

# Interpreting Tagalog clitic cluster combinations<sup>1</sup>

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**Abstract.** In a number of cases where two adverbial clitics cooccur in Tagalog, their combined semantic contribution may seem, at least at first glance, to differ from the transparent combination of its two component parts. In this paper, we describe and analyze the combinations *pa lang* which we can roughly describe as indicating “low progress” and *na lang* which indicates a “change of plan,” akin to English *instead*. These combinations include the clitics *pa* ‘still,’ *na* ‘already,’ and *lang* ‘only,’ whose individual semantics we must first clarify. We then argue that the distributions and contributions of both clitic combinations can be derived compositionally, although in the expression of ‘instead’ with *na lang*, we must also posit a covert necessity modal.

## 1 Introduction

Tagalog is known for its rich inventory of second-position clitics, which include a closed class of pronouns and adverbials (Schachter and Otones, 1972, Kaufman, 2010, a.o.). A single clause may include multiple of these clitics, which then linearly cluster together after the “first element” of the clause. Compare the examples in (1) below, which show the clitics following the clause-initial predicate in the basic case but after the preverbal negator in its negation:

(1) **Second-position placement of Tagalog clitics:**

a. Bi~bigy-an ka na rin daw nila ng regalo.

FUT~give-LV 2SG.NOM already also EVID 3PL.GEN GEN gift

‘They will now also give you a gift (reportedly).’

b. Hindi ka na rin daw nila bi~bigy-an ng regalo.

NEG 2SG.NOM already also EVID 3PL.GEN AV.IPFV~give-LV GEN gift

‘They will also no longer give you a gift (reportedly).’

When multiple clitic adverbs cooccur, their combined semantic contribution is sometimes transparent—that is, straightforwardly reflecting the semantics of each individual adverb—but other times less so. For example, in (2a), combining *na* and *rin* which are naturally translated

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individually as ‘already’ and ‘also’ gives a compositionally straightforward result. In contrast, (2b) shows that the result of combining *na* and the adverb *lang* ‘only’ naturally conveys a change of plan, inviting an English translation using ‘instead.’

(2) **Various results for clitic adverb combinations:**

- a. Context: The parents already ate breakfast. How about the kids?  
 K<um>ain **na** **rin** sila ng almusal.  
 <AV>eat(PFV) already also 3PL.NOM GEN breakfast  
 ‘They have also already eaten breakfast.’ semantically transparent
- b. Context: I thought the guests would take a shower.  
 K<um>ain **na** **lang** sila ng almusal.  
 <AV>eat(PFV) already only 3PL.NOM GEN breakfast  
 ‘They ate breakfast instead.’ less semantically transparent

We give a few more examples of such less semantically transparent and semi-conventionalized clitic adverb combinations in (3), with brief, approximate English paraphrases. Can the semantic contributions of these combinations actually be derived from the compositional semantics of their component parts, contrary to first appearances? Or do these combinations reflect some degree of conventionalization and grammaticalization of these combinations, with semantics that cannot be synchronically derived from its parts?

(3) **Some less semantically transparent clitic adverb combinations:**

- a. *pa* ‘still’ + *lang* ‘only’  $\rightsquigarrow$  low progress
- b. *na* ‘already’ + *lang* ‘only’  $\rightsquigarrow$  change of plan, ‘instead’ (2b)
- c. *pa* ‘still’ + *rin* ‘also’  $\rightsquigarrow$  ‘still’ despite threat to plan
- d. *man* ‘even’ + *lang* ‘only’  $\rightsquigarrow$  NPI ‘even’
- e. *na* ‘already’ + *naman* topic change  $\rightsquigarrow$  ‘again’

In this paper, we investigate the semantics of two such clitic adverb combinations: *pa lang* (composed of *pa* ‘still’ and *lang* ‘only’) indicating “low progress” and *na lang* (composed of *na* ‘already’ and *lang* ‘only’) indicating a “change of plan” and translatable as ‘instead.’ In both cases, we argue that their overall semantic effects *do* in fact reflect the meanings of their constituent parts, although in the latter case, an additional meaning component also plays a role. These case studies also serve to clarify the compositional semantics of the individual clitic adverbs as well.

This paper is organized as follows. We present some general background on Tagalog second-position clitics and unique challenges for theorizing their semantic contributions in section 2, then introduce the individual clitic adverbs of interest in section 3. We then discuss and analyze the two clitic adverb combinations *pa lang* ‘low progress’ and *na lang* ‘instead’ in sections 4 and 5. Finally, we conclude in section 6.

## 2 Background

The distinct morphosyntactic properties of Tagalog second-position clitic adverbs pose unique challenges for investigating their compositional semantic contributions. The linear position of clitics is determined rather strictly based on factors including their phonological properties, and so their surface positions do not offer reliable hints as to how they take scope within a sentence. This section briefly illustrates these properties.

### 2.1 Clitic linearization

As illustrated in (1) above, the defining property of Tagalog second-position clitics is that they appear in a cluster linearly after the “first element” in their clause. This may be the verb or a preverbal head such as negation, as in (1a,b) above, but may also be a preverbal phrase, as we will see in example (8a) below.

The linear order of clitics that cooccur in a cluster is also (mostly) fixed, based on their type (pronoun vs adverbial) and phonological size (mono- vs multisyllabic), as schematized in (4) (see e.g., Schachter, 1973; Schachter and Otnes, 1972: 411–414; Anderson, 2009).

#### (4) The order of Tagalog second-position clitics:

$1\sigma$  pronouns <  $1\sigma$  adverbs <  $2+\sigma$  adverbs <  $2\sigma$  pronouns

We see a concrete illustration of this ordering in (5), which shows that the monosyllabic clitic adverb *lang* must precede the disyllabic pronominal clitic *ako* (1SG.NOM) in (5a) but follow the monosyllabic pronominal clitic *ka* (2SG.NOM) in (5b).

- (5) a. Umi~inom **lang ako** ng tsaa. \* ... **ako lang** ...  
 AV.IPFV~drink only 1SG.NOM GEN tea  
 ‘I’m only drinking tea.’
- b. Umi~inom **ka lang** ng tsaa. \* ... **lang ka** ...  
 AV.IPFV~drink 2SG.NOM only GEN tea  
 ‘You’re only drinking tea.’

### 2.2 Clitic adverbs and semantic scope

The linear order of the clitic adverbs does not clearly correlate with how they contribute semantically to the clause. For example, linear precedence does not automatically imply higher scope. This holds not only between the clitic adverbs and other semantic operators, but also between different clitic adverbs. We illustrate these general properties with two examples here. (See also Hsieh and Erlewine 2023 for further discussion.)

First, consider the interaction between *na* ‘already’ and sentential negation *hindi* shown in (6). As noted by Richards (2003: 243–244), *na* must follow *hindi*, yet the only possible scope interpretation is the one where *na* takes higher scope (6a).

- (6) **Hindi na** siya k<um>a~kain ng karne.  
 NEG already 3SG.NOM <AV>.IPFV~eat GEN meat  
 a. <sup>ok</sup> ‘She doesn’t eat meat anymore.’ (≈ She stopped) (already > not)  
 b. \* ‘She doesn’t already eat meat.’ (≈ She hasn’t started) (not > already)

Second, we observe a similarly rigid scope restriction between the clitics *lang* ‘only’ and *din* ‘also’, where *lang* must take higher scope over *din*, as (7) shows. The fixed scope here is perhaps even more noteworthy since there is some optionality in the relative linear order of these two adverbs.

- (7) Nag-i~English {**lang din** / ?**din lang**} si Mary.  
 AV-IPFV~English only also also only NOM Mary  
 a. <sup>ok</sup> Context: John speaks only<sub>F1</sub> [English]<sub>F1</sub>.  
     ‘[Mary]<sub>F2</sub> also<sub>F2</sub> speaks only<sub>F1</sub> [English]<sub>F1</sub>.’ (also > only)  
 b. \* Context: Everyone here speaks Tagalog.  
     ‘Only<sub>F1</sub> [Mary]<sub>F1</sub> also<sub>F2</sub> speaks [English]<sub>F2</sub>.’ (only > also)

This decoupled nature of linear order and semantic scope accords with approaches where the linear positions of clitics are determined postsyntactically (see e.g. Richards, 2003; Anderson, 2009; Kaufman, 2010), but runs counter to the predictions of syntactic accounts for clitic adverb placement such as the head-movement account in Tanenbaum 2020a,b.

### 3 Ingredients

Before discussing the clitic adverb combinations that are the main focus of this paper, we first introduce the individual clitic adverbs involved and their semantics. Here we present three clitic adverbs: the focus-sensitive particle *lang* and two aspectual particles *na* and *pa*.

#### 3.1 Focus-sensitive *lang*

*Lang* (and its variant *lamang*) is a focus particle with both exclusive and scalar uses, commonly translated as English *only* (Schachter and Otnes, 1972). The examples in (8) illustrate the exclusive use, which asserts that alternatives to the prejacent that vary in the focused position are false. Note that the focus associate (indicated here by subscript F) may appear postverbally as in (8b), but speakers tend to prefer it to be fronted or a cleft pivot as in (8a) (Richards, 2019).

(8) **Exclusive lang**

- a. [Si Christine]<sub>F</sub> **lang** ang k<um>a~kain ng gulay.  
 NOM.P Christine only NOM AV.IPFV~eat GEN vegetable  
 ‘Only [Christine]<sub>F</sub> eats vegetables.’ ⇒ nobody else eats vegetables
- b. K<um>a~kain **lang** si Christine [ng gulay]<sub>F</sub>.  
 AV.IPFV~eat only NOM.P Christine GEN vegetable  
 ‘Christine only eats [vegetables]<sub>F</sub>.’ ⇒ she doesn’t eat other things

Example (9) illustrates a purely scalar use of *lang*. Here, we contrast alternatives on two ends of a scale of (presumed) athletic ability:

(9) **Scalar lang**

Context: Various kinds of people compete together in this race. There is a *unique* winner.

- { [Di-kilala=ng tao]<sub>F</sub> / #[Magaling na atleta]<sub>F</sub> } **lang** yung nanalo sa karera.  
 unknown=LK person skillful LK athlete only NOM won OBL race  
 ≈ ‘The winner of the race was merely [an unknown person]<sub>F</sub>.’ (scalar / #exclusive)

We see that *lang* is felicitous with a low point on this scale (‘an unknown person’) but not with a high point (‘a skilled athlete’). Furthermore, since the context in this example establishes that the property of being the winner of the race may only hold of one individual, a non-scalar exclusive reading would be uninformative. This therefore shows that *lang* allows for purely scalar uses, which we translate with English *merely* or *just*.

Example (10) illustrates both uses of *lang*. The first instance of *lang* is exclusive as it asserts that no forms of ID other than passports are accepted. The second instance is scalar, as it results in the inference that school IDs are low on the scale of acceptable forms of identification.

(10) **Exclusive lang + scalar lang:**<sup>2</sup>

- Passport **lang** ang ta~tanggap-in nila. Hindi pwede=ng school ID **lang**.  
 passport only NOM FUT-accept-PV 3PL.GEN NEG can=LK school ID only  
 ‘They will only accept passports. It’s not allowed to be just a school ID.’

To account for these two uses of *lang*, we adopt the unified account for exclusive and scalar uses of *only*-like particles from Coppock and Beaver 2014. The denotation for *lang*, given in (11), is scalar at its core and contains two parts: an at-issue maximality component and a presuppositional minimality component:<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> In the second sentence, *pwede* ‘can’ embeds a clause, which has ‘school ID’ as a predicate nominal and a null pronoun subject. *Lang* is in second position within this embedded clause.

<sup>3</sup> We treat propositions as world and time dependent. Where composition necessitates, we type-shift using Intensional Functional Application (Heim and Kratzer, 1998) or similar operations. Where it is not specified, expressions are interpreted with respect to the actual world  $w^*$  and actual time  $t^*$ .

- (11)  $lang_C(p)(w^*)$
- a. at-issue:  $\neg \exists q \in C[q(w^*) \wedge q >_C p]$
  - b. presupposes:  $\exists q \in C[q(w^*) \wedge q \geq_C p]$

Both meaning components make reference to a contextual set of alternatives  $C$  and an ordering of those alternatives  $\geq_C$ . First,  $lang_C(p)(w^*)$  asserts that among the alternatives in  $C$ , the prejacent  $p$  is the strongest true proposition based on the ordering  $\geq_C$ . Second,  $lang_C(p)(w^*)$  presupposes the existence of true alternatives to the prejacent that are at least as strong as it.

We can most straightforwardly see how this analysis works in the purely scalar race example in (9) above. In this case, the basis for the ordering  $\geq_C$  is contextually determined, based on presumed athletic skill or, correspondingly, relative likelihood to win the race. Following (11), the felicitous variant of (9) asserts that the winner of the race was nobody more skilled than the unknown person (the dark horse), while it presupposes that the winner of the race was someone at least as skilled as the unknown person. The result is that the winner of the race is uniquely identified as the unknown person.

For the analysis to account for the exclusive use, Coppock and Beaver propose that in addition to being contextually specified, the ordering  $\geq_C$  can also be based on logical strength, specifically subset/superset relations within the contextual alternatives. We can see how this works when applied to an exclusive example like (8a). The example asserts that no logically stronger focus alternatives (which are of the form ‘Christine +  $X$  all eat vegetables’) are true, while presupposing that the prejacent ‘Christine eats vegetables’ or a stronger focus alternative is true. Together, the result is that Christine is uniquely identified as the one who eats vegetables.

These two options for the ordering  $\geq_C$  are summarized in (12):

- (12) **Basis for ordering  $\geq_C$ :**
- a. Contextually specified ordering  $\rightsquigarrow$  Scalar use
  - b. Logical strength  $\rightsquigarrow$  Exclusive use

### 3.2 Temporal adverbs *pa* and *na*

Tagalog *pa* ‘still’ and *na* ‘already’ are aspectual particles whose behavior parallels well-studied temporal particle pairs in other languages, such as German *noch* vs *schon* and Mandarin Chinese *hái* vs sentence-final *le*; see e.g. Löbner 1989; Krifka 2000; Soh and Gao 2008; Zhang and Ling 2016. Like these other temporal particles, *pa* and *na* have a number of seemingly disparate uses (see Schachter and Otones, 1972 for details). Our working hypothesis follows Löbner (1989) who uses the term “phase quantification” to refer to the general semantic function of such particles. For him, such particles express the presence or absence of a change in whether an eventuality holds or not (positive and negative “phase” in his terminology) with respect to some scale. In this section,

we illustrate the phenomenon with time as the relevant scale, though other types of scales are also possible, as we will see later.

Consider the minimal pair of simple imperfective clauses with *pa* and *na* in (13–14) below.<sup>4</sup> The addition of *pa* in (13) requires a context where the description of cooking has continued since a salient prior time, thus corresponding to English ‘still.’ In contrast, the addition of *na* (14) requires that the description did *not* hold true at a salient prior time.<sup>5</sup> These contextual requirements are reflected in the felicity judgments that we report in (15) below.

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| (13) Naglu~luto <b>pa</b> ako.<br>AV.IPFV~cook still 1SG.NOM<br>‘I’m still cooking.’ | (14) Naglu~luto <b>na</b> ako.<br>AV.IPFV~cook already 1SG.NOM<br>≈ ‘I’m cooking now.’ |
|--|--|

(15) Contexts: You call in the afternoon and ask what I’m doing.

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| a. You saw me <u>cooking</u> this morning.  | <sup>ok</sup> <i>pa</i> (13) # <i>na</i> (14) |
| b. You saw me <u>cleaning</u> this morning. | # <i>pa</i> (13) <sup>ok</sup> <i>na</i> (14) |
| c. We haven’t talked recently.              | # <i>pa</i> (13) # <i>na</i> (14)             |

We assume a relatively straightforward semantics for *pa*, as shown in (16) below.  $Pa(p)(t^*)$  asserts that its prejacent *p* is true at the time of utterance  $t^*$  and presupposes that there is a salient prior time  $t_s$  starting from which the prejacent was continuously true until  $t^*$ . Additionally, we follow Beck 2020 (citing discussion by Wolfgang Klein) in proposing a third inference that *p* will become false at some future time, though we will remain uncommitted here regarding how this inference arises.

- (16)  $pa(p)(t^*)$
- a. at-issue:  $p(t^*)$  true
  - b. presupposes:  $\exists$  salient time  $t_s < t^*$ ,  $p(t_s)$  true (with no interruption)
  - c. possible implicature:  $\exists t' > t^*$ ,  $p(t')$  false

Like with *pa*, the semantics we propose in (17) for *na* is straightforward.  $Na(p)(t^*)$  asserts that its prejacent *p* is true at the time of utterance  $t^*$  and presupposes that there is a salient prior time  $t_s$  when the prejacent did not hold.

- (17)  $na(p)(t^*)$
- a. at-issue:  $p(t^*)$  true
  - b. presupposes:  $\exists$  salient time  $t_s < t^*$ ,  $p(t_s)$  false

Now that we have introduced the individual clitic adverbs *lang*, *pa*, and *na*, we discuss their combinations *pa lang* and *na lang* in turn.

<sup>4</sup> Both also have habitual interpretations, but we concentrate on their present progressive interpretations, in accord with the contexts under discussion.

<sup>5</sup> We gloss *na* as ‘already,’ although this is not a direct equivalent in (Standard) English. *Na* does, however, correspond more closely to *already* in Singlish (Colloquial Singapore English); see Erlewine 2023 and citations there.

## 4 Low progress *pa lang*

Combining *pa* ‘still’ and *lang* ‘only’ conveys a low degree of progress towards a goal or endpoint, reminiscent of German *erst* (Löbner, 1989). More specifically, *pa lang* implies a non-final state along some progression along with an expectation of further stages of progress. This is shown in (18), where the contribution of *pa lang* is most naturally captured using English *only ... so far*.

- (18) a. Tatlo=ng libro **pa lang** ang naha~hanap ni Paula.  
 three=LK book still only NOM IPFV.NVOL~find[PV] GEN.P Paula  
 ‘Paula has only found three books (so far).’  
 ~> she has more books to read (patterned after Neeleman and van de Koot, 2022)
- b. Isa=ng buwan **pa lang** sila=ng magkasama.  
 one=LK month still only 3PL.NOM=LK together  
 ‘They have only been together for a month (so far).’  
 ~> they will (probably) be together for longer (patterned after Löbner, 1989)

Before we present our analysis of *pa lang*, let us first consider some key properties of this combination of clitic adverbs.

### 4.1 Key properties of *pa lang*

First, both *pa* and *lang* are required for the low progress reading. Removing *lang* from (18) results in (19). Here we observe additive or scalar readings, which are expected uses of *pa* (Schachter and Otnes, 1972) and similar particles crosslinguistically. We speculate that such readings are derivable as phase quantification (à la Löbner) over non-temporal scales.<sup>6</sup>

- (19) a. Tatlo=ng libro **pa** ang na-hanap ni Paula.  
 three=LK book still NOM PFV.NVOL~find[PV] GEN.P Paula  
 ‘Paula found three more books.’ / ‘Paula even found [three]<sub>F</sub> books.’
- b. Isa=ng buwan **pa** sila=ng magkasama.  
 one=LK month still 3PL.NOM=LK together  
 ‘They will be together for one more month.’ / ‘They were even together for a month.’

The examples above show that *lang* is necessary for the low progress reading, but we see in (20) below that *lang* by itself is also not sufficient. Removing *pa* results in a plain scalar or exclusive

<sup>6</sup> Note that there is an aspectual difference between (18a) and (19a). These appear to be the most natural aspectual forms to use in the respective sentences, though we do not yet have a definitive explanation. It may be that *pa lang* requires its prejacent to be stative or ongoing in some way. The nonvolitional imperfective form in (18a) would fit such a requirement. However this form usually expresses ability attributions (e.g., ‘is able to find’), while the reading in (18a) appears to be closer to a result state reading. See also Alonso-Ovalle and Hsieh 2021 on the semantics of nonvolitional forms.



reading, without any inference or expectation about continued progress (e.g., finding more books or being together for longer). Thus, both *pa* and *lang* are required for the low progress ‘only ... so far’ readings illustrated in (18).

- (20) a. Tatlo=ng libro **lang** ang na-hanap ni Paula.  
 three=LK book only NOM PFV.NVOL~find[PV] GEN.P Paula  
 ‘Paula only found three books.’
- b. Isa=ng buwan **lang** sila=ng magkasama.  
 one=LK month only 3PL.NOM=LK together  
 ‘They were only together for a month.’

Second, low progress *pa lang* requires that the preadjacent reflect some progress having been made relative to a contextually salient progression. Consider the contrast in (21) below, where *pa lang* is compatible with the predicate *isang litro* ‘one liter’ but not *kulang* ‘insufficient.’ We can understand this contrast by observing that the state expressed by ‘one liter’ is naturally preceded by earlier states such as ‘no water’ or ‘half a liter.’ In contrast, ‘insufficient’ is necessarily an initial state.

- (21) Context: I ask you to take an empty bucket and fill it with 5 liters of water.
- a. Isa=ng litro **pa lang** ang tubig.                      b. Kulang **pa (\*lang)** ang tubig.  
 one=LK liter still only NOM water                      insufficient still only NOM water  
 ‘The water is only one liter so far.’                      ‘The water is still insufficient.’

Another pair of examples showing this property is (22–23), which have *pa lang* and *pa* alone, respectively. These sentences have different felicity conditions, as highlighted by the contexts in (24), which manipulate whether or not being at home is the initial state in the sequence. If being at home is the initial state, as in (24a), then only (23) with *pa* is felicitous. In contrast, if the contextual progression includes a state prior to being at home, as in (24b), then only (22) with *pa lang* is felicitous.

- (22) Nasa [bahay]<sub>F</sub> **pa lang** ako.                      (23) Nasa bahay **pa** ako.  
 PRED.OBL house still only 1SG.NOM                      PRED.OBL house still 1SG.NOM  
 ≈ ‘I’m still/only at [home]<sub>F</sub> (so far).’                      ‘I’m still at home.’

- (24) Contexts: I’m meeting friends for dinner. I’m running late so they ask me where I am...
- a. It’s the weekend so I’m leaving from home.                      #low prog. (22) <sup>ok</sup> ‘still’ (23)
- b. I came from work, but I had to go home first.                      <sup>ok</sup>low prog. (22) # ‘still’ (23)

## 4.2 Analysis

We propose that low progress *pa lang* can be derived compositionally as *pa* scoping over *lang*. We first discuss the case of context (24b), where we go to dinner leaving from work. In this context, the alternatives in  $C$  are ordered by the expected progression, as in (25). Here, we use expressions of the form `home` to stand in for propositions of the form ‘I’m at home.’

$$(25) \quad C = \{\text{work}, \text{home}, \text{train}, \text{dinner}\} \quad (\text{from context (24b)})$$

$$\text{work} <_C \text{home} <_C \text{train} <_C \text{dinner}$$

Applying *lang* to the prejacent `home` is shown in (26). The result is a scalar *only* interpretation, with no implication of progression. By itself, this conveys that the speaker is at home, and that is low within the expected sequence of events leading up to dinner. We also note here that *lang* cannot take the strongest alternative (i.e., `dinner`) as its prejacent, as the at-issue content would be trivially satisfied and thus be vacuous. Since *lang* must convey a non-final state, we ensure that *pa lang* also must convey a non-final state.

$$(26) \quad \text{lang}_C(\text{home})(w^*):$$

- a. at-issue:  $\neg \exists q \in C[q(w^*) \wedge q >_C \text{home}]$   $\neg \text{train} \wedge \neg \text{dinner}$   
 $\leadsto$  I am at most as far along as being at home
- b. presupposes:  $\exists q \in C[q(w^*) \wedge q \geq_C \text{home}]$   $\text{home} \vee \text{train} \vee \text{dinner}$   
 $\leadsto$  I am at least as far along as being at home

Now let us consider the effect of adding *pa*. Let the salient time  $t_s$  refer to the time of the starting state and assume that the Common Ground includes that I was at work at  $t_s$  ( $\text{work}(t_s)$ ), or else that this is easily accommodated. The main points of interest in the derivation in (27) are the presupposition and implicature. *Pa* introduces the presupposition (27b) that I was no further along than being at home since the salient starting time, which is true given our assumption above that the Common Ground includes  $\text{work}(t_s)$ .

$$(27) \quad \text{pa}(\text{lang}_C(\text{home})(w^*))(t^*):$$

- a. at-issue: (26a) true at  $t^*$   $\neg \text{train} \wedge \neg \text{dinner}$  true at  $t^*$
- b. presupposes: (26a) true at  $t_s < t^*$   $\neg \text{train} \wedge \neg \text{dinner}$  true at  $t_s < t^*$
- c. presupposes (projected from lang): (26b) at  $t^*$   $\text{home} \vee \text{train} \vee \text{dinner}$  at  $t^*$
- d. possible implicature: (26a) false at  $t' > t^*$   $\neg \text{train} \wedge \neg \text{dinner}$  false at  $t' > t^*$   
 $\iff \text{train} \vee \text{dinner}$  true at  $t' > t^*$

*Pa* also introduces the implicature (28d) (following Beck, 2020) that the prejacent will be false at some future time. In other words, I will be on the train or at dinner at some future time. This derives the inference about continued progress towards the endpoint.

So far we have accounted for (i) *lang* being insufficient on its own, (ii) the requirement that a non-final state is required, and (iii) the inference of continued progress towards an endpoint. What

remains to be demonstrated are the insufficiency of *pa* by itself as well as the non-zero progress requirement.

Let us therefore consider a variant of the example with only *pa*, as in (23) above. As illustrated in the predicted semantics in (28), the problem lies with the non-at-issue components. The presupposition (28b) is incompatible with the context under discussion (24b), since in this context, *home* is not true at the start time  $t_s$ . The implicature (28c) also does not give us the desired result as it is insufficiently specific; that is, *home* being false at a future time  $t'$  does not entail progression, as this could also be satisfied if *work* is true at  $t'$  (cf. (27d)).

(28)  $pa(\text{home})(t^*)$ :

a. at-issue: *home* true at  $t^*$

b. presupposes: *home* true at  $t_s < t^*$

$\leftrightarrow$  # in context (24b) where “I came from work” ( $\text{work}(t_s)$ ) and  $C$  includes:

$\text{work} <_C \text{home} <_C \text{train} <_C \text{dinner}$

$\leftrightarrow$  OK in context (24a) where “I’m leaving from home” ( $\text{home}(t_s)$ ) and  $C$  includes:

$\text{home} <_C \text{train} <_C \text{dinner}$

c. possible implicature: *home* false at  $t' > t^*$

Finally, to see how the non-zero progress requirement is derived, let us consider what happens under context (24a). Let us assume furthermore that exactly one alternative in  $C$  is true: the speaker is necessarily in one of these stages in the expected progression, and cannot be in multiple at the same time. In this case, (27) with  $pa > lang$  and (28) with  $pa$  alone are semantically equivalent because  $\neg \text{train} \wedge \neg \text{dinner}$  in the former is contextually equivalent to *home* in the latter. The addition of *lang* is therefore vacuous in this case and would violate a Non-Vacuity condition on particle insertion (see e.g. Crnič, 2011a,b; Alxatib, 2020; Erlewine and New, 2021), explaining the infelicity of *pa lang* (22) in context (24a). More generally speaking, with scales representing progressions, the start state holding is semantically equivalent to all the remaining states not holding. Therefore, including *lang* is generally ruled out when the prejacent corresponds to the start state in a progression. This derives the non-zero progress requirement of *pa lang*.

### 4.3 Summary

To summarize, we have shown that the combination of *pa* and *lang* (where  $pa > lang$ ) operates over a contextual set of alternatives that describe an expected temporal progression to express that the prejacent is neither an initial nor a final state in this progression, with a (cancellable) expectation of continued future progress. All these properties emerge from interactions between the basic semantics of *pa* and *lang*, as well as specific properties of the contextual scale.

## 5 Change of plan *na lang*

The combination of *na* ‘already’ and *lang* ‘only’ has a few uses, the first of which is semantically transparent. Examples of this form are in (29), where we can readily identify the ‘change of state’ and ‘only’ components in the meanings of the sentences. Specifically, these examples reflect *na* taking scope over *lang*: they convey a change of state to a low point on a contextual scale.

- (29) a. [Si Benny]<sub>F</sub> **na lang** ang nagba~basa.  
 NOM Benny already only NOM AV.IPFV~read  
 ‘Only Benny is reading now/anymore.’ (Everyone else finished.)
- b. [100 piso]<sub>F</sub> **na lang** ang laman ng wallet ko.  
 100 peso already only NOM contents GEN wallet 1SG.GEN  
 ‘I (now) only have 100 pesos in my wallet.’ (I had more but I spent it.)

The second use was briefly introduced at the beginning of this paper and is illustrated again in (30). Here, *na lang* conveys a change of plan and is more naturally rendered into English as ‘instead’. This “change of plan” use of *na lang* will be the focus of this section.

- (30) a. Context: Bryan was originally planning to [eat out]<sub>F</sub> tomorrow.  
 [Mag-lu~luto]<sub>F</sub> **na lang** si Bryan bukas.  
 AV-FUT~cook already only NOM Bryan tomorrow  
 ‘Bryan will [cook]<sub>F</sub> tomorrow instead.’
- b. Context: Bryan was originally planning to cook [tonight]<sub>F</sub>/[on the weekend]<sub>F</sub>.  
 [Bukas]<sub>F</sub> **na lang** mag-lu~luto si Bryan.  
 tomorrow already only AV-FUT~cook NOM Bryan  
 ‘Bryan will cook [tomorrow]<sub>F</sub> instead.’

### 5.1 Key properties of *na lang*

Two properties of the change of plan use of *na lang* will guide our analysis. First, as our description suggests, the “change of plan” use is felicitous in contexts where there was an earlier, contextually salient plan, but now a new plan is in force. We attribute the inference about this change to the phase quantificational semantics of *na* operating over the existence of a plan. Note that the concrete change may relate to different aspects of the plan, such as the predicate in (30a) or the topic time in (30b), or its location in example (38) below.

The second property is that *na lang* generates as inference whereby the prejacant is less desirable than the original plan or expectation. This is shown by the contrast between ‘TA’ and ‘professor’ in (31). Assuming stereotypical (but perhaps not universal) expectations regarding the relative desirability of professor- versus TA-taught classes, we can understand the felicitous use of ‘TA’ as stemming from being lower in desirability.

- (31) Ang { [TA]<sub>F</sub> / #[propesor]<sub>F</sub> } **na lang** ang mag-tu~turo ng klase=ng ito.  
 NOM TA professor already only NOM AV-FUT~teach GEN class=LK this  
 a. <sup>ok</sup> ‘[The professor was supposed to teach this class, but now...] the TA will instead.’  
 b. # ‘[The TA was supposed to teach this class, but now...] the professor will instead.’

This desirability is contextually determined, so it is easy to accommodate or infer an appropriate desirability scale in the absence of conflicting information. For example, (31b) becomes felicitous in the context in (32). Since this low desirability inference picks out a low point along a contextual scale, we attribute it to the scalar use of *lang* (cf. the race example in (9)).

- (32) Context: The TA was originally scheduled to teach this class to relieve some teaching load from the professor, but the plan fell through. <sup>ok</sup>(31b)

## 5.2 Analysis

To derive the change of plan reading, we assume *na* > *lang* scope, following the more transparent uses in (29). Furthermore, we assume that both adverbs scope over a covert *metaphysical necessity modal*  $\Box_{MP}$  (or simply,  $\Box$ ) evaluated at a particular time  $t$ .<sup>7</sup> Where the prejacent proposition makes reference to a time that is in the future of the modal’s evaluation time, we evaluate such claims as reflecting a particular individual’s *intended future plan*, using the PLAN operator of Copley 2008, 2009. See our overall formulation for  $\Box_{MP}$  in (33) below. For now, we will assume the existence of this operator without further justification and defer further discussion of this notion of a “plan” until section 5.3.

$$(33) \quad \Box_{MP,t_1}(p_{t_2}) = \begin{cases} \text{PLAN}_{d,t_1}(p_{t_2}) & \text{if } t_1 < t_2 \\ p_{t_2} & \text{otherwise} \end{cases}$$

where  $d$  is the plan’s *director* (i.e., the entity committed to executing the plan)

To illustrate the analysis, let us consider how it applies to example (31). Let expressions such as TA stand for ‘the TA teaches the class at  $t_{\text{class}}$ ’, where  $t^* < t_{\text{class}}$ . The context provides a ranking of desirability (34a), and we assume that the metaphysical necessity modal applies to each member of the scale resulting in a corresponding ranking of plans (34b), which will be the scale that *lang* operates on. The result of applying *lang* (35) is the regular scalar ‘only’ reading where the TA is uniquely identified as the one planned to teach the course.

- (34) a. Contextual scale of desirability: student < TA < prof  
 b. Ranking of plans in  $C$ :  $\Box$ student <<sub>C</sub>  $\Box$ TA <<sub>C</sub>  $\Box$ prof

<sup>7</sup> Following discussion in Copley 2009 (ch. 1), a “metaphysical” modal base refers to what Kratzer (1991 *et seq*) calls a “totally realistic circumstantial” modal base, which includes all propositions that are true in the actual world  $w^*$  at that time.

- (35)  $lang_C(\Box TA)(w^*)$ :
- at-issue:  $\neg \exists q \in C[q(w^*) \wedge q >_C \Box TA]$   $\neg \Box \text{prof}$   
There is no more desirable true plan.
  - presupposes:  $\exists q \in C[q(w^*) \wedge q \geq_C \Box TA]$   $\Box TA \vee \Box \text{prof}$   
The prejacent plan, or one more desirable, is true.

Applying *na*, we get (36). The resulting semantics expresses that there was a prior plan at  $t_s$  (36b), but now at  $t^*$  there is a contrasting plan (36a,c), which is less preferred.

- (36)  $na(lang_C(\Box TA)(w^*))(t^*)$ :
- at-issue: (35a) true at  $t^*$   $\neg \Box_{t^*} \text{prof true}$
  - presupposes: (35a) false at  $t_s < t^*$   $\neg \Box_{t_s} \text{prof false} \iff \Box_{t_s} \text{prof true}$
  - presupposes (projected from lang): (35b) at  $t^*$   $\Box_{t^*} TA \vee \Box_{t^*} \text{prof}$

Without *lang*,  $na > \Box$  would simply convey the current plan  $\Box TA$ , which did not exist before, as exemplified in (37). The addition of *lang* ensures that there was *some* prior contrasting plan (i.e.,  $\Box \text{prof}$ ) and clarifies the direction of the change of plan, as less desirable.

- (37) Possible context: We are scheduling classes for the next semester and deciding who to assign as instructors. For one class, the TA and the professor are equally qualified.  
 Ang {TA / propesor} **na** ang mag-tu~turo ng klase=ng ito.  
 NOM TA professor already NOM AV-FUT~teach GEN class=LK this  
 ‘This class will now be taught by the {TA/professor}.’

Finally, we comment on the disjunctive definition for the modal  $\Box_{MP}$  in (33) above. The shape of this definition reflects the basic asymmetry between future and non-future claims: a metaphysical necessity claim of a proposition in the relative past or present may be simply treated as a claim of the proposition itself, whereas future-oriented claims cannot be evaluated with certainty unless relative to a more specific basis for evaluation (in this case, a particular individual’s plan). This more general modal operator  $\Box_{MP}$  is necessary to model cases where *na lang* describes a change of plan regarding a completed, past event, as in (38):

- (38) Context: We had originally planned to go someplace special for dinner on my birthday.  
 K<um>ain **na lang** kami sa [ma-lapit]<sub>F</sub>.  
 <AV>eat(PFV) already only 1PL.EXCL.NOM OBL ADJ-near  
 ‘We ate [nearby]<sub>F</sub> instead.’

Three times are relevant here: the original plan time  $t_p$ , the topic time of the speaker’s birthday  $t_b$ , and the current utterance time  $t^*$ . In this case,  $t_p < t_b < t^*$ . In brief, the use of *na lang* here relies on two alternative modal propositions,  $\Box(\text{SPECIAL.DINNER}_{t_b})$  and  $\Box(\text{NEARBY.DINNER}_{t_b})$ . At the salient earlier time  $t_p$ ,  $\Box_{t_p}(\text{SPECIAL.DINNER}_{t_b})$  is true and  $\Box_{t_p}(\text{NEARBY.DINNER}_{t_b})$  is false, evaluated using PLAN as  $t_p < t_b$ . However, the utterance ultimately asserts that  $\Box_{t^*}(\text{SPECIAL.DINNER}_{t_b})$

is false as a matter of established fact, as we ate dinner nearby instead at  $t_b < t^*$ . In summary, the unified  $\Box_{MP}$  as defined in (33) allows for the straightforward extension of our account to such examples which describe a completed past event which was counter to an earlier plan.

Having shown that our analysis using  $na > lang > \Box$  captures the overall “change of plan” usage of  $na lang$ , including its lower desirability inference, we turn next to further discussion of notion of a “plan” and its associated modal operator PLAN.

### 5.3 On the notion of “plan”

A crucial ingredient in our analysis of change of state  $na lang$  is the covert necessity modal  $\Box_{MP}$ . In this section, we motivate its postulation by observing various semantic effects associated with its postulation. Most significantly, there appears to be a volitionality requirement on the change of plan use of  $na lang$  that is absent with  $na$  or  $lang$  alone. For example, (39) shows that change-of-plan  $na lang$  is incompatible with a weather predicate such as *umuulan* ‘raining,’ although the string is acceptable with the semantically transparent use of  $na > lang$  (without any covert modal). Variants of this example with just  $na$  or  $lang$  alone are also grammatical; see (40).

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <p>(39) *<math>\langle Um \rangle u \sim ulan</math> <b>na lang</b>.<br/> <math>\langle AV \rangle IPFV \sim rain</math> already only<br/>         Intended: ‘It’s raining instead.’<br/>         Possible as: ‘It’s only raining now.’ (The weather was much worse a while ago.)</p> | <p>(40) <math>\langle Um \rangle u \sim ulan</math> {<b>na / lang</b>} <i>kanina</i>.<br/> <math>\langle AV \rangle IPFV \sim rain</math> already only earlier<br/>         ‘It was {already/only} raining earlier.’</p> |
|---|--|

Similarly, examples involving an animate actor that does not have control over an eventuality, such as in the raffle context in (41) below, are also incompatible with change-of-plan  $na lang$ ; see (41a). Example (41b) shows that the individual use of  $na$  or  $lang$  in this case is acceptable. Note that  $na$  is marked as infelicitous in this example because, although it is grammatical, it requires a more specific supporting context, as the first free translation suggests.

- (41) Context: Luis entered a raffle hoping to win the grand prize.
- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <p>a. *Consolation prize <b>na lang</b> ang na-kuha ni Luis.<br/>         consolation prize already only NOM NVOL.PFV-get GEN Luis<br/>         Intended: ‘Luis got a consolation prize instead.’</p> | <p>b. Consolation prize {<b>#na / lang</b>} ang na-kuha ni Luis.<br/>         consolation prize already only NOM NVOL.PFV-get GEN Luis<br/>         ‘What Luis got {is already/can already be considered} a consolation prize.’<br/>         ‘Luis only got a consolation prize.’</p> |
|---|---|

We suggest that the volitionality requirement reflects properties of the “director” under Copley’s (2008; 2009) notion of a plan. On her account, the director is the (volitional) entity responsible for a plan. More specifically,  $\text{PLAN}_d(p)$  presupposes that “the director [*d*] has the ability to ensure that a *p*-eventuality happens” and asserts that “the director is committed to a *p*-eventuality happening” (Copley 2008: 271, 2009: 29).

Further evidence that a plan with a (volitional) director exists comes from contrasts such as in (42) suggesting that the addition of  $\text{PLAN}$ —involved in relative future evaluations of  $\square_{\text{MP}}$  (33)—is sensitive to the accessibility of a director’s state of mind. These examples differ minimally in terms of their subject: the speaker vs a non-participant. Note also that both examples have *na* without *lang* and have the expected “new plan with no previous plan” reading. Crucially, with the first person subject (42a) (itself a second-position clitic) but not with the third person one (42b), a change of plan reading is also accessible.

- (42) a. [Bukas]<sub>F</sub> na      **ako**      maglu~luto.  
 tomorrow already 1SG.NOM AV.FUT~cook  
<sup>ok</sup>‘I will cook tomorrow instead.’ (Change of plan)  
<sup>ok</sup>‘I will now be cooking tomorrow.’ (No previous cooking plan)
- b. [Bukas]<sub>F</sub> na      maglu~luto **si Bryan**.  
 tomorrow already AV.FUT~cook NOM Bryan  
 #‘Bryan will cook tomorrow instead.’ (Change of plan)  
<sup>ok</sup>‘Bryan will now be cooking tomorrow.’ (No previous cooking plan)      cf. (37)

We speculate that this difference in interpretation between (42a,b) can be explained as follows. The change of plan reading in (42) requires a covert *lang*, which we suggest is supported by the focus-fronting of *bukas* ‘tomorrow.’ Also required is the covert modal  $\square_{\text{MP}}$ , as is the case with the *na lang* combination. Let us suppose that positing two covert operators (covert *lang* and  $\square_{\text{MP}}$ ) simultaneously when parsing a sentence is (in some sense) more difficult than positing just one of them. Thus the change of plan reading is unavailable in (42b) with a third person subject. In contrast, we suggest that adding the covert modal  $\square_{\text{MP}}$  is “easier” in (42a) because the speaker can be assumed to be the authority on their own plans. The presence of the first person subject thus alleviates some of the difficulty of introducing several covert operators, allowing the change-of-plan reading to surface in (42a), but not in (42b).

## 5.4 Summary

To summarize, we have shown here that the combination *na lang* has a “change of plan” reading that can be relatively straightforwardly derived from the meanings of *na* and *lang* but requires an additional modal component that encodes the notion of a plan when future-oriented. Although this



modal component has no morphosyntactic reflex, it has semantic effects that cannot be attributed to either *na* or *lang*.

## 6 Discussion and future directions

In this paper, we have given detailed semantic descriptions and work-in-progress analyses for two combinations of clitic adverbs in Tagalog that are quite common but have limited semantic transparency. These were *pa* ‘still’ + *lang* ‘only’ resulting in a “low progress” reading and *na* ‘already’ + *lang* ‘only’ resulting in an “instead, change of plan” reading.

When encountering such expressions with limited semantic transparency, it may be tempting to assume that their meaning has undergone grammaticalization of some kind. However, we showed that at least with these two clitic adverb combinations, the observed semantics emerge (mostly) from the interaction of the semantics of their individual components. This was especially the case for low progress *pa lang*. In contrast, while our analysis of change-of-plan *na lang* was also compositional, we argued for the presence of an additional, covert modal operator to capture observed inferences about plans associated with this combination. This may be evidence of a first step towards the grammaticalization of change-of-plan *na lang*, separate from the independently attested combination *na* and *lang*.

It is also worth noting that in this compositional analysis, we adopted fairly basic or pre-existing assumptions about the semantics of the individual components. This highlights the potential benefit of investigating the more complex combinations of clitics towards the understanding of their individual semantics. That is, given that many of these clitic adverbs are highly multifunctional, studying the semantics that results from their interaction with each other can help to pinpoint a core meaning from which to derive a clitic’s observed range of functions. This work thus supplements prior work on the fine-grained description and analysis of the meaning of various *individual* clitic adverbs in Tagalog (see especially AnderBois, 2016, 2023; Avelino, 2022, 2023). To our knowledge, this is the first detailed semantic work investigating *combinations* of Tagalog clitic adverbs (except for some very brief descriptions in Schachter and Otones 1972).

In future work, we hope to consider other particle combinations with non-obvious combined effects, including those mentioned in the introduction: *pa* ‘still’ + *rin* ‘also’ resulting in a ‘still, despite threat to plan’ (or concessive *still*) reading; *man* ‘even’ + *lang* ‘only’ resulting in an ‘even’ with NPI-like distribution; and *na* ‘already’ + topic change marker *naman* resulting in ‘(yet) again’.

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