POSTVERBAL *WH*-PHRASES IN MALAGASY, TAGALOG AND TSOU*

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We argue that postverbal *wh*-phrases in Malagasy, Tagalog and Tsou are subject to the same general constraint on marking of postverbal trigger argument. We show that the trigger is not necessarily definite or specific; the non-occurrence of *wh*-phrase trigger in postverbal position therefore cannot be due to the definite/specific constraint on the trigger argument. There exists evidence, little noticed in the literature, that *wh*-phrase trigger may sometimes occur in postverbal position. We claim that postverbal *wh*-phrase trigger is possible just in case it can independently be marked in the same fashion as postverbal non-*wh*-phrase trigger.

1. INTRODUCTION

A very typical property of many Austronesian languages is that verbal morphology correlates with argument-positioning or marking. In Malagasy, the Actor argument of a verb appears in the end of the sentence with the verb in active morphology, and the Patient argument is in the end of the sentence with it carrying passive morphology (Keenan 1976):

(1) a. Manasa lamba Rasoa.  
\[\text{wash.ACT clothes} \]  
‘Rasoa is washing clothes.’
b. Sasan-dRaso ny lamba.  
\[\text{wash.PASS the clothes} \]  
‘The clothes are being washed by Rasoa.’

Reordering of the arguments may result in different or pragmatically odd interpretations.

In Tagalog, the marker *ang* appears prefixed on the full DP Actor (*si* for proper name Actor) when the verb has active morphology, on the full DP Patient when it has passive morphology, and on the full DP Goal when it has directional morphology (Schachter 1993:1422):

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1 Abbreviations: ACT=active, COMP=complementizer, DIR=directional, FOC=focus, LNK=linker, NACT=non-active, NOM=nominative, OBL=oblique, P=preposition, PASS=passive, PL=plural, Q=question, REA=realis, s=singular. For simplicity, morphemes are not precisely segmented, and the glosses given here may deviate from the originals.
(2) a. Hihiram ang babae ng laruan sa bata.  
borrow.ACT woman toy child  
‘The woman will borrow a toy from a/the child.’
b. Hihiram-in ng babae ang laruan sa bata.  
borrow-PASS woman toy child  
‘A/the woman will borrow the toy from a/the child.’
c. Hihiram-an ng babae ng laruan ang bata.  
borrow-DIR woman toy child  
‘A/the woman will borrow a toy from the child.’

While the postverbal arguments may be re-ordered in Tagalog, marking the arguments differently may result in pragmatically odd interpretations. For instance, if in (2a) babae ‘woman’ were prefixed with *ng and laruan ‘child’ with *ang, the sentence would have the interpretation in which the toy borrows a woman from the child.

In Tsou, an Austronesian language spoken in Mount Ali, Taiwan, the Actor largely occurs in the end of the sentence with the nominative marker *e, *o or *na when the thematic verb bears active morphology, and the Patient does so when the thematic verb has passive morphology:

(3) a. M-i-ta eobak-o ta mo’o ’e pasuya.  
ACT-REA-3S hit- ACT OBL NOM  
‘Pasuya hit Mo’o.’
b. ∅-i-ta eobak-a ta pasuya ’e mo’o.  
NACT-REA-3S hit-PASS OBL NOM  
‘Mo’o was hit by Pasuya.’

Arguments other than the Nominative-marked argument are marked with the Oblique marker *ta or *to (Szakos 1994, Zeitoun 2000). Following Schachter (1993), the argument that is marked or positioned in a specific way as correlated with verbal morphology will here be called the trigger.

The facts in (4)-(5) apparently show that the postverbal trigger in Malagasy and Tagalog cannot be a *wh*-phrase (Sabel 2002 and Richards 1998):

(4) a. Nividy trondro Rabe.  
bought.ACT fish  
‘Rabe bought fish.’
b. *Nividy trondro iza?  
bought.ACT fish who  
‘Who bought fish?’

(5) a. Bumili si Pedro ng isda.  
bought.ACT fish  
‘Pedro bought fish?’
b. *Bumili sino ng isda?
   bought.ACT who fish
   ‘Who bought fish?’

From a comparative perspective, it is of some interest that Tsou has no restriction on postverbal wh-phrase. Either a wh-phrase or a non-wh-phrase may occur in the same postverbal position:

(6) a. M-o m-hin-o to tposu na oko. (Tsou)
   ACT-REA ACT-buy-REA OBL book NOM child
   ‘A child bought a book.’
  
b. M-o m-hin-o to tposu na sia?
   ACT-REA ACT-buy-REA OBL book NOM who
   ‘Who bought a book?’

Despite the contrast in (4) and (5) on the one hand, and the lack thereof in (6), we argue that the grammatical patterns in (4)-(6) can be given a unified account.

We suggest that the distribution of postverbal wh-phrase triggers is not related to a ban on postverbal indefinite triggers (Sabel 2002, Richards 1998), but is due to the same general requirement on the form of the trigger in postverbal position. Specifically, a wh-phrase trigger is allowed postverbally just in case it can independently have the form that satisfies the formal requirement on the trigger in postverbal position. As it turns out, even in Malagasy and Tagalog, the contrast in (4) and (5) fails to hold of certain postverbal wh-phrase triggers, a fact that has not received much attention and systematic investigation.

The paper proceeds as follows. First, we present empirical evidence that the trigger in postverbal position is not necessarily definite or specific, contrary to the common perception in the literature (Keenan 1976 and Schachter 1993). Second, we show that a wh-phrase trigger is sometimes possible in postverbal position in Malagasy and Tagalog. Third, in light of these facts, we argue that the non-occurrence of certain wh-phrases in postverbal position is not related to the definiteness requirement on the trigger in that position, there being none, but to the form of the trigger that is independently required.

2. TRIGGER AND DEFINITENESS

The trigger in Austronesian languages is commonly taken to be definite. According to Keenan (1976:252-253), the surface subjects of Malagasy simplex Ss, here called the trigger, are

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2 On a cautionary note, it has to be mentioned that these authors only give the rough outlines of an account. Thus Richards (1998) suggests that “the semantics of a wh-word might be incompatible with specificity” and Sabel (2002) assumes that "Malagasy wh-words are inherently [-specific]." This limitation to just wh-words is clearly insufficient for dealing with wh-phrases like which-NP. Sabel explicitly concedes the relevance of D-linking for the latter. Likewise, our own findings will have ultimately to be weighed against a more sophisticated theory of definiteness/specificity, taking into account generic and kind referring readings of DPs as well as the universal vs. free choice construal of any-NP.
necessarily definite, and indefinite NPs without any determiner may occur as objects, but never as subjects:

(7) a. Lasa *(ny) mpianatra. (Malagasy)
gone the student
‘The students left.’

b. Nahita mpianatra Rabe.
saw.ACT students
‘Rabe saw some students.’

Similarly, Schachter (1993:1419) claims that the trigger in Tagalog is regularly interpreted as definite (cf. the interpretations in (2)), in concordance with Schachter and Otanes’s (1972:60) suggestion that the ang-marked topic never expresses a meaning of indefiniteness.

If the trigger is necessarily definite, then the exclusion of postverbal wh-phrase triggers can be straightforwardly linked to the definiteness constraint on the trigger, wh-phrases not being definite (Richards 1998 and Sabel 2002). The same account carries over to Tsou. As indicated in the interpretation in (6a), postverbal trigger argument need not be definite. It is therefore just as expected that in Tsou a wh-phrase may occur in the same postverbal position of the trigger.

That there may be a connection between definiteness of the trigger argument and postverbal wh-phrase trigger is buttressed by the fact that non-triggers are not necessarily definite or specific and postverbal wh-phrase non-triggers are possible:

(8) a. Nividy inona Rabe? (Malagasy)
bought.ACT what
‘What did Rabe buy?’

b. Bumili si Pedro ng ano? (Tagalog)
bought.ACT what
‘What did Pedro buy?’

c. M-o m-hin-o to cuma ’o oko? (Tsou)
ACT-REA ACT-buy-REA OBL what NOM child
‘What did the child buy?’

As simple and plausible as it may sound, there is empirical evidence, perhaps not very well-known, showing that the trigger in Malagasy and Tagalog need not be definite or specific (contra Paul (1999:69,81) for Malagasy).

In the existential construction (cf. the construction with the expletive there in English), the argument of the existential predicate must be indefinite, as has been extensively discussed in the literature (cf. Milsark 1974). This is true of Malagasy as well. As shown in the example in (9a), taken from Paul (1999:68), a DP with the determiner ny may occur as argument of the existential predicate misy ‘exist’:
Paul originally gives the translation as partitive. One might argue that *ny lehilahy* ‘the man’ is in fact definite, but is embedded under a phonetically empty determiner whose meaning is *some*, giving rise to the partitive reading. If so, then the example in (9a) would not be a counterexample to the generalization that the argument of an existential predicate must be indefinite.

There is good reason to suppose that the argument in (9a) is not interpreted as partitive, however. As indicated in the interpretation in (9b), the trigger must be understood to be under the scope of negation. In order for it to have a partitive reading and have wide scope over negation, an overt lexical item like *sasany* ‘some’ must be used, as in (10a):

(10) a. Tsy misy any an-trano ny sasany amin’ny lehilahy.
    not exist there at-house the some P-the man
    ‘Some of the men are not in the house.’

b. Tsy misy intsony ny zaza mitomany.
    not exist any longer the child cry
    ‘Some of the children are no longer crying.’

Similarly, our informants understand the example in (10b), contrary to Paul’s (1999:76) rendition as partitive, as saying that no children are crying.

In (11) are more examples of *ny*-marked trigger that is not definite. Thus, the sentence in (11a) is coherent only if the argument *ny kianja filalaovana* ‘playground’ is not definite or specific, the following clause denying the existence of a playground:

(11) a. Ilainay ny kianja filalaovana,
    need.PASS.1PL the ground play
    satria tsy manana toerana afahan’ny ankizy milalao izahay.
    because not have ground can the children play we
    ‘We need a playground, because we don’t have any place where children can play.’

b. Omeo ahy ny kaopy raha mba misy ao.
    give.PASS me the cup if PRT there are there
    ‘Give me a cup, if there is any!’
c. Nilaza tamin-ko ny sefo, fa ho hirahiny ny dokotera
   said.ACT to-me the director that will send.3SG the doctor
   (fa kosa tsy fantatro hoe iza).
   but not know.1SG COMP who
   ‘The director told me that he’ll send a doctor (but I don’t know which).’

d. Te hanao trano ianao. Tena ananao ve ny sary?
   want.ACT build.ACT house you really have.2SG Q the picture
   ‘You want to build a house. Do you really have a plan?’

In (11b), the if-clause makes it clear that the speaker has no knowledge of whether a cup exists;
so the ny-marked DP ny kaopy ‘cup’ is understood to be non-specific or indefinite. In the same
vein, ny dokotera ‘doctor’ in (11c) is not specific or definite, since the speaker explicitly says
that s/he does not know which doctor is coming. In (11d), ny sary ‘plan’ may be understood to
refer to an existing plan or to one that does not yet exist.3

Similarly, there are examples in Tagalog where the ang-marked trigger need not be definite
or specific. In the examples in (12), taken from Adams and Manaster-Ramer (1988:83) and
Schachter and Otanes (1972:534) respectively, the trigger need not be definite or specific:

(12) a. Darating bukas
   come.ACT tomorrow
   ang isang babae-ng nakilala ko sa probinsya.
   one woman-LNK met.PASS I in province
   ‘A woman is coming tomorrow who I met in the province.’

b. Kailangan ng puno ang tubig.
   need tree water
   ‘Trees need water.’

In (12a), the referent of the trigger can just be any woman that the speaker has met in the
province (or it can also be a specific one that the speaker has in mind). The generic sentence in
(12b) clearly does not refer to any specific body of water.

More examples with indefinite and non-specific triggers are given in (13). Note that the
mood in (13a) and (13b) is imperative:

(13) a. Basahin mo ang libro at sabihin mo sa akin,
   read.PASS you book and tell you me
   kung makikita mo ang mali sa libro.
   whether see.PASS you mistake book
   ‘Read the book and tell me whether you find any mistake in the book!’

3 For consistency, ny is glossed throughout as the definite determiner. As is clear from the text, however, it does
not necessarily have the definite interpretation.
b. Gamitin mo ang anuma-ng pinggan.  
use 2SG any-LNK dish  
‘Use any dish.’

c. Ibibigay niya sa akin ang tasa, kung mayroon.  
give.PASS he me cup, if there is  
‘He’ll give me a cup, if there is one/any.’

While it is not impossible that the trigger in (the second conjunct of) the example in (13a) may refer to some specific mistakes, it is certainly possible for it to have no specific reference. That is, the order is to find just anything that is incorrect. The command with the indefinite modifier anuman ‘any’ in (13b) evidently indicates that the referent of the trigger ang anumang pinggan is just any dish. In (13c), like in (11b), the continuation is a clear indication that the referent of the trigger in the main clause, ang tasa ‘a cup’, is not any specific one.

There are in fact declarative examples with indefinite triggers showing unequivocally that the trigger may very well be indefinite (Schachter and Otanes 1972:535):

(14) a. Sasabihin nila sa iyo ang anum ang mangyari.  
tell.PASS they you anything happen  
‘They will tell you anything that happens.’

b. Pinapahinto nila ang sinumang nagdaan.  
stop.PASS they anyone pass by  
‘They stop anyone who passes by.’

The examples in (14) somehow escaped attention in the syntactic literature, giving rise to the misperception that the trigger must be definite or specific.

The facts in (9)-(14) are evidence that the trigger need not be definite or specific. If this is correct, then we obviously cannot relate the ungrammaticality of the examples in (4b) and (5b) to the general requirement that the trigger be definite or specific.

3. POSTVERBAL WH-PHRASE TRIGGER

While the examples in (4b) and (5b) are indeed ungrammatical, it is unwarranted to generalize across-the-board to the effect that postverbal wh-phrase trigger is never possible. As shown in (15), some wh-phrase triggers may occur postverbally in Tagalog:

(15) a. Bumili ng isda ang ano?  
buy.ACT fish what  
‘Who bought fish?’

b. Bumili ng isda ang aling babae?  
buy.ACT fish which woman  
‘Which woman bought fish?’
c. Bumili ng isda ang ilang babae?
buy.ACT fish how many woman
‘How many women bought fish?’

The examples in (15) may but need not be understood as echo questions. This point is crucial, for if they were necessarily echo questions, then they need not be taken to be evidence that postverbal *wh*-phrase triggers in *wh*-questions are possible.

The questions in (15) can be *wh*-questions, since they can be embedded by the subordinator *kung* as indirect question complements or as sentential subjects.\(^4\)

\begin{enumerate}
\item[(16)] a. Hindi ko alam kung bumili ng isda ang ano.
not I know.PASS COMP buy.ACT fish what
‘I don’t know who bought fish.’

b. Hindi maliwanag kung bumili ng isda ang aling babae.
clear COMP buy.ACT fish which woman
‘Which woman bought fish is not clear.’

b. Dikalala ang tanong kung bumili ng isda ang ilang babae.
unknown question COMP buy.ACT fish how many woman
‘The question of how many women bought fish is.’
\end{enumerate}

The lack of the interpretation of *kung* as *whether* in (16), in contrast with cases like (17) without an overt *wh*-phrase in the same clause, excludes the possibility that the embedded questions in (16) are echo questions.\(^5\)

\begin{enumerate}
\item[(17)] a. Hindi ko alam kung bumili ng isda ang babae.
not I know.PASS whether buy.ACT fish woman
‘I don’t know whether the woman bought fish.’

b. Kung mapapasa si Pedro ang tanong.
whether pass.ACT question
\end{enumerate}

\[^4\] The less than perfect grammaticality of the examples in (16) is most probably due to the garden-path effect. When the hearer first hears *kung* without an overt *wh*-phrase in the immediate vicinity, he or she would think that it is interpreted as *whether* (cf. (17)), and is part of an embedded yes/no question. Only much later in the sentence does the hearer encounter an overt *wh*-phrase, and realize that *kung* is not interpreted as *whether*. The garden-path effect disappears when the overt *wh*-phrase occurs earlier in the sentence:

\begin{enumerate}
\item[(i)] Hindi ko alam kung ang aling babae ang bumili ng isda.
not I know.PASS which woman buy.ACT fish
‘I don’t know which woman bought fish.’
\end{enumerate}

\[^5\] It is an independent issue as to how the morpheme *kung* ‘whether’ in (17) is to be related to *kung* in (16) where it does not have that interpretation. One possibility is that *kung* is just a grammatical formative with some abstract Q feature (Baker 1970) appearing on C. It is interpreted as *whether* if a phonetically empty yes/no question operator appears in its Spec position, and it lacks that interpretation when it co-occurs with an overt *wh*-phrase in the same clause.
'Whether Pedro will pass (the exam) is the question.'

Quite generally, the sentence an echo question echoes is independently possible. Thus, the echo questions in (18a) and (20a) echo the independently possible sentences in (18b) and (20b):

(18)
   a. John wondered whether Mary bought WHAT?
   b. John wondered whether Mary bought the book.

(20)
   a. Whether John will pass WHAT is an interesting question?
   b. Whether John will pass the written exam is an interesting question.

By contrast, as the sentences in (20b) and (21b) are independently impossible, there would then be no source for echo questions. We can take the ungrammaticality of the examples in (20a) and (21a) as evidence that echo questions do not satisfy selectional restriction imposed by predicates taking indirect question complements:

(20)
   a. *John wondered Mary bought WHAT.
   b. *John wondered Mary bought the book.

(21)
   a. *John will pass WHAT is an interesting question.
   b. *John will pass the written exam is an interesting question.

Returning now to (16), we can see that the embedded clauses in these examples are not indirect yes/no questions, kung not being interpreted as whether. They are not echo questions either, for predicates taking indirect question complements cannot take echo questions as complements (cf. (20a) and (21a)). The embedded clauses in (16) are thus wh-questions with postverbal wh-phrase triggers. Now, as the examples in (15) are formally the same as the embedded clauses in (16) (apart from the absence of kung), they too are (possibly) wh-questions. This thus shows that postverbal wh-phrase triggers in wh-questions are possible.

It is significant that the example in (5b) is also impossible as an echo question, showing that sino ‘who’, in contrast with ang ano ‘who’, simply cannot occur in postverbal position.

The facts in Malagasy are slightly more complicated, but the general pattern seems to be the same. All my informants accept an example like that in (22a); however, judgment varies with respect to those in (22b) and (22c) (we will return to the dialectal variations in the next section):

(22)
   a. Hitan-dRabe ny sarin’-iza? (Malagasy)
      see.PASS the picture-who
      ‘Who did Rabe see pictures of?’
   b. (*) Hitan-dRabe ny sary firy?
      see.PASS the picture how many
      ‘How many pictures did Rabe see?’
c. (*) HitandRabe ny inona?
   see.PASS the what
   ‘What did Rabe see?’

Like Tagalog, the examples in (22a), (22b) and (22c), for the speakers that accept them, are not
echo questions, but are wh-questions. They can be embedded under a predicate taking an indirect
question as complement:

(23) a. Manotany tena aho hoe hitandRabe ny sarin’-iza.
   ask.ACT self I COMP see.PASS the picture-who
   ‘I am wondering who Rabe saw pictures of.’

b. (*) Tsy mazava hoe hitandRabe ny sary firys?
   not clear COMP see.PASS the picture how many
   ‘It’s not clear how many pictures Rabe saw.’

c. (*) Fanontaniana tsara be hoe hitandRabe ny inona?
   question good very COMP see.PASS the what
   ‘What Rabe saw is a very good question.’

Hoe in Malagasy is similar to kung in Tagalog in that it may sometimes be interpreted as
whether. In contrast with the examples in (23), hoe is interpreted as whether in cases like (24)
where the embedded clause contains no overt wh-phrase:

(24) a. Manotany tena aho hoe hitandRabe ny sarin.
   ask.ACT self I whether see.PASS the picture
   ‘I am wondering whether Rabe saw the picture.’

b. Tsy mazava hoe hitandRabe ny sary.
   not clear whether see.PASS the picture
   ‘It’s not clear whether Rabe saw the picture.’

So our argument that the examples in (15) in Tagalog are wh-questions, not echo questions, also
holds for the examples in (22) in Malagasy as well, which we will not repeat.

In sum, it seems clear that one cannot in principle exclude wh-phrase triggers in postverbal
position. Therefore, the ungrammaticality of the examples in (4b) and (5b) cannot be due to the
trigger being necessarily definite or specific. Moreover, such an account also cannot explain why
certain wh-phrase triggers, e.g. those in (15) and (22), may occur postverbally. We argue
presently that whether a certain wh-phrase trigger may occur in postverbal position crucially
depends on whether it can independently have the form that is required of the postverbal trigger.

4. THE FORM OF THE TRIGGER

In Malagasy, the trigger argument occurring in the end of the sentence must be preceded by ny,
while a non-trigger argument need not:
(25) a. Novidin-dRabe *(ny) trondro. (Malagasy)
bought.PASS the fish
‘Rabe bought the fish.’
b. Nividy (ny) trondro *(ny) vehivavy.
bought.ACT the fish the woman
‘The woman bought (the) fish.’

It is of special interest that *ny is not required on the trigger argument in preverbal position:

(26) a. (Ny) trondro no novidin-dRabe.
the fish FOC bought.PASS
‘It is Rabe who bought fish.’
b. (Ny) vehivavy no nividy (ny) trondro.
the woman FOC bought.ACT the fish
‘It is the woman who bought (the) fish.’

Similarly, in Tagalog the trigger argument in postverbal position usually must be prefixed by the marker *ang; leaving it out would lead to ungrammaticality:

(27) a. May desk *(ang) bawa’t bata. (Tagalog)
have desk each child
‘Each child has a desk.’
b. Narito na *(ang) lahat ng tao.
here now all people
‘All the people are here now.’

(28) a. Bumili *(ang) bata ng lapis.
buy.ACT child pencil
‘The child bought a pencil.’
b. Binili ng bata *(ang) lapis.
buy.PASS child pencil
‘A child bought the pencil.’

However, the marker *ang can sometimes be missing on a DP in the clause-initial position. This is true of DPs with quantifiers like bawa’t ‘each’ and lahat ‘all’ (Schachter and Otanes 1972:486-487), as well as other DPs:

(29) a. (Ang) bawa’t bata ay may desk.
each child have desk
‘Each child has a desk.’
b. (Ang) lahat ng tao ’y narito na.
all people here now
‘All the people are here now.’
(30) a. (Ang) bata ang bumili ng lapis.
   child buy.ACT pencil
   ‘The one bought pencil is a child’

   b. (Ang) lapis ang binili ng bata.
   pencil buy.PASS child
   ‘The thing that the child bought is a pencil.’

It is then quite evident from the facts in (25), (27) and (28) that the trigger in postverbal position must have a specific form. In Malagasy, it must have the determiner ny, and in Tagalog it must be preceded by the marker ang. The trigger argument (or a DP related to it) appearing in some other position does not have to have that form.\(^6\)

Tsou has two series of prefixes for marking arguments, which Szakos (1994) and Zeitoun (2000) take to be Case-markers. One series is for the trigger argument, what can be taken to be Nominative, and the other for Oblique (non-trigger) arguments. Case-markers in each series are further distinguished among themselves in terms of visibility, distance to the speaker or hearer and whether it is known (Szakos 1994:74). Thus, ’e marks the trigger whose referent is visible and close to the speaker, si is for one that is visible and close to the hearer, ’o is for one that is invisible and known, and na is for one that is invisible and unknown (Szakos 1994:74, 77):

(31) a. Uh-tan’e ’e puutu. (Tsou)
   come.ACT-here NOM Chinese
   ‘The Chinese are coming.’

   b. B-oec-u no cou ’o fkoi.
   ACT-bite-ACT OBL people NOM snake
   ‘The snake bit people.’

   c. Eon ne pangka na tposu.
   be OBL table NOM book
   ‘Some books are on the table.’

Significantly, the trigger in preverbal position is prefixed by one of the Case-markers in the same

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\(^6\) As is well-known, questions with argument wh-phrases in Tagalog are clefts, structurally consisting of two juxtoposed DPs, both marked with ang. Should it turn out that there is a null copula verb preceding the two DPs, these languages being predicate-initial, then the first DP would be postverbal with respect to the null copula, and is related to the trigger argument of the verb in the second ang-marked DP, perhaps a null relative operator as is familiar. Even in this case, the first DP is not required to be ang-marked.

Space limitation does not allow us to go into the details of the analysis of postverbal trigger with kahit ‘even, any’, which need not be marked with ang (Schachter and Otanes 1972:532):

(i) Gamitin mo (ang) kahit (na) ano.
   use 2SG even what
   ‘Use anything.’

Our impression is that DPs with kahit have special syntactic property. For instance, they may occur in clause-initial position even when it is not a trigger (Schachter and Otanes 1972:490), impossible for DPs without kahit.
way as the postverbal trigger:

(32) a. ‘E/*na pasuya ∅-i-ta eobak-a ta mo’o.
    NOM    NACT-REA-2S beat-PASS OBL
    ‘Pasuya was beaten by Mo’o.’

    b. ∅-i-ta eobak-a ta mo’o ‘e/*na pasuya.
    NACT-REA-2S beat-PASS OBL NOM
    ‘Pasuya was beaten by Mo’o.’

We can now bring the requirement on the form of the trigger in postverbal position to bear on
the restriction on postverbal wh-phrase triggers. As we can see, the postverbal triggers in the
ungrammatical examples in (4b) and (5b) precisely do not have the form required of the trigger
in postverbal position. The ungrammaticality of these examples is therefore due to the fact that
the marker ny or ang is missing on the postverbal trigger argument (cf. the grammatical contrasts
in (25), (27) and (28)).

These examples would become grammatical, if the trigger or the DP related to it appears in
preverbal position (cf. Law (2005) for a discussion of the structure of no-clefts in Malagasy):

(33) a. Iza no nividy trondro? (Malagasy)
    who FOC buy.ACT fish
    ‘Who bought fish?’

    b. Sino ang bumili ng isda? (Tagalog)
    who  buy.ACT  fish
    ‘Who bought fish?’

The grammaticality of the examples in (33) is just as expected, given the facts in (26), (29) and
(30). In all these cases, the wh-phrases are not in postverbal position, and hence are not required
to have the form of the trigger in postverbal position.

The occurrence of certain wh-phrases in preverbal position suggests that there is a connection
between postverbal wh-phrase trigger and the required form of the trigger in postverbal position.
All my Malagasy informants have the same judgment for the examples in (34a) and (34d) and
accept those in (34b) and (34c) without ny:

(34) a. (Ny) sarin’-iza no hitan-dRabe? (Malagasy)
    the picture-who FOC saw.PASS
    ‘Who did Rabe see a picture of?’

    b. (*) Ny sary firiy no hitan-dRabe?
    the picture how many FOC saw.PASS
    ‘Who did Rabe see a picture of?’

    c. (*) Ny inona no hitan-dRabe?
    the what FOC saw.PASS
    ‘What did Rabe see?’
Two of them do not accept (34b) and (34c) with ny, but one does. What is most interesting is that the speakers make the same cut as in (22). The examples in (34b) and (34c) with ny are rejected on a par with those in (22b) and (22c) by the same speakers, and the speaker that has a different judgment accepts all of them.

As for Tagalog, Schachter and Otanes (1972:507, 510) already point out that ano ‘what’ and alin ‘which’ in predicative position may be preceded by ang, differing sharply from sino ‘who’:

\[(35)\]
\[
\begin{align*}
\text{a. (Ang) ano ba ang nasunog?} & \quad \text{(Tagalog)} \\
& \quad \text{what Q burned} \\
& \quad \text{‘What got burned?’} \\
\text{b. (Ang) alin ba ang punong-lunsod ng Pilipinas, ang Maynila o ang Quezon?} & \\
& \quad \text{which Q capital or} \\
& \quad \text{‘Which is the capital of the Philippines, Manila or Quezon?’} \\
\text{c. (Ang) aling bahay ang inyo?} & \\
& \quad \text{which house yours} \\
& \quad \text{‘Which house is yours?’} \\
\text{d. (*Ang) sino ba ang dumating?} & \\
& \quad \text{who Q came} \\
& \quad \text{‘Who came?’}
\end{align*}
\]

In light of the examples in (35), it is clear why certain wh-phrases, e.g. ang ano ‘who/what’ and ang alin ‘which’, can occur postverbally in (15). These are precisely the ones that independently can be prefixed with ang, a form that is required of the trigger in postverbal position.

If the postverbal trigger is required to be marked in a specific way (with ny in Malagasy and ang in Tagalog), then an issue that immediately arises is why the examples in (36) with the required form of the trigger are nevertheless ungrammatical:

\[(36)\]
\[
\begin{align*}
\text{a. *Nividy trondro ny iza?} & \quad \text{(Malagasy)} \\
& \quad \text{buy.ACT fish the who} \\
& \quad \text{‘Who bought fish?’} \\
\text{b. *Bumili ang sino ng isda?} & \quad \text{(Tagalog)} \\
& \quad \text{buy.ACT who fish} \\
& \quad \text{‘Who bought fish?’}
\end{align*}
\]

The examples in (34d) and (35d) provide a straightforward answer. As iza cannot be preceded by ny, nor sino by ang in these cases, they too cannot be preceded with these markers in (36). The examples in (34d), (35d) and (36) are thus all ungrammatical for the same reason.
In Tsou, preverbal non-wh-phrase trigger is prefixed in the same way as postverbal trigger (cf. (32)). We would therefore expect that the same holds of a wh-phrase trigger as well. The expectation is borne out (cf. footnote 6 for questions in Tagalog):

\[(37)\]  
\[a.\] (Na/*'E) sia na m-o eobak-o ta mo’o? \hspace{1cm} (Tsou)  
\[\text{NOM} \hspace{0.5cm} \text{NOM} \hspace{0.5cm} \text{ACT-REA} \hspace{0.5cm} \text{beat-ACT} \hspace{0.5cm} \text{OBL} \]  
\[\text{‘Who beat Mo’o?’} \]  
\[b.\] M-o eobak-o ta mo’o na/*’e sia?  
\[\text{ACT-REA} \hspace{0.5cm} \text{beat-ACT} \hspace{0.5cm} \text{OBL} \hspace{0.5cm} \text{NOM} \]  
\[\text{‘Who beat Mo’o?’} \]

It should be evident now why some wh-phrases may but some others may not appear as the trigger in postverbal position. The reason has to do with whether the wh-phrase independently can have the form required of the postverbal trigger.

5. CONCLUSION

In this paper, we present empirical evidence for our claim that the trigger argument in postverbal position is not necessarily definite or specific, and that certain wh-phrases may occur as postverbal triggers. We argue that the exclusion of certain wh-phrase triggers in postverbal position is not due to a general constraint on the trigger argument that it be definite or specific, there being none. We suggest that the occurrence of postverbal wh-phrase triggers is related to their possibly having the form that is required of the trigger in postverbal position.

REFERENCES


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