

NOTES ON CEBUANO SYNTAX¹

By PERCY & KATHLEEN MEIKLEJOHN

SUMMER INSTITUTE OF LINGUISTICS
University of North Dakota

If we regard the Cebuano sentence structure as being dependent upon the prefixes used on the verbal stems, we obtain a unique relationship between the other variable grammatical parts of the sentence and the verbal prefixes. The verbal prefixes may all be classed as Primary (I) or Secondary (II), according to whether the sentence emphasis is on the verb-subject or the verb-object relation. Likewise, the substantives (personal and demonstrative pronouns; articles with the sequences they identify; and demonstrative pronouns used as adjectives with their respective head constituents) may all be classed as occurring in Primary (1), Secondary (2), or Tertiary (3) relations with the verbal stem. The verbal prefixes, in determining the sentence emphasis, control the order of the connections² of the substantives and must therefore be looked upon as consisting of a construction marker as well as a tense-aspect indicator.

For ease in setting up formulae, let us add to the five preceding abbreviations the following symbols:

S=Substantive (any sequence used as a noun equivalent);³ V=Verbal stem;
~ = or; + ~ ± = Construction marker or connection; 1, 2, 3 = Order of construction; P=Verb prefix, (I) or (II).

(The symbols + & ± indicate presence or absence of).

A conception of the main Cebuano sentence structure may now be obtained from the very generalized formula:

$$PV + S \overset{\textcircled{1}}{+} S \overset{\textcircled{2}}{\pm} S \overset{\textcircled{3}}{\pm} S$$

(1) The materials on which this article is based were collected during a period of three months field work under the auspices of the Summer Institute of Linguistics at its Mindanao headquarters on the campus of the Mindanao Agricultural College at Musuan, Bukidnon.

(2) For a complete discussion of the terms 'connections' and 'construction markers', see *The Four Minimal Structural Units of Descriptive Grammar*, unpublished ms.

(3) The term 'noun' is used to identify a word which occurs in sequence with one of the following class markers:

(a) Articles: *ang, sa, ug*.

(b) Adjectives: *Kint, niini, daini, diini; kant, niani, daani, diani* (this); *Kadto, niadto, daadto, diadto; kana, niana, daana, diana* (that).

(c) Possessive pronominal adjectives: *ako, imo, iya, ato, amo, inyo, ila*.

A. CONNECTION INDICATORS: These consist of 'pure' ligatures⁴ and complex articles, adjectives, or pronouns.

- (1) *Primary Connections*: Always necessary, though may be covert.
- (a) *Pronouns*: The pronouns indicating this connection are:
akó (first pers. sing.), *i(ká)w* (second pers. sing.), *siyá* (third pers. sing.),
kitá (first pers. plural inclusive), *kami* (first pers. pl. excl.), *kamó* (second
pers. plural), *silá* (third person plural), *kint*, *kani* (this); *kadtó* (that, far);
kaná (that, near).
- (b) *Articles*: The articles that indicate this connection precede a noun and
are: *ang*, *si*.
- (c) *Demonstrative Adjectives*: The adjectives that indicate this connection
precede nouns⁵ and consist of:
kint, *kant* (this); *kadtó*, *kaná* (that).
- (2) *Secondary Connections*: This connection always presupposes (or is
dependent upon) connection number one, but either or both may be
covert.
- (a) *Pronouns*: The pronouns indicating this connection are:
ko (first sing.), *mo* (second sing.), *niya* (third sing.), *natò* (first pl. incl.), *namò*
(first pl. excl.), *ninyo* (second plural), *nila* (third plural).
niini, *niani* (this); *niadto*, *nianà* (that).
- (b) *Articles*: The articles that indicate this connection precede a noun and
are: *sa*, *ni*, *ug*.
- (c) *Demonstrative Adjectives*: The adjectives that indicate this connection
precede nouns and consist of:
niini, *niani* (this); *niadto*, *nianà* (that).
- (3) *Tertiary Connections*: These connections presuppose connections one
and two, although either or both may be covert.
- (a) *Pronouns*: The pronouns indicating this connection are:
akò (first sing.), *imo* (second sing.), *iya* (third sing.), *atò* (first pl. incl.), *amò*
(first pl. excl.), *inyo* (second plural), *ila* (third plural). (These are all preceded
by either the prefix *kan-* or the article *sa*).
daini, *daani* (this); *daadto*, *daaná* (that). (These are all often replaced by the
secondary set above).
- (b) *Articles*: The articles that indicate this connection precede a noun and
are: *sa*, *kang*, *ug*.
- (c) *Demonstrative Adjectives*: The adjectives that indicate this connection
precede nouns and consist of:
daini, *daani* (this); *daato*, *daaná* (that). (All are often replaced by the secondary
set given above).

(4) A 'pure' ligature is a particle that has no lexical meaning, but is used solely as a connector between two words; e.g., "nga" (in Cebuano).

(5) A noun that is modified by a demonstrative adjective may take one of the following endings if emphasis is desired: *-a*, *-ba*, *-hana*, *-bona*.

B. ARRANGEMENT INDICATORS:

Verbal prefixes control the arrangement of the sequences of the substantives in the sentences. It seems necessary to regard these prefixes as complex morphs consisting of a morpheme plus a construction marker.

(1) *Primary Arrangements*:

I-V+1±2±3

Q+1+I-V±2±3

Q+nga+I-V+1±2±3.

(Q may be an adverb or an interrogative pronoun)

Some of the verbal affixes indicating this arrangement are:

pag-, *mag-*, *nag-*; *-um-*, *mo-*, *mi-* / *ni-*; *paga-*, *maga-*, *naga-*; *pang-*, *mang(a)-*, *nang(a)-*; *maka(g)-*, *naka(g)-*; *manag-*, *nanag-*; *pakig-*, *makig-*, *nakig-*; *bing-*.

Examples:

- | | | |
|--|-------------------|---------------------------------------|
| (a) <i>Pagbasa</i> | I-V(+1) | (You) read! |
| <i>Pagkuhà</i> | I-V (+1+2) | (You) get (it)! |
| <i>Magdagan akó</i> | I-V+1 | I will run. |
| <i>Magdagan ang lalaki</i> | I-V+1 | The boy will run. |
| <i>Pagbasa sa libro</i> | I-V(+1)+2 | (You) read the book! |
| <i>Pagbasa kanako</i> | I-V(+1+2)+3 | (You) read (it) to me! |
| <i>Magabang akó sa balay</i> | I-V+1+2 | I will rent a house. |
| <i>Makigdagan akó kaniya</i> | I-V+1+(2)+3 | I will run (there) with him. |
| <i>Pagbasa sa libro kanako</i> | I-V+(1)+2+3 | (You) read the book to me! |
| <i>Magabang akó sa baláy kaniya</i> | I-V+1+2+3 | I will rent the house to him. |
| (b) <i>Asa ka nagpuyò</i> | (Q+1)+I-V | Where do you live? |
| <i>Dili akó magpalit sa kapayás</i> | (Q+1)+I-V+2 | I won't buy papaya |
| <i>Kanus'a ka maghatag kaniya</i> | (Q+1)+I-V(+2)+3 | When you will give (it) to him? |
| <i>Kanus'a ka maghatag sa libro kaniya</i> | (Q+1)+I-V+2+3 | When will you give the book to him? |
| (c) <i>Nganong nagkaon ka</i> | Q+nga+I-V+1 | Why did you eat? |
| <i>Nganong nagkaon ka ug karne</i> | | Why did you eat the meat? |
| <i>Nganong nagkaon ka sa tawo</i> | | Why did you eat (it) for the man? |
| <i>Nganong nagkaon ka ug karne sa tawo</i> | (Q+nga)+I-V+1+2+3 | Why did you eat the meat for the man? |

(2) *Secondary Arrangements*:

II-V+2+1+3

Q+2+II-V+1+3

(Q+nga)+II-V+2+1+3

Some of the verbal affixes indicating this arrangement are:

-(b)a, *-(b)on*, *-(b)an*, *gi(na)-* *-(an)*; *pa-* *-(an)*, *Pa-* *-(on)*, *ma-* *-(an)*, *na-* *-(an)*; *-i*, *i-*, *-in-*.

Examples :

(a) <i>Dagana</i>	II-V+(2+1)	(You) run (somewhere)!
<i>Kubaa</i>	II-V+(2+1)	(You) get (it)!
<i>Gikaon ni Juan</i>	II-V+2+(1)	John ate (it).
<i>Nakità akó</i>	II-V+(2)+1	I was seen (by someone).
<i>Basaba ang libro</i>		(You) read the book.
<i>Gikapoy ako</i>		(It) tires me.
<i>Gihatag kang Juan</i>	II-V+(2+1)+3	(Someone) gave (it) to John.
<i>Nakita niya ako</i>	II-V+2+1	He saw me.
<i>Nakitá sa irô ang lalaki</i>	II-V+2+(1)+3	The dog saw the boy.
<i>Gihatag mo kaniya</i>	”	You gave (it) to him.
<i>Gihatag ang libro kang Juan</i>	II-V+(2)+1+3	(He) gave the book to John.
<i>Gihatag mo ang libro kaniya</i>	II-V+2+1+3	You gave the book to him.
(b) <i>Walâ basaba ang libro</i>	Q+(2)+I-V+1	(He) didn't read the book.
<i>Kanus'a gihatag kaniya</i>	Q+(2)+I-V+(1)+3	When did (he) give (it) to him?
<i>Kanus'a gihatag ang libro kaniya</i>		When did (he) give the book to him?
<i>Ditin nimó gibutáng</i>		Where did you place (it)?
<i>Ditin nimó gibutáng ang kapayas</i>	Q+2+II-V+1	Where did you put the papaya?
<i>Kanus'a mo gihatag kaniya</i>	Q+2+II-V+(1)+3	When did you give (it) to him?
<i>Kanus'a mo gihatag ang libro sa tawo</i>	Q+2+II-V+1+3	When did you give the book to the man?
(c) <i>Nganong bubaton kaná</i>	(Q+nga)+II-V+(2)+1	Why did (he) do that?
<i>Nganong bubaton kaniya</i>	(Q+nga)+II-V+(2+1)+3	Why did (he) do (it) to him?
<i>Nganong bubaton mo kaná</i>	(Q+nga)+II-V+2+1	Why are you doing that?
<i>Nganong bubaton mo kaniya</i>	(Q+nga)+II-V+2+(1)+3	Why are you doing (it) to him?
<i>Nganong bubaton kaná sa iya</i>	(Q+nga)+II-V+(2)+1+3	Why is (he) doing that to him?
<i>Nganong bubaton mo kaná sa iya</i>	(Q+nga)+II-V+2+1+3	Why are you doing that to him?

The equational type of construction is also common in Cebuano. It may be diagrammed in formula form as follows :

$$S \longleftrightarrow S$$

The connector indicated by the arrow joins the substantives. We may class the substantives as follows :

- (a) Those occurring on either side of the connector :

- (1) Those indicated by the articles: *ang, si*.

Si Juan ang manlulutò John is the cook.

- (2) Those introduced by a demonstrative adjective: *Kini, kaní, kadtó, kaná*.

Kining baláy nako. This house is mine.

- (3) Demonstrative Pronouns: *Kini, kaní, kaná, kadtó*.

Kaná ang baláy. That is the house.

- (b) Those on the left side of the connector only:

- (1) Interrogative Pronouns: *Kinsa* (who), *Unsa* (what), *Asa* (where).

Kinsa ang tawo. Who is the man?

Asa ang lalaki Where is the boy.

- (c) Those on the right side of the connector only:

- (1) Personal Pronouns: *akó, i(ká)w, siyá, kitá, kami, kamó, silá*.

Kinsa siyá. Who is he?

- (2) Possessive pronouns with ligature: *akò, imo, iya, atò, amò, inyo, ila*.

Kini imong baláy. This is my house.