REVIEW

PORTER, DORIS. A Tboli Grammar. PJL. Special Monograph Issue. Number 7, 1977.

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Anyone who is familiar with the grammar and lexicon of a Philippine language will find even a casual perusal of Doris Porter's Tboli Grammar an interesting experience. This grammar is fascinating because on the surface Tboli appears to be very different from most Philippine languages, yet when we look at its grammatical categories and semantics, we find classic Philippine structures which are typical of many languages of the south.

Tboli is listed by Walton (1979) as a member of the South Mindanaoan subfamily of Philippine languages with closest ties to Blaan. The other members of the subfamily are Guiangan (Bagobo) and Tiruray. Dyen earlier (1965) classified Tboli along with Blaan as members of the Bilic subfamily of the Philippine Hesion.

Tagmemics as proposed by Pike provides the theoretical model on which the grammar is based. It is evident that the author has also employed format and certain notations suggested by Robert Longacre.

The table of contents indicates that the grammar is composed of eight chapters plus an introduction, an appendix, and a bibliography. It is unfortunate that, because of a printer's error, the bibliography is missing. In each chapter a major level or division of the structure of Tboli is described beginning with morphophonemics in chapter one. The remaining chapters treat morphology, phrases, nonverbal clauses, verbal clauses, sentence types, paragraph types, and discourse types.

The author's stated purpose for the grammar is to make available to the linguistic world, data from a little known language and a suggested analysis of it. For those of us who have some acquaintance with tagmemic theory, terminology, and notation, she achieves her purpose very well. A more lengthy explanation of the charts and of certain terminology such as *tagmeme, slot, filler, exponence,* and *level,* might have made the work more accessible to those who are less familiar with tagmemics.

The monograph is a description of the pattern of structure on various levels of the tagmemic hierarchy. Except for reference to certain situational roles such as agents, patient, beneficiary, and accessory, there is no treatment of underlying structure.The grammar does not make use of transformational rules to account for complex structures, but where necessary it does account for permutations and co-occurrence restrictions with certain prose rules following the charts.

The author's treatment of verbal clauses is of theoretical interest with implications for the analysis of other Philippine languages. She suggests that the basic structure of verbal clauses is:

$$\text{complement} + \text{topic} \pm \text{location} \pm \text{time}$$

She also suggests that the complement which is manifested by a verbal predicate is in an equational relationship to the topic which is manifested by a noun phrase. (She uses the

term 'topic' to refer to what some analysts of Philippine languages have called focused item or subject. For Tagalog it would be an *ang* phrase and the pronouns which can substitute for it.) Her suggestion that verbal clauses have an equational structure goes beyond what Forster suggested for Dibabawon (1961), i.e., that Dibabawon verb clauses show simultaneously a dual structure in that they consist of a topic plus a comment, but are also a typical clause level string.

To reinforce the notion of equational structure in Tboli verbal clauses, she gives two kinds of translation for her examples, one labeled literal and the other labeled free. The literal English translations are equational sentences and, presumably because they are literal, claim to map into English something of the structure of the Tboli clauses. No other structural evidence is given in the grammar to support the claim that Tboli verbal clauses are equational. It is the validity of the claim that the translations labeled literal are indeed literal that we are concerned with here.

All of the literal English translations of the verb clause examples are a kind of cleft sentence. The following is an example from page 103:

Pred	Agt	Benef	Patient
ma	le	dou	soging
get	they	for me	banana

Literal: 'The ones to get some bananas for me were they'
  Free: 'They got some bananas for me'

The abbreviations are to be read as follows: Pred 'predicate', Agt 'agent as topic', Benef 'beneficiary'. A cleft sentence is an equational sentence which establishes an identity between a known or presupposed entity and a focused entity which represents new information (Harries - Delisle: 422). The English cleft sentence in the example above carries the presupposition that some bananas were gotten for me. The new and focused information in the sentence is the fact that the identity of those who got the bananas is *they*.

English cleft sentences like the literal translation given in the grammar are possible responses for questions such as 'Who got bananas for you? ' But they cannot be possible responses for questions about actions such as: 'What did they do for you? '

The opinion of another of my SIL colleagues who is familiar with Tboli is that the clause: *ma le dou   soging*   cannot be the response to an identity question, but it can in fact be the response to the question: 'What did they do for you? '
        got   they for me banana

If this is indeed true, then the Tboli clause is not a cleft sentence, and the English translation in question is not literal and presumably does not closely reflect the structure of the Tboli clause.

Another method for deciding whether or not the translations reflect the structure of their Tboli counterparts would be to compare the relationships which the Tboli clause and its translation have to their respective underlying structures. An English cleft sentence has its source in two underlying clauses, one of which is equational and identificational and the other which is verbal. Similarly, cleft sentences in other Philippine languages also have complex sources in the underlying structure. They are the result of an embedding transform which nominalizes a verb clause by deleting the topic (focused item) and inserting the resulting structure in the head position of a noun phrase which

is the nucleus of an identificational clause. The following Tagalog cleft sentence is the result of such an operation:

sila	*ang*	*kumuha ng*	*saging para sa*	*akin*
they	marker got	marker	banana for marker	me

'They are the ones who got bananas for me.'

The matrix clause is the following equational construction:

sila	*ang*	_____
they	marker	noun head position

The embedding clause before topic deletion is the following verval clause:

kumuha sila	*ng*	*saging para sa*	*akin*
got	topic-they	marker	banana for marker	me

The operation results in the cleft sentence:

sila ang kumuha ng saging para sa akin

There appears to be no evidence in the grammar that the relations between the Tboli unmodified verbal clauses and their underlying structures are similar to those between the corresponding cleft sentences and their underlying structures. The Tboli unmodified verbal clauses do not appear to be different structurally from similar clauses in other Philippine languages whose sources in the underlying structure are not complex. From all of this it would seem that the notion that Tboli clauses are equational has not been established as fact.

The major contribution of the grammar is focused in Porter's treatment of the higher grammatical levels in the chapters dealing with sentence, paragraph, and discourse. Her approach closely follows that presented by Longacre (1968) during workshops in the Philippines in 1967 and 1968.

She explains the difference between clause and sentence by saying, 'Whereas a clause is a predicate centered construction with clause constituents participating in roles related to the predicate, a sentence is a clause centered construction with sentence level constituents participating in roles related to a proposition or propositions.' (p. 123).

Crucial to an understanding of her chapter on paragraphs is the idea of paragraph linkage. Longacre describes linkage in narrative paragraphs as follows:

> The device basically consists of repeating, paraphrasing, or referring in some manner at the onset of a succeeding sentence to the whole or part of the preceding sentences. The repeated material in each succeeding sentence serves as ground for the new material which is the figure for that sentence. (Longacre 1968:56)

The following chart from page 183 of the grammar illustrates how sentences in a narrative paragraph are linked.

Ground	Figure
	Her father *chopped* down the tree.
After he had *chopped* down the tree.	he told the men to drag it away.

Linkage in procedural paragraphs is similar to that of narrative paragraphs in that it also consists of back reference. In dialogue paragraphs, repartee forms the linkage system in which one of two or more speakers initiates a turn-taking dialogue sequence which continues until one of the speakers resolves the dialogue. In explanatory and hortatory paragraphs logical relations are the means of linkage.

The final chapter is devoted to Tboli discourse types. In her description, Porter identifies four types of discourse in Tboli: narrative, procedural, expository, and hortatory. She further utilizes the notion of linkage to describe continuity or theme in a discourse. Narrative and procedural discourses utilize chronological relationships as a means of linkage; expository and hortatory discourses make use of logical relationships to signal linkage.

To the casual reader the treatment of discourse may seem over-simplified. She devotes only 11 pages to the actual description of discourse structure. The beauty of her treatment, however, is the fact that not much more description is necessary to give the reader an adequate understanding of her analysis of Tboli discourse. The units, which fill slots on the discourse level, i.e., sentence and paragraph, have been carefully described in earlier chapters so that here only higher level features need be dealt with.

The work as a whole is a good example of a grammar which applies tagmemic theory to the various levels of the hierarchy of a language. We are indebted to Doris Porter for her contribution, especially since it illuminates for us the structure of a rather unique Philippine language.

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