

SUBJECT PREDICATE AND FOCUS MARKING IN ISINAY

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This paper is concerned with subject, predicate and focus marking in the Isinay language. The data used in this study come from the dialect of Isinay spoken in the town of Dupax, Nueva Vizcaya. This study aims to show the different ways of marking the three said grammatical functions in the Isinay language based on the use of markers. The examples used in this paper are simple verbal sentences with a subject and a predicate.

1. Let us consider sentences (1) and (2) which are situational sentences.

(1) Nanagtag di asuwar.
 'The dog ran.'

(2) Nangan si mansanas di asuwar.
 'The dog ate an apple.'

In these sentences, it can be seen that the predicate occurs before the subject. The subject of the two sentences consists of /di...-war/ and /asu/ 'dog'. Let us call /di...-war/ the subject marker in the two sentences. It can also be seen that the predicate of the two sentences has no marker.

Let us consider sentences (3) and (4).

(3) Nanagtag di asuwar dari.
 'The dogs ran away.'

(4) Nangan si mansanas di asuwar dari.
 'The dogs ate apples.'

The subject of these sentences two sentences is pluralized by the pluralizer /dari/.

2. Now let us consider sentences (5), (6) and (7) which are definite sentences.

- (5) Asuwar si nanagtag.
'It was the dog which ran away.'
- (6) Asuwar si nangan si mansanas.
'It was the dog which ate an apple.'
- (7) Asuwar si nangan si mansanasar.
'It was the dog which ate the apple.'

The subject of these sentences is /asuwar/ and this occurs at the beginning of the sentences. /asuwar/ consists of /asu/ 'dog' and /-war/. Let us call /-war/ the subject marker.

The predicate of sentences (5), (6) and (7) has the marker /si/. The use of /di ...-war/ before the predicate of the three sentences is very rarely done and is perhaps not considered or accepted as normal.

- (8) ?Asuwar di nanagtagar.
'It was the dog which ran away.'
- (9) ?Asuwar di nanganar si mansanas.
'It was the dog which ate an apple.'
- (10) ?Asuwar di nanganar si mansanasar.
'It was the dog which ate the apple.'

It is not also possible to use /di/ before the subject of sentences (5), (6) and (7). Thus, the following three forms are not considered grammatical in Isinay.

- (11) *Di asuwar si nangtag.
- (12) *Di asuwar si nangan si mansanas.
- (13) *Di asuwar si nangan si mansanasar.

Let us compare sentence (6) with sentence (7). We will see that the object of sentence (6), /mansanas/ 'apple', is indefinite and that of sentence (7), /mansanasar/ 'the apple', definite. The definite object has the suffix /-ar/ and the indefinite object does not have this suffix.

It will be noticed that the suffix /-ar/ of the definite object and the suffix /-war/ of the subject are allomorphs of the same morpheme. Because of this, we will change the analysis of /-war/ as subject marker or part of the subject marker and consider it instead as solely a definitizing suffix. In this case, the subject of sentence (5), (6) and (7) has no subject marker but has only a definitizing suffix.

3. Let us consider sentences (14), (15) and (16) which are indefinite sentences.

(14) Asu di nanagtagat.
'It was a dog which ran away.'

(15) Asu di nanganar si mansanas.
'It was a dog which ate an apple.'

(16) Asu di nanganar si mansanasar.
'It was a dog which ate the apple.'

It can be seen that the subject of these sentences has no marker nor definitizing suffix. On the other hand, the predicate has before it the marker /di/ and the definitizing suffix after its verb. The marker /si/ cannot be used before the predicate of these three sentences. Thus the following forms are not grammatical.

(17) *Asu si nanagtag.

(18) *Asu si nangan si mansanas.

(19) *Asu si nangan si mansanasar.

4. On the basis of the preceding discussion, we can draw the following observations.

(a) Only one particle is used as subject marker in Isinay, the particle /di/.

(b) Two particles are used as predicate markers in Isinay, the particles /si/ and /di/.

(c) The particle /si/ which marks the object is different from the particle /si/ which marks the predicate.

(d) There are subjects and predicates which have no particulate markers.

(e) The particulate marker /di/ always has a definitizing suffix co-occurring with it. This suffix is placed at the end of the noun of the subject or at the end of the verb of the predicate.

(f) If the noun of the subject is definite, i.e. it has the definitizing suffix, the use of the definitizing suffix in the predicate verb is not grammatical.

(g) If the noun of the subject is not definite or does not have the definitizing suffix, the predicate verb must have the definitizing suffix.

(h) In the same sentence, the subject or the predicate must have a marker.

(i) In the same sentence, it is not possible for both the subject and the predicate to have their own markers.

(j) In the same sentence, it is not possible for both the subject and the predicate to have no markers.

5. Now, let us consider the following sentences which are inversions of the preceding sentences.

- (20) War asuwar ot nanagtag.
'As for the dog, ran away.'
- (21) Wer asuwar ot nangan si mansanas.
'As for the dog, it ate an apple!'
- (22) War nanagtagar or asuwar.
'As for the one that ran away, it was the dog.'
- (23) War nanganar si mansanas ot asuwar.
'As for the one that ate an apple, it was the dog.'
- (24) War nanagtagar ot asu.
'As for the one that ran away, it was a dog.'
- (25) War nanganar si mansanas ot asu.
'As for the one that ate an apple, it was a dog.'

The form /war/ at the beginning of these sentences consists of /wa/ and /-r/. /-r/ is an allomorph of the subject marker /di/. /wa/ is the focus marker. The particle /ot/ marks the inversion of the immediate constituents of the sentence.

In sentences (20)-(25), /wa, or /wa/ and /di/, cannot be deleted. Thus the following forms are not grammatical.

- (26) *Di asuwar ot nanagtag.
- (27) *Asuwar ot nanagtag.

6. We can see in sentences (20)-(25) that it is not only the subject which can be found but also the predicate. The constituent of the sentence which can be focused is always the second constituent, whether this be the subject of the predicate. However, a predicate which had the marker /si/ cannot be focused even if this occurs as the second constituent of the sentence. Thus the following forms are not grammatical.

(28) *Wat nangtag ot asuwar.

(29) *Wat nangan si mansanas ot asuwar.

What this means is that only the second constituent of the sentence which has the marker /di/ and the definitizing suffix /-ar/ can be focused.

7. In conclusion, I want to point out what I consider to be the most important contribution of this short paper to be the analysis of the syntax of Isinay and also of the other Philippine languages. This contribution consists of the demonstration that focus is distinct from subject though they often times occur together in the same constituent. The subject and predicate in Isinay have their own markers and positions in the sentence. On the other hand, focus has its own marker, /wa/, which is distinct from the markers of the subject and predicate. Also, focus has its own distinct position, that before /ot/. Thus in Isinay, and presumably also in the other Philippine languages, the processes of subjectivalization and focusing are not the same nor are they coterminus.. The constituent which is focused need not be the subject, and the subject need not be in focus.