

Notes on Noun Phrase Structure in Tagalog

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This paper presents some observations on the syntax and semantics of the Tagalog phrase marking particles *ang*, *ng*, and *sa*. More specifically, it is concerned with investigating the following two points. First, while there is some evidence for the widely held view that the phrase marking particles form a kind of paradigm in that they are at least in partial complementary distribution, they differ significantly in their distributional characteristics. These differences reflect the fact that historically speaking, the phrase marking particles develop from two quite different sources, i.e. determiners and prepositions. Synchronically, they clearly interact in a way that makes it difficult to analyze them unequivocally as either determiners or prepositions. Still, the different distributional characteristics make it doubtful whether it is actually warranted to assign them the same structural position within NP/DP.

Second, it will be argued that at least for *ang* and possibly also for *ng* a DP-type analysis is very well supported. In fact, they provide examples par excellence for functional elements displaying (syntactic) head characteristics. The main problem for this type of analysis for nominal expressions in Tagalog and similar languages relates to the complement of the functional head: What is its category and its internal structure? Among other things, the answer to this question requires a syntactic analysis of the so-called linker, a topic which will also be briefly addressed (if time permits).