

## Saturating Syntax: Linkers and Modification in Tagalog

**SUMMARY:** Not all instances of composition are saturating in the sense of Functional Application (FA; Heim & Kratzer, 1998). For example, intersective modification with adjectives or relative clauses requires a non-saturating type of composition. To account for such semantic configurations, composition rules like Predicate Modification (PM; Heim & Kratzer, 1998) or Restrict (Chung & Ladusaw, 2004) have been posited. In Tagalog, wherever we find instances of non-intersective composition, we also find the element *na/-ng*, known in the Austronesian literature as LINKER. Sabbagh (2009, fn.31) points out that LINKER may be analyzed either as a semantically vacuous element serving as a “morphological flag” for non-saturating composition (Chung & Ladusaw, 2004), or as an operator of type  $\langle et, et \rangle$  that composes with a property and adds the “instruction” to compose its output with another property via a non-saturating composition rule. Both options leave us with the need for a specialized composition rule in addition to FA so that two properties may compose in the semantics. Alternatively, Rubin (1994) proposes the grammar supplies us with a functional head of type  $\langle et, \langle et, et \rangle \rangle$  that composes with two properties and returns a single property denoting the intersection of both – a head that does the work of Predicate Modification. In Tagalog, we claim that this element is realized overtly as *na/-ng*. Adopting this latter proposal allows us to simplify our compositional mechanism so that it needn’t rely on PM in addition to FA. It also makes strong predictions, consistent with the data, about the type of composition implicated whenever these linking elements surface, and, conversely, about the environments in which we expect them to appear.

**DATA:** In Tagalog, whenever we have non-saturating composition, (i.e., modification, as in the (a) examples), LINKER appears; it is disallowed otherwise (i.e., when composition is saturating, as in the (b) examples).

### (1) Adjectival

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|--|---|
| a.     bahay *(na) maganda<br>house LK    beautiful<br>‘beautiful house’ | b.     Maganda (*ng) ang bahay.<br>beautiful LK    TOP house<br>‘The house is beautiful.’    Rubin (1994: §2.1) |
|--|---|

### (2) Prepositional

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| a.     libro *(-ng) nasa mesa<br>book LK    on    table<br>‘book on the table’ | b.     Nasa mesa (*-ng) ang libro<br>on    table LK    TOP book<br>‘The book is on the table.’ |
|--|--|

### (3) Adverbial

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| a.     Bigla    *(-ng) binukasan ni Fred ang pintuan<br>sudden    LK    be opened NS Fred TOP door<br>‘Fred suddenly opened the door.’ | b.     Bigla    ang pagbukas ni Fred ng pintuan<br>sudden TOP opened    NS Fred NS door<br>‘The manner in which Fred opened the door was sudden.’ |
|--|---|

(4) **Relative clause**

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| a.   bahay *(na) nakita ko<br>house LK   saw    I<br>‘house that I saw’ | b.    Nakita ko (*ng) ang bahay<br>saw    I   LK    TOP house<br>‘I saw the house.’ |
|---|---|

(5) **Weak vs. strong quantification**

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| a.    marami *(-ng) bata<br>many   LK    child<br>‘many children’ | b.    bawa’t    (*na) bata<br>each/every LK   child<br>‘each/every child’ |
|---|---|

PROPOSAL: Given the distribution of LINKER, we follow Rubin (1994) in proposing that the semantics of this morpheme be that of a functional element performing modification, rather than simply “flagging” it:

- (6)     $[[\text{LINKER}]] = \lambda P. \lambda Q. \lambda x. P(x) = Q(x) = 1$

At this point we would like to take the evidence from Tagalog to suggest that PM is not a necessary composition rule, and that where it has previously been posited, we in fact have functional heads responsible for non-intersective modification. Thus, we do away with the need for non-saturating semantic composition, and the flagging thereof, and simplify our compositional inventory by removing unnecessary rules; FA is sufficient. It should be noted that the burden has now been shifted to the syntax, which we claim is responsible for the composition of complex properties.

IMPLICATIONS: Assuming that LINKER signals non-saturating composition, its co-occurrence with complement clauses suggests that these too are modificational, and not complements per se.

- (7)    a.   Kailangan \*(-ng) magbasa ng libro si   Pedro  
          need       LK    read       NS book TOP Pedro  
          ‘It needs to be the case that Pedro reads a book.’  
      b.   Kailangan ni   Pedro \*(-ng) magbasa ng libro  
          need       NS Pedro LK    read       NS book  
          ‘Pedro needs to read a book.’

Such reasoning is in line with recent theorizing on the syntax of clausal complements, wherein CPs do not saturate argument positions (cf. Moulton, 2011).

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