WORD ORDER IN TAGALOG CHILD LANGUAGE

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1. INTRODUCTION

This paper was initially conceived to investigate the development of word order in children speaking Tagalog, which is a verb-initial language.[1]

The original impetus for this study came from studies of word order in children speaking French and Chinese, both verb-medial languages (Yau 1979, 1980). In these studies, Shun-Chiu Yau advanced the hypothesis that there exists a natural word order in child language. In sentences containing a transitive verb (called 'relator' by Yau and symbolized as R), an agentive noun, and an accusative noun, 'the natural order in child language is R-final, or more exactly NN-initial' (1980:3). According to his formulation,

> The R will appear only after the two initial N have already been conceived. The appearance of R implies the prerequisite conception (but not necessarily the actual presence) of the two initial N together with the posterior designation of their respective grammatical roles as agentive and accusative. (1980:8)

In the studies that he has undertaken with French-speaking and Chinese-speaking children, the development of sentence patterns in the children shows a progression from an *enumerative description* (ED), which simply names objects (N1, N2, N3), *through an enumerative-relational description* (ERD), which identifies the objects first and then provides a description of the action occurring between the Ns (e.g., N1, N2, NRN' where N is agentive and N' accusative), to a *relational description* (RD), which describes the action using only one basic utterance, the order of which matches that of the parental order (e.g., NRN').

In this account, therefore, the child moves from, for example, using Yau's English glosses (1979:30-33):

a little dog and a boy/ and the bathroom///I don't know

to

Daddy / a car / he's pushing the car

to

There, the children are watching the little puppets.

Yau sees in this progression the working of the child's cognito-perceptual faculty and the impact of the adult word order on it. The child begins by simply naming the Ns. After the ED stage, he still does not possess the cognito-perceptual faculty or the linguistic facility to simultaneously describe the action, the actor, and the acted-upon; thus he first

has to enumerate the two Ns before providing the NRN'. Some time later (just before the age of 4), the child no longer has the need to first list the two Ns before describing the R. At this point, as a reflection of the normative pressure of the target language and the development of the child's cognito-perceptual faculty, the adult word order replaces the natural word order of the child.

As the study progressed, however, the concern moved from solely testing the Yau hypothesis of a natural word order in child language to looking closely at word order in Tagalog child language to investigate agent or patient dominance in Tagalog and the occurrence of NRN-type sentences in Tagalog.

2. METHOD

2.1. SUBJECTS

One hundred seven children between the ages of 2;2 and 4;6 served in this study, 66 females and 41 males. All the children spoke Tagalog as their dominant language.

The limitations of the sample should be pointed out: The great difficulty in getting children to participate in the tasks allowed for only an accidental sample. Furthermore, the conditions for recording could not be controlled; 90 interviews were conducted in the homes of the children or in places near their homes and 17 were conducted in play schools. The children did not all come from one Tagalog-speaking area: The majority of the children (72) were residents of Metro Manila but 35 lived outside Metro Manila — 17 in Capas, Tarlac and 18 in Angeles City, Pampanga — places where Tagalog is a lingua franca but not the language of the majority. The sample was not equalized for sex, being biased in favor of females. Finally, the statistics are thin for some of the age groups (see Table 1 for the breakdown of age groups).

In short, the findings of this study need to be tested against data from a more adequately constituted sample.

Fourteen postcard size drawings from the Yau studies were utilized. In general, these drawings were expected to elicit a description containing three elements, an N-agentive, an N'-accusative, and an R. The 14 pictures depict the following:

a. A boy is washing a dog.
b. A woman is cutting a boy's hair.
c. Two children are watching TV.
d. A woman is holding a cat.
e. A man is pushing a car.
f. A cat is giving a gift to a rabbit.
g. A turtle is catching a rabbit. *or* A turtle is holding the leg of a rabbit.
h. A man is washing a cow.
i. A bear is hitting (the head of) an elephant (with a hammer).
j. A mailman is putting a letter into a mailbox.
k. A bear is pushing a car.
l. A girl is feeding some chicks.
m. A policeman is hitting (the head of) a man (with his fist).
n. A girl is giving a flower to a woman.[2]

The procedure followed that used by Yau. Each child was approached by a native speaker of Tagalog in the following way: *May ipapakita ako sa iyong mga litrato. Ikuwento mo nga sa akin.* 'I'm going to show you some pictures. Tell me the story, OK?' Then the pictures were shown one by one, with the cassette recorder taping the children's utterances. In the course of the child's response, if there was a pause longer than 2-3 seconds, he/she was prompted with *Tapos?* 'Then?' In case the child kept on enumerating N1, N2, N3 . . . . or stopped after naming the two Ns corresponding to the two objects in

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[2]The stimulus materials might seem a little fanciful to adults, but the children in the sample (who are, after all, children of the Sanrio age) did not have difficulty with them. Another researcher might wish to use 'more plausible' materials.

the picture, despite being prompted twice, a hint was given: *Anong ginagawa niya/nila?* 'What is he/she/it doing?' or 'What are they doing?' If there was no response or if the child again failed to describe the action presented in the drawing, the next picture was then presented.

2.2. METHOD OF ANALYSIS

The tapes of the children's responses were transcribed and typed on note cards, one card per child. The word order of each sentence was analyzed, using the broad labels of N for N-agentive, N' for N-accusative, N'' for N-dative, and R for relator. At the first level of analysis, focusing on word order, only the logical functions of agent, patient, recipient, and relator were coded, not the grammatical functions of subject, direct object, indirect object, and predicate. Word order categories were then set up and the data tabulated by age group according to these word categories.

A second level of analysis was subsequently done on the data of the older children (2;7-4;6) to look at the covariation between logical (or deep structure) and grammatical (or surface structure) functions. In other words, this analysis looked at how agent, patient, recipient functions were expressed variously in surface structure as subject, direct object, indirect object.

3. RESULTS

3.1. PRELIMINARY WORD ORDER CATEGORIES

System was imposed on the data by identifying and using certain categories of word order relations in Tagalog. These are presented and exemplified below. (Note that the examples are actual utterances from different children and are unedited. In the following categories, a comma means that something occurs between the two items, usually a prompt. The symbol ⊐ means that the two items can be interchangeably placed. In the examples, the stroke indicates the prompting *Tapos?* 'Then?' and the Q represents the hint *Anong ginagawa niya/nila?* 'What is he/she/it doing?' or 'What are they doing?' Since at this point, the main concern is agent-patient-relator relations, the English gloss for the citation will not include grammatical markers but will simply be a translation that reflects the structure of the Tagalog sentence.)

A. Pointing and/or Demonstrative

1. kotse iyan (2;4)
   car   that

2. iyan tao [3]
   that man

B. N, N, N

3. aso / kamay Q planggana
   dog hand   basin

4. bata / mommy / gunting Q buhok Q buhok
   child mother   scissors   hair   hair

5. mama / dyip Q QQ
   man   jeep

C. N,N,R

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[3]In some citations, acceptability of the utterance was dependent on the **prosody used** by the child. Prosody has not been marked here because it is not central to the concerns of the study.

6. bata / nanay Q gupit
   child mother cut

7. cat / bata Q karga
   cat child carry

8. pagong / rabbit Q rabbit Q habol
   turtle   rabbit   rabbit   run after

In the citations under *C*, the R is not inflected; it is not clear if the child perceives which N is agent and which N is patient.

D. $\overline{N}\lfloor N$', R

9. kotse / baboy / Q nagtutulak
   car   pig   is pushing
   'The pig is pushing the car'

10. TV / bata / nanonood
    TV   children are watching
    'The children are watching TV'

11. bata / dog / papaliguan[4]
    child dog is being bathed
    'The dog is being bathed by the child'

In the citations under *D*, the R is inflected and in this case there is evidence that the child knows which N is agent and which N is patient.

E. $\overline{N}\lfloor N$', RN'

12. kotse / tao Q tinutulak iyong kotse[5]
    car   man is being pushed the car
    'The car is being pushed (by a man)'

13. bata / sisiw Q nagbibigay ng pagkain
    child chicks is giving   a food
    '(The child) is giving food (to the chicks)'

14. si Mia / at saka dog Q naliligo iyong doggie niya
    det Mia   and   dog   is being the   doggie her
                              bathed
    'Her doggie is being bathed (by Mia)'

F. $\overline{N}\lfloor N$', RN

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[4]The affix here is defective; lack of mastery of the affix system has resulted in contemplated aspect, but the child probably means imperfective aspect. In other examples below, I have ignored errors in affixes and have regularized the glosses.

[5]Although *iyong* is the demonstrative *that*, I prefer to gloss it as *the* because it has the force of the determiner rather than the demonstrative in the sentence here.

15. pagong / ang daga / hinihila   ng pagong Q Q
    turtle   the rat   is being pulled by turtle
    '(The rat) is being pulled by the turtle'

16. kalabaw / bata Q niliguan   ng bata
    carabao   child   was bathed   by child
    '(The carabao) was bathed by a child'

17. iyong ɲama iyong pulis   napukpok ng pulis
    the   man   the policeman   was hit   by policeman
    '(The man) was hit by a policeman'

G. N̄N', P̄N̄N'

18. pusa / bata Q kinukuha   niya   iyong pusa
    cat   child   is being gotten by him   the   cat
    'The cat is being caught by him'

19. iyong kotse / iyong daddy Q tinutulak niya   iyong kotse
    the   car   the   daddy   is being by him the   car
                                   pushed
    'The car is being pushed by him'

20. pagong / kangaroo Q hinahawakan ng pagong iyong paa ng kangaroo
    turtle   kangaroo   is being held by turtle the   foot of kangaroo
    'The kangaroo's foot is being held by a turtle'

H. N'R

21. kotse nitutulak
    car is being pushed
    'The car is being pushed'

22. iyong sulat ihuhulog
    the   letter will be dropped
    'The letter will be dropped'

23. ang regalo ibibigay
    the gift   is being given
    'The gift is being given'

I. NR

24. pulis   naghuhulog[6]
    policeman is dropping
    'The policeman is dropping (. . .)'

_____

[6]In sentences 24-26, the gloss I present is what I assume the child means, considering the particular pictures that elicited the response.

25. pulis   / tulak Q nagtutulak
policeman   push   is pushing
'The policeman is pushing (. . .)'

26. pulis   // hinuhulog   Q hinuhulog
pliceman   is being dropped   is being dropped
'(. . .) is being dropped by the policeman'

J. RN'

27. naghuhulog ng sulat
is dropping a   letter
'(. . .) is dropping a letter'

28. nanonood   ng TV[7]
are watching a   TV
'(. . .) are watching TV'

29. inaalagaan   ang muning
is being cared for the pussycat
'The pussycat is being cared for'

K. RN

30. hinahawakan niya
is being held by her
'(. . .) is being held by her'

31. pinupukpok po   ng horse po
is being hit respect marker by horse respect marker
'(. . .) is being hit by a horse'

32. sinuntok   ng pulis
was socked by policeman
'(. . .) was socked by a policeman'

L. RN̅|N'

33. nagtutulak iyong bear ng kotse
is pushing   the   bear a car
'The bear is pushing a car'

34. nililinis   niya   iyong cow
is being cleaned by him the   cow
'The cow is being cleaned by him'

35. pinapaliguan   po   ang aso ng bata
is being bathed respect the dog by child
'The dog is being bathed by a child'

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[7]In 28, I use 'are watching' because the picture shows two children. In Tagalog, plural marking in the verb is highly optional.

M. RN[N'[N''

36. bigay   niya   sa girl iyong flower
    was given by her to girl the   flower
    'The flower was given to the girl by her'

37. pinakakain   ng nanay iyong bibi   ng pagkain
    are being fed by mother the   ducklings a   food
    'The ducklings are being fed food by a mother'

N. RN[N''

38. nagbibigay po   ng regalo sa rabbit
    is giving   respect a gift   to rabbit
    '(. . .) is giving a gift to the rabbit'

39. binibigay   iyong flower sa titser
    is being given the   flower to teacher
    'The flower is being given to the teacher'

40. binibigyan   ng pagkain iyong mga manok
    are being given a   food   the plural chicken
    'The chickens are being given food'

O. NRN'

41. ang mama naghuhulog ng sulat
    the man   is dropping a letter
    'The man is dropping a letter'

42. ang mama tinutulak   ang kanyang kotse
    the man   is being pushed the his   car
    'The car is being pushed by the man'

43. ang bata hinahawakan ang pusa
    the child is being held   the cat
    'The cat is being held by the child'

P. N'RN

44. car / tinutulak   niya / tinutulak   niya
    car   is being pushed by him   is being pushed by him
    'The car is being pushed by him'

45. tao   pinukpok ng pulis
    man was hit   by policeman
    'The man was hit by a policeman'

46. iyong kalabaw po   pinapaliguan   ng mama
    the   carabao respect marker is being bathed by man
    'The carabao is being bathed by a man'

Q. NRN[N'

47. iyong bata   po   nanonood   sila ng TV

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the   children respect marker are watching they a   TV
'The children are watching TV'

48. iyong bata kinakarga   niya   iyong pusa
    the   child is being carried by her the   cat
    'The cat is being carried by the child'

49. iyong bear pinupukpok niya   iyong elephant
    the   bear is being hit by him the   elephant
    'The elephant is being hit by the bear'

R. R

50. kain kumakain Q kain
    eat   is eating   eat

51. hinahampas   / / Q naghahampas
    is being struck   is striking

52. ginugupitan
    is being given a haircut

S. Residue — refers to the sentences produced by the children that contain intransitive verbs or have a different structure from the expected reply, e.g.

53. umaalis   sila / umaalis   sila Q ito
    are leaving they   are leaving they   this

54. gift niya   sa kanya / / Q nilaro   niya
    gift to her to him   was played by him'
    'Her gift to him . . . (. . .) was played by him'

55. may pinapaliguan   ang bata · ang aso
    existential is being bathed the child the dog
    'There is someone being bathed by the child — the dog'

Another category, Failure, which subsumes instances when the child could not describe the picture, has been eliminated from the tally inasmuch as the task was not a test of linguistic ability but was used to obtain a corpus for a study of word order relations in child language.

3.2. CONFLATED WORD ORDER CATEGORIES

The classification scheme presented and exemplified above served its purpose in the analysis of the individual sentences in the corpus. However, for purposes of identifying the patterns, that scheme had to be incorporated into a tighter version that would allow developmental patterns to emerge.

Conflating the categories was done primarily in the light of the Yau hypothesis. Thus, a major consideration was to be faithful to the number of initial Ns and to the order of the Ns and the R relative to each other.

The grouping subsequently produced the following conflated categories:

A. N, N, N, for pointing and/or demonstrative and N,N,N

B. $\overline{N}N$', R for N,N,R and $\overline{N}N$', R

C. $N \underline{N}$', $R\{_N^N\}$ for $N\underline{N}$', RN and $N\underline{N}$' RN and $N\underline{N}$', $R\overline{N}\underline{N}$'

D. $\{_N^N\}R$ for N'R and NR

E. $R\{_N^{N'}\}$ for RN'' and RN and $R\overline{N'}\underline{N}$''

F. $R\overline{N}\underline{N}$' for $R\overline{N}\underline{N}$' and $R\overline{N}\underline{N}'\overline{N}$''

G. $\{^{NRN'}_{N'RN}\}$ for NRN' and N'RN and $NR\overline{N}\underline{N}$'

H. R

I. Residue

The ⌐ indicates that the Ns can change places; the { } indicates either/or. Since the primary interest is in agentive and accusative, the dative has by and large been disregarded.

3.3. RESULTS

Table 1 presents the percentages for the different word order categories for the different age groups.

It is unfortunate that the numbers of children for 2;7-2;8, for 2;9-2;10, and for 3;1-3;2 are so small, with the low frequencies being spread out among many categories. Setting aside the fuzziness of the data for these particular age groups, a pattern emerges if we consider the highest percentage for each group (encircled in Table 1). From 2;2 to 2;6, the predominant word order category is N,N,N. From 3;5 to 4;2, the predominant word order category is $R\{_N^{N'}\}$. For 4;3 to 4;6 it is $\{^{NRN'}_{N'RN}\}$. In the age groups embraced by the age bracket 2;7 to 3;4, there seems to be no clear predominant word order category inasmuch as the top two or three percentage figures for each group come close to each other.

It is not clear whether the lack of a clear-cut pattern for 2;7 to 3;4 is an artifact of the small sample used or is a legitimate finding. I tend to think that the instability manifested in the data is characteristic of the period, which may be considered a transition from the naming description of a younger age to the more relational description of an older age.

The pattern becomes more distinct in Table 2, where the age groups in Table 1 have been bracketed together on the basis of highest percentage in each age group.

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Table 1

Occurrence of Different Word Orders (in Percentages)
for Different Age Groups

AGE	NUMBER OF SUBJECTS	NUMBER OF UTTERANCES	N,N,N*	N̲LN'R	N̲LN'R {N'/N} **	{N'/N} R	R {N'/N}	RN̲LN'	{NRN'/N'RN} ***	R	Residue
2;2	4	41	(76)	2		5	2			5	10
2;3-2;4	5	46	(87)	4			2				7
2;5-2;6	9	103	(43)	19	5	14	8		1	6	4
2;7-2;8	6	70	19	3	7	13	(27)	3	14	3	11
2;9-2;10	5	64	6	8	(24)	10	21	6	11	12	2
2;11-3;0	8	105	1	4	(22)	9	20	20	13	4	7
3;1-3;2	5	65		8	17	5	20	5	(31)	8	6
3;3-3;4	8	111		1	14	5	(33)	13	29	2	3
3;5-3;6	10	131		4	8	1	(46)	17	17	3	4
3;7-3;8	7	96		4	14	4	(59)	4	7	7	1
3;9-3;10	8	106	1	5	12	9	(41)	12	11	2	7
3;1-4;0	8	112			9	8	(53)	12	10	4	4
4;1-4;2	5	67			2		(51)	19	26		2
4;3-4;4	8	111			10	3	17	15	(50)	1	4
4;5-4;6	11	149		3		5	19	23	(44)	3	3
	N=107	N=1377	10%	4%	10%	6%	30%	12%	20%	4%	4%

*includes demonstrative and pointing
**includes N̲LN'; RN̲LN'
***includes NR N̲LN'

NOTE: For each age group, the highest percentage is encircled and the record highest percentage is underscored twice.

Note how in Table 2, the absence of a dominant pattern for the age bracket 2;7-3;4 is shown in the small differences in the percentages obtained by $R\{^{N'}_{N}\}$ = 25%, and N̲LN', $R\{^{N'}_{N}\}$ = 17%. In the other age brackets, one particular word order category clearly predominates.

The different word order categories can be grouped together into description schemas, following those suggested by Yau. Thus, N,N,N, is an enumerative description (ED) — naming objects in the picture without making any attempt to describe the action, i.e. the relation between the objects. Under the enumerative-relational description (ERD), which consists of naming the two Ns and R the action occurring between them, are $\overline{N}\underline{N}',R$ and $\overline{N}\underline{N}',R\begin{Bmatrix}N'\\N\end{Bmatrix}$. Intermediate relational description (Int. RD) refers to the schema that does not list two Ns but immediately presents the action in the picture; here, the word category of R, of $\begin{Bmatrix}N'\\N\end{Bmatrix}R$, and of $R\begin{Bmatrix}N'\\N\end{Bmatrix}$ falls. Finally, the full relational description schema (Full RD) applies to those word order categories conforming to the Tagalog adults' sentence patterns RN N' and $\begin{Bmatrix}NRN'\\N'RN\end{Bmatrix}$.[8]

The results are as follows:

Table 2
Bracketing of Age Group Data according to Closeness of Highest
Percentage Received Per Group in Table 1

AGE	NUMBER OF SUBJECTS	NUMBERS OF UTTERANCES	N,N,N	$\overline{N}\underline{N}',R$	$\overline{N}\underline{N}',R\begin{Bmatrix}N'\\N\end{Bmatrix}$	$\begin{Bmatrix}N'\\N\end{Bmatrix}R$	$R\begin{Bmatrix}N'\\N\end{Bmatrix}$	$R\overline{N}\underline{N}'$	$\begin{Bmatrix}NRN'\\N'RN\end{Bmatrix}R$		Residue
2;2-2;6	18	190	(60)	12	3	9	(5)	0	1	4	6
2;7-3;4	32	415	4	4	17	8	(25)	11	20	5	6
3;5-4;2	38	512	0	3	9	5	49	12	14	4	4
4;3-4;6	19	260	0	2	5	4	18	20	(46)	2	3

NOTE: For each age bracket, the highest percentage is encircled. Percentages very close to the highest percentages are underscored twice or once.

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[8] That $\begin{Bmatrix}NRN'\\N'RN\end{Bmatrix}$ is a Tagalog adults' sentence pattern needs to be confirmed with empirical data. Table 4 provides only limited confirmation since the data came from only eight Tagalog-speaking adults. Certainly there is a need for more frequency counts of child and adult Tagalog language.

Table 3
Bracketing of Age Group Data According to Description Schema
(in Percentages)

AGE	NUMBER OF SUBJECTS	NUMBER OF UTTERANCES	ED N,N,N	E R D $\bar{N}\underline{N}'R$ & $\bar{N}\underline{N}',R\{^{N'}_N\}$	INT. RD $\{^{N'}_N\}$ R & R $\{^{N'}_N\}$	$R\bar{N}\underline{N}'$ & $\{^{NRN'}_{N'RN}\}$	Residue
2;2-2;6	18	190	(60)	15	18	1	6
2;7-3;4	32	415	4	21	(38)	31	6
3;5-4;2	38	512	0	12	(58)	26	4
4;3-4;6	19	260	0	7	24	(66)	3

NOTE: For each age bracket, the highest percentage is encircled. Percentages very close to the highest percentage are underscored twice or once.

The pattern for the description schemas mirrors that for the word order categories — Tagalog children appear to move from a purely enumerative description to a transitional period when different description schemas jostle each other, then on to a stage when they give incomplete relational description until they get to the point when they describe the action fully in the adult schema of full relational description.

4. DISCUSSION

4.1. EVIDENCE FOR THE YAU HYPOTHESIS

The results provide support for Yau's sketch of the developmental patterns in the description schemas of children: The movement seems to be from enumerative description. Thus, the utterances of the youngest children are predominantly N,N,N and those of the oldest children are predominantly in the adult relational schemas $R\bar{N}\underline{N}'$ and $\{^{NRN'}_{N'RN}\}$.

However, with regard to his specific hypothesis on the NN-initial pattern (referring to $\bar{N}\underline{N}',R$ and $\bar{N}\underline{N}',R\{^{N'}_N\}$) the pattern does appear in the data — and it is an unexpected pattern in Tagalog — but it appears very short-lived and occurs side-by-side with $R\{^{N'}_N\}$ and $\{^{NRN'}_{N'RN}\}$

The data in the categories $\bar{N}\underline{N}',R$ and $\bar{N}\underline{N}',R\{^{N'}_N\}$, and $R\{^{N'}_N\}$ and their high

incidence between the enumerative and the full relational descriptions lend credence to Yau's claim that the ERD and the Int. RD are strategies that follow from the cognito-perceptual capacity that children possess at that point in time. Either they overtly state the two Ns first and then relate them or else they drop one N and go directly into the action (providing an appropriate R) and the naming of the noun (giving an appropriate N, usually the patient). It is only around the age of 4 when they easily provide a full overt description of the action, the actor, and the acted-upon.

4.2. AGENT OR PATIENT DOMINANCE

The process of conflating categories has grouped together word order categories like N͟N',RN' and N͟N',RN, N'R and NR, and RN' and RN, and therefore the tables do not show the figures specific to N-agentive or N'-accusative for each category. However, close analysis of the data has made it clear that the relationship of R and patient is expressed more often than that of R and agent. The ratio of N͟N',RN' to N͟N',RN is 4 to 1, that of N'R to NR is 3 to 1, and that of RN' to RN is 8 to 1.

In some instances, this might well be an artifact of the question prompt employed, i.e. *Anong ginagawa nila?* 'What are they doing?', in which case the typical answer is to give the action and patient of the action, e.g. *Nanonood ng TV* 'Watching TV'.[9] However, this prompt question was hardly ever needed with the older children; yet their utterances possess more R-N' ties than R-N. In Tagalog, the relationship between relator and patient appears more salient than that between relator and agent. The present study thus substantiates the claim made by Ceña (1979) that both linguistic and psychological evidence points to patient primacy in Tagalog. (See also the discussion below of Segalowitz and Galang 1978).

4.3. THE $\begin{Bmatrix} \text{NRN'} \\ \text{N'RN} \end{Bmatrix}$ WORD ORDER

It is striking that the expected target word order of RN͟N' as in

56. Nagtutulak ang tao ng trak
    is pushing the man a   truck
    'The man is pushing a truck'

57. Pinupukpok ng bata iyong pulis
    is being hit by child the policeman
    'The policeman is being hit by a child'

is overshadowed by the order $\begin{Bmatrix} \text{NRN'} \\ \text{N'RN} \end{Bmatrix}$ as in

58. Ang mama naghuhulog ng sulat
    the man   is dropping a letter
    'The man is dropping a letter'

59. Si   Allan ginugupitan   ng nanay
    determiner Allan is being given a haircut by mother
    ''Allan is being given a haircut by his mother'

Very few of the $\begin{Bmatrix} \text{NRN'} \\ \text{N'RN} \end{Bmatrix}$ utterances contain the inversion marker *ay;* here is one example:

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[9]In fact, Ceña (1979) uses the form *Anong ginagawa nila* 'lit., what is being done by them?' as yet one more proof that Tagalog is patient-oriented rather than agent-oriented. Notice that in English, it is agent-oriented, *What are they doing,* with *they* as subject, while in Tagalog, *nila* is non-subject.

60. Ang bata   ay   nanonood ng TV
    the child inversion marker is watching a   TV
    'The child is watching TV'

Instead, many of the $\begin{Bmatrix} NRN' \\ N'RN \end{Bmatrix}$ utterances are in the form

61. Ang mama tinutulak   ang kanyang kotse
    the man   is being pushed the his   car
    ''As for the man, his car is being pushed by him'

62. Si   Allan pinapaliguan   iyong doggie
    determiner Allan is being bathed the   doggie
    ''As for Allan, the doggie is being bathed by him'[10]

where there are two Ns in the sentence marked with the subject-marker *ang, si* or *iyong*.

The structure of such sentences will be discussed below. Here, it is necessary to ask the question whether the word $\begin{Bmatrix} NRN' \\ N'RN \end{Bmatrix}$ as exemplifed by 58 to 62 above — is to be considered a target word at par with RNN'.

For this purpose, a very small scale test was conducted with adults[11]. The same stimulus materials were used to elicit descriptions from eight Tagalog-speaking adults, with the following results:

**Table 4: Occurrence of Different Word Orders (in Percentages)
for Eight Adults**

Word Order Category	Percentage
RNN'	55
$\begin{Bmatrix} NRN' \\ N'RN \end{Bmatrix}$	36
$R\begin{Bmatrix} N' \\ N \end{Bmatrix}$	5
Residue	4
	N=112 utterances

As expected, RNN' registered the highest occurrence, but a large 36% of the adult utterances were $\begin{Bmatrix} NRN' \\ N'RN \end{Bmatrix}$. It is worth noting that these $\begin{Bmatrix} NRN' \\ N'RN \end{Bmatrix}$ sentences were not marked by *ay*-inversion. Slighly less than half were of the type.

63. Iyong bata   nagkakarga ng pusa
    the   child is carrying a   cat
    'The child is carrying a cat'

but surprisingly, slightly more than half had the form with the two ang-phrases:

64. Iyong pagong hinahabol   iyong rabbit
    the   turtle is being chased the   rabbit

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[10]Some of the glosses might be ungrammatical English, but they reflect the structure of the Tagalog sentence.

[11]This test was suggested by Yau.

"As for the turtle, the rabbit is being chased by him'

It seems reasonable, to propose that there are two adult word orders in Tagalog: RN̅L̲N' and $\begin{Bmatrix} \text{NRN'} \\ \text{N'RN} \end{Bmatrix}$. What is surprising is that a comparison of the occurrence of these two adult word orders in the total sample of children's utterances shows 20% $\begin{Bmatrix} \text{NRN'} \\ \text{N'RN} \end{Bmatrix}$ and only 12% RN̅L̲N'. These figures imply that word order is rather free in Tagalog and that topicalization (defined here as the preposing of the *ang* phrase to the beginning of the sentence) is a fairly common feature of the children's Tagalog (and, considering the figures obtained for the eight adults, also of the adults' Tagalog).

4.4. FOCUS, SUBJECT, AND TOPIC

So far I have dealt exclusively with the logical relations of agent and patient. How do agent and patient surface in the utterances of the children, that is, in terms of the surface structure of Tagalog, what is the predominant focus in the utterances of the children?

Focus in Tagalog can be exemplified in the following (not all of these sentences are from the corpus; all of them are given in the perfective aspect):

65. Nagbigay   ang bata   ng bulaklak sa titser
    give AGENT FOCUS the SUBJ child a   flower   to teacher
    'The child gave a flower to the teacher'

66. Ibinigay   ng bata ang bulaklak   sa titser
    give PATIENT FOCUS by child the SUBJ flower to teacher
    'The flower was given by the child to the teacher'

67. Binigyan   ng bata ng bulaklak ang   titser
    give DIRECTION FOCUS by child a   flower   the SUBJ teacher
    'The teacher was given a flower by a child'

In 65, the subject (or sentence focus) is *ang bata* 'the child', the agent of the action; in 66, it is *ang bulaklak* 'the flower', the patient; in 67 it is *ang titser* 'the teacher', the recipient of the action. In Tagalog, the subject is always the *ang/si/iyong* phrase and subject choice is governed by the focus marking in the verb. (For a full treatment of Tagalog focus, see Schachter and Otanes 1972).

The relative freedom of Tagalog word order results in sentences like the following:

68. Ang bata (ay) nagbigay ng bulaklak sa titser.

69. Ang bulaklak (ay) ibinigay ng bata sa titser.

70. Ang titser (ay) binigyan ng bata ng bulaklak.

In such sentences, topicalization has taken place and the subject has been preposed or topicalized.

Topic in Tagalog can be seen in the following sentences from the corpus, which possess both a topic and a comment with its own subject:

71. Iyong   bata   po   nanonood   sila ng TV
    the   SUBJ children respect marker watch ACTOR FOCUS they a   TV
    'As for the children, they are watching TV'

39

72. Ang   bata ibinibigay   sa titser   ang kanyang bulaklak
    the   SUBJ child give PATIENT FOCUS to teacher the SUBJ her flower
    'As for the child, her flower is being given to the teacher'

73. Iyong   bata binibigyan   ang   mga   sisiw
    the   SUBJ child   give DIRECTION FOCUS   the SUBJ plural   chick
    ng   pagkain
    a   food
    'As for the child, the chicks are being given food'

It is important to note that in all examples given above with a preposed *ang*-phrase (or topic), there was hardly a pause between the topic and the rest of the sentence almost as if the word order was the S V O of other languages.

To determine focus predominance in the children's utterances, I reviewed the verb forms for focus type of the children from 2;7 on. (I excluded 2;6 and below because the children in this bracket were still at the N,N,N stage.).

I was not concerned about whether to consider the *ang*-phrase as subject or topic and simply considered all *ang*-phrases as subject; the only time I distinguished between topic and subject was in double *ang*-phrase sentences, in which I considered the preposed *ang*-phrase as topic and the second *ang*-phrase as subject. The results are presented in Table 5. (See Li and Thompson 1976 for their discussion of Tagalog as neither a subject prominent nor topic-predominant language; Schachter 1976 for his analysis of Tagalog subject; and Ceña 1979 for counter arguments to Schachter's analysis.)

Table 5
Occurrence (in Percentages) of Each Focus Type

Focus Type	Percentage
Agent Focus, Subject Stated (e.g. Nag-aalaga siya ng pusa.)	11
Agent Focus, Subject Not Stated (e.g. Nagbibigay ng flower doon sa titser.)	12
Patient Focus, Subject Stated (e.g. Hinahawakan ng bata iyong pusa.)	48
Patient Focus, Subject Not Stated (e.g. Ginugupitan ng mommy niya.)	7
Direction Focus, Subject Stated (e.g. Binigyan ng bata ng bulaklak ang titser.)	1
Direction Focus, Subject Not Stated (e.g. Binigyan ng regalo.)	1
Both Topic and Subject* (e.g. Iyong dalaga ginugupitan iyong bata. Iyong bata binibigyan ang mga sisiw ng pagkain. Iyong bata po nanonood sila ng TV.)	14
Errors (e.g. Nagbabatukan ang pulis iyong bata.)	6
	N=1105 utterances

*For the Both Topic and Subject cases (N=152), 145 are Agent Topic and Patient Subject, 3 are Agent Topic and Direction Subject, 2 are Agent Topic and Agent Subject, 1 is Direction Topic and Direction Subject, and 1 Patient Topic and Patient Subject.

Inas much as at most only three of the pictures *(f, l,* and *n)* could easily be described with the direction focus, the results for direction focus can be ignored. The results for the patient focus are congruent with the earlier observation that the R-N' tie appears more salient than the R-N tie. Sentences in patient focus occur twice more often than sentences in agent focus (55% vs. 23%); if the sentences with both topic-and-subject are included, the ratio becomes three patient focus sentences to one agent focus sentence.[12]

The results are in line with the findings of Segalowitz and Galang (1978), who found Tagalog children to have better mastery (in comprehension and production) of patient focus sentences than agent focus sentences, and with those of Ceña (1979), who found Tagalog high school students to produce more patient-oriented sentences than agent-oriented sentences in describing reversible transitive events.

However, the predominance of patient focus sentences in this study is particularly impressive considering that only four out of the 14 stimulus drawings show reversible transitive events *(f, g, i,* and *m).* In the Ceña study, the non-reversible condition favored the agent-oriented sentence; it was primarily in the reversible sentence condition that patient focus sentences exhibited an overwhelming predominance. Segalowitz and Galang have offered the explanation that non-reversibles are easier to handle because 'they involve a certain amount of redundancy, the agents tend to be animate and the patients inanimate, and the action has only one plausible direction' (1978:61). And yet for the children under study, patient focus sentences were much greater in number even though there were more non-reversible stimuli.

Segalowitz and Galang contend that the better mastery of patient focus than agent focus is the result of the interplay of two factors: 1) the well-documented bias of children to favor the agent-then-patient order of mention and 2) the 'usual' word order for Tagalog of Verb-Object-Subject. Thus, because of the confluence of these two, the favored construction would be

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[12]The eight adults also show an overwhelming preference for patient focus sentences over agent focus sentences; including the cases of both topic-and-subject, the figures are 64% for patient focus and 28% for agent focus. This is shown in Table 6.

Table 6
Occurrence (in Percentages) of Each Focus Type
for Eight Adults

Focus Type	Percentage
Agent Focus, Subject Stated	27
Agent Focus, Subject Not Stated	1
Patient Focus, Subject Stated	40
Direction Focus, Subject Stated	5
Both Topic and Subject*	25
Errors	2
	N=106 utterances

*For both Topic and Subject cases (N=27), 23 are Agent Topic and Patient Subject, and 4 are Agent Topic and Direction Subject.

```
                V               O           S
74. Tinutulak              ng mama ang      kotse
    push PATIENT FOCUS by man    the SUBJ car
    'The car is being pushed by a man'

                V               O           S
75. Nagtutulak             ng kotse ang     mama
    push AGENT FOCUS a    car     the SUBJ man
    'the man is pushing a car'
```

where the order of mention is patient-then-agent.

It is not clear if the 'usual' surface order in Tagalog is indeed Verb-Object-Subject, as Segalowitz and Galang claim, inasmuch as word order in Tagalog is rather free and I am not aware of any statistical studies of surface order. What is clear is that the agent-then-patient order of mention is in fact preferred. An investigation of the data revealed 365 clear instances of two overt Ns (one agent and one patient) with an R, given as complete utterances without prompting, by children from 2;7 up. Of this number, 88% are agent-then-patient and only 12% are patient-then-agent.

The norm of agent-then-patient produces a non-ambiguous sentence, e.g.

```
76. Pinapaliguan              po            ng bata ang      aso
    bathe PATIENT FOCUS respect marker by child the SUBJ dog
    'The dog is being bathed by the child'
```

whereas the patient-then-agent version results in the ambiguous:

```
77. Pinapaliguan              po            ang       aso ng bata
    bathe PATIENT FOCUS respect marker the SUBJ dog of child
                                                        by
```

which can be glossed as 'The dog of the child is being bathed' or 'The dog is being bathed by the child'. It likewise explains why the following utterance from one of the children appears unacceptable:

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78. *kotse iyong     tao tinutulak
    car      the SUBJ man push PATIENT FOCUS
```

whereas

```
79. iyong      tao kotse tinutulak
    the SUBJ man car      push PATIENT FOCUS
```

is marginally acceptable.

I believe that the Segalowitz and Galang claim that the usual word order in Tagalog is Verb-Object-Subject is open to question. No one has pointed out the problem more succinctly than Ceña (1979:10-11):

> The difficulty experienced in classifying Philippine language as to word order appears to be due to the insistence to classify them in terms of the categories subject and object, thus forcing a choice between VSO and VOS. The VSO analysis for Tagalog ignores speaker preference for sentences in which the subject (topic) is last. The difficulty with the VOS analysis is that in the preferred construction, the constituent (object) does not carry the role of Os in other languages, that is, it is

not the patient; it is in fact the agent, and thus the O-S part of the schema is misleading.

What Ceña proposes is to use the roles' agent and patient, and thus 'Tagalog word order would be V-A-P, with the patient as subject' (11). There is a considerable gain from using semantic roles in describing word order, according to Ceña. On the assumption that agent-then-patient is the universal preferred order of mention, 'then the number of basic word orders is meaningfully reduced to three, namely: verb-initial V-A-P, verb-medial A-V-P, and verb-final A-P-V, with either nominal in each order capable of becoming subject' (11).

The results of this study how the merit of Ceña's proposal. Independently of each other, both Yau and Ceña are using the same categories to discuss word order.

The need, then, becomes that of discovering the reason for the primacy of the patient focus in Tagalog and the agent-then-patient order of mention across languages. As to the latter, it will be worthwhile to follow up Segalowitz and Galang's (1978:63) suggestion that the reason might be outside the linguistic domain and might lie in cognitive predispositions.

5.   SUMMARY

This study sought to test the hypothesis proposed by Yau (1979, 1980) that there exists a universal natural word order in child language, this order being NN-initial, and that children move from an initial period of enumerative description through enumerative-relational description to full relational description. Data obtained from 107 Tagalog-speaking children between the ages of 2;2 and 4;6 support the claim of a developmental progression from enumerative description to full relational description with the children progressing from a stage of simply enumerating Ns to a stage of relating these Ns using the adult word orders of $\overline{RN}N'$ and $\begin{Bmatrix} NRN' \\ N'RN \end{Bmatrix}$. However, the stage of NNR description (posited by the Yau hypothesis) appeared very short-lived; the data did not provide conclusive support for the claim that NN-initial is the natural word order in child language. The investigation also revealed that in Tagalog stronger ties exist between the N-patient and R than between the N-agent and R.

Going beyond the logical relations of N-agentive and N'-accusative, the study likewise considered the predominance of N-agent or N-patient in surface structure focus. The primacy of patient focus was evident, far overshadowing the incidence of agent focus. Likewise striking was the relatively frequent occurrence of sentences with two *ang*-phrases, i.e. sentences with a topic and a subject.

The paper concludes by reiterating the suggestion that the primacy of patient focus and the preference for the agent-then-patient order of mention in Tagalog need to be investigated by taking account of both linguistic and cognitive factors.

One final point: This paper has focused on sentences elicited individually. It has not looked at the word order of spontaneously produced utterances in natural discourse. It has not gone beyond individual sentences to consider, for instance, topic and subject in interwoven sentences in a conversation. Beyond linguistic and cognitive factors, therefore, future studies should attend to pragmatic or sociocultural factors.

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USE OF DIALOGUE IN A DIBABAWON NARRATIVE DISCOURSE

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1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this paper is to examine the use of dialogue as a strategy for building tension in a Dibabawon factual narrative discourse.[1] The discussion will deal mainly with one such discourse, with a less detailed look at a second discourse in Section 3 of the paper. The text from which most of the data are drawn is a first person narrative, written by a man in his early 30's, recalling both the events and the emotions he experienced the first time he attended school. The discourse begins with an expository paragraph in which the author introduces a problem. The remainder of the discourse comprises four episodes which rely heavily on dialogue to further define the problem and to set forth the solution. The progression of excitement in dialogue paragraphs is reflected in the author's choice of quotation types. These range from narrative dialogue, in which dialogue is introduced by a quotation formula, to dramatic dialogue, in which there is no quotation formula to signal change of speaker.[2] Within narrative dialogue there is a contrast of tension shown in the quotation formulas: an inflectional quotation formula in which the speech verb has the same time aspect affixation as other independent verbs in the paragraph is less vivid than a reduced quotation formula in which the speech word is unaffixed. Thus for this text I posit a scale of vividness[3] with three levels:

1 — no quotation formula

2 — reduced quotation formula

3 — inflectional quotation formula

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[2]The speaker is usually identified in Dibabawon quotation formulas, but with the exception of quotation formulas which contain verbs such as *usip* 'ask', *sugù* 'command', the addressee is seldom mentioned in the formula. The addressee is however frequently identified by a vocative within the quotation, and in dramatic dialogue vocatives often provide the only means of keeping track of the participants.

[3]The notion of a scale of vividness for quotation types derives from Longacre's use of the term spectrum, '. . . a cline of information which ranges from the most dynamic elements of the story to the most static. . .' (Longacre 1981:340).

The analysis of paragraph types occurring in the discourse follows Longacre (1976) chapter 4, and Longacre (1980).