

# Where (and what) the Tagalog *kung*-CPs are\*

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## SUMMARY

The functional element *kung* in Tagalog introduces CPs in various, seemingly disparate contexts. This paper presents a number of constructions where *kung* can be found, and gives a descriptive overview of their properties. While no concrete analysis is provided of these constructions, some speculation and discussion of relevant previous work is given with the intention of highlighting the data for future work.

## RÉSUMÉ

L'élément fonctionnel du tagalog introduit des SC dans divers contextes. Cet article présente quelques constructions dans lesquelles on peut trouver *kung*, puis il fait la synthèse de leurs propriétés. Bien qu'aucune analyse concrète de ces constructions ne soit donnée, des conjectures s'inspirant de travaux antérieurs, ainsi que des discussions sur ces derniers, soulignent les données, préparant ainsi le terrain pour des recherches dans l'avenir.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

In Tagalog (Austronesian, Central Philippine), the functional element *kung* appears in a number of contexts, the most intuitively salient of these being to introduce conditional clauses (1). As such, native speakers naturally translate *kung* as English 'if'.<sup>1</sup>

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\* This paper grew out of Claire Halpert's *Clausal Arguments in Bantu and Beyond* class at the 2017 LSA Institute in Lexington, KY. We would like to acknowledge Claire and the members of this class for providing the inspiration for this topic, the audience at the LSA 2018 Annual Meeting where a version of this work was presented, and Hagen Blix and Thom van Gessel for their useful comments. All uncited data comes from the first author's judgements, or from elicitation with other native speakers conducted by both authors. Congratulations on a successful career, Lisa!!

<sup>1</sup> Glossing abbreviations in this paper more or less follow the Leipzig Glossing Rules with a few additions: AV: Agent voice; CV: Conveyance voice; LK: Linker; LV: Locative voice; PV: Patient voice.

- (1) [**Kung** mano~nood sila ng sine], sa~sama ako.  
 if AV.FUT~watch 3PL.NOM GEN movie FUT~join(AV) 1SG.NOM  
 ‘If they’re going to watch a movie, I’ll join them.’

However, aside from marking conditional clauses, *kung* also marks other types of clauses which do not obviously have conditional semantics. These include embedded questions (2), relative clauses of obliques (3), and free-relative-like constructions (4).

- (2) T<in>anong ni Bong [**kung** ano ang k<in>uha ni Luz].  
 <PFV>ask(PV) GEN Bong if what.NOM NOM <PFV>take(PV) GEN Luz  
 ‘Bong asked what Luz took.’
- (3) Nagta~trabaho ako sa tindahan [**kung** saan b<um>ili si Kiko ng gatas].  
 AV.IMPF~work 1SG.NOM OBL store if where <AV.PFV>buy NOM Kiko GEN milk  
 ‘I work at the store where Kiko bought milk.’
- (4) [**Kung** sino ang una=ng da~rating], siya ang mana~nalo ng premyo.  
 if who NOM first=LK FUT~arrive(AV) 3SG.NOM NOM FUT.AV~win GEN prize  
 ‘Whoever is first to arrive, they will win a prize.’

This paper presents a survey of these *kung*-marked CPs, outlining some properties of these constructions which we think might be of interest. While we ultimately do not offer an overall analysis of the phenomena presented, we hope that the discussion in this paper can serve as the starting point of future work on *kung* and the constructions it appears in.

## 2 CONDITIONALS

When *kung* marks an otherwise declarative clause, the result is a conditional antecedent. Schachter and Otnes (1972, §6.15) observe that *kung* can be used to mark regular conditional clauses (1) as well as counterfactual conditional clauses, as shown in (5). This example also shows that *kung* is unselective with respect to the type of predication (in this case equative) of its complement. An example showing an adjectivally predicated clause is given in (6), and the corresponding matrix declarative clauses are in (7).

- (5) [**Kung** ako si Juan], hindi ko sana g<in>awa iyon.  
 if 1SG.NOM NOM Juan NEG 1SG.GEN HORTATIVE <PFV>do(PV) NOM.DIST  
 ‘If I were Juan, I would not have done that.’ Schachter and Otnes 1972, p.467
- (6) [**Kung** mabuti ang panahon], p<um>u~punta kami sa tabing-dagat.  
 if good NOM weather AV.IMPF~go 1PL.INCL.NOM OBL adjacent.LK-sea  
 ‘If the weather is good, we go to the seashore.’ Schachter and Otnes 1972, p.467
- (7) a. Ako si Juan. b. Mabuti ang panahon.  
 1SG.NOM NOM Juan good NOM weather  
 ‘I am Juan.’ ‘The weather is good.’

In addition, Schachter and Otnes (1972) also observe that conditional *kung* clauses appear to license the neutral/non-finite aspect verb form, which is ungrammatical in matrix declaratives. Thus, the form *makita* is ungrammatical in matrix clauses (8), but is well-formed in conditionals (9).

- (8) { Na-kita / \*ma-kita } ko siya.  
 PV.PFV-see PV-see 1SG.GEN 3SG.NOM  
 ‘I saw him.’
- (9) [**Kung** ma-kita ko siya], sa~sabih-in ko sa kaniya ang nangyari.  
 if PV-see 1SG.GEN 3SG.NOM FUT~say-PV 1SG.GEN OBL 3SG.OBL NOM happen.PFV  
 ‘If I see him, I’ll tell him what happened.’ (Schachter and Otnes, 1972, p.469)

### 3 EMBEDDED QUESTIONS

Another area in which *kung* appears is in embedded questions. In parallel fashion to *kung* marking CPs with the form of declarative clauses to result in conditionals, embedded questions generally follow the template of *kung* attaching to a CP having the form of a matrix question. This is most clearly seen with embedded *wh*-questions; compare the matrix questions in (10) to the embedded ones in (11). Notice also that embedded contexts preserve the structural difference between DP and non-DP matrix questions, where *ang* appears following the *wh*-element only if it is a DP.<sup>2</sup>

- (10) a. Ano ang k<in>uha ni Luz?  
 what.NOM NOM <PFV>take(PV) GEN Luz  
 ‘What did Luz take?’  
 b. Saan p<um>unta si Luz?  
 where <AV.PFV>take NOM Luz  
 ‘Where did Luz go?’
- (11) a. T<in>anong ni Bong [**kung** ano ang k<in>uha ni Luz].  
 <PFV>ask(PV) GEN Bong if what.NOM NOM <PFV>take(PV) GEN Luz  
 ‘Bong asked what Luz took.’  
 b. T<in>anong ni Bong [**kung** saan p<um>unta si Luz].  
 <PFV>ask(PV) GEN Bong if where <AV.PFV>go NOM Luz  
 ‘Bong asked where Luz went.’

Turning to embedded polar questions, we note slightly different behavior from matrix polar questions with respect to the question clitic *ba*. While this clitic is optional for both matrix and embedded polar questions, this optionality manifests in different ways. For matrix polar questions (12a), Schachter and Otnes (1972, §7.4) note that “in spite of its optionalness, *ba* actually does occur in yes–no questions more often than not”, suggesting that omitting *ba* is more marked. On the other hand, for embedded polar questions (12b), omitting *ba* is the unmarked form, as speakers

<sup>2</sup> See Richards, 1998; Aldridge, 2002 for discussion of this structural difference.

intuit that the presence of *ba* imparts some degree of emphasis or “impatience” to the sentence.<sup>3</sup> The marked form is indicated with “?” in the examples below.

- (12) a. D<um>ating na <sup>?</sup>(ba) ang guro?  
 <AV.PFV>arrive already Q NOM teacher  
 ‘Has the teacher arrived already?’  
 b. T<in>anong niya [**kung** d<um>ating na (<sup>?</sup>ba) ang guro].  
 <PFV>ask(PV) 1SG.GEN if <AV.PFV>arrive already Q NOM teacher  
 ‘She asked if the teacher had already arrived.’

#### 4 AN ASIDE: THE STATUS OF *kung*

A fairly straightforward initial hypothesis for the status of *kung* is that it is a  $C^0$  head, as it marks various types of clauses: embedded questions, conditionals, etc. However, two details regarding the behavior of embedded questions would need to be reconciled with such an analysis.

First, the fact that *kung* consistently precedes *wh*-elements, as in (11), is unexpected under the assumption that *wh*-phrases move to Spec-CP in *wh*-movement languages.<sup>4</sup> Second, the fact that *kung* can cooccur with the question clitic *ba*, as shown in (12b), is at odds with what might have been an independently reasonable analysis of the latter as the Tagalog question complementizer (compare the complementary distribution of *if/whether* and subject-auxiliary inversion in English).

This word order problem has been noted in the literature, with recent work (Sabbagh, 2013; Otsuka and Tanaka, 2016) proposing a final landing site for *wh*-movement between  $C^0$  and TP. In line with such proposals, we might also analyze *ba* as occurring in a similar position. In other words, the evidence suggests that the functional projection(s) responsible for question formation occur(s) below the highest clausal functional projection (perhaps within a system like in Rizzi 1997). We leave this as speculation.

#### 5 OBLIQUE RELATIVE CLAUSES

The remainder of the constructions considered in this paper resemble embedded *wh*-questions on the surface (i.e., *kung* + matrix *wh*-question form). The first of these is the oblique relative clause.

Two relativization strategies are found in Tagalog, which we will refer to as DP relativization and oblique relativization. As the examples below show, the immediately salient difference between the two constructions lies in what introduces the relative clause modifier. DP relative clauses, as in (13a), are introduced by a linker morpheme *na/=ng*. On the other hand, oblique relative clauses are introduced by *kung+wh*, resulting in a surface structure similar to an embedded *wh*-question.

<sup>3</sup> In this regard, embedded polar questions appear to behave like matrix *wh*-questions, which are also judged to be more emphasized or “impatient” with *ba*.

(i) Ano **ba** ang k<in>uha ni Luz?  
 what.NOM Q NOM <PFV>take(PV) GEN Luz  
 ‘What **did** Luz take?’

<sup>4</sup> Although see Aldridge 2002 for arguments that only a subset of *wh*-questions in Tagalog are formed via *wh*-movement.



- (13) a. Malaki ang isda[=**ng** k<in>uha ni Luz **ang**-isda].  
 big NOM fish=LK <PFV>take(PV) GEN Luz NOM fish  
 ‘The fish that Luz took is big.’  
 b. Malaki ang sinehan [**kung saan** p<um>unta si Luz **sa**-sinehan].  
 big NOM cinema if where <AV.PFV>go NOM Luz OBL cinema  
 ‘The cinema where Luz went is big.’

As noted by Otsuka and Tanaka (2016), these two strategies are in complementary distribution with respect to the XPs they can target: DP relativization may only target DPs marked *ang* ‘NOM’, while oblique relativization may only target oblique-marked or adjunct-like clausal dependents (indicated by the text struck out in (13)). Thus, the following examples are ungrammatical:

- (14) a. \*Malaki ang isda [**kung ano** (**ang**) k<in>uha ni Luz].  
 big NOM fish if what.NOM NOM <PFV>take(PV) GEN Luz  
 Intended: ‘The fish that Luz took is big.’  
 b. \*Malayo ang sinehan[=**g** p<um>unta si Luz].  
 far NOM cinema=LK <AV.PFV>go NOM Luz  
 Intended: ‘The cinema where Luz went is far.’

Furthermore, oblique relative clauses do not show the same flexibility as DP relative clauses with respect to headedness. DP relative clauses may be head-initial as in (13a), head-final or headless as in (15), or even head-internal (see Aldridge, 2004, 2017), whereas oblique relatives may only be head-initial, as shown by the various ungrammatical attempts in (16) to create head-final or headless oblique relatives.

- (15) K<in>ain ni Luz ang b<in>ili ko(=**ng** isda).  
 <PFV>eat(PV) GEN Luz NOM <PFV>buy(PV) 1SG.GEN=LK fish  
 ‘Luz ate {the fish / what} I bought.’  
 (16) a. \*Malayo ang (**kung**) (**saan**) p<um>unta si Luz (sinehan).  
 far NOM if where <AV.PFV>go NOM Luz cinema  
 Intended: ‘(The cinema) Where Luz went is far.’  
 b. \*Malayo ang p<um>unta si Luz **kung saan** sinehan.  
 far NOM <AV.PFV>go NOM Luz if where cinema  
 Intended: ‘The cinema where Luz went is far.’

With regards to the kinds of XPs oblique relativization may target, these are not limited to XPs marked *sa* ‘OBL’. Reasons and times are also commonly relativized in this way, as in (17) and (18).

- (17) Malaki=**ng** sikreto ang dahilan [**kung bakit** <um>alis si Maria ~~dahil~~...].  
 big=LK secret NOM reason if why <AV.PFV>leave NOM Maria because  
 ‘The reason why Maria left is a big secret.’  
 (18) ang panahon [**kung kailan** ang lahat ay maaari natin=**g** ma-angkin ~~bukas~~]  
 NOM time if when NOM all TOP can 1PL.GEN=LK PV-possess tomorrow  
 ‘The time when we can have everything’ (modified from Sabbagh, 2013, p.16)

Not all OBL-marked XPs may be relativized in this way, however, as shown in (19). The exact generalization of this restriction is unclear. While it appears that at least some types of individual entities (e.g., benefactors, recipients, etc.) may not undergo relativization in this way, other examples, such as (20), appear to be well-formed.

- (19) \*Na-tuwa ang babae [**kung kanino** b<in>igay ni Tina ang regalo sa ~~babae~~].  
 PFV-joy NOM woman if who.OBL <PFV>give(PV) GEN Tina NOM gift OBL woman  
 Intended: ‘The woman who Tina gave the gift to became glad.’
- (20) Na-kilala ko ang guro [**kung kanino** na-tuto si Julian  
 PFV.PV-be.acquainted 1SG.GEN NOM teacher if who.OBL PFV-learn NOM Julian  
 ng Bisaya ~~kay Ms. dela Cruz~~.  
 GEN Bisaya OBL Ms. dela Cruz  
 ‘I met the teacher who Julian learned Bisaya from.’

Note, however, that *bigay* ‘give’ may appear in a voice form that marks the once-oblique recipient nominative, thus allowing DP relativization of the relevant XP, as in (21). In contrast, *tuto* ‘learn’ appears to lack such a form. This might then suggest that oblique relativization is only available in the absence of a voice form that marks the target XP nominative. Counterexamples to this hypothesis are easy to find, however. For example, the oblique argument of *punta* ‘go’ can undergo oblique relativization, as in (13b), but can also undergo DP relativization if *punta* appears in locative voice form, as in (22).

- (21) Na-tuwa ang babae[=**ng** b<in>igy-**an** ni Tina ng regalo ~~ang babae~~].  
 PFV-joy NOM woman=LK <PFV>give-LV GEN Tina GEN gift NOM woman  
 ‘The woman who Tina gave the gift to became glad.’ *cf. ungrammatical (20)*
- (22) Malaki ang sinehan[=**g** p<in>untah-**an** ni Luz ~~ang sinehan~~].  
 big NOM cinema=LK <PFV>go-LV GEN Luz NOM cinema  
 ‘The cinema where Luz went is big.’ *cf. grammatical (13b)*

A final detail about the apparent similarity of oblique relatives to embedded *wh*-questions, which both involve *kung+wh*, is illustrated by (18) above. In this example, the relative clause modifier contains an instance of topicalization with the particle *ay*. Such topicalization is impossible in matrix or embedded questions. Compare (23) with *ay*-topicalization to (24) without. This suggests that the *wh*-word occupies different positions between the embedded question and the oblique relative.

- (23) \*(*T*<in>anong ko **kung** **kailan** ang lahat **ay** maaari natin=g ma-angkin.  
 <PFV>ask(PV) 1SG.GEN if when NOM all TOP can 1PL.GEN=LK PV-possess  
 Intended: ‘I asked when we can have everything.’ / ‘When can we have everything?’
- (24) **Kailan** natin maaari=ng ma-angkin ang lahat?  
 when 1PL.GEN can=LK PV-possess NOM all  
 ‘When can we have everything?’

## 6 FREE RELATIVE-LIKE CONSTRUCTIONS

A final use of *kung* clauses appears related to free relatives, which, again like embedded *wh*-questions, involve *kung+wh*. These free relatives may at first glance appear like headless oblique relatives, which were claimed in the previous section to be impossible. However, a few key differences can be observed. First, free relatives do not exhibit the same restriction against targeting DPs that oblique relatives do; compare (25a) to (26c). Second, while free relatives may appear in a number of syntactic positions, they are for the most part not case-marked. (25a) shows that nominative case is ungrammatical; compare with the behavior of an NP in the same position (25b).

- (25) a. B<in>ili ko (\*ang) [**kung ano** ang gusto ni Lemuel].  
 <PFV>buy(PV) 1SG.GEN NOM if what.NOM NOM want GEN Lemuel  
 ‘I bought what(ever) Lemuel wanted.’  
 b. B<in>ili ko \*(ang) saging.  
 <PFV>buy(PV) 1SG.GEN NOM banana  
 ‘I bought the banana.’

Oblique case marking shows variable behavior with *kung* clauses. We find instances where it is optional (26a), and instances where it is obligatory (26b). Again, compare this to (26c), which has an NP in this position.

- (26) a. P<um>unta ako (sa) [**kung saan** b<um>ili si Lemuel ng saging].  
 <AV.PFV>go 1SG.NOM OBL if where <AV.PFV>buy NOM Lemuel GEN banana  
 ‘I went where(ever) Lemuel bought bananas.’  
 b. Nagta~trabaho ako malapit \*(sa) [**kung saan** b<um>ili si Lemuel  
 AV.IMPF~work 1SG.NOM near OBL if where <AV.PFV>buy NOM Lemuel  
 ng saging].  
 GEN banana  
 ‘I work near where(ever) Lemuel bought bananas.’  
 c. P<um>unta ako \*(sa) tindahan.  
 <AV.PFV>go 1SG.NOM OBL store  
 ‘I went to the store.’

As for genitive case, free relatives appear to be ungrammatical in such positions, regardless of whether or not case marking is overt. This is shown in (27). Note that in (27a), the free relative appears clause-finally to control for its heaviness.

- (27) a. \*(In>inom ang sabaw (ng) [**kung sino** ang b<um>ili ng saging].  
 <PFV>drink(PV) NOM soup GEN if who NOM <AV.PFV>buy GEN banana  
 Intended: ‘Who(ever) drank bought bananas drank the soup.’  
 b. <In>inom ng bumbero ang sabaw.  
 <PFV>drink(PV) GEN firefighter NOM soup  
 ‘The firefighter drank the soup.’

Free relatives may also occur clause initially, in which case, a coreferring pronoun, which need

not be nominative, must appear in the main clause as shown in (28). Note that (28b) is well-formed, despite (27a) being ungrammatical. Some speakers show a preference for this pronoun to be focus fronted (if possible), as in (29).

- (28) a. **Kung** sino ang una=ng magi~gising, makaka-kuha \*(**siya**) ng premyo.  
if who NOM first=LK FUT~wake AV.FUT-take 3SG.NOM GEN prize  
'Whoever wakes up first, they will receive a prize.'
- b. **Kung** sino ang una=ng magi~gising, gi~gising-in \*(**niya**) ang mga iba.  
if who NOM first=LK FUT~wake FUT-wake-PV 3SG.GEN NOM PL other  
'Whoever wakes up first, they will wake the others up.'
- c. **Kung** sino ang pu~punta, ibi~bigay ni Fe ang isda \*(**sa kanya**).  
if who NOM FUT~go(AV) CV.FUT~give GEN Fe NOM fish OBL 3SG.OBL  
'Whoever is going, Fe will give the fish to them.'
- (29) a. **Kung** sino ang una=ng magi~gising, **siya** ang makaka-kuha ng premyo.  
if who NOM first=LK FUT~wake 3SG.NOM NOM AV.FUT-take GEN prize  
'Whoever wakes up first, THEY will receive a prize.'
- b. **Kung** sino ang pu~punta, **sa kanya** ibi~bigay ni Fe ang isda.  
if who NOM FUT~go(AV) OBL 3SG.OBL CV.FUT~give GEN Fe NOM fish  
'Whoever is going, Fe will give the fish TO THEM.'

That the obligatory coreferring pronoun is not simply a requirement on the main clause that is independent of the clause-initial free relative is shown in (30). Thus, while Tagalog free relatives may appear superficially similar to English *wh-ever* constructions, they do not have the so-called unconditional use described by Rawlins (2013). Unconditional meanings are instead expressed using the element *kahit*, as in (31).

- (30) **Kung** sino ang pu~punta sa party, matu~tuwa {siya / \*ako}.  
if who.NOM NOM FUT~go(AV) OBL party FUT~joy 3SG.NOM 1SG.NOM  
'Whoever goes to the party, {they / \*I} will be happy.'
- (31) **Kahit** sino ang pu~punta sa party, matu~tuwa ako.  
even who.NOM NOM FUT~go(AV) OBL party FUT~joy 1SG.NOM  
'{Whoever/No matter who} goes to the party, I will be happy.'

## 7 CONCLUSION

This paper has discussed a number of constructions that share of the form *kung* + CP. In discussing various properties of these constructions, a number of differences between them were highlighted, suggesting that these are indeed different constructions on some level. However, this leaves open the question of why they share the functional element *kung*. Does *kung* contribute anything semantically that would explain its presence? Is it simply an instance of  $C^0$ , and if so, what explains the apparent irregularities in its distribution? These questions are left for future research.



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