

## Argument Structure and Ordering Source in Tagalog Modal Must

Tagalog has two modals corresponding to the English “must”: *kailangan* and *dapat*. Schachter and Otnes wrote in 1972: “In construction types [in Tagalog] in which *kailangan* and *dapat* both occur, *kailangan* often connotes internal necessity or need, *dapat* external necessity or appropriateness.” This paper aims to elucidate further the semantic differences between the two modals.

Tagalog verbs with two arguments can be divided into two categories: those that mark their subject with ANG (and their object with NG), and those that mark their object with ANG (and their subject with NG). However, when the subject appears between the modal and the main verb, it is sometimes marked with NG though the lower verb would mark it with ANG.

We argue here that the marking on the subject has a syntactic implication. When the noun before the main verb is ANG-marked, as assigned by the lower verb ((1a) and (2a)), the modal takes the entire VP as an argument. Here the modal is non-directed deontic – it assigns obligation, but without attributing it to the subject in particular. The semantics of the full VP then determine where the obligation is placed. When, on the other hand, the noun before the main verb is NG-marked, though the lower verb would assign it an ANG marking (as in (1b)), the modal takes two arguments, the subject NP and the rest of the VP, and assigns a NG marking to the subject. Here the modal is subject-directed deontic – it always assigns obligation to the subject.

The connotations of (1a) and (1b) support this claim. In (1a), it is the fact that Tagalog is being spoken that is objectionable, not that “you” in particular is speaking it, so *kailangan* is non-directed. In (1b), on the other hand, the question is whether “you”, in particular, will have the obligation of speaking Tagalog.

When a sentence contains a modal but no lower verb, the subject must receive its theta role from the modal, and so the modal takes it as a separate argument. Thus in (3a) we see (as in (1b)) *kailangan* taking two arguments and assigning a NG-marking to the subject. Both in (2b) and (3b) *dapat* cannot take two objects, and so the result is ungrammatical.

However, when a sentence contains a transitive verb under a modal, *kailangan* and *dapat* are both required to mark the subject with NG if it appears before the main verb, as we see in (4) and (5). Both *kailangan* and *dapat* therefore must take two arguments and assign obligation to the subject, and this obligation is quite clear in (4) and (5). It does not, however, semantically make sense for the direct object of the lower verb to receive obligation from the modal. Therefore, as we see in (6), sentences where the direct object appears between the modal and the main verb and has a different ANG/NG marking from that assigned by the lower verb are ungrammatical.

Even when sentence structure is the same with *Kailangan* and *dapat*, the sentence meanings are not identical. The difference lies in the ordering source – a set of propositions relative to expressed ideals. *kailangan* sentences are consistent with the rules of the universe, while *dapat* sentences are consistent with speaker authority. For example, (7a) is perfectly natural. The speaker has no authority over the weather; it depends on the natural conditions of the world. In contrast, (7b) only makes sense in the special context when the speaker has power over the weather, for instance when the speaker is a mage.

We have thus shown that the deontic modals *kailangan* and *dapat* can each take either one argument, in which case the modal is non-directed deontic, or two arguments, in which case the modal is directed deontic. In both cases, *kailangan* and *dapat* have different ordering sources: the rules of the universe for *kailangan* and speaker authority for *dapat*.

## Supporting Evidence

- (1) a. Kailangan ka ba mag-Tagalog?  
must ANG-you Q SUBJ.ANG-speak-Tagalog  
'Must you speak Tagalog?' (it's very rude)
- b. Kailangan mo ba mag-Tagalog?  
must NG-you Q SUBJ.ANG-speak-Tagalog  
'Must you/(one) speak Tagalog?' (at this party; I don't know it well)
- (2) a. Dapat ka ba mag-Tagalog?  
must ANG-you Q SUBJ.ANG-speak-Tagalog  
'Must you speak Tagalog?'
- b. \* Dapat mo ba mag-Tagalog?  
must NG-you Q SUBJ.ANG-speak-Tagalog
- (3) a. Kailangan mo ang tulong niya.  
need NG-you ANG help her  
'You need her help.'
- b. \* Dapat mo ang tulong niya.  
need NG-you ANG help her
- (4) a. Kailangan mo/\*ka ba bilhin ang kotse?  
must NG-you/\*ANG-you Q OBJ.ANG-buy ANG car
- b. Kailangan mo/\*ka ba bumili ng kotse?  
must NG-you/\*ANG-you Q SUBJ.ANG-buy NG car
- (5) a. Dapat mo/\*ka ba bilhin ang kotse?  
must NG-you/\*ANG-you Q OBJ.ANG-buy ANG car
- b. Dapat mo/\*ka ba bumili ng kotse?  
must NG-you/\*ANG-you Q SUBJ.ANG-buy NG car
- (6) a. \* Kailangan/Dapat ng kotse ba bilhin mo?  
must NG car Q OBJ.ANG-buy NG-you
- b. \* Kailangan/Dapat ang kotse ba bumili ka?  
must ANG car Q SUBJ.ANG-buy ANG-you
- (7) a. Kailangan umulan bukas para ako gumawa ng mainit na salabat.  
must rain tomorrow for ANG-I make LI hot LI ginger tea  
'It must rain tomorrow for me to make hot ginger tea.'
- b. ?? Dapat umulan bukas para ako gumawa ng mainit na salabat.  
must rain tomorrow for ANG-I make LI hot LI ginger tea  
'It must rain tomorrow for me to make hot ginger tea.'