

Spanish Loanwords in Tagalog: Abstract

The original question driving the research behind this project was whether Spanish loanwords in Tagalog are marked such that their foreign status is obvious; for comparison, there is a brief look at loanwords in Japanese and how they are marked. In some cases loanwords do act differently than words from the native stratum of Tagalog; e.g., some Spanish loanwords pertaining to people are marked for natural gender within the word, whereas native Tagalog words must be linked to morphemes indicating gender. For the most part, though, Spanish loanwords appear to undergo the same processes of morphology, syntax, and semantics that native words do. Special attention is given to the morphological level.

Spanish Loanwords in Tagalog

I. Introduction

This paper has its roots in my home and the languages spoken there. My parents are from the Philippines, and Taglish (Tagalog and English) flows freely in my family. Because of the many Tagalog words which are of Spanish origin, I was familiar with Spanish words and sounds. In college I undertook the study of Spanish, and now and then I would be surprised to find a word in my vocabulary list which to me had sounded very Tagalog but was in fact a Spanish loanword, e.g. Spanish *medias* "stockings; hose" and Tagalog *medyas* "socks." I spent the Spring 1996 semester in Spain and made more such discoveries, e. g. *palangana* "basin" and *imperdible* "safety pin," both of which are Spanish loanwords. I was also lucky enough to be a student of Professor Antonio Quilis, a congenial man who is one of Spain's top linguists and whose specialty is the influence of Spanish in other countries.

Both Spanish and Tagalog are languages that are dear to me, and it seemed only natural to me that the subject of my thesis combine the two. My goal at the beginning of my research was to find out whether Spanish loanwords in Tagalog are treated differently from native words, e. g., are they given certain morphological markers that make its loanword status obvious. Japanese is a language that treats loanwords specially, and I will treat that briefly in this paper, for sake of comparison to the Spanish-Tagalog situation. In my research it became clear to me that the answer, for the most part, is *no*; they do not take grammatical markers which indicate their loanword status; and in this paper I will show the ways in which loanwords are treated like native words of Tagalog, and the ways in which Tagalog has changed to accommodate the loanwords, especially in terms of its morphology.

II. History

The Spanish colonial period in the Philippines lasted from Magellan's arrival in the archipelago until the cession of the islands to the United States after the Spanish-American War in 1898. Despite more than 300 years of colonialism, Spanish was not very widespread by the time the American colonial period began—but within a few decades, the Americans' accomplishment of spreading English in the Philippines was much more successful than the Spaniards' attempts to spread Spanish.¹

There are several reasons for this lack of use of Spanish. One is that, even when there were decrees from Spain to teach Spanish to the natives, those making such decrees were much too far away from the islands to enforce them. Another reason for the narrow usage of Spanish is because of the power of the Catholic clergy. Spanish Catholic policy about spreading the One True Faith was that the natives should have their religious instruction in their own language rather than in Spanish; this would make conversion and learning the concepts of the faith easier. Also, because of the abundance of indigenous languages in the Philippines, adding to the clergymen's daily duties the task of teaching Spanish to the natives as well as learning their languages seemed like too onerous a burden. There was also the added benefit that if the clergymen were the only ones who knew both Spanish and the indigenous languages, they were in a position of power as intermediaries between Spanish administrators and native peoples. Of course Spanish learning did occur, but usually only by the privileged (which in turn meant usually those with Spanish blood).²

¹Cecilio Lopez. "The Spanish Overlay in Tagalog." *Lingua* v. 14 (1965, 467-504) 467-468.

²Rosalina Morales Goulet. "English, Spanish and Tagalog: A Study of Grammatical, Lexical, and Cultural Interference." *Philippine Journal of Linguistics*, special monograph issue no. 1 (July 1971) 4.

III. Phonology

This comparison of the phonemic inventories of Spanish and Tagalog is based, with some adjustments, on the ones given by Quilis, and the ones by Schachter and Otones. The inventories for both languages are very similar.

Table 1: TAGALOG CONSONANT PHONEMES³

	Labial	Labiodental	Dental	Alveolar	Palatal	Velar	Glottal
Stop -voice	p		t			k	ʔ
Stop: +voice	b		d			g	
Nasal: +voice	m		n			ŋ	
Fricative-voice		(f)		s			h
Affricate-voice				(tʃ)			
Lateral+voice				l			
Trill +voice				r			
Glide +voice					y	w	

Table 2: SPANISH CONSONANT PHONEMES⁴

	Labial	Labiodental	Dental	Alveolar	Palatal	Velar	Glottal
Stop -voice	p		t			k	
Stop: +voice	b		d			g	
Nasal: +voice	m			n	ɲ		
Fricative-voice		f	θ	s		x	
Fricative +voice				dʒ			
Affricate-voice				tʃ			
Lateral+voice				l	ʎ		
Trill +voice				r, rr			

Haugen notes that it is very common for a borrowed word to have phonemes that do not exist in the native language, and that the native language therefore substitutes the nearest phoneme in its inventory into the borrowed word.⁵ The situation is no different for Spanish and Tagalog. Tagalog under-differentiates some Spanish phonemes and allophones, substituting in their stead the closest Tagalog

³ Paul Schachter and Fe Otones, *Tagalog Reference Grammar* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972) 18.

⁴ The setup of the table is based on Schachter and Otones 18; the data for Spanish consonants is from Antonio Quilis "A Comparison of the Phonemic Systems of Spanish and Tagalog" in *Scientific and Humanistic Dimensions of Language*, Kurt R. Jankowsky, ed. (Washington, DC: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 1985) 244.

⁵Haugen, Einar. "The Analysis of Linguistic Borrowing." In *The Ecology of Language: Essays by Einar Haugen*. Anwar S. Dil, ed. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1972) 85.

phoneme.⁶ Some of the main differences between these inventories are as follows.

A. Consonants

Beginning with the labials and labiodentals, Schachter and Otones say that in Tagalog, the original /f/ of a loanword may or may not be retained, and whether a speaker retains the original /f/ of a loanword depends on his level of education, social class, etc.⁷ The phonemes [p] and [f] are allophones of Tagalog /p/ occurring in free variation, as in *pighting filots* “fighting pilots.” Quilis and Lopez simply document /p/ without allophones; Quilis does not include [f] in his inventory of Tagalog.⁸ In Spanish, /p/ and /f/ are distinct phonemes.

The dental voiceless fricative /θ/ which appears in Castilian Spanish has the substitution /s/ in Tagalog, much like the varieties of Spanish spoken in Andalucía and other regions of Spain, and in Latin America.⁹ In fact, many of the colonizers from the first two centuries of Spain’s colonial period were from Andalucía and Extremadura.¹⁰

Quilis and Lopez also document the alveolar voiceless affricate /tʃ/ as not occurring in Tagalog, but again Schachter and Otones disagree; like /f/, the speaker’s use of it depends on his level of education. The usual substitution that Tagalog makes for /tʃ/ is either [ty] or [ts].¹¹

The Spanish trills /r/ and /rr/ as in *pero* “but” and *perro* “dog” are not differentiated in Tagalog; in Tagalog, there is only /r/: *yero* (Spanish: *hierro* “iron”).¹²

⁶ Lopez 471.

⁷ Schachter and Otones 22.

⁸ Quilis “A Comparison of the Phonemic Systems of Spanish and Tagalog” 244; Schachter and Otones 22.

⁹ Lopez 472.

¹⁰ D. Lincoln Canfield ed. *The University of Chicago Spanish Dictionary, Fourth Edition*. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1987) 26.

¹¹ Goulet 19.

¹² Goulet 19.

The voiced palatal lateral /ʎ/ of Spanish, represented in Spanish orthography as *ll*, is substituted in Tagalog as either [ly] or [y]: Spanish *cuchillo*, Tagalog *kutsilyo* “knife;” Spanish *cebolla*, Tagalog *sibuya* “onion.”

The unvoiced velar fricative /x/ in Spanish, represented orthographically by *j* and sometimes *g*, is usually substituted by [s] or [h] in Tagalog: Spanish *aguja*, Tagalog *aguha* “needle;” and Spanish *jabón*, Tagalog *sabon* “soap.”

Tagalog phonemes that do not occur in Spanish are /ʔ/ and /ŋ/; Spanish has the palatal nasal /ɲ/ instead of /ŋ/.

Sometimes a Spanish word can spawn two or even three different pronunciations within Tagalog; these doublets and triplets may or may not have distinct meanings.¹³ From Spanish *hechura* “making, workmanship, form, build of a person” come Tagalog *itsura* “making, workmanship, form, build of a person” and *hitsura* “ugly.”¹⁴ Substitutions of [l] and [r] lead to the triplet of Spanish *bordar* and Tagalog *burdá* and *buldá*—all meaning “embroider.”¹⁵

B. Vowels

The experts disagree on whether Tagalog simply has a three-vowel system of /a, i, u/ or a five-vowel system of /a e i o u/. Quilis states that it is a three vowel system; however, Schachter and Otones claim otherwise, as do Goulet and Lopez. Quilis says that /i/ has allophones [e, i] and /u/ has allophones [u, o]. Schachter and Otones document five vowels, each with their own allophones; and Goulet presents minimal pairs that demonstrate that there are indeed five vowels: /mura/ “cheap” vs. /mora/ “Muslim woman;” /misa/ “Mass” vs. /mesa/ “table,” for example.¹⁶

¹³ Antonio Quilis. *La lengua española en cuatro mundos*. (Madrid: Editorial MAPFRE, 1992) 156.

¹⁴ Lopez 480.

¹⁵ Lopez 480.

¹⁶Goulet 52.

IV. Morphology

It is in the morphology that the absorption of Spanish loanwords in Tagalog becomes evident. Not only does Tagalog affix morphemes to Spanish loanwords as if they were “native” words, but Tagalog has also borrowed affixes from Spanish as well.

Such is not the case in languages like Japanese. In Junko Ito and Armin Mester’s study of Japanese phonology, they describe the four morpheme classes of Japanese. These morpheme classes are part of the four chronological strata of Japanese and are roughly analogous to the Latinate and Anglo-Saxon strata of English. These classes are the Yamato class (the “native” class), the Sino-Japanese class, the Foreign class, and the Mimetic class. Japanese has phonological constraints regarding voicing, syllable composition, and other features, which are exclusive to certain morpheme classes.¹⁷ As an example, the Yamato, Sino-Japanese, and Mimetic classes obey at least two of the following constraints: (1) a constraint against single [p], (2) a constraint against nasals followed by voiceless consonants, and (3) a constraint against voiced obstruent geminates such as **bb* and **dd*. Morphemes from the foreign class, however, do not obey any of these constraints.¹⁸

Now let us see some examples of Tagalog affixes on Spanish loanwords from Quilis and Lopez, by no means an exhaustive list. Each one is followed by a corresponding example, if available, from Schachter and Otones of the same affix combined with a native word. For the verbs, Schachter and Otones give what they call the bare form or the underlying form of the verb after showing the affix in question, such as *sumulat* “write”; however, what they really give is in fact a base

¹⁷ Junko Ito and Armin Mester. and Mester, Armin. *Japanese Phonology: Constraint Domains and Structure Preservation*. Paper presented at the Linguistics Research Center at Cowell College, University of California at Santa Cruz. (Santa Cruz: Linguistics Research Center, 1993) 2.

¹⁸ Ito and Mester3-4.

with an affix which classifies a verb as an actor-focus verb (i. e., a verb whose topic performs the action in question), an object-focus verb, a goal-focus verb, or a directional-focus verb.¹⁹ In the case of *sumulat*, the affix in question is the infix *-um-*. I have therefore taken the liberty of removing that affix and presenting in this text just the base; e. g., in the case of *sumulat*, simply *sulat* will be provided.

-an, -han (Tagalog: “action realized by two or more persons”). *Kásalan* “to marry” (Spanish: *casar* “to marry”); *swelduhan*; “salary” (Spanish: *sueldo* “salary”).²⁰ *Bigayan* “giving (one another)” (Tagalog: *bigay* “give”).

mag-, nag- (Tagalog: “deliberated action”). *Magdúduktór* “will study to be a doctor” (Spanish: *doctor*), *nagkrús* “to make the sign of the cross” (Spanish: *cruz* “cross”).²¹ *Magkamayan* “exchange handshakes” (Tagalog: *kamayan* “shake hands; do something with one’s hands”). Schachter and Otones give several examples in which *mag-*, used as above, means “to become a member of a certain profession” such as *magnars* “become a nurse.” All the examples they give, however, are of the prefix attached to a Spanish or English loanword, not a native word.²²

maka- (Tagalog: “in favor of; fond of”). *Maka-Kastila* “Pro-Spanish.”²³ *Maka-ina* “close to (one’s) mother” (Tagalog: *ina* “mother”), *makaluma* “conservative” (Tagalog: *luma* “old.”)²⁴

pag-. . .-in, pag-. . .-hin (Tagalog: “permissive action”) *Paglílitsunín* “will be asked or allowed to roast a whole pig” (Spanish: *lechón* “suckling pig”).²⁵

Lopez also documents cases in which entire compound words have been

¹⁹ Schachter and Otones 283.

²⁰ Antonio Quilis. *La lengua española en cuatro mundos*. (Madrid: Editorial MAPFRE, 1992) 143.

²¹ Quilis *Lengua Española* 143.

²² Schachter and Otones 308-309.

²³ Lopez 486.

²⁴ Schachter and Otones 227.

²⁵ Lopez 488-489.

borrowed and then affixed to, such as *maglúlunademyél* “will spend the honeymoon” (Spanish: *luna de miel* “honeymoon”).²⁶

As mentioned above, affixation occurs both ways; below are some examples of Spanish affixes on Tagalog bases, again from Quilis and Lopez.

-erya (Spanish *-ería* “where something takes place; where something is made or sold”). *Pansiteryá* “restaurant where *pansit* noodles (type of Chinese noodles) are served; Chinese restaurant.”²⁷

Gender is denoted in two ways on Spanish loanwords. In Tagalog, a noun’s gender is indicated optionally by linking it with *lalaki* “male; masculine” or *babae* “female; feminine:” *artista* “artist (gender not specified);” *artistang babae* “female artist.”²⁸ In Spanish, the gender of *artista* and other nouns ending in *-ista* is denoted by using either the masculine article *el* or the feminine article *la*. On loanwords not ending in *-ista* and which denote familial relations, nationalities, occupations, religious and political affiliations, and other types of people, the Tagalog follows the Spanish rule of using the gender marker *-o* if the person is masculine and *-a* if feminine, or of adding *-a* if the masculine form ends in *-or*: *tiyo*, *tiya* “uncle, aunt” (Spanish *tío*, *tía*); *Katóliko*, *Katólika* “Catholic man, Catholic woman;” *doktor*, *doktora* “male doctor, female doctor.”²⁹ The Spanish article denoting gender is not retained; rather, the Tagalog definite article *ang* is used, which does not denote gender. Spanish has introduced to Tagalog the concept of using a morpheme within the word to denote gender, rather than linking it externally to another morpheme. There are also cases of loanwords in which a change of gender also gives a slight change in meaning: *Tagalogbayabas* [masculine]

²⁶ Lopez 489.

²⁷ Quilis *Lengua Española* 140.

²⁸ Quilis *Lengua Española* 140.

²⁹ Quilis *Lengua Española* 140.

"guava tree," *bayabas* [feminine] "guava fruit" (Spanish: *guayaba* "guava").³⁰

Like gender, another type of morpheme which may or may not indicate a change in meaning is the numerical morpheme. Some Spanish loanwords appear in Tagalog in what would be their plural form in Spanish, marked with *-s* or *-es*; therefore, when they are pluralized in Tagalog, they need to be pluralized in the way that Tagalog pluralizes native words, i. e., by placing the morpheme *mga* (pronounced [maɲá]) before it: *mga bata* (Tagalog: *bata* "child"), *peras* "pear," *mga peras* "pears" (Spanish: *pera* "pear"); *botones* "button," *mga botones* (Spanish: *botón* "button").³¹

One of the morphological processes for which Tagalog is famous is its reduplication. When a whole word is reduplicated with perhaps a phoneme such as *-s-* in the middle as a joining particle, the meaning of the word is intensified: *bastábastá* "all of a sudden" (Spanish *bastar* "to be enough").³²

The reduplicated form *bastá* given above is, in Spanish, the third person, singular of *bastar*. This follows the pattern that Goulet notes of loaned Spanish verbs in Tagalog; namely, that they are borrowed in the third person-singular and then are inflected for aspect, and for agency. (Verbs in Tagalog loaned from English are, in contrast, borrowed in their bare or gerund forms.) Here is part of a paradigm for Tagalog *intindi* "to understand" (Spanish: third person, singular *entiende* from the infinitive *entender* "to understand").

intindihin "understand (it)!"
inintindi "was/were understood"
iniintindi "is/are being understood"
iintindihin "will be understood"³³

The linguistic processes in question include affixation and reduplication.

³⁰ Quilis *Lengua Española* 140.

³¹ Quilis *Lengua Española* 140.

³² Lopez 493.

³³ Goulet 26-27.

Sometimes a loanword is reanalyzed in terms of the native language's morphology. An example of such a process English would be *orange*, which came ultimately, from Sanskrit *narangah* via French and Arabic. By Shakespeare's time, *anorange* was reanalyzed as *an orange*.³⁴ In the case of Spanish and Tagalog, one such example is Tagalog *masyado* "too much", which evolved from Spanish *demasiado* "too much." Tagalog speakers had heard the Spanish form and had reanalyzed it as *di* "no, not" + *masyado* "too much," so that the Tagalog meaning of *demasiado* is the opposite of the Spanish meaning! Hence the present form in Tagalog *masyado*.³⁵

V. Syntax

Now that we have seen how Tagalog phonology and morphology affect Spanish loanwords, we will now examine briefly how the loanwords function at the phrasal levels. The basic sentence structure of Tagalog is predicate + topic; the tree structures for sentences which Schachter and Otanes give are left-branching ones. The predicate may be nominal, adjectival, or verbal; one of each kind of predicate is shown in the sentences below (*ang* "the;" *babae* "woman").

<i>Artista ang babae.</i>	"The woman is an artist."
<i>Maganda ang babae.</i>	"The woman is beautiful."
<i>Yamaman ang babae.</i>	"The woman got rich." ³⁶

Besides predication, another form of syntactic relation is that of attribution, of which there are four types; both native words and loanwords can undergo the same attributive constructions. Each type of attribution given below will have an example with both native words and loanwords. (These attributions are labeled as

³⁴ Steven Pinker. *The Language Instinct*. (New York: HarperPerennial, 1995) 244. *The American Heritage Dictionary, Second College Edition* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1982) 874.

³⁵ Lopez 482.

³⁶ Schachter and Otanes 61.

such in the traditional literature, though I myself cannot distinguish the differences in shades of meaning between them.)

The first kind of attribution is conjunctive, in which the attribute and its head are joined with *na* or *-ng*. Word order is usually not fixed: *hanging malamíg*, *malamíg na hangin* “cold wind” (Tagalog *hangin* “wind” *malamíg* “cold”); *inulenteng prubinsyano*, *prubinsyanong inulente* “innocent from the provinces” (Spanish: *inocente* “innocent,” *provinciano* “provincial”).³⁷

The second kind of attribution is disjunctive attribution; attributes join their heads disjunctively by means of *nang*: *dahon nang saging* “banana leaf” (Tagalog *dahon* “leaf;” *saging* “banana”), *kwerdas nang byolín* “violin string” (Spanish *cuerda* “cord;” *violín* “violin”). The word order in this case is fixed.³⁸

The third kind of attribution is local attribution; attributes and heads joined locally do so by means of *sa*: *hangin sa bukid* “wind in the field” (Tagalog: *bukid* “field”), *istorbo sa kalye* “obstruction in the street” (Spanish *estorbo* “disturbance,” *calle* “street”).³⁹

The last kind of attribution is absolute attribution, and the marker for this construction is zero: *hindí bale* “it’s not worth it; it doesn’t matter” (Tagalog *hindí* “no, not;” Spanish *valer* “to be worth”). (No example with only native words could be found.)⁴⁰

VI. Semantics

Haugen once wrote, “If loanwords are to be incorporated into the utterances of a new language, they must be fitted into its grammatical structure. This means that they must be assigned by the borrower to the various grammatical classes which

³⁷ Lopez 491-492.

³⁸ Lopez 492.

³⁹ Lopez 492-493.

⁴⁰ Lopez 493.

are distinguished by his own language.”⁴¹ Indeed, Tagalog has borrowed words from all classes of Spanish: nouns, verbs, adverbs, adjectives, and even some closed-class words such as prepositions, conjunctions, pronouns, making up more than twenty percent of the Tagalog lexicon.⁴² The words borrowed from open classes tend to be high frequency words.

The prepositions and conjunctions retain their full meaning in Tagalog: *ni* . . . *ni* “neither. . . nor,” *o* “or,” *para* “for,” and *pero* “but.”⁴³ The pronouns, however, are used only in stock phrases, leaving the original Tagalog pronoun system intact: *Diyos miyo!* (Spanish: ¡*Dios mío!*)⁴⁴

Based on the relationship between morphemic and phonemic change, Haugen proposes three types of loanwords, the first two of which occur frequently in the Spanish and Tagalog case. The first type he simply calls loanwords; these are “morphemic importations without [phonemic] substitutions.”⁴⁵ These loanwords may then be classified as to how much phonemic substitution they have undergone. The conjunctions and prepositions given above fit this definition well.

The second type of loanword he calls loanblends. These are words which have undergone not only phonemic but also morphemic substitutions; i. e., “all or part of a native morpheme [is inserted] for some part of the foreign.”⁴⁶ An example of this in Tagalog would be *nasabi ko na po* “as I have said” (Tagalog “was-said by-me already term-of-deference;” Spanish *he dicho*, used in academic discourse).⁴⁷

The last type of loanword Haugen defines is loanshifts, which “show morphemic substitution without importation;” i. e., the loanword is

⁴¹ Haugen 88.

⁴² Quilis *Lengua Española* 151.

⁴³ Quilis *Lengua Española* 145.

⁴⁴ Goulet 29.

⁴⁵ Haugen 85.

⁴⁶ Haugen 84, 90.

⁴⁷ Quilis *Lengua Española* 155, Lopez 499.

homophonous with a native word, thereby adding new meaning to the native word, or gradually replacing the native word altogether; unfortunately, no examples of this sort could be found.

Conclusions

In a paper of this scope I cannot hope to give a complete accounting for all the grammatical processes of Tagalog, specifically, in the manner in which Tagalog treats words borrowed from Spanish, with special attention in the morphological processes as well as brief glosses of syntactic and semantic processes. The major way I could find in which loanwords behaved differently was in the case of gender; Spanish loanwords relating to individual people had a morpheme denoting gender within the word boundary, rather than a link to another morpheme outside the word boundary. Spanish loanwords undergo the same morphological processes such as affixation and reduplication that native words undergo. Not only are there Spanish words with Tagalog affixes, but there are Tagalog words with Spanish affixes. For the most part, Tagalog treats its Spanish loanwords as if they were words from the native stratum of the lexicon.

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