THE CUYONON VERB SYSTEM: A FIRST APPROXIMATION

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ABSTRACT

Cuyonon, a West Visayan language, is one of the eight indigenous languages of Palawan. Of the eight it is the most dominant one, since it is spoken over the province.

This paper is a descriptive analysis of Cuyonon verbal sentences. The underlying semantic relationship that exists between verbs and noun phrases is described using Fillmore’s Case Grammar. Classification of verbs is made according to the environment that accepts them as reflective in the case frames and the semantic features that they co-occur with. A case frame is the total number of noun phrases that may co-occur with a verb relationship. It is a convenient way of putting all verbs that may have the same number and kinds of verb phrases together. Another area examined in the study is aspect. Aspect is the characterization of an event as begun or not begun, and if begun, as completed or not.

1. Introduction

The 2000 Census of the Philippines identifies 72 languages spoken in private households in Palawan. The two largest language groups are Tagalog and Cuyonon, followed by Hiligaynon and Palawan. In the urban setting, Tagalog outnumbers Cuyonon, whereas in the rural areas, Cuyonon predominates.

The languages of Palawan can be divided into two main categories: those that are indigenous to Palawan and those that are “immigrant languages” McFarland (as cited by Quackenbush, 1989) lists six Palawan languages on the basis of genetic classification: Calamianon, Agutaynon, Batak, Tagbanua, Pinalawan (or Palawan) and Molbog. The first two form a northern grouping, the second four, a southern group. In addition to McFarland’s list of six languages, two northern languages, Cuyonon and Cagayanon should be included in the list of indigenous category on the basis of geographic location alone. (Cuyonon is classified genetically as West Visayan and Cagayanon as North Manobo). The most important immigrant language by far is Tagalog. There are also sizable minorities of Cebuano, Ilocano and Karay’a along with many other lesser minorities.
2. **Purpose**

The main purpose of this paper is to present the verb system of Cuyonon using Case Grammar. A general survey of the verb forms was made taking into consideration perfective, imperfective, contemplative, recent and intensive-recent perfective aspects, including affixes, case and nominal markers.

3. **The Cuyonon Case System**

A basic Cuyonon sentence may be non-verbal or verbal. A non-verbal sentence consists of either nominal, adjectival or adverbial predicate and a topic. A verbal sentence on the other hand, consists of a verb and one or more nominal phrases (NP).

A verbal predicate with several nominal phrases does not have a rigid order. The components of a basic sentence may occur in two or more different orders without change in meaning and loss of grammaticality.

For example:

\[
\begin{array}{ccc}
\text{Nagpopo} & \text{si Dodoy} & \text{y pomangga} & \text{sa solar}.
\end{array}
\]

pick

\begin{array}{c}
\text{NP} & \text{NP} & \text{NP}
\end{array}

\begin{array}{c}
\text{Dodoy} & \text{mango} & \text{in the backyard.}
\end{array}

‘Dodoy picked mangoes in the backyard.’

The sentence could be: Nagpopo \text{y pomangga} si Dodoy \text{sa solar}. Or Nagpopo \text{sa solar y pomangga} \text{si Dodoy}. (Note: When verbs which take mag- as prefix are inflected for aspect, both perfective and imperfective, the nag- and naga- become ag- and aga-, respectively, in rapid speech. There is n deletion.)

Each of the NPs that co-occurs with a verbal predicate can be described in terms of its relation to that particular verbal predicate through Case. The case relation makes direct reference to underlying functional relations such as those expressed by agent, object, beneficiary, source, goal, etc., as they are conceived in relation to the verb. For example:
Nagtawag ang bata y traysikel para ki nanay.

called the child tricycle for mother

‘The child hailed a tricycle for mother.’

Bata is said to be in agentive relation to the verb, that is the agent or the doer of the action tawag; traysikel is in objective relation to the verb, and nanay is in benefactive relation to the verb because it is the beneficiary of the action.

Another example is:

Ingpanggeret y saging ang kotsilyo.

was used to slice banana the knife.

‘The knife was used to slice the banana.’

The sentence has the following underlying structure.

Saging is in objective case since it is the object of the verb geret, while kotsilio is in an instrumental relation to the verb. It is the instrument used to cut saging.
The Cases and Their Markers

Cuyonon has many markers. These are agentive (A), objective (O), experiential (E), directional (D), locative (L), benefactive (B), victim (V), instrumental (I), causative (C), and associative (As).

Nouns are formally marked for case by case markers. The case of noun is indicated by such nominal markers as si, ang, y, sa, para sa, etc. The nominal markers ang, ng, sa, etc. signal the relationship each nominal complement in a sentence has with the verb and other nominals.

For example, in the sentence

Nagloto y pansit si nanay para sa mga bata.
cooked pansit mother for the children.
‘Mother cooked pansit for the children.’

There are three NPs. These are y pansit, si nanay and para sa mga bata. The nominal pansit is preceded by y, nanay by si, and bata by para sa. These are nominal markers. Since y pansit is the object of loto, it is in objective case. Y becomes a nominal marker for objective case. Si nanay is the agent or performer of the action. Since si introduces nanay, si is an agentive case marker, while para sa mga bata is in benefactive case. Para sa is the benefactive marker.

If any of the NPs mentioned above becomes a topic or is made a topic, the marker always becomes si for proper nouns and ang for common nouns.

For example:

Ingloto ni nanay ang pansit.
cooked by mother the pansit.
‘Mother cooked the pansit.’

Inglotoan ang mga bata y pansit.
cooked for the children pansit.
‘Pansit was cooked for the children.’

In these sentences, a corresponding change is made on the verb through the verbal affixes. So when y pansit is topicalized to become ang pansit, nagloto becomes inglotoan. In these examples, the verbal affixes mark the grammatical relation between the verb and the topic (focused noun).
As per example given, when the agentive phrase is topicalized, it is generally marked by prefix mag- in the verb. Hence, the verb loto becomes nagloto.

When the objective phrase is topicalized, it can be marked in the verb by ing – as Ingloto ni nanay ang pansit. The benefactive phrase, on the other hand is marked in the verb by ing - an as Inglootoan ang mga bata y pansit.

Affixes in Cuyonon verbs mark case relationships between the verb and the topic of sentence, while the markers (particles) introducing noun phrases mark the same kind of relationship, but do so between verbs and non-topic phrases.

The case relationships marked by the verbal affixes are the same type of relationship as those obtaining the non-topic nominal expressions and the verb.

The different examples that follow show how Cuyonon nouns are marked for case and how these noun phrases are topicalized and generally marked by verbal affixes to show the grammatical relation between and verb and a focused noun (topic).

1. **The agentive case.** This refers to the performer, doer or agent of the action. It is the case of the typically animate perceived instigator of the action identified by the verb.

   The agentive case is indicated in the noun by the nominal marker si and ang as in:

   \[
   \begin{align*}
   \text{Nag-adal} & \quad \text{si Amy y anang liksion.} \\
   \text{studied} & \quad \text{Amy her lessons.} \\
   & \quad \text{‘Amy studied her lessons.’}  \\
   \text{Nagaboroniog-boniog} & \quad \text{ang mga tao ki Mitra.} \\
   \text{are united} & \quad \text{the people with Mitra.} \\
   & \quad \text{‘The people are united with Mitra.’}  \\
   \text{Nag-ampang} & \quad \text{kami ren.} \\
   \text{talked} & \quad \text{we already.} \\
   & \quad \text{‘We talked already.’}  \\
   \end{align*}
   \]

   The grammatical relation between the verbs and the topic is indicated by the verbal affix mag-.
2. **The objective case.** This refers to the case which identifies the object, being or place affected by the action or state identified by the verb.

The objective case is indicated in the noun by the nominal marker ' and in the verb basically by the verbal affix *ing*- as exemplified below.

**NP Marker**

-Nagtimes ako y koarta.
saved/collected I money.
‘I saved/collected money.’

-Magaopak ako y saging.
will peel I banana.
‘I will peel the banana.’

**Objective NP as topic**

-Ingtimes ko ang koarta.
‘saved I my money.’
I saved my money.

-Ing-opakan ko ang saging.
peeled I banana.
‘I peeled the banana.’

**Other examples:**

-Nagbonga ren ang pomangga.
bore fruit already the mango.
‘The mango (tree) bore fruits already.’

-Naglopopok ang ribintador.
burst the firecracker.
‘The firecracker exploded.’

-Nagateyeb ang eleng.
rotate top.
‘The top is rotating.’
3. **The experimental case.** This refers to the case of the animate noun that is affected by the action or psychological state expressed/identified by the verb.

   *Nagaagoanta pa ra y getem ang mga Pilipino.*
   suffering still hunger the Filipinos.
   ‘The Filipinos are still suffering from hunger.’

   *Nademdeman ko si nanay.*
   remember I mother.
   ‘I remember mother.’

   *Nagarispito ako sa mga malam.*
   respect I the elders.
   ‘I respect the elders.’

The experimental case shares with the agentive the use of markers *si* and *ang*.

4. **The directional case.** The directional case is the case of the animate or inanimate object from or toward which the action of the verb is directed. This case actant occurs with verbs in motion. This case may be divided into two: the directional source and the directional goal.

   a. **The directional source (DS).** This refers to the object or place which is the original or starting point of the action or state identified by the verb.

   *Ingbeel ko ang koarta sa koartamonida.*
   got I the money in the wallet.
   ‘I got the money from the wallet.’

   *Nagpakitaw ako y langgaw sa akeng kamalay.*
   asked I vinegar my neighbor.
   ‘I asked for a vinegar from my neighbor.’

   *Nag-osoy kita sa mga Amirikano.*
   imitated we the Americans.
   ‘We imitated the Americans.’

   b. **The directional goal (DG).** This refers to the case which indicated the object, or being or place toward which the action or state is directed or the actual recipient or end point indicated by the verb.
Malagted ang mga Santos sa siodad.
will transfer the Santoses in the city.
‘The Santoses will transfer to the city.’

Naglekas ang mga Muslim sa Luzon.
transferred the Muslims in Luzon.
‘The Muslims transferred to Luzon.’

Nagpirma tana sa pitision.
signed he in the petition.
‘He signed the petition.’

The directional NPs are marked by sa before common nouns and ki before proper nouns. Sa- pronouns or demonstratives can replace directional NPs marked by sa/ki.

A DG
Nagpakon si Ana sa iskwilahan.
went Ana to school Ana went
ki Pipay to Pipay.
doto. there.
kananda. to them.

‘Ana went to school’

5. The locative case. This refers to the location or place where the action occurs.

Nagkatorog si Lolo sa saheg.
slept lolo on the floor.
‘Lolo (grandfather) slept on the floor.’

Magaeseb ang mga bata sa soba.
will swim the children in the river.
‘The children will swim in the river.’

Nagaistar sanda sa mi dagat.
Live they on the seashore.
‘They live on the seashore.’
The locative case is indicated in the noun by the marker *sa* and in the verb by the case-marking affixes *ing* - *an*. The following are the examples:

**Nominal Marker**

*Nagkatorog ako *sa katri.* 
*sa* in bed.  
‘I slept in bed.’

*Nagpakon ako *sa palingki.*  
went *I* to the market.)  
‘I went to the market.’

**Locative NP as Topic**

*Ingkatorogan ko *ang katri.*  
slept *I* on the bed.  
‘I slept on the bed’

*Ingpakonan ko *ang palingki.*  
went *I* to market.  
‘I went to market’

There is a distinction between a place as DG and a place as locative. A place as DG is an obligatory case or part of the sentence, whereas, a place as locative case is optional. It may be there or not.

Take the following examples:

*Mabalik tana *sa probinsia.*  
goback *he* to the province.  
‘He will go back to the province.’

*Sa probinsia* is an obligatory constituent of the sentence. It is the place where the topic *siya* (she) will go back to. The name is true in the sentence

*Magalagted ang mga Santos *sa siodad.*  
transfer *the Santoses* to the city.  
‘The Santos family will transfer to the city.’

*Sa siodad* is the goal of Santos’ transfer. When one says she is to transfer, the question that follows is *where*? The answer to this query is a place which is the DG.
In the example, *Nakatorog si Lolo sa saleg, sa saleg* tells us of the place. This is the locative case. This case, however, may be deleted in the sentence. It is optional. In *Maeseb ang mga bata sa soba, sa soba* is the place of the action. Just like the preceding example, it is optional. Besides, in the last sentence, when one thinks of swimming, what comes to mind is the place where there is water, as sea, river, pool, etc. And it is understood, although the additional specification makes the sentence clearer.

6. **The benefactive case.** This expresses the animate being for whose benefit the action is carried out.

   *Nagbakal ako y bolong para ki Nene.*
   bought medicine for Nene.
   ‘I bought medicine for Nene.’

   *Nagkiwit ako y pomongga para sa mga bisita.*
   (Picked I mangoes for the visitors.)
   ‘I picked mangoes for the visitors’

   *(Para ki Dong ang ingbedbed kong kalilies.)*
   (For Dong the sewed I pants.)
   ‘The pants I sewed is for Dong.’

   The benefactive case is indicated in the noun by the marker *para sa / para ki* and in the verb by the case-marking affixes *ing - - an.*

   *Para sa* has the specification *[+ common]* which means that the noun following it must be a common noun. *Para ki,* on the other hand, has the specification *[+ proper],* hence, the noun following it must be a proper noun.

   **Nominal Marker**

   *Nagbedbed tana y kalilies para sa batang Vietnamese.*
   sewed he/she pants for the children Vietnamese.
   ‘He/she sewed pants for the Vietnamese children.’

   *Nagsegnad ako para ki Lola y anang iyapon.*
   cooked rice I for Lola her dinner.
   ‘I cooked rice for Lola for her dinner.’

   If the action carried out is negative, the beneficiary specifically becomes a victim.
7. **The victim case.** The case which designated the being suffers the consequences of the action identified by the verb.

*Ingkawan* ang mga Santos y mga gamit sa balay.
(Rubbed the Santoses home appliances.
‘The Santoses were robbed of home appliances.’)

*Ingdaeg kami.*
Lost we.
‘We lost.’

*Nasonogan y balay si Dang Maria.*
Burned the house of Miss Maria.
‘The house of Miss Maria was/got burned.’

8. **The instrumental case.** This refers to the tool or force or instrument involved in the action or state identified by the verb. I verbs identified, the instrumental actant is at the same time body-part of the agent and is not expressed.

*Ingkirayan (sa mapapagitan ng mata) na anang “cruch”.*
Winked his/her crush.
‘He/she winked at her crush.’

*Ingsontok (sa pamamagitan ng kamay) ni Tito si Dodoy.*
Box (by fist) by Tito Dodoy.
‘Toto boxed Dodoy.’

*Nag-arek (sa pamamagitan ng labi) ako ki Baby.*
Kissed I the Baby.
‘I kissed Baby.’

*Kiray (wink), sontok (box) and arek (kiss) are examples of verb roots with built-instrumental case. Cook (quoted in Ladera) calls instrumental cases as being lexicalized.

The instrumental case is indicated in the verb by the case marking- verbal affix *ipang*-.

*Ipangkiwit mo ang bolo.*
(pick/gather using a stick made of bamboo)
(You) Pick (fruits) with the use of stick/bamboo.
9. **The causative case.** The case which refers to the reason why the action or state identified by the verb has, is, or will occur.

The causative case is indicated in the noun by the marker *samoro* or *tenged* (because of) and in the verb by the case-marking verbal affixes *ingka* – or *ing* -.

**Nominal Marker**

*Ipangpotos mo  ang  papil  na dan.*

use as wrapper paper that.
‘Use that paper as wrapper.’

*Nasilag tana tenged sa  ingboliawan  ko  ang mga tio.*

mad he because of freed/released I the dogs.
‘He got mad because I freed the dogs.’

*Nagtambek tana  samoro nagainem  tana gatas.*

got fat she because drinks she milk.
‘She got fat because she drinks milk.’

**Causative NP as Topic**

*Ingtambek na anang pag-inem y gatas. or Ingtambek*

made fat her drinking of milk
‘Milk made her fat/stout.’

There are very few examples for this case using the verbal affix *ingka-* or *ing* -

10. **The associative case.** This case expresses the animate being who joins or associates with another animate being in carrying out the action identified by the verb.
The associative case is indicated in the verb by the marker or verbal affix *magpakig-* -an.

Examples are:

*Nagpakigbailian pa* tana.
Joined dancing activity she.
‘She joined the dancing activity.’

*Nagpakigbaritaan anang nanay kanamen.*
Chatted his/her mother with us.
‘His/her mother joined our chitches.’

*Nagpakig-arigloan anang tatay kanamen.*
Made peace his/her father with us.
‘His/her father made peace/reconciled with us.’

Cuyonon Case Markers

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Case and Topic

In the sentence

1. *Nagboat* si tatay *y balay-balay* sa oto para kanda Baby.
   
   NP  NP  NP  NP
   Agent  Object  Location  Beneficiary

   The verbal predicate *nagboat* (made) co-occurs with the four NPs, each having a case relation to the verb; *tatay* (father) is the agent, *balay-balay* (toy-house) is the object, *oto* (outside) is the place or location of the action while *Baby* is the beneficiary.

   The sentence above has a variant:

2. *Ingboat* ni tatay *ang balay-balay* sa oto para kanda Baby.
   
   NP  NP  NP  NP
   Agent  Object  Location  Beneficiary

   Sentence 2 has the same grammatical elements as sentence 1, the verbal predicate *ingboat* co-occur with the four NPs *tatay* as agent, *balay-balay* as object, *oto* as location and *Baby* as beneficiary.

   Another variant of sentence 1 is:

3. *Ingboatan* ni tatay *y balay-balay* sanda Baby *sa oto*.
   
   NP  NP  NP  NP
   Agent  Object  Beneficiary  Location

   As in sentence 2, the NPs in sentence 3 have the same kind of case relationship: *ni taytay* stands in agentive relation, to *ingboatan*; and *y balay-balayyan* in an objective relation, and *sanda baby* in benefactive relation, and *sa oto* in locative relation.

4. **Concluding Statement**

   It is clear from the foregoing examples and discussion that case relation between NPs and verbal predicate in Cuyonon remain constant although the forms of the noun markers may change from one sentence variant to another.
References

Dangan, Florida V. 2004. Mga Salitang Mag-kakaugat at Di-Magkakaugat sa Filipino at Cuyunon. A publication of the Panrehiyong Sentro ng Wikang Filipino IV, under the auspices of the Komisyon Sa Wikang Filipino.


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