

Chapter 7

Conclusion

This dissertation has explored the following three issues related to the verbal semantics and syntax of Amis within the framework of Role and Reference Grammar (VVLP 1997; VV 2005): verb classification, case marking, and grammatical relations. Although these three issues have been discussed to various degrees of thoroughness in the previous research related to the Amis grammar, most of these studies share the following similarities in their approaches and analyses. First, most of them employ the voice (focus) morphology, semantic features (e.g. transitivity parameters in Hopper and Thompson 1980), and/or case frames as the major criteria for classifying the verbs. Second, most of these studies propose a four-voice or four-focus system (most commonly agent, patient, instrument, and locative) for Amis, and the semantic roles are mainly discussed under the thematic relations related to the voice distinctions. Third, most of these studies acknowledge the existence of an accusative case in the case marking system of Amis, which implies an accusative system or a split ergative system in this language. Finally, most of these studies explicitly or implicitly regard the NP marked by the nominative case as the grammatical subject of Amis, but the behavioral properties of a “subject” have not been thoroughly explored to prove the existence of a grammatical relation in Amis.

The RRG framework offers perspectives remarkably different from the approaches or frameworks adopted in the previous research regarding the analyses of the three issues mentioned above. To begin with, verbs are classified into different classes based on the Aktionsart features such as dynamicity, telicity, and punctuality. This approach was

firstly proposed by Vendler (1967) and later elaborated by Dowty (1979). RRG further expands it by incorporating two more classes, active accomplishment and semelfactive, into Vendler's four basic classes: states, activity, achievement, and accomplishment.

The features of each class are given in Table 7.1:

Table 7.1 Aktionsart Features of Each Verb Class

Class	Aktionsart Features
State	[+static], [-dynamic], [-telic], [-punctual]
Activity	[-static], [+dynamic], [-telic], [-punctual]
Achievement	[-static], [-dynamic], [+telic], [+punctual]
Semelfactive	[-static], [\pm dynamic], [-telic], [+punctual]
Accomplishment	[-static], [-dynamic], [+telic], [-punctual]
Active Accomplishment	[-static], [+dynamic], [+telic], [-punctual]

These classes can be differentiated by a set of tests that are designed to diagnose the features displayed in Table 7.1. Each verb is represented in a decomposition-based logical structure, as shown in Table 7.2:

Table 7.2 Lexical Representations for Aktionsart Classes

Verb Class	Logical Structure (LS)
State	predicate' (x) or (x, y)
Activity	do' (x, [predicate' (x) or (x, y)])
Achievement	INGR predicate' (x) or (x, y), <i>or</i> INGR do' (x, [predicate' (x) or (x, y)])
Semelfactive	SEML predicate' (x) or (x, y), <i>or</i> SEML do' (x, [predicate' (x) or (x, y)])
Accomplishment	BECOME predicate' (x) or (x, y), <i>or</i> BECOME do' (x, [predicate' (x) or (x, y)])
Active Accomplishment	do' (x, [predicate'₁ (x) or (x, y)]) & INGR predicate'₂ (z, x) or (y)
Causative	α CAUSE β , where α , β are LSs of any type

Furthermore, semantic roles are examined in terms of generalized semantic roles, termed macroroles, in addition to thematic relations. The former consists of two macroroles, actor and undergoer, while the latter is composed of the five possible argument positions in the logical structures, and these positions respectively subsume a group of thematic relations that are adopted in traditional grammar. The assignment of

an argument as a certain macrorole makes crucial reference to the Actor-Undergoer Hierarchy (AUH) in Figure 7.1:

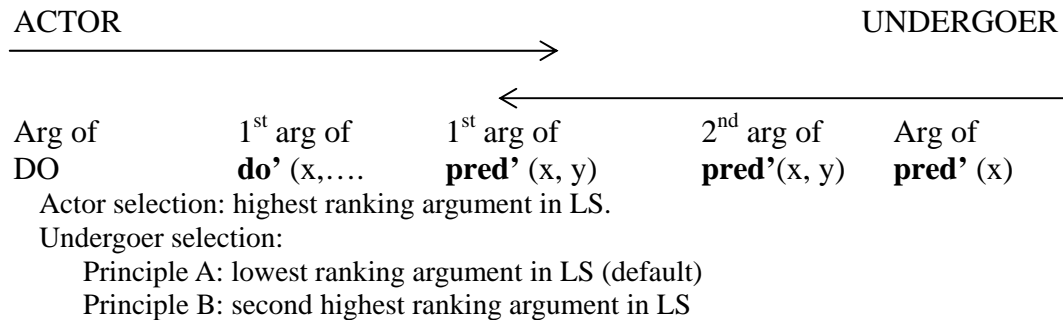


Figure 7.1 Actor-Undergoer Hierarchy (AUH, VV 2005:126)

The notion of macrorole is extremely important in the discussion of case assignment, the definition of transitivity, and the examination of subject properties. Unlike most of the previous works that define the transitivity in terms of the semantic valence of a verb, RRG defines the transitivity of a verb based on the number of macroroles it takes. This is referred to as macrorole transitivity (M-transitivity), in which there are three possibilities: M-transitive (for two-macrorole verbs), M-intransitive (for one-macrorole verbs), and M-atransitive (for zero-macrorole verbs).

Finally, RRG also offers a rather different perspective of looking into the grammatical relations in a language. This framework does not view grammatical relations as a basic component for a language system, nor does it regard grammatical relations as a universal. On the contrary, grammatical relations are treated as construction-specific phenomena, and in fact, many grammatical phenomena in a language can be accounted for solely by semantic roles without an additional postulation of a grammatical relation. There is only one syntactic function posited in RRG, termed privileged syntactic argument (PSA), which refers the restricted neutralization of semantic roles for syntactic purposes. There are two types of privileged arguments:

controller and pivot. Privileged arguments of a certain construction can be defined semantically, syntactically, or pragmatically. Only a syntactically defined privileged argument is deemed as a kind of grammatical relation, but it only makes sense for the construction containing that argument, not the whole language.

Incorporating the aforementioned RRG viewpoints, this dissertation has proposed the following analyses and claims for the Amis grammar. First, I have argued that there are only two voice oppositions in Amis: actor voice and undergoer voice. The so-called instrumental voice and locative voice are analyzed as applicative constructions, and they follow UV pattern by default. This new analysis is presented in Table 7.3 and 7.4, which are repeated from Tables 3.13 and 3.14:

Table 7.3 Amis Voice Markers

Actor Voice (AV)	<i>mi-</i>	<i>-um-</i>	<i>ma-</i>
Undergoer Voice (UV)	<i>ma-</i>	<i>ma-</i> <i>ma-...-um-</i>	<i>ma-ka-</i>
	<i>-en</i>		<i>-en</i> <i>ka-...-en</i>

Table 7.4 Amis Applicative Markers and the Co-occurring Affixes

Instrumental applicative		<i>sa-pi-</i> , <i>sa-ka-</i> , <i>sa-ka-...-um-</i>		
Locative Applicative	Goal	<i>mi-...-an</i>		
	Patient	<i>mi-...-an</i>	<i>-um-...-an</i>	<i>ka-...-an</i>
	Location	<i>pi-...-an</i>	<i>ka-...-um-...-an</i>	<i>ka-...-an</i>

The voice markers exhibit robust derivational functions in addition to their inflectional property of indicating voice operations. The applicative makers promote the semantic status of an NP by either making a non-argument become a core argument, or an NMR core argument become a macrorole. The promoted NP will be the undergoer of the sentence, and it is marked by nominative case.

Besides, this dissertation has also proposed a new analysis for the case marking system in Amis; in particular, the so-called accusative/locative case in Amis is treated as

dative case in the new analysis. Following this proposal, I have argued that the two-place predicates that follow the AV case marking pattern (i.e. nominative-dative) should be M-intransitive, as the dative NP is not a macrorole. That is, the AV verbs pattern like intransitive verbs in Amis, and the marking of the S argument in both types of verbs is the same as the undergoer in a UV verb; Amis exhibits an ergative pattern in terms of case marking. This is shown in the following table:

Table 7.5 Transitivity and Case Patterns: An Ergative Pattern in Amis

Voice	Case Pattern and Macrorole	M-transitivity	Ergative Pattern
AV	Nominative-Dative (actor) (NMR argument)	M-intransitive	Nominative -Dative S_A - NMR argument
Neutral	Nominative (actor or undergoer)	M-intransitive	Nominative S_A or S_U
UV	Genitive-Nominative (actor) (undergoer)	M-transitive	Genitive- Nominative A_T U_T

Employing the decompositional modal of RRG, I have proposed the following logical structures for the voice affixes, as listed in Table 7.6.

Table 7.6 The Logical Structures of The Voice Affixes

Affix	Voice	Logical Structures
<i>mi-</i>	AV	(do' (x, [go' (x)]) & INGR be-at' (z, x)) PURP) do' (x, [pred' (x, y)]) (<i>motional/purposive</i>) <i>activity</i>)
<i>-en (-en1)</i>	UV	DO (x, [do' (x, [pred' (x, y)])])BECOME (pred' (y)) (<i>agentive active/causative accomplishment</i>)
<i>ma-1</i>	AV or NEUT	do' (x, [pred' (x, (y))]) (<i>activity</i>)
<i>ma-2</i>	AV or NEUT	INGR/BECOME (pred' (x, (y))) (<i>result state</i>)
<i>ma-3</i>	UV	do' (x, [pred' (x, y)])BECOME (pred' (y)) (<i>active/causative accomplishment</i>)
<i>ma-4</i>	AV or NEUT	pred' (x, (y)) (<i>transient/plain state</i>)

This decompositional analysis helps us better understand the properties of these affixes, such as their TAM inferences reported in Zeitoun et al. (1996) and Tsukida (1993) and their derivational functions. Furthermore, I have also utilized the following diagnostic tests to differentiate the verb classes in Amis:

Table 7.7 Tests for Amis Aktionsart Classes

Criterion	States	Activities	Accomp	Achieve	Seml	Active Accomp
1. Occurs with <i>X ccay tu</i> <i>tatukain</i> “for an hour”	Yes*	Yes	irrelevant*	No	Yes*	irrelevant*
2. Occurs with <i>X i ccay</i> <i>tatukian</i> “in an hour”	No	No	Yes	No*	No	Yes
3. Occurs with adverbs like <i>harakat</i> “quickly”, <i>rara saan</i> “slowly”, etc.	No	Yes	Yes	No*	No*	Yes
4. Occurs with <i>tu</i>	change of state	perfectiveness or inception of activity	inception of activity or result state	result state	inception of activity	completion of the activity
5. Occurs with <i>ho</i>	continuing state	anticipatory telic point or progressive	anticipatory telic point or DNA (ma-)	iterative	anticipatory telic point or iterative*	iterative
6. The Reading of <i>X sa</i>	on-going state	on-going activity	result state	iterative	iterative	irrelevant

Almost all of the major Aktionsart classes are found in Amis, though the distinctions among some classes such as accomplishments and result states, and semelfactives and achievements are not very clear sometimes.

Following the identification of the verb classes, I have discussed the macrorole assignment for verbs with different numbers of core arguments, especially verbs that display a mismatch between syntactic transitivity and macrorole transitivity. I have argued that both the two-place and three-place AV verbs are M-intransitive. Furthermore, I have also shown that both Principle A and Principle B of undergoer selection based on the Actor-Undergoer Hierarchy are required in Amis to account for the case marking patterns of the three-place UV predicates. In other words, Amis presents a mixed type of undergoer selection, though it behaves more like a primary object language. The following set of case assignment rules is proposed for Amis based on the case assignment rules for ergative languages proposed in RRG:

(7.1) Case Assignment Rules in Amis

- a. Assign nominative case to the lowest macrorole argument in terms of (5.58)¹
- b. Assign genitive case to the other macrorole argument.
- c. Assign dative case to other direct core argument (s)

Besides the rules in (7.1), two sets of rules that account for the case pattern of *-en* verbs and the assignment of the preposition *i* have also been postulated. The rules are listed in (7.2) and (7.3) respectively.

(7.2) Case Assignment Rules for Verb Marked by *-en*

- a. Assign genitive case to the highest ranking macrorole in terms of (5.58)
- b. Assign nominative case to the other macrorole argument.
- c. Assign dative case to other direct core argument (s).

(7.3) Preposition Assignment Rules for Amis

Assign the preposition *i* to the first argument of ...**pred'** (x, y)... if it is a non-macrorole argument:

- (i) obligatory if **pred'** (x, y) = **pred-loc'** (x, y), x = common noun
- (ii) optional if **pred'** (x, y) = **pred-loc'** (x, y), x = personal proper noun
- (iii) optional if **pred'** (x, y), **pred'** = cognition, possession, and perception

The above three sets of rules can account for the major case marking patterns of the participants in Amis.

The last major chapter of this dissertation probed the existence of grammatical relations in Amis. I have shown that except for the relative clause and the nominal type of displacement construction in which there exists a subject-like grammatical relation (i.e. a syntactic PSA) and this grammatical relation has an ergative pattern, other constructions that have been examined such as control, reflexivization, and pivots in consecutive clauses mostly have semantic controllers and/or pivots. I have also stipulated constructional schemas for the instrumental applicative and the locative applicative constructions. For the instrumental applicative, two logical structures have been proposed (i.e. modifying sub-event and reason), and three (i.e. location, goal, and patient)

¹ (5.58) refers to the PSA selection hierarchy of RRG.

have been proposed for locative applicative to fully account for their functions and semantics. This dissertation ended with the discussion of the voice constructions in Amis. I have argued that the AV construction performs both PSA modulation and argument modulation functions, while the UV, in spite of being the default pattern, may appear to the marked voice choice for some verbs, which indicates that Amis presents a split-ergative system morphologically, though syntactically it is ergative. The functions of voice constructions in Amis are summarized in Table 7.8, and the discussion of the ergativity in Amis is summarized in Table 7.9:

Table 7.8 Functions of Voice Constructions in Amis

	PSA Modulation	Argument Modulation
AV Constructions	Yes. Allowing the actor, but not the default argument in terms of the selection hierarchy, as the PSA	Yes. Realizing the undergoer as a non-macrorole argument
(Plain) UV Constructions	NA (basic voice)	NA (basic voice)
Applicative UV Constructions	NA (basic voice)	Yes. Allowing a marked choice of the undergoer

Table 7.9 Split-Ergativity in Amis

Grammatical Phenomena	AV Pattern	UV Pattern
Voice Morphology	basic	basic
Voice Oppositions		basic
Case Marking		basic
Grammatical Relations (in RC and WH-Q formation)		basic

Although the issues investigated in this dissertation are not unfamiliar, yet with the different perspectives and insights provided by RRG, we have achieved a better and more thorough understanding about the verbal syntax and semantics of Amis. The decompositional model of verbal analysis helps us more adequately describe the important derivational functions of the voice affixes. The incorporation of the notion macrorole lets us more accurately identify the different semantic status of the NPs and the

transitivity value of a sentence, and consequently elucidate the ergative nature of Amis. Finally, discussing the phenomenon of grammatical relations by means of examining the privileged arguments of different constructions makes it possible to avoid the potential problems of identifying the NP marked by the nominative case as the only argument with the subject properties in Amis. These problems were long ago pointed out in Schachter (1977) for Tagalog, a language genetically related to Amis.