EXPRESSION OF CASE BY THE VERB IN TAGALOG*

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The idea that the case relations of a noun may be expressed by a verb is foreign to the usual grammatical conceptions of the languages of both the Indo-European and the Semitic families of speech. Nevertheless, such a conception is possible if only to a limited degree, in both speech-families. The active and passive verbs that both families possess indicate respectively that the subject acts, is the agent of the action; or that the subject is acted upon, is the object of the action. That is to say, the active verb may be conceived of as expressing the case of the agent or nominative; the passive as expressing the case of the object or accusative. For example, in the sentence Cain killed Abel, killed may be said to indicate that its subject is an agent or nominative; while in the sentence Abel was killed by Cain, was killed may be looked upon as denoting that its subject is the object of the verbal action or accusative.

This function of the verb, however, was not further developed in either of these families of speech. Latin, for example, was brought face to face with the problem of making a verbal form

to indicate the dative, when it came to turn into the passive those verbs which take their direct object in the dative, e. g., obedire 'obey.' Instead, however, of developing a new form which might take the dative object as subject, it got around the difficulty by using the regular or accusative passive impersonally, and retaining the dative; e. g., servus domino obedit becomes in the passive domino a servo obeditur.[1]

In the Philippine languages, on the other hand, this case-indicating function of the verb is developed to a high degree. The active, as in Indo-European and Semitic, denotes the case of the agent, but the passive expresses not only the accusative, but also the dative, instrumental, locative, and ablative; the noun whose case is to be indicated being made the subject of the passive verb.

In Tagalog, which may be taken as a type of these languages, a verb may have an active and three so-called passive forms, which are known respectively, according to the particles with which they are formed, as the in, i, and an passives.

The various case relations are expressed by these verbal forms as follows. The case of the agent is indicated by the active as in other languages, e. g., in the sentence 'the man is

writing a letter,' the fact that 'the man' is the agent is expressed by making it the subject of an active verb, viz. ang táwo'y sungmusúlat nang súlat.

The accusative is denoted in general by the in passive, which corresponds about to our passive; e.g., 'take this book' is expressed by 'let this book be taken by you' kúnin[2] mo itó-ng líbro, the object itó-ng libro 'this book,' being made the subject of the in passive kúnin.

The dative idea of 'for' is expressed by the i passive; the dative idea of 'to,' by the an passive: e.g., 'for you I will suffer all things' is rendered by 'you will be suffered by me of all things,' ikáw[3] ang ipagtitiís ko nang lahát; ikáw, the person for whom, being made the subject of the passive ipagtitiís, which expresses the idea 'to be suffered for;' the sentence 'he gave me the money' is rendered by 'I was given to by him of the money,' or more literally, 'I was his giving place of the money,' akó'y binigyán[4] niyá nang salapí;[5] akó, the person to whom, being made the subject of the passive binigyán, which expresses the idea 'to be given to' or 'giving place.'

The instrumental is denoted by the i passive; e.g., 'cut the wood with this hatchet' is rendered by 'let this hatchet be your

cutting instrument of the wood' itó-ng palakól ay ipótol mo nang káhoy, the instrument itó-ng palakól 'this hatchet' being made the subject of the passive form ipótol, which expresses a verbal idea that is approximately equivalent to 'cutting instrument.'

The locative and ablative are expressed by the an passive; e.g., 'he planted a tree in the garden' is rendered by 'the garden was planted in by him or was his planting place of a tree' ang halamánan ay tinamnan[6] niya nang isá-ng káhoy, the place where ang halamánan 'the garden' being made the subject of the passive tinamnán, meaning 'to be planted in' or 'planting place;' the sentence 'I bought the house from the priest' is rendered by 'the priest was bought from by me or was my buying place of the house' binilhan[7] ko nang báhay ang páre, the person from whom ang páre 'the priest' being made the subject of the passive binílhan, meaning 'to be bought from' or buying place.'

This case indicating function of the verb is most clearly seen in the constructions with interrogative and relative pronouns, the case of which is almost always indicated in this way in a sentence containing a verb. The interrogative or relative stands unchanged at the beginning of its sentence, and its case-relations are indicated by varying the verb. For example in the case of

sino 'who?'; 'who calls?' is expressed by the interrogative sino followed by the active, viz., sino-ng tungmatáwag; 'whom are you calling?' by sino with the in passive, viz., sino-ng tinatáwag mo; 'for whom are you inquiring?' by sino with the i passive, viz., sino-ng itinatanóng mo; 'from whom did you buy this?' by sino with the an passive, viz., sino-ng binílhan mo nitó. In the case of the relative, which is identical with the ligatures na, ng, 'the man who came' is expressed by the antecedent joined by the ligature to the active, viz., ang táwo-ng naparoón; 'the book that you are reading' by the antecedent with ligature and in passive, viz., ang líbro-ng binabasa mo; 'the needle with which you sewed' by the antecedent with ligature and i passive, viz., ang karáyom na itinahí mo; 'the house in which he died' by the antecedent with ligature and an passive, viz., ang báhay na kinamatayán niyá.

Tagalog is, of course, not confined to this means of expressing the case relations between noun and verb; these may also be indicated by the case forms of those words which have case inflection, i.e., the various pronouns and pronominal adjectives. The cases of words that are uninflected, such as nouns, are indicated by the forms of the articles or demonstratives

placed before them. The case forms are three in number, a nominative; a genitive that expresses the ideas 'of,' 'by,' 'with,' and an oblique that expresses the ideas 'to,' 'for,' 'in,' 'from;' e. g., the definite article is declined, nom. ang, gen. nang, obl. sa.

The adnominal genitive is, of course, always expressed by inflection; in a sentence with non-verbal predicate, i. e., in a sentence not containing a real verb, all cases must necessarily be so indicated; and even in a sentence with verbal predicate, case forms are almost always present.

These two methods of expressing case, however, are by no means equivalent. In Tagalog in a verbal sentence, that adjunct of the verb which is of most importance in the eyes of the speaker or writer is made the subject of the sentence, and the rest of the sentence is conformed to the character of this subject, the other adjuncts of the verb, which for the time being are of minor importance, having their case relations expressed by means of inflection. The verb might thus be said to express the case with emphasis; the various inflected forms, without emphasis. The sentence 'he looked for the book with the light in the room,' may be expressed in four different ways according as the agent,

the object, the instrument, or the place, are specially emphasized.

If the idea is 'he, and no one else, was the one that did the looking,' the active of the verb would be used with the agent as subject, e.g., siyá ang hungmánap nang líbro nitó-ng ílaw sa silíd.

If the book is uppermost in the mind of the speaker or writer, the book, the object of the action, is made the subject of the in passive, e.g., ang líbro ay hinánap niya nitó-ng ílaw sa silíd.

If the idea is that 'this light, and no other' was used, the light, the instrument of the search stands as the subject of the i passive, e.g., itó-ng ílaw ay ihinánap niyá nang líbro sa silíd.

If the idea is that 'the room and no other place' is where the search was made, the room is made the subject of the an passive, e.g., ang silíd ay hinanápan niyá nang líbro nitó-ng ílaw.

In all these examples the non-emphatic cases are expressed by inflection: the agent by the genitive, viz., niyá 'by him;' the object by the genitive, viz., nang líbro 'of[8] the book;' the instrument by the genitive, viz., nito-ng ilaw 'with this light;' the place by the oblique, viz., sa silíd 'in the room.'

The development of the numerous passive forms in Tagalog has resulted in restricting within comparatively narrow limits the use of the active, which in Indo-European and Semitic grammar is the most important form of the verb. The passive construction has become the rule, its prevalence forming one of the most characteristic features of the language.[9] If the agent is specially emphasized, the active may be used in any case, but when the agent is without such special emphasis the active is usually employed only in sentences containing not more than two verbal adjuncts. If the agent is the only adjunct, it must, of course, stand as subject, e. g., 'the boy is reading' ang báta'y bungmabása; if the verb has besides the agent a direct object, the active is only used when that is indefinite and hence less emphatic than the subject, e. g., 'the boy is reading a book' ang báta'y bungmabása nang líbro; if the verb is intransitive and has another adjunct besides the agent, the active is used unless the adjunct is specially emphasized, e. g., 'the man went to Manila' ang távro'y naparoón[10] sa Maynila.

In all other cases one of the three passive forms is regularly employed, according as one or the other of the remaining elements of the sentence receives the chief stress,

and is made the subject.

The four cases expressed by the four species or voices of the verb do not, of course, correspond exactly in their scope to any of the cases commonly recognized in Indo-European grammar; sometimes two forms are used to express what is ordinarily considered one case, sometimes one form expresses two or more cases.

The active indicates the case of the agent, and requires no further comment.

The in passive indicates the case of the direct object of an action which aims at or results in the acquisition of something by the agent, as for example 'to take,' 'to eat,' 'to call,' 'to seek;' or of the direct object of an action which the agent performs without necessarily acquiring or alienating anything, as for example 'to cut,' 'to carry,' 'to destroy,' 'to think,' 'to love;' e. g.,

tawágin mo ang báta[11] 'call the boy.'

kináin niyá ang tinápay 'he ate the bread.'

si Maria'y sinisintá ni Pédro 'Pedro loves Maria.'

The uses of the i passive may be comprised under three heads. It indicates the case of the object of an action which results in the agent's alienating something from himself or at

least in imparting something to some other person or thing, as for example 'to give,' 'to sell,' 'to teach,' 'to tell,' etc., e.g.,

ibigáy mo itó-ng líbro sa iyó-ng kapatid 'give this book to your brother (let this book be given by you to your brother).'

Secondly, it is used in a sentence whose subject is a relative pronoun referring to 'time when,' as for example 'the day when' or 'that he arrived,' ang áraw na idinatíng niya. Thirdly, it indicates the case of anything that can be regarded in the light of a cause, including 'person for or on account of whom,' 'thing on account of which,' and 'instrument with which,' e.g.,

ibilí mo ako nitó-ng baril 'buy this gun for me (let me be bought for by you of this gun).'

ang itinangís[12] ko'y ang kamatáyan ni amá 'I wept on account of my father's death (my father's death was the cause of my weeping).'

iginawá niyá ang iták 'he made it with the knife (the knife was the instrument of his making it).'

The an passive indicates the case of any person or thing that can be regarded as a place. This place may be 'place where,' 'place whither,' or 'place whence,' including 'person

to or from whom,' the difference in the locative relation being due to the meaning of the verbs themselves; e. g.,

sinusul-átan ko itó-ng papél 'I am writing on this paper (this paper is the place of my writing).'

ang Cebú[13] ang pároroónan niyá 'he is going to Cebú (Cebu is whither he is going).'

bigyán mo kamí ngay'ón[14] nang áming[15] kánin sa arawáraw 'give us this day our daily bread (let us be given to by thee today of our bread for every day).'

tinanggápan[16] ko ang áking[15] amaín 'I received it from my uncle (my uncle was received from by me).'

The possibility, then, of expressing the case relations of a noun to a verb by varying the verb, which is latent in all languages, is developed to a high degree in Tagalog. By means of its four voice forms, not only the case of the agent and the object may be expressed, as in Indo-European and Semitic, but all the ordinary case relations which may exist between noun and verb. The active expresses the case of the agent; the in passive, the case of the non-alienated object; the an passive, all local relations of whatever character; while the i passive bears the burden of the remaining case relations.

FOOTNOTES

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1. Cf. Gildersleeve-Lodge, Latin Grammar, N. Y. and London, 1898, p. 152. In Greek the dative is treated as if it were an accusative, and made the subject of the passive; cf. Gildersleeve, Syntax of Classical Greek, N. Y., Cincin.; and Chicago, p. 77.

2. Syncopated passive from the root kúha 'take.'

3. Aw is used to represent the diphthong au, (formerly written ao) just as ay, to represent the diphthong ai (e.g., báhay 'house'). The consonantal writing of the final element of these diphthongs is to be preferred, because words ending in these dipthongs are always treated as if they ended in a consonant: (a) in sentence nexus, e.g., malínaw na túbig 'limpid water;' apparent exceptions are due to the fact that the diphthong has been contracted to a simple vowel, for example in ikáo'y 'thou art' the diphthong has been contracted to o: (b) in assonance, words ending in aw and ay being used in the same stanza with those ending in al, am, an, ang; cf. Dr. Seiple's paper on Tagalog Poetry, JHU. Circs. No. 163, p. 78, b.

4. Syncopated passive from root bigáy 'give.'

5. The circumflex accent is used to indicate an accented final vowel followed by the glottal catch.

6. Syncopated passive from root tanim 'sow.'

7. Syncopated passive from bilí 'buy;' a root ending in a root ending in a simple vowel, i.e., one not followed by a glottal catch, takes h before the suffixes in and an; this h is retained in syncopated forms.

8. The expression of the direct object by the genitive is due to the fact that the Tagalog verb is little removed from a noun, the relation between the two being practically the same

as that between noun and dependent genitive.

9. Cf. my paper, Contributions to Comparative Philippine Grammar, to appear in the second half of this volume of the Journal.

10. This r might also be written d, r being usually as in this case derived from an intervocalic d; cf. my papers, Sanskrit Loan-words in Tagalog and Analogies between Semitic and Tagalog, JHU. Circ. No. 163, pp. 64a, 66a; Differences between Tagalog and Bisayan, JAOS. xxv, p. 163, ft-nt. 1. It is on the whole, however, better to retain the r.

11. The acute accent indicates the stress; the grave, the glottal catch after the final vowel.

12. The guttural nasal ng is written with a tilde, viz., ng, when it stands at the beginning of a syllable.

13. Proper names of places are treated in Tagalog as common nouns, taking the definite article.

14. The reversed apostrophe is used to indicate the glottal catch at the beginning of a syllable after a consonant: in the older orthography this was denoted by a dash, viz., ngay-ón.

15. The final ng of these words is the result of the coalescing of a final n with the ligature ng. The different type is used to indicate this coalescing, and to show that ng is not the final consonant of the words, as it is for example in galíng 'goodness.'

16. The spelling ngg is to be preferred to the older form ng, as in tinangápan, because it indicates the sound (guttural nasal plus guttural sonant stop) more accurately, and because the simpler form ng is more or less liable to be confused with ng.