronoun, but can then be moved.

Constraints on double apposition: Apposition can apply simultaneously to two core arguments of an NAV transitive clause, leading to a clause with two associate phrases. When the two associates are formally identical (e.g. *may–may*) — for two of our four speakers — the agent associate is required to precede the pivot associate. This is true even where we might expect world knowledge to disambiguate, as in (9): For two of our speakers, the sentence has only the ‘the blind man saw the woman’ (agent < pivot) reading; for two others, the more natural reading is available.

- (9) Anengneng =to [may bulag ya laki] [may bie].
 see.PV GEN.3SG DEM blind ATTR man DEM woman
 # ‘The blind man saw the woman.’ / % ‘The woman saw the blind man.’

We discuss approaches to capturing such word order restrictions and their variation in the talk.

References: Aldridge 2004 *Ergativity and word order...* • Benton 1971 *Pangasinan reference grammar* • Erlewine, Levin, Van Urk 2015 “What makes a voice system?” AFLA 21 • — 2020 “The typology of nominal licensing...” AFLA 26 • Kroeger 1991 *Phrase structure and grammatical relations...* • Rackowski & Richards 2005 “Phase edge and extraction...” *LI*