There has been much recent inquiry into the nature of right-node raising (RNR) constructions in general and in Tagalog in particular (Sabagh 2008 and Larson 2011a). However, the study of RNR finds itself at a crossroads as all the main analyses of the construction have been argued to be fatally empirically insufficient (Barros and Vicente 2010 and Larson 2012). In this paper I show that RNR in Tagalog succumbs to the same problems as RNR in general and propose a new account that avoids the pitfalls for previous accounts. To this end I first present the current three mainstream analyses of RNR: movement, deletion, and multidominance. Each of these accounts is then shown to fail to account for some aspects of the construction in Tagalog. I offer an analysis that avoids the problems that the other analyses face, one in which the gap in the non-final conjuncts is actually empty of any syntactic object. The ostensibly shared material of RNR sentences is nevertheless interpreted in a position that it does not syntactically arise in. This is argued to be due to focus-related event quantifier restriction of the same sort found in Herburger 1997, 2000. The result is an analysis that is divorced from language-specific quirks and in turn can account for the cross-linguistically uniform nature of the construction, be the language Austronesian, Indo-European, or other.

1. Introduction

Right-node raising (RNR) is a strangely pervasive construction among human languages. No language has yet been shown to lack this construction despite its apparent non-fundamental nature. The construction, shown in (1), involves the interpretation of an overt grammatical element in more than one position. Descriptively, there is a gap in the first conjunct and a dependency between that gap and its overt counterpart in the second conjunct.

(1) Ivan bought e₁ and Ivy read [the collection of short stories],

Such a high wire act of a dependency ought to be subject to more cross-linguistic variation than we find in RNR. Take wh-movement as an analogous filler-gap dependency and a diverse typology quickly reveals itself: there are in-situ, single, and multiple wh-movement languages. No such variation is discernable in RNR. As such, any account of the construction ought to rely on operations that are essentially cross-linguistically invariant. This is the tack taken here. In this paper I argue that the current

---

*I would like to gratefully acknowledge the patience and precision of Ron Barrameda in assisting me with the Tagalog examples cited herein. Special thanks also go to Edith Aldridge and Joey Sabbagh for insightful comments on the analyses presented here.*
accounts of RNR are incorrect with respect to Tagalog and instead offer a new approach, focusing again on Tagalog, that in fact is predicted to work for any language.

The analysis offered is sketched in (2). In this rather sparse account, the first conjunct acts like a complex specifier to a coordination phrase. Note that this complex specifier is not fully formed in terms of its syntactic (and thus argument) structure.

(2)

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\& \\
& \& \\
\& T & \& T \\
\& & \& \\
Ivan & bought & Ivy & read \\
\& \& \& \\
T & & & T \\
& bought & & read \\
\& \& \& \\
T & & & \\
& read & & the \\
\& \& \& \\
T & & & \\
& & & the \\
\& \& \& \\
T & & & \\
& & & collection...
\end{array}
\]

I will argue that the inchoate nature of the first conjunct is overcome by interpreting a presupposed, non-focused element from the second conjunct into the first one. But before going into the details of the present account, let us first explore the current mainstream analyses of RNR.

1.1 Movement

The filler and the gap in (1) must be related somehow. One logical possibility is that the filler was at some point in derivational time actually in the gap location. It then moved out of the position leaving behind an unpronounced version of itself.\(^1\) This approach to RNR has been promoted most convincingly by Sabbagh 2007 but also by a host of others (see as in Ross 1967, Postal 1974, Gazdar 1981, Williams 1981, and Sabbagh 2008). The essence of this approach is that two syntactic elements under some condition of identity move in an across-the-board (ATB) fashion out of their respective conjuncts into some right-peripheral position. They leave behind two gaps in their wake, but the rightmost gap is not obvious as that half of the ATB movement is string vacuous. This is sketched in (3a) for the Tagalog sentence in (3b) (from Sabbagh 2008).\(^2\)

---

\(^1\) I assume a copy theory of movement, but for ease of interpretation I often use traces as a shorthand here.

\(^2\) Abbreviations used throughout: abs=absolutive marker, erg=ergative marker, dat=dative marker, neg=negation, 3s=third person singular pronoun.
b. Nagluto’ ng bigas at kumain ng isda ang babae  
cooked erg rice and ate erg fish abs woman  
‘The same woman cooked rice and ate fish.’

Note that the derived position of the moved phrases straightforwardly c-
commands the clauses that they were base-generated in. This being the case, we should
find that c-command conditions are met by this configuration. The Tagalog test case is to
be based off the example in (4) in which the negative polarity item *anumang* requires that
it be c-commanded by a negative element (from Aldridge 2006).\(^3\)

(4) Hindi niya tinanggap ang anumang mungkahi  
neg 3s.erg accepted abs any proposal  
‘He/she didn’t accept any proposal.’

If we hoist an NPI to the hypothesized c-commanding right-peripheral position, it
should result in an ungrammatical sentence. NPI licensing is determined with respect to
the latest derived position and if an NPI moves too high, it cannot be licensed by negative
elements that nevertheless c-command its base position. Unfortunately, it is not the case
that right-node raising an NPI results in an unacceptable sentence. As seen in (5), the
shared element contains a NPI and the sentence is fine:

(5) Hindi inalay ni Juan at hindi tinanggap ni Maria ang anumang kotse  
neg offer erg Juan and not accept erg Maria abs any car  
‘Juan didn’t offer, and Maria didn’t accept, any car.’

Under the movement hypothesis, the NPI in the shared element ought to have
moved to a position where it is no longer c-commanded by the negative elements in the
sentence, thus effecting ungrammaticality. Were it the case that this sort of sentence were
judged unacceptable, the movement hypothesis would have a strong argument on its side.
Since the result of RNR is not ungrammatical, it seems that this hypothesis is incorrect.

\(^3\) I describe the NPI requirement as one of c-command by a negative element in the syntax. This will
translate at LF to the NPI being in the scope of a downward entailing element. The potential differences
between these two conceptions will not play a relevant role in the argumentation.
Another argument against movement analyses comes from the dichotomy between elements that can A’-move in Tagalog and those that cannot. It is argued in Sabbagh 2008 that all and only the elements in Tagalog that can A’-move can also serve as the shared material in Tagalog RNR sentences. This confluence of conditionals would lead one to suspect that RNR is derived as a result of an A’-movement.

Specifically, only non-ergative arguments can undergo wh-movement in Tagalog, an A’-movement (6). In (6a) the (covertly) absolutive wh-word has moved to the left-periphery leaving behind the ergative argument. In (6b) however an ergative argument has moved and the sentence is ungrammatical.

(6) a. Sino ang nagnakaw ng kotse mo?
    who abs stole erg car you
    ‘Who stole your car?’
   b. *Sino ang ninakaw ang ktotse mo?
    who abs stole abs car you
    (‘Who stole your car?’)

Similarly, as seems to be the case, in Tagalog RNR only non-ergative arguments can serve as the shared material (7). This leads to the suspicion that the same constraint is working on both wh-movement and RNR. Since wh-movement is unambiguously A’-movement and subject to Tagalog’s proprietary restrictions on that sort of movement, then maybe RNR is, too.

(7) a. Hindi nagluto’ ng bigas at hindi kumain ng isda ang parehong babae
    not cooked erg rice and not ate erg fish abs same woman
    ‘The same woman did not cook rice and did not eat fish.’
   b. *Nagsara si Juan at nagbukas si Pedro ng pintuan
    closed abs Juan and opened abs Pedro erg door
    ‘Juan closed, and Pedro opened, a door.’

However, for reasons relating to focus, ergative arguments can indeed serve as the shared material in RNR sentences under certain conditions. This is seen in (8) below and there are other examples of the type above and an explanation of the exception to be found in Larson 2011a.

(8) Si Juan ay nanghuhuli at si Maria ay nagtitinda ng isda
    abs Juan ay catches and abs Maria ay sells erg fish
    ‘Juan catches, and Maria sells, fish.’

Since it is apparently possible for elements that cannot A’-move in Tagalog (ergative arguments) to serve as the shared material for a RNR sentence, then it must be the case that RNR is not derived via A’-movement. This suggests further that RNR is not derived by movement.

Summing up this section, movement accounts of RNR fail to capture the fact that in Tagalog, syntactic elements can serve as the shared material even when they cannot otherwise move and they do not display c-command effects. This is indicative of a
construction that does not involve movement to a c-commanding position as is maintained by proponents of this analysis. There is of course another way to link up a gap with an interpretation as we shall see in the next subsection.

1.2 Deletion

We have seen that a movement analysis is not a desirable means to relate filler and gap in (1). A second logical possibility is to maintain that the same identity condition that licensed the ATB movement above instead licenses the phonological deletion of the element in the first conjunct. That is, there is no movement from the gap position in RNR sentence. Instead a gap arises when an element, extant in the syntax and at LF, is elided with respect to pronunciation. Such an approach has been argued for by Wexler and Culicover 1980 as well as Wilder 1997, Hartmann 2000, Ha 2006, An 2007, and Ince 2009 among others.

Under this approach, the sentence in (9a) is derived in the manner suggested by (9b), namely, two identical elements license the phonological deletion of the first one. At the semantic interface however, the first conjunct’s elided element is as visible as any other argument.

(9) a. Nagluto’ng bigas at kumain ng isda ang parehong babae
    cooked erg rice and ate erg fish abs same woman
    ‘The same woman cooked rice and ate fish.’

    b. Nagluto’ng bigas [ang parehong babae] at kumain ng isda [ang parehong babae]

A problem with this analysis immediately arises. Even though Tagalog has been argued to allow ellipsis in some instances (Richards 2003), the interpretation of the sentence in (9a) is more constrained than the derivation on (9b) would suggest. In (9a) it must be the self-same woman that both cooked rice and ate fish. But at LF, the sentence as describe in (9b) should be indistinguishable from (10).

(10) Nagluto’ng bigas ang parehong babae at kumain ng isda
    cooked erg rice abs same woman and ate erg fish
    ang parehong babae
    abs same woman
    ‘The same woman cooked rice and the same woman ate fish.’

The sentence in (10) has a reading in which there were two distinct women who carried out the respective eating and cooking. That is, one woman cooked rice at one time and another woman ate fish and then later the same woman (who cooked rice earlier) cooked rice and the same woman (who ate fish earlier) ate fish. The RNR sentence in (9a) would be predicted to allow this reading since it and (10) would have identical LF representations. Having identical LF representations forces the sentences to be interpreted in an identical manner. The extent to which this is not the case is an argument against the phonological deletion account of RNR.
In sum, the deletion account very clearly overgenerates in this instance. The relational modifier *same* can only refer to a single entity in RNR sentence and this contrasts with what is expected given a deletion account. It is not only the case that the gap in question cannot be derived via movement, it cannot be derived via deletion either. This leaves us with one final option to account for RNR, discussed in the following subsection.

1.3 Multidominance

The conundrum we find ourselves in now is that we want neither movement nor deletion to relate the filler and the gap in (1). In classical generative theory, these were the only options to derive interpretation without pronunciation. Current trends in theorizing have seemingly obviated the single-mother condition and ruled in structure whereby a single constituent can be immediately dominated by a more than one node (see Citko 2005 for good argumentation). Depending on one’s linearization scheme, this ought to allow a single element to be interpreted in a position where it is not pronounced without recourse to deletion or movement.

More concretely, our Tagalog RNR sentence (11a) can be (rather roughly) represented as (11b). Here, there is but a single instance of *ang babae* and it can appear to the far right of the sentence (see Wilder 1999, Bachrach and Katzir 2009, for different ways to insure the correct word order.).

(11) a. Nagluto’ ng bigas at kumain ng isda ang babae
    ‘The woman cooked rice and ate fish.’

Such approaches have been suggested by McCawley 1982, Wilder 1999, de Vos and Vicente 2005, Bachrach and Katzir 2009, Grosz 2009, and Larson 2009 among many others. These have been posited in response to shortcomings similar to those described in the previous two sections. By and large, these approaches do indeed avoid the problems discussed above, but they still suffer from an unavoidable setback.
Note that in the sketch above the shared material is c-commanded identically by both conjuncts. Were this the case, it would be straightforwardly simple to support with evidence. The first conjunct would show c-command effects to the exclusion of the second and vice versa. Recall that in sentence (5) (repeated here as (12)) the NPI appeared to be c-commanded from both conjuncts by a negative element.

(12) Hindi inalay ni Juan at hindi tinanggap ni Maria ang anumang kotse neg offer erg Juan and not accept erg Maria abs any car
    ‘Juan didn’t offer, and Maria didn’t accept, any car.’

The above example is readily explicable under the multidominance account: the NPI is certainly c-commanded by both conjuncts. However, there is no evidence that one conjunct or the other is necessarily doing the relevant c-commanding. It could be the case that only the negative element in first conjunct or only the conjunct in the second conjunct is c-commanding the NPI. If this were the case, the example in (12) would still correctly be predicted to be acceptable.

To test this, one must only create a sentence in which only one conjunct could be involved in the relevant c-command relation. As seen in (13), when the negative element is in the final conjunct, the c-command relation holds and the sentence is acceptable. So one half of the multidominance account is correct: the final conjunct c-commands the shared material.

(13) Inalay ni Juan pero hindi tinanggap ni Maria ang anumang kotse offered erg Juan but not accept erg Maria abs any car
    ‘Juan offered, but Maria didn’t accept, any car.’

When the negative element is found only in the first conjunct, the NPI does not seemed to be licensed (14). This suggests that there is no potential c-command relation between the first conjunct and the shared material. In other words, the second half of the multidominance model is false.

(14) *Hindi inalay ni Juan pero tinanggap ni Maria ang anumang kotse
    not offered erg Juan but accepted erg Maria abs any car
    (‘Juan didn’t offer, but Mary accepted, any car.’)

Similar facts can be found with respect to bound variable interpretations of pronouns. As seen in (15) below, such interpretations are available when the pronoun is c-commanded by the co-indexed quantified noun phrase. This reading is also available when the quantified noun phrase is in the second conjunct and the pronoun to be bound is in the shared material (16a) but not when the quantified noun phrase is found solely in the first conjunct (16b).

4 It ought to also be possible to test this with quantified noun phrases c-commanded by pronouns as well. The bound variable reading is impossible when this is the case (i).

(i) He bought every boy’s book.
(15) Iniisip ng bawat ama, na siyang, sumasaya.
    thought erg each father that he becoming, happy
    ‘Each father thought that he was becoming happy’

(16) a. Alam ng mga bata at iniisip ng bawat ama, na siyang, sumasaya
    knew erg plural child and thought erg each father that he becoming, happy
    ‘The children knew, and every father thought, that he was becoming happy.’

b. #Iniisip ng bawat ama, at alam mga bata na siyang, sumasaya
    thought erg each father and knew plural child that he becoming, happy
    ‘Each father thought, and the children knew, that he was becoming happy.’

The results of these forays suggest that only the final conjunct allows for c-command relationships with the shared material. In other words, the structures posited by the multidominance proponents cannot work for RNR.

1.4 Summary

We are left in a rather conscribed position based on the results above. The following must all simultaneously be true for RNR:

1) The shared material has not A’-moved from its base position.

2) The locus of interpretation of the shared material in the first conjunct cannot have arisen due to phonological deletion.

3) The shared material is not c-commanded by anything in the first conjunct.

In the following sections I will propose a new approach to RNR shaped by the facts from Tagalog presented here. The new account here adheres to the three strictures above and in doing so requires extra-syntactic help in relating the shared material to the gap.

2 A Sparser RNR

The criteria delineated in the summary above are rather difficult to meet. They rather clearly suggest that the shared material, while interpreted in the first conjunct, is never actually syntactically realized there. It cannot have moved from that position to the right-periphery. It cannot remain there hidden by deletion or obscured by multidominance linearization schemes. In short, it can neither have moved nor stayed in place. At this

Based on the tests above, if the pronoun were in the first conjunct of a RNR sentence and the quantified noun phrase were in the shared material, then the bound might not be blocked, assuming covert quantifier raising.
point one should reassess whether there was ever really anything in the first conjunct at all.

There seems to be little recourse to do other than accept that, syntactically speaking, the shared material simply does not exist in the first conjunct. Yet given the c-command facts discussed above, it does seem that the shared material appears in the second conjunct. Taking these facts seriously leads one to posit a structure for Tagalog RNR like that in (17a) again for our familiar sentence in (17b).³

(17) a.  

```
&
 /    \
&
 /     \
T     T
 /   \
 nagluto v kumain
 / \
 ng bigas v ng isda
 /   \
 t V ang babae
 /     \
 t V
 /   \
 t t
 /
 t l
```

b. Nagluto’ ng bigas at kumain ng isda ang babae
cooked erg rice and ate erg fish abs woman
‘The woman cooked rice and ate fish.’

There is a lot happening in the above tree. The verbs in each clause have worked their way up the tree through an intermediate little-v position to their final T position. Further, the internal arguments have moved to a specifier position of the little-v. The details of those matter little here. The interesting aspect of the above tree is that there is no external argument in the first conjunct at all. One appears at the tail end of the second conjunct, but one simply does not exist in the first conjunct.

This representation can handle the three criteria set out above rather trivially. There has been no movement whatsoever of the shared material (ang babae), so criterion one is satisfied. No deletion has occurred with respect to the shared material, thus taking care of criterion two. Finally, ang babae is not c-commanded by anything in the first conjunct other than the highest projection of the T. The only problem is that the shared material is nevertheless interpreted in the first conjunct.

³ A more detailed account of this proposal can be found in Larson 2011b.
2.1 Types of Problems

It is clear from the proposed representation of Tagalog RNR above that something needs to be said concerning the interpretation of the first conjunct. As it stands, there seems to be a sort of argument structure violation occurring. The verb of the first conjunct is not in a passive form and generally requires an external argument. That conjunct in isolation would constitute an unacceptable sentence:

(18) *Nagluto’ ng bigas
     cooked erg rice
     ‘cooked the rice’

What is less clear is whether there is anything syntactically amiss in the proposed representation. One can surely code argument structure demands into the syntax, effectively forcing the representation in (17a) to not be generable. But doing so is by no means necessary. One can code any interface condition into the syntax with sufficient features in the sense of Chomsky 1995 (and this seems to be very enticing for many researchers). If we maintain that this violation is a mere semantic one, it then stands the chance of being repaired. I will argue as much in a following subsection.

Furthermore, compared to the sins of the other approaches, argument structure violations are relatively trifling. For example, the movement analysis falls afoul of movement constraints in Tagalog. In Tagalog, ergative elements cannot A’-move. This is obviously not a universal constraint and as such ought not be attributed to the semantics where it is hypothesized that all human languages are identical. Instead, it seems like a narrow syntax restriction particular to Tagalog. This being the case, it seems like a more damning problem for those analyses: something not subject to interface repair.

A problem for the movement and multidominance accounts involves c-command restrictions. Again here, we have a transparently syntactic, not semantic, constraint being violated. It is methodologically more sound to claim that ambiguously syntactic constraints are correctable at the interfaces than it is to claim that straightforwardly syntactic ones are. Further, if c-command constraints were generally violable, it would be mysterious as to how they would ever be discovered in the first place.

Finally, for the deletion account, we have what seems to be a semantic problem. The interpretation of a sentence, which by hypothesis involves deletion, has a different interpretation than the same sentence without the deletion. The sentences ought to have the same LF representations despite their phonological differences. There is no syntactic problem to overcome, but still one of pairing sound and meaning. This can be avoided by coding into the syntax a correlation between the deletion and the meaning desired. Say there were a feature that prompts the RNR deletion as well RNR interpretation. This would get the facts correctly, but in an unsatisfying ad hoc manner.

This is not to say that these problems are necessarily fatal, but rather that, compared to the one faced by the present account, they are methodologically less easy to account for. The syntactic and interface problems with the current accounts of RNR with respect to the Tagalog data seem more daunting than the argument structure one that arises with the current account. In what follows, I argue that this ostensible problem never actually arises given certain assumptions about focus.
2.2 Ways of Semantic Composition

In order to account for the ostensible argument structure problem, it is prudent to consider how argument structure is to be represented semantically. Under traditional approaches, argument structure is coded into the denotation of a given verb. For example, the English verb *hit* would have a denotation like the following:

\[(19) \quad [[\text{hit}]] = \lambda y \lambda x.\text{HIT}(x,y)\]

That is to say that *hit* has a valency of two and requires a hitter and a hittee to be well-formed and fully saturated. This sort of approach is a non-starter for the RNR representation proposed here. This approach requires that arguments go missing which under this account would unavoidably lead to ill-formedness (ungrammaticality). The sentence in (20a) is ungrammatical because it has an unsatisfied semantic representation (20b).

\[(20)\]
\[a. \quad *\text{Ivan hit}\]
\[b. \quad [[\text{Ivan hit}]] = \lambda y \lambda x.\text{HIT}(x,y) \ x=\text{Ivan}\]

The sort of ill-formedness in (20) above is not to be overcome. There is luckily another means of semantic composition that would not consider (20a) ill-formed. A neo-Davidsonian approach like that found in Pietroski 2005 and elsewhere would consider (20a) to be formally fine, yet pragmatically odd. Under such an approach, *hit* is does not have a formal valency in the semantics, but is rather a predicate of an existentially quantified event variable. Instead of the ungrammaticality in (20a), we would be left with an infelicity (21a) and a well-formed LF (21b).

\[(21)\]
\[a. \quad \#\text{Ivan hit}\]
\[b. \quad \exists e\{\text{hit}(e) \ & \ \text{past}(e) \ & \ \text{Agent(\text{Ivan}, e)}\}\]

The LF in (21a) says that there was a past hitting event whose agent was Ivan. This is fine formally, but it is odd to have a hitting event without a hittee. If it were possible to infer the hittee then the sentence would remain well-formed and lose its infelicity. This is what I intend to show is done regularly in RNR in the following subsection.

2.3 Event Variable Restriction and Focus

Herburger 1997, 2000 offers a means of capturing focus-related presupposition in a event semantic model like that presented above. An example like that in (22a) would have the event semantic representation like that in (22b).

\[(22)\]
\[a. \quad \text{Rosalia wrote poetry}\]
\[b. \quad \exists e\{\text{write}(e) \ & \ \text{past}(e) \ & \ \text{Agent(\text{Rosalia}, e)} \ & \ \text{Theme(\text{poetry}, e)}\}\]
This semantic representation can be translated into English like so: there was a past event of writing with Rosalia as its agent and poetry as its theme. If the verb phrase were to be focused to the exclusion of the subject (as in (23a)) the semantic representation, per Herburger, would be that of (23b).

(23) a. Rosalia WROTE POETRY  
   b. [∃e: Agent(Rosalia,e)] {write(e) & past(e) & Theme(poetry,e)}

In (23b), the restrictor of the existential quantifier has been altered to include Rosalia as an agent. The formalism can be translated as: There was an event with Rosalia as its agent such that it was a past writing with poetry as its theme. This captures the intuition that the subject in (23a) is presupposed. Rosalia as agent can be inferred as the writer of the poetry because an event of poetry writing that presupposes Rosalia as an agent can have no other interpretation. We can infer that Rosalia was the agent of the writing even though this is not explicitly represented in (23b).

Note that this same inference can be made even if the subject is not explicitly represented as the agent in the restrictor. That is, (23b) can be altered as (24) with no ill effect. There is still an event of poetry writing and it involved Rosalia. The only reasonable interpretation of that set of facts is that Rosalia was the agent, not the recipient, instrument, etc.

(24) [∃e: Rosalia(e)] {write(e) & past(e) & Theme(poetry,e)}

The fact that non-focused, or presupposed, material is what is interpreted into the restrictor dovetails with facts about RNR. Hartman 2000 for English and German and Larson 2011a for Tagalog argue that the shared material is necessarily old, or presupposed information. As such, the shared material of any RNR sentence ought to be that which is found in the restrictor. One difference is that in RNR cases, since there are two clauses, there is going to be a plural event variable instead of the singular one above.

Concretely, this means that the Tagalog RNR sentence in (25a) will have a LF representation like that in (25b). The English translation is something like: There are some events of which one is event-A and one is event-B and these events involved the woman such that event-A’s theme is the rice and it is a past cooking and event-B’s theme is the fish and it is a past eating.

(25) a. Nagluto’ ng bigas at kumain ng isda ang babae  
   cooked erg rice and ate erg fish abs woman  
   ‘The woman cooked rice and ate fish.’  
   b. [∃E: Ee & E’e’ & woman(E)] {Theme(rice,e) & past(e) & cook(e) & Theme(fish, e’) & past(e’) & eat(e’)}

Since the woman was involved in both events via the restriction the only plausible interpretation of the respective events

\[^{6}\text{Individual, singular events are introduced into the restrictor as well so as to specify that the events mentioned in the nuclear scope are relevant and members of the larger, plural event.}\]
has her as the agent for each. This is the case without *the woman* ever being directly semantically related to either conjunct. In other words, the fact that *the woman* was never syntactically present in the first conjunct is no longer important. As long as we maintain that the syntactic representation in (17a) is licit, then there ought to be no other problems with this account of RNR. The semantic representation, given the cross-linguistic focus constraints on RNR, is sufficient to supply the first conjunct with an argument such that it avoids the infelicity discussed earlier. In fact, both conjuncts are supplied in the same manner with an argument. There is no privileged conjunct in this symmetrical account. The fact that only the final conjunct had the shared material in the syntax is irrelevant under this approach.

Further, since the presupposed element in the restrictor is divorced from thematic roles, it can be inferred as having a different role in different conjuncts if need be. Take the English example in (26), in the first conjunct the missing element is a theme, in the second it is an agent, and in the third a recipient. The sentence is acceptable because the presupposed police officer is has no formal thematic role. There is thus no potential conflict in it being interpreted with multiple roles.

(26) Ivy saw, Ivan was seen by, and Iris gave a present to, the police officer.

This approach enjoys the added advantage of relying on language-invariant operations to rule in RNR sentences. In addition to capturing the empirical landscape in a more comprehensive manner than the current accounts, this approach does so in such a way as to explain the cross-linguistics banality of RNR. It appears, as far as we can tell, in every language because all that is required is vanilla structure building and independently motivated and generalizable focus effects.

3 Conclusion

As we have seen, there is currently no satisfactory account of RNR that can capture the Tagalog landscape. The facts suggest that the initial gap in RNR sentences is extant in the syntax, not just the phonology. This being the case requires a new approach to RNR and one is offered here. This new approach derives the interpretation of the gap via extrasyntactic inference that is driven by the focus structure common to all RNR sentences.

4 References

Aldridge, Edith 2006. The heterogeneity of VOS and extraction in Austronesian languages. Ms, Northwestern University.


Grosz, Patrick. 2009. Movement and agreement in right node raising constructions. Ms., MIT.

Ha, Seungwan. 2006. Multiple dominance CAN’T, but PF-deletion CAN account for right node raising. Paper presented at the 42nd Annual Meeting of the CLS. Chicago, IL.


