

On Statives and Potentives in Western Austronesian (Mostly Tagalog)

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1. Introduction

This contribution is concerned with prefixed forms in western Austronesian languages¹ which have been called a wide variety of names including ‘stative’, ‘accidental’, ‘involuntary’, ‘potential’, ‘coincidence’, ‘momentary’, and so on. Although widely neglected in the literature,² these formations are of major import to the grammar of many western Austronesian languages, where for all event expressions there is an obligatory choice between a neutral form and a form marked for ‘involuntariness’, ‘potentiality’, ‘coincidence’, or the like. Furthermore, this distinction has implications for a wide range of theoretical issues, including the nature of unaccusativity and causativity, split-intransitivity, and the grammar of control and complementation.

The main goal of this contribution is to bring some basic order to the fairly broad and, on first sight at least, somewhat heterogeneous range of uses and meanings associated with these forms. I will argue that the different uses can be grouped into two semantically and morphosyntactically quite different construction types, which I will call *STATIVE* (proper) and *POTENTIVE*, respectively.

Section 2 presents the major uses of the ‘stative’ prefix *ma-* in Tagalog. In section 3, it is shown that despite superficial similarities the various examples with *ma-*marked predicates presented in section 2 involve two different constructions and that the prefix *ma-* belongs to two different morphological paradigms. Section 4, finally, provides a systematization of stative and potentive uses and discusses similarities and differences between the Tagalog system and superficially similar systems in so-called split-S languages.

2. Typical uses of *ma-* in Tagalog

In Tagalog, the prefix marking stative and related types of predicates is *ma-* in non-realis formations and *na-* in realis formations. There is also a variant with a long vowel which is orthographically represented as *mà-* (realis *nà-*). It is not unlikely that historically these two variants represent two different formations. But in current Tagalog there is no longer a systematic grammatical distinction between them (cp. Schachter & Otnes 1972:330, among others). As usual in the literature, *ma-* is used here as the citation form of the prefix.

The major uses of *ma-* can be roughly grouped into the following seven semantic classes.

First, *ma-* regularly occurs on property-denoting (‘adjectival’) predicates, regardless of whether these are used attributively (as in (1)) or predicatively (as in (2)). This usage differs formally from all the remaining uses in that *ma-* here is invariable, i.e. there is no mood alternation (*ma-* vs. *na-*).³

PROPERTY

- (1) ang **ma-lít** na hayop
 SPEC ST-smallness LK animal
 'the small animal'
- (2) **ma-saráp** ang pag-kain
 ST-satisfaction SPEC GER-eating
 'the food was good'

A closely related use is the occurrence of *ma-* on predicates denoting states or changes of state (more precisely: entering into the state denoted by the base). This includes positionals (as in (5)) or locationals (as in (6)). Locationals typically occur only in realis mood (i.e. with *na-*), while all other state expressions occur in both moods.

STATE/ENTERING STATE

- (3) **na-tà-takot** silá
 RLS.ST-RDP1-fear 3.PL
 'they were afraid (of the snake)'
- (4) **na-pipe** sya.
 RLS.ST-dumb 3.SG
 'He got dumb.' (Bloomfield 1917:285)
- (5) isá-ng araw **na-upó** syá sa taburete
 one-LK day RLS.ST-sitting 3.SG LOC stool
 'One day he sat down on the chair (between the four pits) ...'
 (Bloomfield 1917:24)
- (6) semantala-ng sya 'y **na-sa tabí** ng ilog
 meanwhile-LK 3.SG PM RLS.ST-LOC side GEN river
 'When he was close to the riverside, ...'

A third major usage of *ma-* is with predicates denoting involuntary actions, i.e. eventualities which in principle involve a controlling agent but in the instance at hand this agent lacks full control. Lack of control may pertain to lack of physical control (as in (7) and (8)) but also to the lack of intention. In the latter case the agent performs a controlled action without intending its outcome (as in (9)).

ACCIDENTAL

- (7) **na-hulog** siyá sa kabayo.
 RLS.ST-fall 3.SG LOC horse
 'S/he fell from a horse.' (English 1986:664)
- (8) **nà-ihí'** akó sa kà-ta-tawa.
 RLS.ST-urine 1.SG LOC ??-RDP-laugh
 'I laughed so hard I wet my pants.' (Wolff et al. 1991:1135)

- (9) **na-dalá** ko ang libró
 RLS.POT.PV-carried 1.SG.POSS SPEC book
 ‘I took the book by accident.’ (cp. Wolff et al. 1991:285)

Inanimate effectors by definition lack intentions as well as the ability for physical control. Events involving them are thus often also marked with *ma-*, as in (10).

INANIMATE EFFECTOR

- (10) ang dahon ay **na-dà-dalá** ng tubig
 SPEC leaf PM RLS.POT.PV-RDP1-carried GEN water
 ‘The leaf was being carried along by the water, ...’

Lack of control also plays a role for non-volitional or spontaneous perception predicates. In Tagalog, these are regularly marked with *ma-*, as in (11).

SPONTANEOUS PERCEPTION

- (11) **nà-kíta** niyá ang dugó'
 RLS.POT.PV-seen 3.SG.POSS SPEC blood
 ‘She saw (happened to see) the blood.’

A sixth use of *ma-* pertains to expressions conveying the ability of an agent to do or achieve something. This may refer purely to the (mental or physical) capabilities inherent in the agent, as in (12) or to the fact that the agent was successful in overcoming difficult circumstances in performing an action (as in (13), cp. English ‘manage to’ or ‘succeed in’).

ABILITY

- (12) **nà-kì-kíta** ba ninyó yung iskinita?
 RLS.POT.PV-RDP1-seen Q 2.PL.POSS DIST.LK street corner
 ‘Can you (are you able to) see that corner? (Wolff et al 1991:286)

- (13) ay **na-kuha** niyá ang dahon
 PM RLS.POT.PV-getting 3.SG.POSS SPEC leaf
 ‘he was able to (managed to) get the leaf’

Finally, *ma-* is also used when asserting (or denying) that the possibility or opportunity to do something exists, regardless of the capabilities of the agent involved in the eventuality. In addition to the following example from a narrative, compare also more or less fixed expressions such as *ma-basa* (POT-reading) ‘can be read, legible’.

POSSIBILITY/OPPORTUNITY

- (14) kung **mà-bi-bilí** iyán
 if POT.PV-RDP-sale MED
 ‘if that can be sold/if this is sellable’

3. Two different constructions and morphological paradigms: stative and potentive

The examples of *ma-* presented above involve two clearly different constructions and morphological paradigms. This is not immediately obvious when presenting the examples in the way it was done in the previous section (and in much of the literature). But the syntactic differences become obvious when comparing two semantically similar expression types, namely predicates for spontaneous perceptions and for emotions. Both expression types denote mental states of animate experiencers, usually directed at or caused by some entity outside of, or different from, the experiencer. It would thus not be very surprising if these two expression types were to be constructed morphosyntactically in the same or at least a similar way.

Tagalog, however, works differently. Let us first take a closer look at a perception predicate. In the following constructed example (which essentially repeats example (11) above), the perception predicate *kita* ‘seen’ is prefixed with *na-* and followed by an experiencer expression in possessive (or genitive) case, which in turn is followed by the stimulus (the thing seen) functioning as the subject of the overall construction (marked by the proclitic specific article *ang*).

- (15) **na**-kita niyá ang aso
 RLS.POT.PV-seen 3.SG.POSS SPEC dog
 ‘She saw a/the dog.’

The emotion predicate *galit* ‘angry’ (see also *takot* in (3) above) is constructed quite differently. Here the experiencer is the subject (being a pronoun in (16), it appears in *ang*-form), while the stimulus occurs in locative case marked by the general locative preposition *sa*.

- (16) **na**-galit siyá sa aso
 RLS.ST-anger 3.SG LOC dog
 ‘She was angry with the dog.’

A correlated difference pertains to the fact that with perception predicates the stimulus is obligatory in the sense that a stimulus is always understood to be present even if not overtly expressed. With emotion predicates, the stimulus is optional. Altogether, these differences suggest that despite the identical marking on the predicate, we are dealing with two different constructions in which semantic roles are differently aligned with syntactic functions.⁴ For reasons that will become obvious shortly, the perception predicate construction is called here a *potentive* construction, while the emotion predicate construction is called a *stative* construction.

Stative and potentive predicates also differ in that they allow for different voice alternations. An alternative way to express the state of affairs in (15) is to use a (potentive) actor voice construction. Here, the experiencer appears as the subject (in *ang*-form) and the stimulus is marked as genitive. Concomitantly, the predicate is prefixed with an actor voice prefix (*naka-*).⁵

- (17) **nakà-kita** siyá ng aso
 RLS.POT.AV-seen 3.SG GEN dog
 ‘She saw a dog.’

An alternative for the emotion construction in (16) is a (stative) locative voice construction, where the predicate is marked with the circumfix *ka—an*. Here the experiencer appears in the possessive form while the stimulus functions as subject (marked by *ang*):

- (18) **k<in>a-galit-an** niyá ang aso
 ST<RLS(UG)>-anger-LV 3.SG.POSS SPEC dog
 ‘She was angry with the dog.’

Table 1 summarizes the alignment differences between the two constructions. The form of the stative predicate which is marked with *ma-* (as in (16) above) is called *basic form*, because this is the most unmarked, frequent and widespread form of stative marking. The role repertoire indicated for each construction includes other possible roles, some of which are exemplified in the examples in the preceding section: Examples (9), (10), (13) and (14) illustrate potentives with agent and theme rather than experiencer and stimulus arguments. Example (7) involves a stative predicate with a theme and a source argument, and (8) one with a theme and a cause argument.

Table 1: Alignment of semantic role and syntactic function in (semantically) transitive potentives and statives

	POTENTIVE	STATIVE	
AV	SUBJ = AGENT/EXPERIENCER GEN = PATIENT/THEME/ STIMULUS	SUBJ = THEME/EXPERIENCER (LOC for SOURCE/GOAL/CAUSE/ STIMULUS)	Basic Form
PV	SUBJ = PATIENT/THEME/ STIMULUS GEN = AGENT/EXPERIENCER	SUBJ = SOURCE/GOAL/CAUSE/ STIMULUS GEN = THEME/EXPERIENCER	LV/CV

The voice alternations illustrated in (17) and (18) are part of the two more extensive morphological paradigms for statives and potentives shown in Table 2. This table also includes the well-known basic voice affixes *-um-*, *-in-*, etc., which correlate directly with the potentive forms (see further section 4.2 below). Evidence for the correlations underlying these paradigms is provided in Himmelmann (forthcoming). Here it will be sufficient to take note of the following points.

Table 2: Dynamic and stative paradigms in Tagalog

	NON-STATIVE (DYNAMIC)		STATIVE	
	NON-POTENTIVE	POTENTIVE		
AV	-um-, mag-	maka-	(maka-)	ST.AV
PV	-in	ma-	ma-	ST
LV	-an	ma--an	ka--an	ST.LV
CV	i-	ma-i-	i-ka-	ST.CV

First, note that potentive and stative formations are identically marked in the second row (both are simply prefixed with *ma-*), but they differ clearly in locative and conveyance voice. Potentives and statives also receive identical marking in actor voice (first row). Here, however, a further difference exists in that stative actor voice is not fully productive, as indicated by the fact that *maka-* appears in parentheses (see Wolff et al. 1991:419f and Himmelmann (forthcoming) for details).

Second, on first sight the occurrence of a *ka-* prefix and the lack of *ma-* in some forms of the stative paradigm may appear to be somewhat unusual. However, it is a well established fact that in many western Austronesian languages *ma-* regularly alternates with *ka-* in a number of grammatically defined environments which are not related to voice. Compare, for example, the following pair of clauses from Mantauran Rukai. In the first clause, the predicate denoting the property of being thick occurs as the single main predicate in clause-initial position and is marked with (stative) *ma-*. In the second clause, the same predicate occurs as the second predicate in a coordinate construction marked by *la*. In this environment, stative predicates in Mantauran Rukai are generally marked by *ka-*.

(19) Example 25 from Zeitoun (2000:429)

- a. **ma-**iʔəmədə ʔona koapə
 STAT-thick this sock
 'This/these sock(s) is/are thick.'
- b. ʔonaʔi koapə ʔa ma-poli la **ka-**iʔəmədə
 that sock TOP STAT-white and STAT-thick
 'Those socks, (they) were white and thick.'

Based on the evidence provided by Mantauran Rukai and other languages it has been suggested that, historically at least, the prefix *ma-* is a clipped version of **kuma-*, i.e. *ka-* infixed with *-um-* (cp. Ross 1995:740, Blust 2003:440 passim).

Note, however, that there are also western Austronesian languages where the *ka-* prefix occurs both in the potentive and in the stative paradigm, as illustrated by the paradigms from Ratahan given in Table 3. In this instance, the two paradigms are almost identical (for Ratahan examples and more discussion, see Himmelmann & Wolff 1999:52-63).

Table 3: Dynamic and stative paradigms in Ratahan

	NON-STATIVE (DYNAMIC)			STATIVE	
	NON-POTENTIVE		POTENTIVE		
	PAST	NON-PAST			
AV	-im-	-um-	maka-	??	ST.AV
PV	-in-	-an	-	ma-	ST
LV	-in--an	-an	ka--an	ka--an	ST.LV
CV	-in-	0	ka-	ka-	ST.CV

As an aside, it may be noted that the Ratahan data suggest the view that the potentive vs. stative distinction is an innovation which happened after the major branches of Western Malayo-Polynesian (WMP) split. See Zobel (in prep.) for further data and discussion.

So far only constructed example pairs have been used in this section for reasons of clarity and ease of processing. The following examples are added to show that the voice alternations adduced above actually occur in natural discourse.

The pair of attested examples below illustrates the actor voice vs. patient voice alternation for potentive (perception) predicates

- (20) nang **mà-riníg** itò ng Kastila'
 when POT.PV-audible PRX GEN Spaniard
 'When the Spaniard heard this, ...' (Bloomfield 1917:28/19)
- (21) at **nakà-riníg** siyá ng mga huni ng ibon
 and RLS.POT.AV-audible 3.SG GEN PL chirping GEN bird
 '... and then he heard some birds chirping.'

The following two pairs of examples illustrate the alternation of basic stative voice and locative stative voice for stative (emotion) predicates:

- (22) **na-tà-tákot** ako sa ahas
 RLS.ST-RDP1-fear 1.SG LOC snake
 'I am afraid of snakes ...'
- (23) **k<in>a-tà-takut-an** siyá ng mga tao dito.
 ST<RLS(UG)>-RDP1-fear-LV 3.SG GEN PL people PRX.LOC
 'People here are afraid of him.' (cp. Wolff et al. 1991:699)
- (24) **na-mù-muhí'** akó sa kanyá.
 RLS.ST-RDP1-detestation 1.SG LOC 3.SG.DAT
 'I am disgusted with him/loathe him/despise him.' (English 1986:917)

- (25) **k**<in>**a-mù-muhi-án** ko siyá sa
 ST<RLS(UG)>-RDP1-detestation-LV 1.SG.POSS 3.SG LOC
 g<in>**awá'** niyá-ng iyón
 <RLS(UG)>act 3.SG.POSS-LK DIST
 'I hate him for doing that.' (English 1977:439)

4. Subclassifying stative and potentive uses

While statives and potentives allow a number of different affixations as seen in Table 2 above, forms prefixed with *ma-* are by far the most frequent formations in Tagalog and other Philippine-type languages. Since *ma-*prefixed forms can be either stative or potentive, they are easily confused. But the preceding discussion provides for two independent diagnostics to keep stative and potentive formations apart:

1. Potentive formations with *ma-* allow for genitive-marked arguments (since they are in patient voice they usually will be (semantically) transitive). Statives with *ma-* never allow for genitive-marked arguments.
2. Stative *ma-* alternates with *ka—an* or *ika-*, while potentive *ma-* alternates with *maka-*, *ma—an* or *ma-i-*.

The result of applying these diagnostics to the different uses of Tagalog *ma-* reviewed in section 2 above is the proposal for a systematization of the different subclasses of statives and potentives given in (26).

(26) Subclasses of STATIVES and POTENTIVES in Tagalog

STATIVE (-ACT)

property: have a certain property/quality (*be red/good/small*)
state: be in/get into a state (*be/become broken/flooded/ angry/ afraid/dumb/surprised* etc.); includes *alive/live, dead/die, sleep* (?) and **positionals** (*sit/lie/stand* etc.) and **locationals**; a few (semantically) transitive expressions for feelings: *hate, fed up with, disgust, fear, like* (?)
'unaccusatives': *fall, drown, slide, collapse, directed motion* (?)

POTENTIVE (+ACT)

potential

abilitative: be able to do sth; succeed in doing
possibility/opportunity: can be done/possible to do

involuntary/non-intentional

accidental: do sth by accident, the action is done intentionally but the outcome is not intended (*I took the wrong pills, hit accidentally, etc.*)

coincidental: happen to do sth without having any prior intentions to do so (*to bump into someone*); includes:

spontaneous perceptions (*to notice/see/hear/sense, find*)

spontaneous cognitive acts (*discover, understand, remember, forget, but see also section 4.1 below*)

inanimate effector (cp. example (10))

This classification implies that the distinction between potitives and statives in Tagalog involves two semantic parameters, i.e. the (aspectual) type of eventuality (state vs. event) and control/intentionality (or agency). As amply illustrated by Mithun (1991), these two parameters also play an important role in many languages with Split-S (active/stative) case or person marking systems. Tagalog and other western Austronesian languages with stative and potitive paradigms, however, are crosslinguistically somewhat unusual for the following interrelated reasons, all of which will be discussed in more detail in the ensuing subsections. First, unlike typical Split-S languages which have binary distinctions (agentive/eventive vs. stative), in Tagalog there is a three-way distinction between neutral (i.e. non-potitive, non-stative), potitive and stative forms (see Table 2 above). Second, the distinction is not restricted to intransitive predicates but applies to both (semantically) transitive and intransitive predicates. Third, both semantic parameters (type of eventuality and control/intentionality) play an equally important role but are distributed asymmetrically across the three categories.

Regarding the last point, note that states by definition lack actors (-ACT) and hence are by default non-controlled and non-intentional. However, the category STATIVE in Tagalog is not restricted to states proper but also includes a few events which lack an actor-like core argument (for lack of a better term called *unaccusative* in (26), which is further discussed in the next section). Potitive marking occurs on event-denoting predicates which include an actor (+ACT) but the potitive morphology indicates that this actor lacks full control or intentionality. Tagalog morphology thus suggests that one can downgrade agentivity/intentionality for event predicates without changing the event type or the semantic role structure. This is unusual from a crosslinguistic point of view in that in many split-S languages, lack of control or intentionality usually involves stative marking and hence a change in event type.

In this regard, it should be noted that examples (7)-(9), which from a purely semantic point of view can be characterized as *accidental* eventualities, actually belong to two distinct morphosyntactic classes. Examples (7) and (8) are statives (of the unaccusative variety), which means that they lack an actor-like core argument. Example (9), on the other hand, is potitive (of the accidental variety), i.e. the predicate includes an actor-like core argument but this actor is depicted as lacking intention. Note also that non-controlled (spontaneous) perceptions and other cognitive acts are potitive rather than stative, i.e. the morphology implies that these acts involve an actor (= experiencer) who lacks control rather than completely lacking an actor role.

The classification given in (26) raises a number of further issues, some of which are dealt with in the following subsections.

4.1. Further notes on statives

Stative is a marked category in two regards. On the one hand, it is marked in the superficial morphological sense of involving more morphological marking than non-statives, at least in locative and conveyance voice. On the other hand, it is marked in the functional sense of being the marked member in a binary opposition. Evidence for this status is provided by the fact that not all semantically stative eventualities require stative morphological marking. For example,

all ‘copula-like’ expressions for ‘equal’, ‘weigh’ and ‘cost’ usually are not marked as statives, as seen in the following example:

- (27) *t<um>ì-timbáng akó ng 110 libra.*
 RDPI<AV>-weight 1.SG GEN pound
 I weigh 110 pounds. (English 1977:1180)

Similarly, it is not the case that all expressions for involuntary bodily actions are marked with *ma-* (as in (8)) above). Instead, lexical bases denoting such actions generally do not occur with stative morphology. Examples include *sinìsinók/nagsìsinók* ‘hiccup’ and *umubó/ubuhín* ‘cough’.

Furthermore, a set of predicates including *tulog* ‘sleep’ and the positionals allows for stative and non-stative affixation without an obvious difference in meaning (e.g. both *na-tùtulog siyá* and *t<um>ùtulog siyá* mean ‘s/he is sleeping’). Some positionals actually occur primarily with non-stative affixation (e.g. *l<um>awít* ‘be hanging down’). Note that the stative and non-stative forms usually differ in some of their senses (for example, only stative *ma-tulog* can be used in the expression for oversleeping). The point here is that both forms can be used to refer to the state denoted by the base form.⁶

Finally, stative marking is also only one of several options for expressions referring to feelings (‘like’, ‘hate’, ‘love’, etc.). Impressionistically speaking, it seems that negative feelings in particular are referred to with stative predicates while positive feelings are often expressed by predicates with non-stative affixation. But this needs further research and is perhaps only of marginal interest because there is a strong tendency to use both positive and negative feeling predicates *without* any affixation. This holds true in particular for the two high-frequency items *gustó* ‘want, like’ and *ayaw* ‘dislike’. Roughly the same comments apply to predicates for cognitive states, in particular *alam* ‘know’.

Of course, rather than saying that the ‘exceptions’ just mentioned show that STATIVE is a marked category, one could also hold that reference to a state is not a major common semantic denominator of the predicates thus marked. This view would be supported by the fact that the category STATIVE includes a few event-type predicates such as ‘fall’, etc. (see (7) and (8) above).

Reasoning along these lines, one could entertain the idea of calling the whole class *unaccusative* instead of *stative*. But note that here again one would have to take note of the fact that predicates such as ‘come’ and ‘arrive’ which are unaccusative in a great many languages where this distinction is clearly attested are generally not marked with *ma-* in Tagalog (a possible exception are some predicates of directed motion, including *puntá* ‘go’, which in some uses allow affixation with *ma-* as an alternative to infixation with *-um-*). In this regard, it may also be noted that intransitive achievements are generally non-stative, e.g. *pumutók* ‘burst’, *sumabog* ‘burst/explode’, *magkalamat* ‘crack’ (< *lamat* ‘crack’).

The use of the term *unaccusative* for ‘fall’, etc. in the above systematization is somewhat ad-hoc and mainly motivated by the lack of a better alternative. The basic point here is that these predicates are clearly stative according to the two diagnostics given at the beginning of section 4, but they do not

point can be made without having to specify the relevant categories, if any: Stative as well as potentive affixations are not restricted to a specific class of lexical bases but both may, in principle, occur on any lexical base, provided the resulting form makes semantic and pragmatic sense. Thus, for example, lexical bases such as *takot* ‘fear’ are not restricted to stative formations but also occur in neutral (non-stative) forms as in:

(29) *Huwág mo-ng takut-in ang bata*.
 NEG.IMP 2.SG.POSS-LK fear-PV SPEC child
 ‘Don’t frighten/scare the child!’ (English 1986)

(30) *Sino ang t<um>akot sa iyó?*
 who SPEC <AV>fear LOC 2.SG.DAT
 ‘Who frightened you?’ (English 1986)

Consequently, one would also expect to find ‘minimal pairs’ of potentive and stative formations derived from the same lexical base. And this is indeed what we find. In the following two pairs of examples, the first example is potentive, the second stative:

(31) *Hindí ma-hulug-an ng karayom ang lugar*
 NEG POT-fall-LV GEN needle SPEC place
sa dami ng tao.
 LOC amount GEN people
 ‘One could not drop a needle in the place because of the amount of people.’ (google)

(32) *iyón ang patibóng na k<in>a-hulug-an ni Gideon*
 DIST SPEC trap LK ST<RLS(UG)>-fall-LV PN.POSS
 ‘that’s the trap into which Gideon fell’ (google)

(33) *Na-upu-án ko ang eyeglasses ko.*
 RLS.POT-sitting-LV 1.SG.POSS SPEC 1.SG.POSS
 ‘I happened to sit on my eyeglasses.’ (google)

(34) *bundók na k<in>a-ù-upu-án ng babae.*
 mountain LK ST<RLS(UG)>-RDP1-sitting-LV GEN woman
 ‘... the mountains where the women were sitting.’ (google)

With regard to ‘unaccusatives’ such as *hulog* ‘fall’ it may be of interest to note that here again Tagalog differs from typical split-S languages in that the non-stative form(s) do not mean ‘(let oneself) fall intentionally’ but rather ‘make fall, drop’. Self-induced falling is expressed by the prefix combinations *magpati-* or *magpaka-*, both of which contain the causative prefix *pa-*.

4.4. Stative and potentive forms do not constitute a split-S system

In a number of recent publications the proposal has been advanced that some western Austronesian languages are split-S or split-intransitive (or “active”) languages in terms of the familiar division of languages into nominative-accu-

sative, ergative, and split-intransitive languages. In typical split-intransitive languages, the main parameter determining the grammatical properties of core arguments in basic transitive and intransitive clauses pertains to the question of whether the participant-role is more ACTOR- or more UNDERGOER-like. That is, the single core argument of some intransitive predicates (S_a) aligns with the more ACTOR-like core argument of transitive predicates (A) while the single core argument of the remaining intransitive predicates (S_o) aligns with the more UNDERGOER-like core argument of transitive predicates (O). Consequently, there is no grammatical relation or function which encompasses one of the core arguments of a transitive predicate and *all* core arguments of intransitive predicates.

It is a matter of debate whether any western Austronesian languages are split-intransitive languages in this sense. The most explicit and convincing case for a split-intransitive analysis has been made by Durie (1987) for Acehnese. In the previous section, it was already pointed out that the stative/potentive system in Tagalog differs from a typical split-intransitive system in a number of important ways. Perhaps the most important point is the fact that stative and potentive marking applies to (semantically) transitive and intransitive predicates alike. Hence, strictly speaking, the stative vs. potentive vs. neutral distinction cannot instantiate a split-intransitive system.

Nevertheless, (semantically) intransitive predicates in Tagalog show, of course, different kinds of morphological marking as seen in the following example pair:

- (35) **Natàtakot** silá. They were frightened.
 Tumàtakbo silá. They are running (away).

But does this difference in morphological marking indicate a difference in basic clause structure? In the brief definition of split-S systems given above, the crucial characteristic for a split-S system is that it provides for two (or more) different intransitive *clause* structures, i.e. different constituent structures or, in LFG terms, different f- or c-structures. A difference in clause structure would mean that there are different positional regularities for the two clauses (e.g. in one clause the subject may be preposed, in the other it may not) or that the core arguments have clearly differing morphosyntactic properties (different case marking, different control properties, different constraints on zero anaphora, etc.). None of these differences applies to the two clauses in (35). They have exactly the same properties with regard to basic clause structure, the only major difference being that the subject arguments carry different semantic roles. Hence, they do not exemplify a split-S system as defined above.

Put in more general terms, the point here is that split intransitivity involves basic and pervasive differences in clause structure and not just minor, superficial differences in morphological marking. Otherwise the concept of split-intransitivity is in danger of losing most of its empirical content and all typological relevance. In many, if not all languages stative and eventive intransitive clauses will differ with regard to one or two minor morphosyntactic features, most often in the morphological marking of the predicate. If such differences were to be taken as evidence for split-intransitivity then (almost) all lan-

guages are split-intransitive, which renders it a typologically uninteresting category.

Pursuing this point a bit further, it is in fact also not sufficient to make just any syntactic difference a pre-requisite for split-intransitive status. For example, inasmuch as the difference between unergatives and unaccusatives is considered to be universal and to be essentially a syntactic distinction (predicates with and without internal subject arguments), then again all languages would have to be regarded as split-intransitive languages. But obviously, the idea behind the three-way typological distinction between nominative-accusative, ergative⁷ and split-intransitive languages is that these languages differ in fundamental aspects of clause structural organization which cross-cut the distinction between transitive and intransitive clauses.

Endnotes

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1. The term *western Austronesian languages* here refers to all non-Oceanic Austronesian languages. See Himmelmann (2004:111f) for more extensive definitions of this and other widely used terms for geographical groupings (e.g. *Philippine languages, languages of western Indonesia, etc.*).

2. Until quite recently, the only work specifically dealing with these formations appears to be Dell (1983), on which Kroeger (1993:80-85, *passim*) heavily draws. Despite its title, Gerdts (1978) hardly deals with statives or potentives at all but rather with the advancement analysis of Ilokano “passives” (in relational grammar terms). Recently, statives have attracted more attention as seen, for example, in work by Zeitoun (2000), Goddard (2003) and Blust (2003).

3. Unless indicated otherwise, all examples in this paper are taken from natural discourse. Sources are the author’s own corpus of spontaneous spoken narratives which includes stories from Wolff et al.’s (1991) textbook, Tagalog websites (coded as *google*) and the texts in Bloomfield (1917). Note that most example sentences in the dictionaries by English (1977, 1986) are from written literary sources. The examples from spoken narratives retain features of the spoken language (in particular common reductions).

4. One way in which this difference could be characterized for the examples given so far is to say that the perception construction is a transitive construction (with *ng* marking a non-subject core argument) and the emotion construction is an intransitive one (with *sa* marking a peripheral argument). However, it is far from clear to what extent (semantic) transitivity is actually grammaticalized in Tagalog and whether the difference between *ng*- and *sa*-marking of non-subject arguments actually correlates with core vs. peripheral status (see Himmelmann 1999:259-261, 2004:147f *passim*). As we will see shortly, both predicate types allow voice alternations promoting non-subject arguments to subject position

and also behave very much alike with regard to other morphosyntactic characteristics. Furthermore, as also noted later on in the text, all kinds of predicates, semantically transitive as well as intransitive ones, allow both stative and potentive marking. All of this makes it highly doubtful whether (syntactic) transitivity is of major relevance here.

5. Unless other factors interfere, the undergoer in an actor voice construction is interpreted to be indefinite, as indicated in the translation of this example. This is of no import to the point at hand. Note also that the claim frequently made in the literature that undergoers in actor voice constructions are always indefinite or even non-specific is not correct (cp. Himmelmann 2004:148, 172f).

6. The grammar of positionals and locationals is much more complex than indicated here (see Himmelmann (forthcoming) for some additional comments). It is not at all impossible that a more thorough investigation will reveal that it is preferable not to analyze them as statives.

7. As seen in the following quote from Dixon, the term *ergative* has been applied to such a heterogeneous variety of phenomena that it has lost its typological significance in the sense that the feature *ergative* does not correlate with any other morphosyntactic features:

“What then does it mean for a language to be ergative? Exactly what we said in the first paragraph of Chapter 1- that S is treated in the same way as O and differently from A in some part or parts of the grammar. **Nothing else necessarily accompanies this.**” (Dixon 1994:219, emphasis added)

Using *split-intransitive* in a similarly liberal way for all kinds of marking differences between intransitive predicates will have the same effect of rendering it typologically vacuous.

Abbreviations

ACT	ACTOR	PN	PROPER NOUN
AV	ACTOR VOICE	POSS	POSSESSIVE
CV	CONVEYANCE VOICE	POT	POTENTIVE
DAT	DATIVE	PRX	PROXIMAL
DIST	DISTAL	PV	PATIENT VOICE
EX	EXCLUSIVE	Q	QUESTION MARKER
GEN	GENITIVE	RLS	REALIS
GER	GERUND	RDP	REDUPLICATION (NUMBERS INDICATE DIFFERENT FORMAL TYPES OF REDUPLICATION)
IMP	IMPERATIVE	SG	SINGULAR
LK	LINKER	SPEC	SPECIFIC ARTICLE
LOC	LOCATIVE	ST	STATIVE
LV	LOCATIVE VOICE	UG	UNDERGOER
MED	MEDIAL		
NEG	NEGATION		
PL	PLURAL		
PM	PREDICATE MARKER		

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