

A Free Relative Analysis of Event Existential Constructions in Aklanon¹

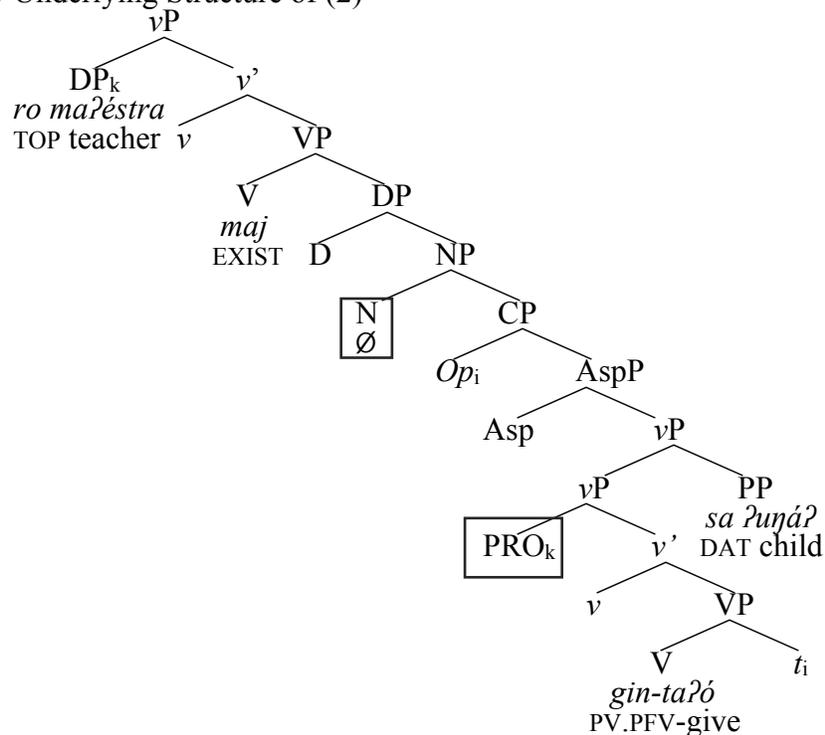
In Aklanon (AKL), an understudied Western Visayan language, the robust correlation between Philippine-type voice and nominal case seems to break down in ‘event existential constructions’ (EECs). Compare (1), a patient voice clause, where the topic-marked argument is the *thematic patient*, to a patient voice EEC (2), where the topic-marked argument is the *thematic agent*.

(1) gin-taʔó ʔit maʔéstra sa ʔuŋáʔ ro libro. [Non-EEC]
 PV.PFV-give UNM teacher DAT child TOP book
 ‘A teacher gave the book to the child.’

(2) maj gin-taʔó sa ʔuŋáʔ ro maʔéstra. [EEC]
 EXIST PV.PFV-give DAT child TOP teacher
 ‘The teacher gave something to the child.’

In this talk I show that the discrepancy in (2) is only apparent and dissolves under the proposed analysis in (3), wherein *maj* selects: (i) a free relative (FR) with a null nominal head as its complement (see Law 2010), and (ii) a topic-marked argument which controls a FR-internal PRO. The surface word order in (2) is derived by VP-remnant-raising of *maj* and its complement.

(3) Underlying Structure of (2)



Three arguments for the relative clause analysis are as follows: (i) an overt head is possible with the addition of the linker *ŋa*

which I analyze as C° (4), (ii) the null head, like an overt one, can host the plural *maŋa* (5), and (iii) the null head, like an overt one, can host PP adjuncts (6):

(4) maj [NP libro] [CP [C ŋa] PRO_i gin-taʔó sa ʔuŋáʔ]] ro maʔéstra_i.
 EXIST book LK PV.PFV-give DAT child TOP teacher
 ‘The teacher gave some book to the child.’

(5) maj [NP [NP [XP maŋa][N Ø]][CP PRO_i gin-taʔó sa ʔuŋáʔ]] ro maʔéstra_i.
 EXIST PL PV.PFV-give DAT child TOP teacher
 ‘The teacher gave some things to the child.’

(6) maj [NP [NP [N Ø][PP ʔuŋód sa Akuján]]] [CP [C ŋa] PRO_i gin-bása]] si Raʔúli.
 EXIST about DAT A. LK PV.PFV-read TOP R.
 ‘Raul read something about Aklan.’

¹ 1SG — 1st person singular; AV — agent voice; DAT — dative argument; EXIST — existential; LK — linker; n — negative; PFV — perfective; PV — patient voice; TOP — topic argument; UNM — unmarked argument.

This analysis also anticipates the fact that agent voice EECs prohibit topics completely (7) — this is because there is no FR-internal PRO to control, since the relative clause operator outcompetes PRO for external argument position in forming an AV FR:

- (7) *maj* [CP Op_i][_{AspP} [_{vP} t_i nag-*taʔó* *ʔit libro sa ʔuŋáʔ*]] (**ro maʔéstra*).
 EXIST AV.PFV-give UNM book DAT child TOP teacher
 ‘{Someone/*the teacher} gave a book to the child.’

I argue that Aldridge’s (2012) vP raising analysis of Tagalog EECs cannot be extended to Aklanon, because Aklanon (in contrast to Tagalog) bans argument extraction from within EECs, and on the relative clause analysis, this ban follows from the complex-NP island constraint.

- (8) *[*sa ʔuŋáʔ*]_i *maj* [*gin-taʔó* *ŋa libro t_i*] *ro maʔéstra*.
 DAT child EXIST PV.PFV-give LK book TOP teacher

Intended: ‘To the child, the teacher gave a book.’ (cf. Aldridge 2012 ex. 6)

Furthermore, the vP raising structure that Aldridge proposes for Tagalog (*ibid* ex. 31) cannot straightforwardly derive Aklanon adjunct modification facts, e.g. (5, 6), because on her analysis, the complement of *maj* is a vP and there is no vP-initial projection to host nominal adjuncts.

By contrast, the present analysis does capture those facts, as well as the observation that FRs in EECs pattern like FRs throughout the language generally, as in:

- (9) *naʔílaʔ akó* [*ʔit gin-uʔáhaʔ ni Mary*].
 PV.like 1SG.TOP UNM PV.PFV-cook UNM M.

Context: At a potluck dinner where Mary made a dish: ‘I like what Mary cooked.’

Finally, this analysis also paves the way for a unified account of EECs and negative EECs (nEECs), which have not been analyzed previously in Tagalog EEC literature. In Aklanon PV nEECs, the thematic agent is again the topic-marked argument, and the negative existential selects for an *ʔit*-marked DP (in contrast to *maj* which selects a bare DP).

- (10) *ʔuwáʔ* [DP [D *ʔit*][NP \emptyset] [CP PRO_i *gin-taʔó sa ʔuŋáʔ*]] *ro maʔéstra_i*.
 nEXIST UNM PV.PFV-give DAT child TOP teacher
 ‘The teacher gave nothing to the child.’

This study is the first theoretical analysis which brings Aklanon data to bear on issues surrounding Philippine-type voice systems. The proposed analysis accounts for both PV *and* AV EECs, and also contributes to a richer understanding of cross-linguistic variation in Philippine languages — in particular, that Tagalog permits but Aklanon bans extraction out of EECs. Finally, this study shows that apparent violations of case assignment in EECs are only apparent and the robust generalization that case and voice covary can be maintained in Aklanon generally.

REFERENCES [i] Aldridge, Edith. 2012. Event Existentials in Tagalog. In Lauren Eby & Greg Scontras (eds.), *Proceedings of the 18th Annual Meeting of the Austronesian Formal Linguistics Society (AFLA 18)*, 16-30. [ii] Law, Paul. 2010. The impersonal construction in Tagalog. In Raphael Mercado et al (eds.), *Austronesian and Theoretical Linguistics*, 297-325.