

Modality Markers in Cebuano and Tagalog

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Abstract

Philippine languages, which are predicate-initial, have “defective” verbs (coined by Pigafetta, n.d.) that are formal particles that occur at clause-initial position (like a predicate), lack inflection, and take a complement clause and that generally convey an epistemic stance. At the same time, there are also second-position modal enclitics that attach to the clause-initial predicate expressing epistemic attitude. Both topics, epistemic enclitics and “defective” verbs, have not been properly examined and investigated in Philippine languages primarily due to their peripheral and polysemous nature. Aside from enclitics and verbs, modality may occur in other forms too. In this talk, I shall present the forms and functions of the modal markers in two Philippine languages, Cebuano and Tagalog, as well as how they interact with each other, with pronominal enclitics and other particles, and with negation. In the process of such an investigation, a typology of Philippine languages will be developed in terms of modality features, such as those listed above. Furthermore, I will show current progress in the study of modality in Formosan languages and discuss how these efforts can inform and complement modality studies in Philippine languages. These will hopefully enable us to gain enough understanding of the issues and write up a grammar of modality in Philippine (and, hopefully, Formosan) languages.