

**Antipassive and Ergativity in Tagalog**  
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This paper argues for and develops an ergative analysis of Tagalog. Determining whether a language is ergative or accusative is the result of examining the case marking alignment in transitive and intransitive clause types. However, identifying transitive and intransitive clauses has traditionally not been a straightforward task in work on Tagalog, which has been argued to possess two basic transitive clause types. Specifically, there is a long-standing controversy in Austronesian linguistics over whether the so-called ‘actor focus’ clause type is transitive or an antipassive. In this paper, I show that ‘actor focus’ clauses do in fact pattern with antipassives in uncontroversially ergative languages. This allows for the conclusion that Tagalog is an ergative language. In the analysis I propose, transitive  $v$  in ergative clauses values structural absolutive case with the object DP and assigns inherent ergative case to the external argument in its specifier. In intransitive (including antipassive) clauses,  $v$  is intransitive and accordingly has no case features to assign or value. The highest DP in  $v$ P values absolutive case with T, and the object in an antipassive is dependent on the lexical verb for inherent case.

**Keywords**

Tagalog, antipassive, ergativity, transitivity

**1. Introduction**

The question of whether Tagalog is ergative, accusative, or belongs to its own typological class remains controversial among Austronesian linguists. If we examine simple transitive and intransitive clauses, we clearly observe an ergative case-marking pattern. In (1), the object of the transitive clause has the same ‘ang’ case marker as the subject of the intransitive clause, while the transitive subject is marked differently.

- (1) a. B<in>ili            ng    babae    ang    isda.  
      <TR.PRV>buy      ERG   woman   ABS   fish  
      ‘The woman bought the fish.’  
      b. D<um>ating            ang    babae.  
      <INTR.PRV>arrive      ABS   woman  
      ‘The woman arrived.’

Given the transitive clause in (1a), however, the case-marking in (2) is unexpected. (2) also appears to be a transitive clause, but here it is the external argument which appears with ‘ang’ case. If (2) is a basic transitive clause, then comparing it with (1b) yields an accusative case-marking pattern.

- (2) B<um>ili            ang    babae    ng    isda.  
      <INTR.PRV>buy      ABS   woman   OBL   fish  
      ‘The woman bought a fish.’

Many linguists do, in fact, analyze both (1a) and (2) as transitive clause types (Foley, 2008; Carrier-Duncan, 1985; Guilfoyle et al. 1992<sup>1</sup>; Kroeger, 1993; Maclachlan, 1996, 2002; Paul and Travis, 2003; Rackowski, 2002; Rackowski and Richards, 2005; Schachter, 1976, 1994). In this paper, I take a different tack. I argue is that (2) is actually not transitive but rather antipassive. Given that antipassive is an intransitive clause type, we can then conclude that Tagalog does, after all, exhibit an ergative case-marking pattern, as proposed by Aldridge (2004), De Guzman (1988), Liao (2004), Mithun (1994), Payne (1982), and others. In this paper, I argue first that Tagalog antipassives exhibit the cross-linguistic characteristics of antipassives. Then I show that the syntactic characteristics of antipassives can be accounted for straightforwardly in a Minimalist analysis of ergativity.

## 2. Cross-linguistic characteristics of antipassives

In this section, I show that antipassives in Tagalog have the cross-linguistically observed properties of antipassives. Although they outwardly resemble transitive clauses in that they generally contain two or more nominal arguments, antipassives have formal characteristics of intransitive clauses (Baker, 1988; Campbell, 2000; Cooreman, 1994; Davies and Sam-Colop, 1990; Dixon, 1979, 1994; Dryer, 1990; England, 1988; Isaak, 1999; Kozinsky et al., 1988; Mithun, 2000; Ordonez, 1995; Palmer, 1994; Siegel, 1998; Tsunoda, 1988; and others). They show intransitive verbal morphology, and any internal arguments present do not receive absolutive case, contrary to objects in transitive clauses. Instead, the object in an antipassive generally receives some sort of oblique case<sup>2</sup>, while absolutive case appears on the external argument. The object also often receives an indefinite, narrow scope interpretation.

First, antipassives are morphologically intransitive. In Mayan languages verbs typically register agreement with their core arguments. In the transitive clause in (3a), the verb shows agreement with both the ergative and absolutive arguments, while in the antipassive in (3b), there is agreement only for the external argument absolutive.

- K'iche' (Campbell 2000:266-7)
- (3) a. k-0-a-yoq'                                ri a-na:n  
ASP-3SG.ABS-2SG.ERG-mock    the your-mother  
'You mock your mother.'
- b. k-at-yoq'-on                                č-e:h                                ri a-na:n  
ASP-2SG.ABS-mock-AP    to.3SG.POSS-GEN    the your-mother  
'You mock your mother.'

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<sup>1</sup> The Guilfoyle et al. (1992) analysis treats both the external and internal arguments as subjects, the external argument in its base position in [Spec, VP] and the internal argument in [Spec, IP]. Although Guilfoyle et al. do not classify Tagalog as an ergative language, it is worth mentioning that this aspect of their proposal bears close resemblance to the analysis of transitive clauses in ergative languages by Bittner and Hale (1996), in which the absolutive argument moves to subject position, while the ergative argument is licensed in situ.

<sup>2</sup> The oblique case in Tagalog is *ng* (pronounced 'nang'), as can be seen in (2) above. This morpheme also serves as the ergative case marker with transitive subjects, as in (1a). In the analysis I propose in section 3, there is only one structural case in Tagalog, which is absolutive. Other nominal arguments receive inherent case. The syntactic behavior of ergative and oblique DPs is differentiated on the basis of their structural positions. In the terminology of Woolford (2006), *ng* on an ergative subject marks 'inherent' case assigned in the specifier of a functional category, while *ng* on an internal argument in an antipassive is 'lexical' case assigned by the verb to its complement.

In Tagalog, antipassive verbs inflect with intransitive verbal morphology. One such marker is the intransitive perfective infix <um>, as in (4a). This same infix appears on simple intransitives, as in (4b).

- Tagalog
- (4) a. K<um>ain=ako                      ng      isda.  
           <INTR.PRV>eat=1SG.ABS        OBL    fish  
           ‘I ate (a/some) fish.’
- b. <um>alis            ‘leave’  
           <um>upo            ‘sit’  
           <um>uwi            ‘go home’  
           b<um>alik          ‘return’  
           p<um>unta          ‘go’  
           l<um>ipad          ‘fly’  
           d<um>ating         ‘arrive’

Another common antipassive marker in Tagalog is the prefix *mag-*, which also is used with simple intransitives. While <um> can be used with both unaccusatives and unergatives, *mag-* is limited to unergatives<sup>3</sup>.

- Tagalog
- (5) a. **Mag**da-dala=ako                      ng      libro.  
           INTR.FUT-bring=1SG.ABS        OBL    book  
           ‘I will bring a book.’
- b. mag-trabaho    ‘work’  
           mag-bayad     ‘pay’

The object in an antipassive construction often receives an indefinite or nonspecific interpretation (Campbell, 2000; Cooreman, 1994; Dryer, 1990; Kalmar, 1979; Kozinsky, et al. 1988; Mithun 2000; Palmer 1994; Rude, 1988; Tsunoda, 1988; and others). In the following pair of South Baffin examples, the antipassive construction is used in (6a) in order to introduce a referent into the discourse. Since this is its first mention in the discourse, the object is clearly indefinite. In (6b), the object is referred to again. (6b) is a transitive construction; the object has absolutive status, and is clearly definite.

- South Baffin Eskimo (Kalmar 1979:124)
- (6) a. Joosi            quqiq-**si**-y-up                      *tuttu-mik*  
           Joosi.ABS shoot-AP-PTCP-INTR        caribou-INS  
           ‘Joosi shot a caribou.’

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<sup>3</sup> *mag-* derives historically from the combination of <um> and the prefix *pag-* (Wolff 1973). Travis (2000) analyzes *pag-* as causative, which suggests an explanation for the restriction to agentive predicates.

- b. Joosi-up quqi-kkaniq-t-a-nga *tuttu*  
 Joosi-ERG shoot-again-PTCP-TR-3/3 caribou.ABS  
 ‘Joosi shot the same caribou again.’

This interpretive asymmetry between oblique and absolutive objects is mirrored in Tagalog. The oblique object in the antipassive construction in (7a) must be interpreted as indefinite.<sup>4</sup> In contrast to this, the absolutive object in the transitive clause in (7b) must be definite.

- Tagalog
- (7) a. B<um>ili                    ang    babae        ng    isda.  
 <INTR.PRIV>buy            ABS    woman      OBL   fish  
 ‘The woman bought a/\*the fish.’
- b. B<in>ili                    ng    babae        ang    isda.  
 <TR.PRIV>buy            ERG    woman      ABS    fish  
 ‘The woman bought the/\*a fish.’

Another asymmetry between oblique and antipassive objects is in their scope possibilities with respect to the external argument. Basilico (2003), Benua (1995), Bittner (1987, 1994), and others show that absolutive objects in transitive clauses like (8a) take wide scope over ergative DPs, while oblique objects in antipassives like (8b) scope under the external argument.

- West Greenlandic (Bittner 1994:138)
- (8) a. atuartu-t                    ila-an-nik                    ikiu-i-sariaqar-p-u-nga  
 student-PL.ERG    part-3PL.SG-INS            help-AP-must-IND-[INTR]-1SG  
 ‘I must help one of the students (any one will do).’
- b. atuartu-t                    ila-at                    ikiur-tariaqar-p-a-ra  
 student-PL.ERG    part-3PL.SG            help-must-IND-[TR]-1SG.3SG  
 ‘There is one of the students that I must help.’

In Tagalog, quantified absolutives also take scope over ergative arguments in transitive clauses, as in (9a). The oblique object in an antipassive, as in (9b), can only scope under the external argument.

- Tagalog
- (9) a. B<in>asa                    [ng    lahat    ng    bata]    [ang    marami-ng    libro]  
 <TR.PRIV>read            ERG    all      GEN    child    ABS    many-LK    book  
 ‘All the children read many books.’  
 MANY > ALL

<sup>4</sup> In fact, this object must be nonspecific. See Rackowski (2002) and Aldridge (2004, 2005) for discussion. However, as pointed out by an anonymous reviewer, the object can be definite if the antipassive is embedded in a relative clause. Interestingly, the same amelioration of the definiteness effects seems to occur in Inuktitut (Alana Johns, personal communication). The reader is referred to Aldridge (2005) for discussion of this effect and how to account for it in the current framework.

- b. **Nag-basa** [ang lahat ng bata] [ng marami-ng libro]  
 INTR.PRV-read ABS all GEN child OBL many-LK book  
 ‘All the children read many books.’  
 ALL > MANY

Aspectual relations such as telicity are sometimes involved in transitive and antipassive alternations (Benua, 1995; Cooreman, 1994; Kozinsky et al., 1988; Palmer, 1994; Siegel, 1998; Tsunoda, 1988; and others). Typically, there is a sense that the action is less complete in an antipassive. The object in the following Chuckchee antipassive in (10b) is less affected by the action of the verb than the object in the transitive construction in (10a).

- Chuckchee (Palmer 1994:182)
- (10) a. *etleg-e* **keyng-en** *penre-nen*  
 father-ERG bear-ABS attack-3SG.3SG.PST  
 ‘Father attacked the bear.’
- b. *etleg-en* *penre-tko-g’e* **kayng-ete**  
 father-ABS attack-AP-3SG.APST bear-DAT  
 ‘Father ran at the bear.’

Nolasko (2009) notes that transitive clauses in Tagalog are also more telic than antipassive clauses in that ‘the action or activity terminates with a clear accomplishment.’ (Nolasko 2009:11). The transitive clause in (11a) is taken from a novela. The *camote* has been mentioned in the previous discourse and is therefore definite. Use of transitive morphology on the verb also adds the implication that the *camote* ends up being fried as a result of the event. The antipassive in (11b) would also be grammatical in this context, but the highlight would shift to the activity of *camote* frying.

- Tagalog (Nolasko 2009:11-12)
- (11) a. Nang mainit=na ang mantika, i-p<in>rito=niya *ang kamote.*  
 when hot=already ABS oil APPL<TR.PRV>fry=3SG.ERG ABS *camote*  
 ‘When the oil was already hot, she fried the *camote*.’
- b. Nang mainit=na ang mantika, **nag**-prito=siya *ng kamote.*  
 when hot=already ABS oil INTR.PRV-fry=3SG.ABS OBL *camote*  
 ‘When the oil was already hot, she fried the *camote*.’

The final parallel I discuss is the possible omission of an object in an antipassive. It is frequently assumed that antipassive objects are optional (Baker, 1988; Campbell, 2000; Cooreman, 1994; Dixon, 1979, 1994; Dryer, 1990; England, 1988; Isaak, 1999; Kozinsky et al., 1988; Mithun, 2000; Ordonez, 1995; Palmer, 1994; Siegel, 1998; Tsunoda, 1988; and others). The typical case appears to be when the lexical verb can be used unergatively<sup>5</sup>, as in the K’iche’ example in (12). (12a) shows a transitive clause and (12b) its antipassive equivalent. Note the *-on* antipassive suffix on the verb in (12b). This same suffix can appear on an unergative stem, as in (12c).

<sup>5</sup> In fact, my reading of the literature suggests that this is always the case. If true, this fact would further serve to connect antipassive to syntactic intransitivity, rather than forcing it to be analyzed as a derived construction in which the internal argument has been demoted to adjunct status.

- K'iche' (Campbell 2000:266-7)
- (12) a. š-0-u-tč'ay                      ri      a lu?    ri      a šwa:n  
 ASP-1SG.ABS-3SG.ERG-hit      DET    Peter    DET    John  
 'John hit Peter.'
- b. ri      a šwa:n      š-0-č'ay-**on**                      č-e:h                      ri      a lu?  
 DET    John            ASP-3SG.ABS-hit-AP      to.3SG.POSS-to      DET    Peter  
 'John hit Peter.' or 'John was fighting with Peter.'
- c. k-0-mes-**on**                      č-qa-naqa:x  
 ASP-3SG.ABS-sweep-AP      to-1PL.POSS-near  
 'She sweeps near us.'

The same is true in Tagalog. (13a) shows an antipassive with two DP arguments. The same *<um>* infix appears on the unergative in (13b).

- Tagalog
- (13) a. K<**um**>ain=ako                      ng      isda.  
 <PRV.INTR>eat=1SG.ABS            OBL    fish  
 'I ate (a/some) fish.'
- b. K<**um**>ain=ako  
 <PRV.INTR>eat=1SG.ABS  
 'I ate.'

In sum, the cross-linguistically observed characteristics of antipassives are also found in Tagalog antipassives, lending credence to the proposal that Tagalog does indeed have an antipassive construction.

### 3. Tagalog analysis

In the previous section, we have observed that Tagalog clauses that take two nominal arguments but show intransitive morphology on the verb behave as expected of antipassives. The universal intransitive behavior of Tagalog antipassives is captured by the analysis of case and locality put forth in this section. In short, antipassives are intransitive in the sense that *v* does not have a structural case feature to value on an internal argument. The narrow scope and other interpretive characteristics of the object are accounted for by the inability of the *v* phase head to carry an EPP feature in intransitive clauses, forcing the object to be interpreted in the VP at LF.

#### 3.1 Transitive and intransitive

Before turning to the analysis of antipassives, let me first introduce the analysis of transitive and intransitive clauses in Tagalog. The relevant features involved in this analysis are summarized in (14). Transitive *v* values absolutive case on the object DP. It also has an EPP feature, which draws the absolutive DP to its outer specifier, where the object receives a presuppositional interpretation and can undergo further movement. Inherent ergative case is assigned to the external argument by transitive *v* (see Legate, 2002, 2008; Mahajan, 1989; and Woolford, 1997, 2006 for similar proposals). Intransitive, including antipassive, *v* has neither a

case nor an EPP feature, so objects in these constructions will not be structurally case-licensed. Nor will they be able to dislocate from VP.

(14) v-Type Ergative Language

$v_{Tr}$ :	Inherent ergative case		
	[ $uCase:Abs$ ]		
	[EPP]		
$v_{Intr}$ :	No case feature	$v_{AP}$ :	No case feature
	No [EPP]		No [EPP]
$T_{Fin}$ :	Optional [ $uCase:Abs$ ]		
	No [EPP]		

Finally, T optionally carries an absolutive case feature. This does not mean, however, that T's ability to value absolutive case is arbitrary or unconstrained. Since the case feature is uninterpretable, it must be checked, and this will only be possible when there is a DP with an unvalued case feature in its c-command domain. This means that the derivation will converge only if T has this case feature in intransitive clauses, when there is no other case-valuing functional head to supply absolutive case to the subject. In transitive clauses, the case feature of the subject and object will be valued by  $v$ . If T also had an uninterpretable case feature to check, then the derivation would crash. The result is that the source of absolutive case in transitive clauses is  $v$ , while it is T in intransitive clauses. I give direct empirical evidence for this division of labor<sup>6</sup> below.

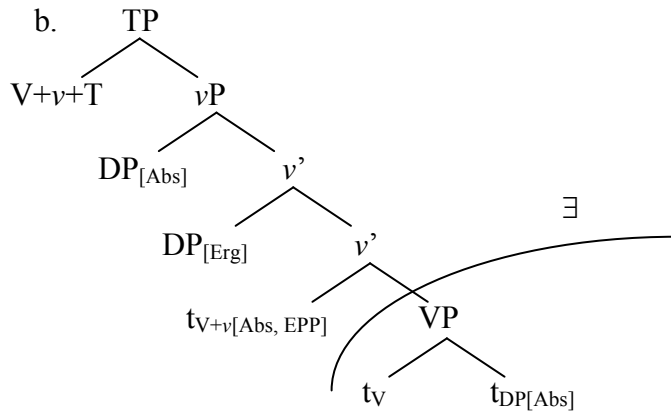
To illustrate the relevant derivations, in a transitive clause,  $v$  values absolutive case on the object DP and assigns inherent ergative case to the external argument in its specifier. The verb moves to  $T^7$  to derive VSO basic word order.

- (15) a. B<in>ili            ng    babae    ang    isda.  
          <TR.PRIV>buy    ERG   woman   ABS   fish  
          'The woman bought the fish.'

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<sup>6</sup> Legate (2002, 2008) also proposes that both T and  $v$  play a role in valuing case on absolutives in certain ergative languages. However, she claims that the case valued by T in the syntax is nominative and that valued by  $v$  is accusative, as in accusative languages. Absolutive case is treated as the default lexical insertion for these cases in the Morphological Component. I do not adopt this approach for Austronesian languages. Aldridge (forthcoming) shows that absolutive and accusative cases are morphologically distinct in certain languages.

<sup>7</sup> Aldridge (2004) proposes that the landing site is actually an aspectual projection between T and  $vP$ . The difference between these two landing sites is inconsequential for the discussion at hand, so I arbitrarily select T here in order to simplify the discussion.



The absolutive DP also undergoes movement to the edge of  $vP$ <sup>8</sup>. Given Diesing’s (1992) proposal that material external to the VP at LF is mapped to the restrictive clause, while VP-internal material is mapped to the nuclear scope, this yields the wide scope, presuppositional interpretation for the absolutive observed in section 2. Having moved to a position c-commanding the external argument, the absolutive will be interpreted as scoping over this argument. Note the parallel with Fox’s (2000) account of inverse scope in the following English sentence. To derive the wide scope interpretation for the object, the subject lowers to its base position at LF, where it is c-commanded by the object in an outer specifier of  $vP$ .

- (16) a. A boy loves every girl.  
 b. [<sub>IP</sub> \_\_\_ [<sub>VP</sub> every girl<sub>2</sub> [<sub>VP</sub> a boy<sub>1</sub> loves  $t_2$  ]]] (Fox 2000:25)

Located in the edge of the  $vP$  phase, the absolutive object is also eligible to undergo further movement, as shown in (16a). The ergative DP, on the other hand, is unable to be extracted, since the absolutive DP is the closer of the two DPs to a probe on the next phase head<sup>9</sup>. The proposal that transitive  $v$  carries an EPP feature then derives the well-known absolutive restriction on A’-extraction, according to which absolutives are the only DPs able to undergo A’-movement in a syntactically ergative language (Aldridge, 2004, 2008; Bittner, 1994; Campana, 1992; Dixon, 1979, 1994; England, 1983; Manning, 1996; Payne, 1982; and others).

<sup>8</sup> Given basic word order in Tagalog, this movement must be ‘covert’, by which I assume that the movement takes place in the syntax, but the higher copy is interpreted at LF, while the lower copy is the one pronounced at PF. See Rackowski (2002) and Rackowski & Richards (2005) for other analyses of Tagalog syntax which assume covert movement of absolutive objects.

<sup>9</sup> This would be surprising, if we assumed that both specifiers of  $vP$  were equidistant from C. However, there is a recent trend away from such employment of the notion of equidistance (Fox and Pesetsky, 2005; Rackowski and Richards, 2005; among others). For example, if we consider the approach in Rackowski and Richards (2005), they ensure that only the highest (closest) specifier in  $vP$  can enter into an Agree relation with a probe on C with the following definition of ‘closest’.

A goal  $\alpha$  is the closest one to a given probe if there is no distinct goal  $\beta$  such that for some X (X a head or maximal projection), X c-commands  $\alpha$  but does not c-command  $\beta$ .

This, then, effectively prevents extraction of the ergative DP over the absolutive.



- (17) a. Ano ang b<in>ili ng babae?  
 what ABS <TR.PRV>buy ERG woman  
 ‘What did the woman buy?’  
 b. \*Sino ang b<in>ili ang libro?  
 who ABS <TR.PRV>buy ABS book  
 ‘Who bought the book?’

Although it is frequently assumed that absolutive case should be equated with nominative and therefore be valued by T<sup>10</sup> (Bittner, 1994; Bittner and Hale, 1996; Bok-Bennema, 1991; Campana, 1992; Johns, 1992; Levin, 1983; Manning, 1996; Marantz, 1981, 1984; Murasugi, 1992; Ura, 2000; and others), there is clear evidence that the source of absolutive case in transitive clauses must be  $\nu$  and cannot be T. Absolutive case is available for objects in transitive clauses in nonfinite contexts. If this case were valued by T, then we would expect it to be unavailable in nonfinite clauses, i.e. when T is defective. Note further that absolutive case in the embedded clause in (18b) cannot be said to be exceptionally assigned by matrix  $\nu$  or T. The case feature on T will be valued on the matrix external argument. There is no case feature on matrix  $\nu$  which could be valued exceptionally on the embedded object, since matrix  $\nu$  is intransitive and carries no case feature.

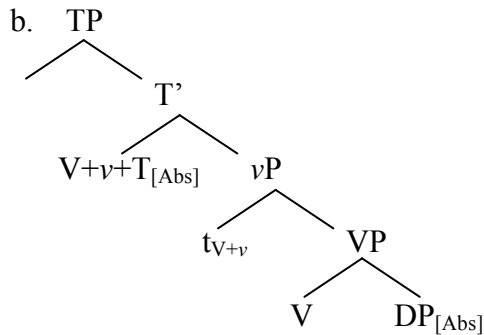
- (18) a. B<in>a-balak ng babae-ng [PRO tulung-an **ang lalaki**]  
 <TR>PROG-plan ERG Maria-LK help-APPL ABS man  
 ‘The woman is planning to help the man.’  
 b. **Nagba**-balak ang babae-ng [PRO tulung-an ang lalaki]  
 INTR.PROG-plan ABS woman-LK help-APPL ABS man  
 ‘The woman is planning to help the man.’

In intransitive clauses,  $\nu$  does not have an absolutive case feature. Therefore, T must be the source of absolutive case in intransitive contexts, which is valued on the single argument in a simple intransitive clause like (19). Following Chomsky (2001), I assume that unaccusative  $\nu P$  is a weak phase, which means that T is still able to probe into VP looking for a DP to check its case feature.

- (19) a. D<um>ating ang babae.  
 <INTR.PRV>arrive ABS woman  
 ‘The woman arrived.’

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<sup>10</sup> I also do not favor an approach along the lines of Bobaljik (1993), Laka (1993), Levin and Massam (1985), Massam (2006), and others, in which absolutive is treated uniformly as an objective case. Approaches of this type require separate mechanisms for the assignment of absolutive case in transitive clauses (where Agree under c-command is possible) and unergative intransitives (in which  $\nu$  does not c-command the external argument which must receive absolutive case). Furthermore, the unavailability of absolutive case in nonfinite intransitives clearly argues that the source for absolutive case is T in this context, as I show below in (20).



Supporting evidence for the association of absolutive case with T comes from nonfinite clauses. If the embedded clause is intransitive, the absolutive subject position must be filled by PRO. In other words, examples like (20) indicate that absolutive case is not available when T is defective.

- (20) Nagba-balak si Maria-ng [PRO p-um-unta sa Maynila]  
 INTR.PROG-plan ABS Maria-LK <INTR>go to Manila  
 ‘Maria is planning to go to Manila.’

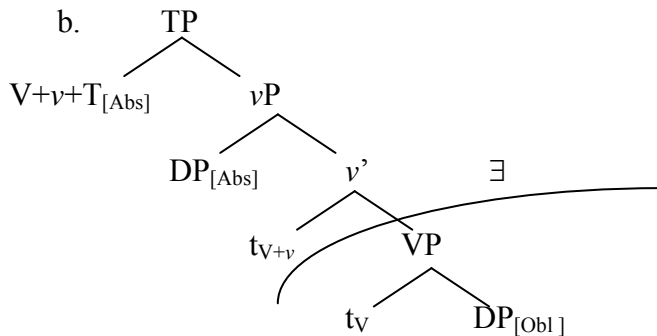
### 3.2 Antipassive

This subsection addresses the question of how to analyze the antipassive. The prevailing view, especially in the typological and Relational Grammar literature, views antipassive as a derived construction in which the object is somehow ‘demoted’ (Baker, 1988; Campbell, 2000; Cooreman, 1994; Davies and Sam-Colop, 1990; Dixon, 1979, 1994; England, 1988; Kozinsky et al., 1988; Mithun, 2000; Palmer, 1994; among many others). However, such a view would be difficult to accommodate within a Generative syntactic analysis, on the understanding that a ‘demotion’ should involve a downward movement transformation. From the perspective of Chomsky’s (1995) Extension Condition, each operation of merger must extend the derivation, thereby preventing downward movement. More recently, the No-Tampering Condition likewise ensures that ‘movement ... leaves unmodified the objects to which it applies, forming an extended object’ (Chomsky 2005:13). Aside from theoretical considerations, it would still be difficult to identify a possible landing site for a lowering approach to antipassive, given that the object to be demoted is typically the theme or patient of the verb, base merged as that verb’s complement. Consequently, we do not expect there to be a position c-commanded by this object to which it could lower.

In contrast to the demotion approach, I show in this section how all of the characteristics of Tagalog antipassives can be accounted for in the analysis sketched in the preceding subsection. Put simply, rather than demotion, antipassive is more accurately conceived of as the failure of promotion of the object. As a type of intransitive, antipassive  $v$  does not have a case feature, and T must value absolutive case. Since the external argument is the first DP in T’s c-command domain, this is the DP which will receive absolutive case. The object is then dependent on the lexical verb for inherent oblique case<sup>11</sup>.

<sup>11</sup> Note further that optional omission of the object will not cause the derivation to crash, since there is no uninterpretable case feature which must be valued with  $v$ .

- (21) a. B<um>ili            ang    babae    ng    isda.  
 <INTR.PRV>buy    ABS    woman    OBL    fish  
 ‘The woman bought a fish.’



Antipassive  $v$  also lacks an [EPP] feature. This means that the oblique does not move to the  $vP$  phase edge and will therefore receive a non-specific, narrow scope interpretation at LF.

- (22) a. B<um>ili            ang    babae            **ng**    isda.  
 <INTR.PRV>buy    ABS    woman    OBL    fish  
 ‘The woman bought a/\*the fish.’
- b. **Nag**-basa            [ang    lahat    ng    bata]    [ng    marami-ng    libro]  
 INTR.PRV-read    ABS    all    GEN    child    OBL    many-LK    book  
 ‘All the children read many books.’  
 ALL > MANY

The oblique object also cannot undergo A'-movement, since it does not move to the edge of the  $vP$  phase but instead remains in its base position in VP, where it will be spelled out and therefore no longer be visible to the computational system after completion of the  $vP$  phase without violating the Phase Impenetrability Condition (Chomsky, 2000, 2001, 2004). Note that if A'-movement takes place, it will be the absolutive subject which is attracted, since it is the only DP in the  $vP$  phase edge.

- (23) a. \*Ano    ang    b<um>ili            ang    babae?  
 what    ABS    <INTR.PRV>buy    ABS    woman  
 ‘What did the woman buy?’
- b. Sino    ang    b<um>ili            ng    libro?  
 who    ABS    <INTR.PRV>buy    OBL    book  
 ‘Who bought the book?’

Another advantage of this analysis is that it anchors the transitive/antipassive alternation in a broader Generative tradition which captures the correlation between the availability of structural case for an object and the definite or specific interpretation for that object, as well as the telicity of the event. For example, Runner (1993) shows that an indefinite object in Turkish appears immediately adjacent to the verb and receives an indefinite interpretation, as in (24a). In contrast,

an accusative-marked object, as in (24b), receives a definite interpretation and is dislocated from the VP.

- Turkish (Runner 1993:23)
- (24) a. Ben    dun        aksam    **cok**   **guzel**   **bir**    **biftek** yedim.  
           I       yesterday evening very nice a       steak ate  
           ‘Yesterday evening, I ate a very nice steak.’
- b. Ben   **bifteg-i**   dun        aksam    [<sub>VP</sub> *t<sub>Obj</sub>* yedim].  
           I       steak-ACC yesterday evening           ate  
           ‘I ate the steak yesterday evening.’

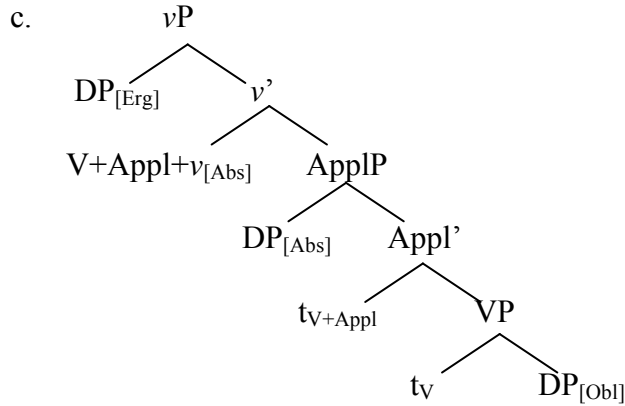
Borer (1994), Ritter and Rosen (2000), Runner (1993), Tenny (1987, 1994), Van Voorst (1988), and others extend the connection between object movement and structural case-licensing to event interpretation, accounting for the relationship between telicity and the availability of structural case for the object. Analyses along these lines have also been put forth for antipassives in ergative Inuit languages (Benua, 1995; Bittner, 1994; Spreng, 2006).

### 3.3 Evidence for inherent case in antipassives

In this subsection, I present evidence that the case assigned to objects in antipassives is inherent and not structural. Given standard assumptions that inherent case is assigned by a lexical category together with a  $\theta$ -role, we expect this case to be found with certain types of arguments, but not others. Specifically, when this case appears on a DP in VP, it is always a theme or patient. This is obvious in the antipassive examples we have seen above where there is a single theme or patient object, as in (25a). This case also appears on themes/patients in applicative constructions<sup>12</sup>, as in (25b). The applied object has absolutive case. This is accounted for by the analysis in 3.1, since transitive  $v$  will value absolutive case on the closest DP in its c-command domain, i.e. the applied object. The theme, since it is directly selected by the lexical verb, can receive inherent oblique case.

- (25) a. B<**um**>-ili=ako                    *ng*    *libro*.  
           <INTR.PRIV>buy=1SG.ABS    OBL    book  
           ‘I bought a book.’
- b. **I**-b<**in**>ili=ko                 *ang*    *babae*    *ng*    *libro*.  
           APP<TR.PRIV>buy=1SG.ERG   ABS    woman    OBL    book  
           ‘I bought the woman a book.’

<sup>12</sup> I assume a ‘high’ applicative structure in the sense of Pylkkanen (2002) for the Tagalog benefactive/instrumental applicative. See Rackowski (2002) for argumentation in favor of this structure.



Tagalog applicative constructions provide direct support for the analysis of *ng* as inherent case. A pseudo-argument like a beneficiary can be packaged as a PP, in (26b). The verb in this case can be intransitive, since there is no internal argument requiring structural case-licensing. An applicative can attach to the verb and license the pseudo-argument as the absolutive, as in (26b). However, note that in this case, the verb is transitive, and the applied object appears with absolutive case. What is not possible is for an applicative to attach to an intransitive, i.e. antipassive, verb, as in (26c). This is accounted for by the proposal in section 3.2 that there is no structural case for the object in an antipassive. In other words, the applied object would not be case-licensed, since only a DP which is directly selected by a verb, can receive the *ng* inherent case.

- (26) a. T<um>awa                    ang    babae    para    sa    anak=niya.  
 <INTR.PRV>laugh    ABS    woman    for    DAT    child=3SG.GEN  
 ‘The woman laughed for her child.’
- b. I-t<in>awa                    ng    babae    ang    anak=niya.  
 APPL<TR.PRV>laugh    ERG    woman    ABS    child=3SG.GEN  
 ‘The woman laughed for her child.’
- c. \*I-t<um>awa                    ang    babae    ng    anak=niya.  
 APPL<INTR.PRV>laugh    ABS    woman    OBL    child=3SG.GEN  
 ‘The woman laughed for her child.’

The ungrammaticality of (26c) is mysterious on analyses like Rackowski (2002) and Rackowski and Richards (2005) that assume that structural accusative case is available in Tagalog antipassives. The current proposal also avoids the empirical shortcomings of traditional approaches which view applicatives as voice markers promoting pseudo-arguments to subject status (Bloomfield, 1917; Schachter and Otnes, 1972; and others<sup>13</sup>). Aside from the lack of cross-linguistic support for the existence of such a derivation, this type of approach also makes false predictions regarding the syntactic behavior of DPs in Tagalog. For example, the fact that ergative DPs can bind absolutive reflexives in applicative (as well as other transitive) constructions clearly shows that it is the external argument and not the applied object which functions as subject of the clause.

<sup>13</sup> See also Foley (2008), Guilfoyle et al. (1992), and others for more recent implementations of this basic idea.

- (27) I-b<in>ili            ng    babae    ang    sarili=niya    ng    bago-ng    kotse.  
 APPL<TR.PRIV>buy ERG    woman    ABS    self=3SG.GEN    OBL    new-LK    car  
 ‘The woman bought herself a new car.’

#### 4. Objections to antipassive in Tagalog

Many Austronesian linguistics continue to reject the ergative analysis of Tagalog, claiming that these languages do not have a true antipassive construction (Kroeger, 1993; Paul and Travis, 2003; Schachter, 1994), as I discussed briefly in section 1. Their objections, however, are not problematic for the analysis of antipassive put forth in the preceding section. Their arguments tend to show that Tagalog antipassives do not have the properties expected of a derived construction or that the object does not behave as if it were demoted. However, the analysis proposed in this paper does not analyze antipassive as derived or the object as demoted. Therefore, these objections in no way nullify the claims put forth in section 3.

Kroeger (1993) objects to the analysis of the matrix clause in the following example as an antipassive, because the object can control a gap in a nonfinite embedded clause. This shows that the object in question is a ‘term’, i.e. an argument.

- (28) Nang-huli            ng    magnanakaw<sub>i</sub>    ang    polis<sub>j</sub>  
 INTR.PRIV-catch    OBL    thief                            ABS    police  
 [nang PRO<sub>ij</sub> p<um>a-pasok            sa    bangko]  
 when                            <INTR>PROG-enter    DAT    bank  
 ‘The police caught a/the thief when entering the bank.’ (Kroeger 1993:47)

The fact that the object in an antipassive can control a gap in an embedded clause is completely expected on the analysis proposed in section 3. What distinguishes antipassive from transitive clauses on this analysis is whether *v* checks absolutive case and has an EPP feature. In both cases, however, the verb still has the ability to select an internal argument. In other words, the object in both clause types is merged in argument position inside VP and should therefore be eligible to serve as controller for PRO.

Another objection comes from Maclachlan (1996), who argues that the Tagalog antipassive is not a derived construction because it is not acquired later than transitive clause types. Derived constructions like passive are generally acquired later than constructions which are not transformationally derived, like a passive. She claims that since the antipassive is not acquired late, then it should not be analyzed as a derived construction. This fact regarding acquisition is, of course, not a problem for the present proposal, because antipassive is not, in fact, a derived construction, involving demotion of the object from a transitive clause. Rather, it has the same basic structural properties as a transitive clause. Its derivation is, in fact, simpler than a transitive clause, since objects do not move to the edge of *v*P, as they do in transitive clauses.

#### 5. Conclusion

In this paper, I have endeavored to address remaining objections to an ergative analysis of Tagalog by showing that Tagalog, like other syntactically ergative languages, does indeed have an antipassive construction. Not only have I shown that Tagalog antipassives have the cross-linguistically expected characteristics of antipassives, I have also shown how the syntactic

behavior of antipassives can be straightforwardly accounted for in a Minimalist analysis of ergativity. The main difference between an antipassive and transitive clause is that, although antipassive *v* selects an external argument, it does not structurally case-license an internal argument. Antipassive *v* also does not have an [EPP] feature, thereby forcing the object to remain in its base position in VP, where it receives a narrow scope, nonspecific interpretation at LF and is also ineligible to undergo A'-movement.

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