

**BEGINNING TAGALOG: A COURSE FOR SPEAKERS OF ENGLISH.**  
Edited by J. Donald Bowen and the staff of the Philippine Center for Language Study, Manila. Los Angeles, California: University of California Press, 1965, 526 pages.

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This review should have been written five years ago, when the book had just come off the press. However, perhaps it is just as well that I waited this long to write this appraisal, because I had more time to reflect on the book's strong and weak points. I would like to discuss here first the book's pedagogical techniques; second, its phonological, morphological, and syntactic descriptions of Tagalog structure.

## 1. PEDAGOGICAL TECHNIQUES

Perhaps, we can begin by saying simply that this book is easily the best Tagalog course so far in print. Its pedagogical techniques are sound, based as they are on the latest developments in the use of the so-called audiolingual method of second language teaching. Its content is well presented, with the grammatical points of the various lesson units arranged from the easier ones to the harder—the degree of difficulty having been determined by a contrastive analysis of Tagalog and English structures.

### 1.1 DIALOGUES

Each lesson begins with a dialogue, which is set in typical everyday life situations among the Tagalogs. An English translation is given in a column parallel to the Tagalog dialogue. Every effort is made to render each Tagalog sentence in idiomatic English, and to avoid literal translations. For example, *kawawa naman* is translated 'too bad' in Unit III (which fits the context); and *tama na, alis!* in Unit IV is translated 'That's enough. Run along now!' Now and then, however, the translation is far-fetched, e.g. *kaawaan kayo ng Dios* is rendered 'hello, children' (p. 193)! By and large, however, the English version matches the Tagalog felicitously.

The result is that the student is forced to notice the difference in the expression systems of the two languages.

In an experiment reported by W. E. Lambert, J. Havelka, and C. Crosby (1966: 407–414), it was discovered that a better type of bilingual—a coordinate bilingual—was produced when the second language learner was taught the target language in "separate contexts" (i.e. in contexts that are different from those in which he acquired his first or native language) rather than when taught in "fused contexts". The use of idiomatic translation in this book is a good way of teaching the target language in "separated contexts".

Of course, the users of the so-called "direct method" of language teaching have maintained that "separate contexts" in second language acquisition is better achieved by learning the values of the target language directly from association with environmental events without the mediation of the student's native language (i.e. translation). They maintain that the exclusive use of the target language in the classroom enables the student to move from one linguistic and semantic world of experience to another with comparatively little interference.

The difficulty one encounters with the dialogues in teaching this course is that they are too long. Students find them difficult to learn by heart not because they are uninteresting or awkwardly written, but because they are lengthy. In the second edition of the book, it would help if these dialogues were either shortened or broken up into several short dialogues. One could then ask the students to memorize them and be prepared to act them out in class.

## 1.2 CULTURAL NOTES

It is quite evident that the various settings of the dialogues were chosen purposely in order to illustrate different aspects of Philippine culture. One gets a good idea of Tagalog society and culture at the end of the course as a result of these dialogues and the cultural notes which follow them. The cultural notes explain the various objects, customs, beliefs, etc. mentioned in the dialogues.

Today's language teachers insist that an understanding of the speech community's "world view" (Weltanschauung) is an integral and necessary part of the process of second language acquisition.

## 1.3 PATTERN DRILLS

The exercises on the various grammatical patterns in each lesson unit are copious, well-made, and interesting. There is variety, too; so that the student moves from one type of pattern drill to another before he gets bored with any. The material gives evidence of pre-testing, since one rarely hits a snag. In short, this is one of the strong points of the book.

## 2.0 PHONOLOGY

I would like to discuss three points in Bowen's description of Tagalog phonology, namely: (a) the glottal stop and glottal fricative; (b) the vowels and diphthongs; and (c) the suprasegmental feature of *length*.

### 2.1 THE GLOTTALS

I fail to see why the authors have phonemically transcribed the various Tagalog words with glottal stops whenever they had vowels in syllable initial position, and with glottal fricatives, whenever they had vowels in syllable final position; for example: *ako* /'ako'h/ 'I', /pa'a-lam/ 'goodbye', /ta'oh/ 'person', /'vma-gah/ 'morning'.

Let us review the phonetic facts involved in this phonemic treatment. They can be simply listed as follows:

(1) In initial position, the glottal stop ['] is opposed to the glottal fricative [h], but not to the smooth onset [#], e.g.

- 1.a. ['ála<sup>1</sup>] 'offering' is opposed to
- b. [hála<sup>1</sup>] 'obscenity', but not to
- c. [#ála<sup>1</sup>] 'offering'.

The form ['ála<sup>1</sup>] occurs only in post-junctural position; the form [#ála<sup>1</sup>] occurs in post-junctural position and elsewhere.

(2) In medial position, ['] is opposed to [h], but not to a hiatus between the two vowels (i.e. to [-#], e.g.

- 2.a. [da'óp ] 'joined is opposed to
- b. [dahóp ] 'in want', but not to
- c. [da#óp ] 'joined'.

The form [da'óp ] occurs only in deliberate speech, i.e. in such a careful pronunciation that a juncture appears before the first vowel; the form [da#óp ] likewise occurs in this position, and elsewhere (e.g., in rapid speech, where no such juncture appears after the first vowel).

(3) In final position, ['] is opposed to the smooth release of the vowel in word final position [#] and [h], but [#] is not opposed to [h], e.g.

- 3.a. [báta'] 'child' is opposed to
- b. [báta#] 'bathrobe' and to
- c. [bátah] 'bathrobe', but [bátah] and [báta#] are not opposed.

The form [bátah] is heard when the word is emphasized, but the form [báta#] is heard elsewhere.

It seems clear that when the glottal stop is in syllable initial position (1a, 2a), and the glottal fricative is in syllable final position (3c), their occurrence is not opposed to their non-occurrence (i.e. their non-occurrence being symbolized by #, since 1a and 1c are not different words; nor are 2a and 2c; nor finally 3b and 3c. This is in striking contrast to the occurrence of ['] in syllable final position, and that of [h] in syllable initial position, where their presence or absence make a difference in the meaning of words (cf. 1b versus 1c, 2b versus 2c, and 3a versus 3b).

The question now arises: if the presence or absence of the glottal stop does not signal a semantic difference in syllable initial position, nor that of the glottal fricative in syllable final position, does this not imply that these sounds are not distinctive in these positions, i.e. they are not functioning as distinctive signalling sound units in these positions; and are, therefore, non-phonemic in these environments?

Another way of saying this is that the occurrence of the glottal stop in syllable initial position and the occurrence of the glottal fricative in syllable final position are *contextually determined* (i.e. they are predictable), and therefore not phonemic. Specifically, the glottal stop in syllable initial position occurs only in post-junctural position; and the occurrence of the glottal fricative occurs only in pre-junctural position. In other words, the glottal stop and the glottal fricative are part of the realizations of the vowel phonemes in these positions.

Bowen explains his phonemic interpretation of the phonetic facts enumerated above as follows (1965:10):

"Phrase-final words represented in ordinary spelling as having final vowel / a, e, i, o, u / are respelled in transcription as enuŋ in (glottal stop) / ' / or / h / . . .

"Tagalog syllable structure requires a final consonant on all final syllables. Final consonants other than /h/ and /'/ are always symbolized in regular Tagalog orthography, but ordinary writing does not indicate how Tagalog words written with a final vowel (e.g. *baga*) should be pronounced. The word may end with either /h/ and /'/, but the two may not be interchanged. /h/ and /'/, are two distinct sounds in Tagalog, and substituting one for the other can change the meaning of a word . . . Even if the meaning is not changed, the resulting mispronunciation will

be obvious. For /h/ and /ʔ/ in final position, therefore, the transcription is very helpful, and care should be taken that it is referred to for all new words spelled with a final vowel." (words "glottal stop" in parenthesis mine).

Clearly Bowen's assertion here that "Tagalog syllable structure requires a final consonant on all final syllables" is assumed, rather than demonstrated. It is true that if one follows Bowen's phonemic interpretation, the syllable structure of Tagalog words would require a final consonant on all final syllables; in fact, it would also require an initial consonant on all initial syllables. This is, however, begging the question. Moreover, it is also a good example of circular reasoning.

What does Bloomfield say about this question? He writes (1917:134-136):

"The laryngeal (glottal) stop occurs as a distinctive sound only after a vowel at the end of words: báta'child, boy, girl, hindi'not, hintò'stop.

"As a non-distinctive sound it is used as a vowel separator whenever syllabic words follow each other without an intervening distinctive non-syllabic. In this use I shall not indicate it in transcription, as it may be taken for granted whenever vowels are written together.

"h is the unvoiced glottal spirant; as in English it occurs only in syllable initial: hindi' not, báhay' house, mukhá' face."

It seems, therefore, that Bloomfield agrees that the glottal stop is phonemic only in word final position, and the glottal fricative is phonemic only in syllable initial position.

The occurrence of the glottal stop in syllable initial, and that of the glottal fricative in syllable final position is identical to their occurrences in these positions in English, and no phonemicist, as far as I know, would hold that these sounds are phonemic in these positions in English.

At this point, someone may call my attention to the principle of invariance, and say that there is a big difference between the glottal stop in Tagalog and in English, since the glottal stop is a phoneme in Tagalog, whereas it is not such in English. It follows, therefore, that the occurrence of the phonetic features assigned to this phoneme is the realization of this phoneme wherever this occurrence may be. In other words, "once a phoneme, always a phoneme." The answer to this is: if this principle must be followed, then one must transcribe the word *pit* 'hole or cavity in the ground' as /phith/ and not /pit/; *take* 'seize', as /theykh/ and not /teyk/, since /h/ is a phoneme in English and aspiration follows the first and last consonant in these words—at least in some American and Filipino varieties of English.

Moreover, if one follows the Bowen interpretation of Tagalog phonology with regard to the glottal phonemes, then there will be no need to set up the semi-vowel phonemes /y/ and /w/ in addition to the vowels /i/ and /u/. The reason is that the phonetic oppositions in the word initial, medial, and final positions of the following words can be adequately (phonemically) represented as follows:

*Initial*

[qíqalís]	/ʔi'alís/	'be removed'
[iátaq]	/iátaʔ/	'perhaps'
[quqód]	/ʔu'od/	'worm'
[uásákʔ]	/uasákʔ/	'ripped apart'

*Medial*

[tulaqín ]	/tula'fn/	'recited (poem, speech)
[tul <sup>â</sup> ín ]	/tulaiin/	'be bridged'
[búqang ]	/bú'ang/	'a fool'
[bu <sup>u</sup> án ]	/buuán/	'moon'

*Final*

[táqo]	/tá'o/	'man'
[túna <sup>u</sup> ]	/túnao/	'melt'
[táqi]	/tá'i/	'excrement'
[bága <sup>i</sup> ]	/bágai/	'thing, fit'

## 2.2 VOWELS AND DIPHTHONGS

Bowen recognizes five vowel phonemes in Tagalog with two sets of allophones as follows:

	STRESSED			UNSTRESSED		
	Front	Center	Back	Front	Center	Back
High	i		u	I		u
Mid	e		o	e		o
Low		a			a	

The phonetic facts do not support this interpretation, unfortunately, because in unstressed position, the opposition between /i/ and /e/, and that between /u/ and /o/ are lost. Thus, for example, one may say [bðbá'i] or [bðbá'e] 'woman,' [sábi] or [sábe] 'said,' ['úlu] or ['úlo] 'head,' [púto] or [pútu] 'rice cake'. This means that in unstressed position, there is a neutralization between the features "high" and "mid" and only the opposition between "front" and "back" is retained. (Incidentally, /a/ is realized as schwa in unstressed position, but as [a] in stressed position.) This means, that in unstressed position, the archi-phonemes /I/ and /U/ occur. The vowels of Tagalog are the following:

	ACCENTED			UNACCENTED		
	Front	Center	Back	Front	Center	Back
High	i		u	I		U
Mid	e		o			
Low		a			a	

I realize that the concept of the phoneme as a class (i.e. an abstraction) will not allow this phonemic interpretation; however, it is precisely in the solution of cases like this that the concept of the phoneme as a *reality* (in this case, as a bundle of distinctive features) shows its advantage.

Bowen recognizes six diphthongs in Tagalog, namely:

	FRONT	CENTER	BACK
High	iw		uy
Mid	ey		oy
Low		ay      aw	

Here again, the phonetic facts of the language do not support this analysis. The distinction between /uy/ and /oy/ is non-existent whether in stressed or unstressed position. e.g. [kasúy] or [kasóy] 'cashew nut', [báboy] or [bábuy] 'pig'. Likewise, phonetically, the [ey] and [iy] diphthongs are not distinct from each other; e.g. [kamiyphilipino] or [kaméyphilipino] 'we are Filipinos'; [sábiy+huwág] or [sábey+huwág] 'he said "don't"'. Thus, the diphthongs in Tagalog are:

	FRONT	CENTER	BACK
High	Iw		Uy
Mid	Iy		
Low		ay      aw	

## 2. LENGTH

Finally, Bowen claims that the primary indicator of stress (i.e. relative prominence of certain syllables as compared with neighboring syllables) in Tagalog is vowel length (1965:12):

In Tagalog, the primary indicator of stress is vowel length, represented in this book by a dot after the vowel. A stressed vowel is pronounced longer than the same vowel unstressed:

gabi/ga·bih/ (starchy root used for food)	gabi/gabi·h/ (night)
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In Tagalog, vowel length distinguishes meaning, as in the above example. There are many pairs of words that differ in meaning only on the basis of long or short vowels, although occasionally in special contexts that call for emphasis of some kind an inherently short syllable may be pronounced long . . . Tagalog stressed vowels may be loud or soft.

Tagalog then has two important degrees of stress, namely, stressed and unstressed, or, in other terminology, long or short. The stressed syllables are dotted in the transcription. The unstressed are left unmarked.

I have done some sonagram recording of Tagalog utterances, and in every case there was a clear correlation of the acoustic features of intensity, pitch rise, and duration when a syllable was given prominence. In cases like this, the term "accent" seems more appropriate than stress, as André Martinet suggests (1960:81-87). The specific characteristics of these features are determined by the type of syllable in which they occur. Thus, a closed syllable (especially one ending in a glottal stop) has a shorter duration, less intensity and lower pitch than an open syllable.

For a while, I thought that there were two accents in Tagalog, namely: (a) the primary /' /; and (b) the secondary /' / . This interpretation was based on such contrasting

triads as: *nàkakáin* 'edible' versus *nakákáin* 'accidentally ate' versus *nakakáin* 'ate'. However, I soon found out that one could shift these accents around, and there would be no change in the word meaning: thus *nákakàin* also meant 'edible' and *nakákàin* 'accidentally ate'.

This clearly indicates that there is only one type of accent in Tagalog. If a word has two accents, one is automatically less loud, shorter in duration, and lower in pitch than the other. The two accents then do not differ hierarchically from each other, but only contextually. Thus, the triad above can be transcribed as: /nákakáin/ 'edible', /nakákáin/ 'accidentally eaten', and /nakakáin/ 'ate'.

To summarize, there is evidence to show that there is only one type of accent in Tagalog. If a word has only one accent, the characteristics of the acoustic features which constitute it are determined by the type of syllable on which it falls. If a word has two accents, then one is automatically louder, longer, and higher in pitch than the other.

### 3. MORPHOLOGY

In this section, I would like to comment on Bowen's analysis of the Tagalog verb. Admittedly, this is one of the most complicated form classes in the language; and, therefore, one of the most difficult to teach.

Bowen's model is represented (cf. Appendix III) in the form of a matrix with six columns and nine rows; with some rows further subdivided into two or more rows. The six columns are the six *focuses*; namely: actor (AF), object (OF), benefactive (BF), locative (LF), instrumental (IF), and causative (CF). The nine rows are the different *affix classes*, each of which can be inflected to signal three *aspects* or types of action, namely: *imperfective* or incomplete, *perfective* or completed, and *future* or not begun.

#### 3.1 FOCUS

The most interesting feature of this model is the number of focuses that Bowen posits for the Tagalog verb; namely, six. If I understand him correctly, Bowen uses the term "focus" here to mean the syntactic relationship between the topic (usually preceded by *ang*) and the morphological shape of the verb (1965:178-179). For example, consider the sentence *kumain si Pedro ng mangga* 'Peter ate a mango'; one can say that his sentence is in the actor focus, because the topic is the actor (*si Pedro*); consequently, the required form of the verb is the actor focus; namely *kumain*. If the sentence had been *kinain ni Pedro ang mangga* 'The mango was eaten by Peter', then one would say that this sentence was in goal focus, since the topic of the sentence would be the goal (*ang mangga*); and consequently, the required form of the verb in this case would be *kinain*.

I do not agree with Bowen that the benefactive and causative forms of the verb are "focuses" in the sense explained above. The benefactive, it seems to me, is a meaning category, and not a formal category. The locative focus form of the verb frequently has a benefactive meaning; for example, *binasahan ko siya ng kuwento* 'I read a story for him'. Likewise, the instrumental focus form of the verb may have a benefactive meaning; for example, *ipinanguha ko siya ng gatong* 'I gathered firewood for him'.

On the other hand, the causative category is not a "focus" in the sense explained above since this category is an optional category which may or may not occur with the other focus forms of the verb. The causative form of the verb in the actor, goal, and local focuses is signalled by the infix {-pa-}, whereas it is signalled by either {-pa} or {-ka} in the

AF	OF	BF	LF	IF	CF
-um-	-in	i-	-an	ipang- i-	ika-
mag-	i- -in -an ipag-	ipag-	-an  pag-...-an	ipang- ipag-	ikapag-
mang-	i- -in -an	ipang-	-an  pag-...-an	ipang-	ikapang
maka-	ma-	mai-	ma-...-an	maipang-	
makapag-	ma-	mai- maipag-	ma-...-an mapag-... -an	maipang-	
makapang-	ma- ma-...-an	mai- maipang	mapang- ...-an	maipang-	
ma-			ka-...-an	ipang-	ika-
maki-	paki-	ipaki- ipakipag- ipakipang-	paki-...-an	pakipang-	ikapaki- ikapakipag- ikapakipang-
magpa-	pa-...-an pa-...-in ipa-	ipagpa-	pa-...-an  pag-...-an	ipapang-	ikapagpa-

instrumental focus. Examples are: *magpakain* 'feed (i.e. cause to eat)' for actor focus; *painumin* 'give water to (i.e. cause someone to drink)' for the goal focus; *ikinagalit* 'caused someone to get angry', or *naipakuha* 'was able to have someone get (something)' for the instrumental focus; and *pakuluan* 'have something be boiling (liquid)' for the local focus.



The conclusion from all this is that there are only four focuses of the verb form in Tagalog; namely, the actor focus (signalled by {um} or {mag-}); the goal focus (signalled by {-(h) in}), the local focus (signalled by {-(h) an}), and the instrumental focus (signalled by {i-}). I am aware that the verb forms with {-(h) an} or {i-} do not always have a "local" or "instrumental" meaning; however, here we are dealing with the verb forms and not with their meanings. As I said above, the verb forms in {-(h) an} and {i-} frequently have a "benefactive" meaning.

### 3.2 ACTOR FOCUS

The actor focus, as mentioned above, is signalled by two affixes; namely, the {um} and the {mag-}. The opposition between these two forms of the actor focus is not always clear; however, in some pairs of verb bases, it is clear that {um} signals 'subitive action', whereas {mag-} signals 'executive action', e.g. *lumabas* 'go out' versus *maglabas* 'bring out'; *bumili* 'buy' versus *magbili* 'sell'; *pumula* 'become red' versus *magpula* 'wear red'; *tumayo* 'stand up' versus *magtayo* 'build or set up', etc. The /ma-/ prefix is clearly an actor focus affix; and it is an allomorph of the actor focus, whose distribution is limited to the intransitive verb bases.

With regard to {mang-}, this prefix seems to be an amalgam (or portmanteau morpheme)—a combination of the actor focus prefix {mag-} and the iterative affix {-pang-}. Similarly, the prefixes {maña-} and {mañag-} are combinations of the affixes signalling the actor focus and the pluralization categories.

### 3.3 STEM-FORMING AFFIXES

This brings us to the theory of stem-forming affixes in the analysis of the Tagalog verb. We notice that in the inflection of the verb form *maglaro* 'play' for the future aspect, the root of the verb is reduplicated by repeating its first consonant and vowel: e.g. *magluluto* 'will cook'. However, if the form of the verb is *magsipaglaro* 'play (plural)', the inflected form of the future is *magsisipaglaro* 'will play (plural)'. In this case, it is helpful to consider *-sipaglaro* as the stem, and the infixes *-sipag-* as 'stem-forming' affixes.

In this system, the Tagalog verb has the following morphological structure:

#### Verb Stem

Focus Affix	Stem-Forming Affixes	Root
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The stem-forming affixes are those affixes which may be optionally added to the root of the verb; while the focus affixes are those affixes which must be added to the verb base or stem.

As mentioned above, the focus affixes are {um} and {mag-} for actor focus, {-(h) in} for the goal focus, {-(h) an} for the local focus, and {i-} for the instrumental focus.

The stem-forming affixes are those which signal the following categories (which intersect the four focuses): causative (-pa or -ka<sup>4</sup>-), potentiality (-ka<sup>3</sup>-), associative intersect the four focuses): causative ({-pa} or {ka<sup>4</sup>-}), potentiality ({-ka<sup>3</sup>-}), associative action ({-ki-}), reciprocal action ({-ka<sup>1</sup>-}) iterative action ({-pang-}) or reduplication of root, doubling of root, or accent shift, etc.

I believe that if the Tagalog verb is presented this way, a certain amount of simplification is achieved. The structure of the verb, as described by Bowen in Appendix III of this book, is somewhat too complex.

## 4. SYNTAX

There are many points which require comment in this book as far as syntax is concerned. For lack of space, I shall confine my remarks to the syntactic model which Bowen has employed in his analysis of Tagalog sentences. Bowen uses the terms topic and predicate, instead of Bloomfield's subject and predicate, but both authors employ essentially the same grammatical model.

The problem with this model is that it fits the structure of Indo-European languages, but it hardly fits that of Philippine languages. In Tagalog, we have many sentences which Bowen would characterize as "topicless"; as, for example, *kararating niya* 'he has just arrived', *ang bilis niya* 'how quick he is', *umuulan* 'it is raining', *may tao* 'someone is around', etc.

To call these sentences "topicless" reminds one of English elliptical sentences; and these are what Bloomfield apparently had in mind when he called *umuulan* "impersonal anaphoric". This sentence, however, is not only not "impersonal" in Tagalog; there is nothing "anaphoric" about it.

A more apt model could be used in describing Tagalog sentences, it seems to me, if we do away with the subject-predicate or topic-predicate model; and instead talk of: (a) the *nucleus* of the sentence; (b) the *number of (satellite) constituents* it has, and (c) indicate their (functional) *positions* in the sentence. We can then proceed to classify the various Tagalog sentences into the following sentence types: MONADIC, if they have one constituent (e.g. *umuulan* '(it is) raining'); DIADIC, if they have two constituents (e.g. *natutulog siya* 'he is asleep'); TRIADIC, if they have three constituents (e.g. *tinawag ko siya* 'I called him') and QUADRADIC, if they have four constituents (e.g. *binigyan ko siya nito* 'I gave him this').

The "nucleus" of the sentence is that part of the sentence which is fixed, and around which the other parts of the sentence revolve. Thus, in the sentence *natutulog siya*, the nucleus is *natutulog* because one can say *siya'y natutulog*; in the sentence *nakita ni Jose ang tao* 'Jose saw the man', *nakita* is the nucleus, because one can say *ang tao'y nakita ni Jose* or *nakita ang tao ni Jose*. However, since one cannot move *ni Jose* before the nucleus (*\*ni Jose nakita ang tao*), one can say that it is part of the nucleus. A fuller description of this model is given in Norma Tiangco's article, which appears in this issue of this journal.

Perhaps, we can end this review by saying that this book, in spite of its limitations, has many other good points to recommend it. There is a great demand these days for a good course in Tagalog for English speakers. This book eminently fills this need.

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