

Morphological Sketch of Tagalog by Mackenzie Salt

Introduction:

Tagalog is a VSO language spoken primarily in the Philippines. It is an Austronesian language, of the Malayo-Polynesian subgroup. It is spoken by approximately 24 million people worldwide. Tagalog uses an ergative-absolutive case system and has three main cases: ergative, absolutive and oblique, as well as a minor case, the locative form, which has only limited uses. With regard to headedness of its morphological structure, Tagalog is left-headed as suffixation is the minority of the morphological processes found in Tagalog. The other morphological processes found in Tagalog are prefixation, infixation, circumfixation, and reduplication. Morphologically, Tagalog is a very rich language as well as being a topic prominent one. By this, I am referring to the fact that it is a language that changes its word order to designate topics and focused elements within a sentence. It does this via an extensive verbal inflectional voice system. Nominally, Tagalog has a great deal of derivation but no inflection. There is an extensive derivational system for nouns, adjectives, numbers, gerunds, verbs and compounds. With regard to adverbials, Tagalog contains enclitics that function more like syntactic particles than morphemes. Because of this, they will not be addressed here.

A note on notation: In the morphological rules found below, I have used the following notation: N (noun), V (verb), P (preposition), A (adjective), B (base), NUM (number), LINK (the linking morpheme *-ng* and its allomorphs, *-na* and *-ø*), L (increased vowel length) and DUP (reduplication). Beside DUP, I have used a series of notations in subscript to indicate what is being reduplicated: B (base), 1 (first syllable of the derived base), 2 (first two syllables of derived base), A (next rightward affix in the derivation, or the first syllable of the base if there is no affix), PRE (the prefix present on the derived base). It is clear in Tagalog, that while these derivations and inflections are expressed as specific combinations of morphemes, they follow the condition of adjacency. That is, in morphological derivations, the affixes apply individually from right to left in sequence and therefore when I refer to a derived base, I refer to the base and all of the affixes applied before the reduplication process. The last notation convention that I want to make clear is in examples, elements such as affixes in parentheses are optional and morphemes are separated by hyphens.

Derivation:

For derivational transformations, I have included the selection of derivation and the category of the resulting lexeme (selected part of speech → category of result) along with the derivational transformation.

Nominal:

Nouns:

In Schachter's grammar of Tagalog, he identifies seventeen types of noun derivation that he identifies as 'classes' though they are not noun classes in the true sense of the term as they exist in Bantu languages.

1. $N \rightarrow N$ N + -an

This transformation creates a noun meaning a location associated with the base noun. Example: *aklat* "book" → *aklat-an* "library".

2. $V \rightarrow N$ V + -an

This transformation creates a noun indicating reciprocal or joint action of the base verb. Example: *um-away* “fight” → *away-an* “fighting one another”.

3. $V \rightarrow N$ V + -in

This transformation creates a noun indicating the object of the action specified in the base verb. Example: *mag-aral* “study” → *aral-in* “something to study”.

4. $N \rightarrow N$ DUP_{B-} + N + -an

The transformation derives a noun that is an imitation of the base noun. Example: *bulaklak* “flower” → *bulaklak-bulaklak-an* “fake flower”.

5. a. $N \rightarrow N$ ka- + N

This transformation derives a noun that designates a person or thing reciprocally associated with the base. Example: *kuwarta* “room” → *ka-kwarta* “roommate”.

b. $V \rightarrow N$ ka- + V

Example: *laro* “play_v” → *ka-laro* “playmate”.

c. $P \rightarrow N$ ka- + P

Example: *tabi* “side_p” → *ka-tabi* “someone/something beside”.

6. a. $N \rightarrow N$ ka- + N + an

This transformation derives nouns that are a class of qualities or group of things denoted by the base.

Example: *Intsik* “(a) Chinese (person)” → *ka-intsik-an* “the Chinese (people)”.

b. $A \rightarrow N$ ka- + A + an

Example: *tamad* “lazy” → *ka-tamar-an* “laziness”.

7. $N \rightarrow N$ mag- + N

This transformation derives a noun designating two relatives, one of whom bears relation to the other, designated by the base. Example: *ama* “father” → *mag-ama* “father and child”.

8. $N \rightarrow N$ mag- + DUP₁₋ + N

This transformation derives a noun designating three or more relatives, one of whom bears relation to the other, designated by the base. Example: *ama* “father” → *mag-a-ama* “father and children”.

9. $N \rightarrow N$ mag- + DUP₁₋ + N

This transformation creates a noun indicating the vendor of the item designated by the base noun. Example: *ulot* “honey” → *mag-pu-pulot* “honey”.

10. a. $N \rightarrow N$ mag- + DUP₁₋ + ka- + N

These transformations derive nouns that designate three or more people or things reciprocally associated with the base. Example: *kuwarta* “room” → *mag-ka-ka-kwarta* “three or more roommates”.

b. $V \rightarrow N$ mag- + DUP₁₋ + ka- + V

Example: *laro* “play_v” → *mag-ka-ka-laro* “three or more playmates”.

c. $P \rightarrow N$ mag- + DUP₁₋ + ka- + P

Example: *tabi* “side_p” → *mag-ka-ka-tabi* “three or more people or things beside”.

11. a. $N \rightarrow N$ mag- + ka- + N

These transformations derive nouns that designate two people or things reciprocally associated with the base.

Example: *kuwarta* “room” → *mag-ka-kwarta* “two roommates”.

b. V→N mag- + ka- + V

Example: *laro* “play_v” → *mag-ka-laro* “two or more playmates”.

c. P→N mag- + ka- + Prep

Example: *tabi* “side_p” → *mag-ka-tabi* “two people or things beside”.

12. a. N→N mang- + DUP₁- + N

This transformation creates nouns that designate a person associated, usually professionally, with the meaning indicated by the base. Example: *awit* “song” → *mang-a-awit* “singer”

b. V→N mang- + DUP₁- + V

Example: *laro* “play_v” → *man-la-laro* “player”.

13. V→N pa- + V

This transformation creates nouns that indicate a thing upon which or toward which the action designated by the base is caused to be directed. Example: *gawa* “make” → *pa-gawa* “something caused to be made”.

14. N→N taga- + N

This transformation derives a noun representing a person from a place designated by the base. Example: *Amerika* “America” → *taga-Amerika* “person from America”

15. V→N taga- + V

This transformation creates a noun denoting a person employed or delegated to perform the action designated by the base –*um*– class verb. Example: *b-um-ili* “buy” → *taga-bili* “buyer”.

16. V→N taga- + pag- + V

This transformation creates a noun denoting a person employed or delegated to perform the action designated by the base *mag*– class verb. Example: *mag-bili* “sell” → *taga-pag-bili* “seller”.

17. V→N taga- + pang- + V

This transformation creates a noun denoting a person employed or delegated to perform the action designated by the base *mang*– or *ma*– class verb. Example: *mang-hiram* “borrow” → *taga-pang-hiram* “borrower”.

He also notes that adjectives that are topicalised have to be nominalised. This is represented in two possible derivational transformations that are freely interchangeable.

18. a. na- + DUP₁- + ka- + A

b. na- + ka- + DUP₁- + A

Gerunds:

In Tagalog, gerunds are derived through a nominalization process being applied to the base forms of derived verbs. I have categorised these by the type of gerund and the derived form of the base verb. In Tagalog, there are two types of gerunds: ones with perfective aspect and ones that have no aspect marking. In the derivations shown below, the first transformation is for aspectless gerunds and the second is for perfective with the exception of the *mag*- verbs. In the case of *mag*- verbs, there are what are called simple and complex forms. Simple derived forms are forms that have the prefix *mag*- and optionally another prefix, *pa*- occurring before the base. Complex forms are derived forms of *mag*- verbs that contain not only the prefix *mag*- but also any other prefix except *pa*- occurring before the base. The complex forms cannot derive an aspectless

gerund so the first two transformations of *mag-* verbs are the simple aspectless and perfective gerunds and the third transformation is a complex form derivation into a perfective gerund.

-um- verbs

19. a. pag- + B Example: *pag-dating* “coming”
 b. pag- (+ DUP₁₋) + ka- + B Example: *pag-(ka)-ka-rating* “having come”

mag- verbs

20. a. pag- + DUP₁₋ (+ pre-) + B Example: *pag-a-aral* “studying”
 b. pag- (+ DUP₁₋) + ka- (+ pag-) (+ pa-) + B Example: *pag-(ka)-ka-(pag)-aral* “having studied”
 c. pag- (+ DUP₁₋) + ka- + pag- + pre₁₋ + B Example: *pag-(ka)-ka-pag-situlong* “having helped (pl.)”

mang- verbs

21. a. pang- + DUP₁₋ + B Example: *pam-am-angka* “going boating”
 b. pag- (+ DUP₁₋) + ka- + pang- + B Example: *pag-(ka)-ka-pa-mangka* “having gone boating”

ma- verbs

22. a. pagka- + B Example: *pagka-buyo* “getting involved”
 b. pag- (+ DUP₁₋) + ka- + B Example: *pag-(ka)-ka-buyo* “having gotten involved”

maki- verbs

23. a. pa- + DUP₁₋ + ki- (+ pre-) + B Example: *pa-ki-ki-sama* “accompanying”
 b. pag- (+ DUP₁₋) + ka- + pa- + ki- (+ pre-) + B Example: *pag-(ka)-ka-pa-ki-sama* “having accompanied”

Adjectives:

Adjective ‘Classes’

In Tagalog, Schachter describes a set of adjective ‘classes’ similar to the noun classes described above; these are listed below under Adjectival Derivation. In addition to these, he describes several types of adjectives that are related in meaning and derived with similar forms. These are listed immediately below along with their derivational transformations.

24. N→A N + -an

This derivation creates an adjectival with the meaning of an object being virtually covered with the noun used in the derivation. Example: *dugo* “blood” → *dugu-an* “virtually covered with blood”.

25. a. N→A N + -in

This derivation, and its variants creates an adjective with the meaning of being given to or susceptible to the designation of the base. Example: *antok* “sleepiness” → *antok-in* “given to sleepiness”.

- b. A→A A + -in

Example: *baliklad* “inside out” → *baliktarin* “reversible”.

- c. V→A V + -in

Example: *himatay* “faint_v” → *himatayin* “tending to faint often”.

26. N→A DUP_N + LINK + N

This derivation creates an adjective indicating the experiencing of an intense degree of the emotion designated by the base. Example: *awa* “pity” → *awa-ng-awa* “feeling great pity”.

27. N→A ka- + DUP₂₋ + N

This derivation creates an adjectival with the meaning of causing or serving in an extreme degree, the designate of the base. Example: *ibig* “love_N” → *ka-ibig-ibig* “adorable”.

28. N→A ma- + N + -an

This derivation creates an adjective that indicates requiring or characterizing of the base. Example: *bilis* “speed” → *ma-bilis-an* “requiring speed”

29. a. N→A maka- + N

These derivations create adjectives with the designation of being fond of or in favour of the base. Example: *bayan* “country” → *maka-bayan* “patriotic”

b. A→A maka- + A

Example: *bago* “new” → *maka-bago* “progressive”

30. a. N→A na- + DUP_A- + ka- + N

These derivations create an adjective with the designation or causing or serving to produce the base. Example: *antok* “sleepiness” → *na-ka-ka-antok* “causing sleepiness”

b. N→A na- + ka- + DUP_A- + N

Example: *antok* “sleepiness” → *na-ka-a-antok* “causing sleepiness”

31. a. V→A na- + DUP_A- + kapang- + V

These derivations create adjectives indicating causation or production of the state designated by the *mang*-verb form or the base. Example: *ma-mutla* “be temporarily pale” → *na-ka-kapa-mutla* “causing temporary paleness”

b. V→A na- + kapang- + DUP_A- + V

Example: *ma-mutla* “be temporarily pale” → *na-kapa-mu-mutla* “causing temporary paleness”

32. V→A naka- + V

This derivation designates that the described element is in the position or state that results from the *-um*-verbal form of the base. Example: *h-um-arap* “face” → *naka-harap* “facing”

ma- Adjectives

ma- Adjectives are the basic nominally derived adjectives.

33. N→A ma- + N

Example: *bigat* “weight” → *ma-bigat* “heavy”

pa- Adjectives

pa- Adjectives are all derived from verbs.

34. V→A pa- + DUP₂ + V

This derivation creates what Schachter calls intermittent-activity adjectives. These adjectives represent verbal actions that occur intermittently, from time to time. Example: *d-um-alo* “attend” → *pa-dalu-dalo* “attend now and then”

35. V→A pa- + V

This derivation creates incipient-activity adjectives. These adjectives indicate the commencement of the action denoted by the base verb. Example: *um-akyat* “climb” → *pa-akyat* “starting to climb”

pang- Adjectives

There two types of *pang-* adjectives: the first type of adjectives, which are derived from nouns are called reservational adjectives and the second, which are derived from verbs are called instrumental adjectives.

36. N→A pang- + N

Reservational adjectives have a meaning of the derived noun being reserved for some purpose. Example: *kamay* “watch_N” → *pang-kamay* “watch for use on ...”

37. V→A pang- + V

Instrumental adjectives are used to describe nouns giving them the meaning of being used for the action denoted by the verb. Example: *h-um-abi* “weave” → *pang-habi* “... used for weaving”

Adjectives of Inclination

Like their name, adjectives of inclination are used to represent someone or something being fond of an activity designated by the verb. Each of these derivations is related to a different verb derivation class: *-um-* verbs, *mag-* verbs, *mang-* verbs and *ma-* verbs respectively.

38. V→A pala- + V

Example: *b-um-asa* “read” → *pala-basa* “fond of reading”

39. V→A mapag- + V

Example: *mag-kape* “drink coffee” → *mapag-kape* “fond of drinking coffee”

40. V→A mapang- + V

Example: *man-ligalig* “cause worry” → *mapang-ligalig* “fond of causing worry”

41. V→A ma- + V + -in

Example: *ma-ingit* “be envious” → *ma-inggit-in* “inclined to be envious”

Verbal:

Base Verb Classes

In Tagalog, there is an extensive voice system that Schachter calls a focus system. He refers to it as a focus system because it is how elements are focussed and topicalised. It also means that the role and relationship of the nominal elements within a sentence are marked by the verbal morphology. All verbs in Tagalog undergo a derivation process applied to a base to become a verb. The affixation that occurs in these derivations is used to determine the ‘class’ of the verb derived. A particular base can create multiple, different verbs depending upon which derivation process they undergo. For example, from the base *bili* can be derived two different verbs: *b-um-ili* “buy_{INF}” and *mag-bili* “sell_{INF}”. These infinitive derivations are used for classifying verbs thus *b-um-ili* is considered an *-um-* verb and *mag-bili* is considered a *mag-* verb. Certain bases are naturally aligned with certain derivational classes. Also, some of the oblique focus types such as locative focus and benefactive focus can be derived in two different ways, there are some bases that are derived directly into locative focus and benefactive focus infinitive forms. These bases are ‘naturally’ associated with locative or benefactive focus. The second method of derivation for benefactive and locative focus verbs is taken from using actor focus bases. I have included immediately below not only the infinitive

forms but also the involuntary-action forms. The involuntary action forms have a meaning that the verbal base's action 'happened' as opposed to being consciously and deliberately performed. I have also included indirect-action forms as well which are derived from the same simple bases as the infinitive and involuntary-action forms with the meaning of permitting or allowing the action of the verb base. Also included are intensive forms of the verbs.

Immediately below, I have created a chart showing all of the derivations necessary to create a verb from a simple base (i.e. a base without affixes). In the case of Involuntary-Action verbs, the X represents the fact that the base can be simple or complex. It should be noted that in the *-um-* infix applies between the first consonant and first vowel of the base. In the case whereby the base does not begin with a consonant, it applies as a prefix. In the case whereby multiple affixes are noted, the first is the most common for that class. I have used N to represent a nasal that assimilates to the next rightward consonant.

Verb Focus	Infinitive	Involuntary-Action	Indirect-Action	Intensive
Actor Focus 1	-um-	maka- + X	magpa-, pa- -in	mag- + DUP ₁ - + B (-L)
Actor Focus 2	mag- / magpa-	makapag- + X	magpa-, papag- -in	mag- + DUP ₁ - + B (-L)
Actor Focus 3	ma-, maka-		magpa-, pa- -in	mag- + DUP ₁ - + pa- + B (-L)
Actor Focus 4	mang-	makapang- + X	magpa-, papang- -in	mag- + DUP ₁ - + pang- + B (-L)
Object Focus 1	-in	ma- + X	ipa-	pag- + DUP ₁ - + B + -in/-an (-L)
Object Focus 2	i-	ma- + X	ipa-	i- + pag- + DUP ₁ - + B (-L)
Object Focus 3	-an	ma- + X	pa- -an	pag- + DUP ₁ - + B + -in/-an (-L)
Locative Focus	-an	ma- + X	pa- -an	pag- + DUP ₁ - + B + -in/-an (-L)
Benefactive Focus	i-	ma- + X	ipa-	i- + pag- + DUP ₁ - + B (-L)
Instrument Focus	ipaN-	ma- + X	ipa-	
Reason Focus	ika-	ma- + X	ipa-	

As mentioned above, benefactive focus and locative focus forms can also be derived from actor focus bases.

Also, there are specific indirect-action derivations for these specific forms that are shown below.

Infinitive	Benefactive	Indirect Action Benefactive	Locative	Indirect Action Locative
-um-	i-	ipagpa-	pag- -an	pagpa- -an, papag- -an
mag- / magpa-	ipag-	ipagpa-	pag- -an	pagpa- -an, papag- -an
ma-, maka-			ka- -an, pag- -an	pagpa- -an, papag- -an
mang-	ipang-	ipagpa-, ipapang-	pang- -an	papang- -an

Below is another table of derivations, this time of Indirect Action forms of Causative mood verbs and Intensive forms of Recent Perfective verb forms described in the verbal inflection section below.

Infinitive	Causative	Indirect Action Causative	Recent Perfective	Intensive Recent Perfective
-um-	i-, ika-	ikapakpa-	ka- + DUP _A -	ka- + DUP _A - + DUP ₂ -
mag- / magpa-	i(ka)pag-	ikapakpa-	ka- + DUP _A - + pag-	ka- + DUP _A - + pag- + DUP ₂ -
ma-, maka-	ika-	ikapakpa-	ka- + DUP _A -	ka- + DUP _A - + DUP ₂ -
mang-	i(ka)pang-	ikapagpapang-	ka- + DUP _A - + pang-	ka- + DUP _A - + DUP ₂ - + pang-

Complex Bases

Beyond the derivation of verbs from simple bases, derived nouns, derived numerals (not discussed in this sketch in interest of space) and derived adjectives. With derived adjectives, there is no set formula for deriving them; it is quite varied, so in interest of space I will not list the copious number of formulas here. For using derived nouns as bases, a verbal affix is attached to the derived noun form. Example: *bahay-bahay-an* “doll house” → *mag-bajay-bahay-an* “play house”. Compound bases, which will be addressed in the next section, also exist.

Inflection:

Verbal:

In Tagalog, verbs are inflected for aspect, number, and mood. There are three aspects in the Tagalog verbal system: perfective, contemplative and progressive. These aspects are important as Tagalog does not have a tense system. Unlike the rest of the language, which has a singular, dual, plural number system, verbs are naturally singular and are inflected for plural number. Tagalog also inflects for three moods: causative, imperative and social. Unlike causative and imperative moods, which are fairly common and self-explanatory, social mood refers to verbs that are performed together with another person or other people. With the exceptions of aspect and imperative mood, the rest of the moods and number inflections only apply to actor focus verbs. That being said, the table immediately below will show the inflections that apply to almost all focus types and the subsequent tables will show the actor focus specific inflections. I should note that while, these are typically inflectional categories, and hence their listing here, the processes involved in Tagalog make it seem that these are all forms of derivation as all the forms are created from common bases that in themselves are not verbs until they are derived. The initially derived verbs, are not further inflected, at least not in Schachter’s analysis, and without the meanings and uses of the individual morphemes involved, which too is lacking from Schachter’s grammar, it is nigh impossible to tell whether there are truly inflections or derivations.

In the tables below I have used the following notation in addition to that which was specified above: C (reduplicates the first consonant of the base), V (reduplicates the first vowel of the base), and N (nasal consonant that is determined by assimilating the place of articulation of the following consonant).

Verb Focus	Infinitive	Contemplative	Progressive	Perfective	Imperative
Actor Focus 1	-um-	CV-	CumV-	-um-	∅ (verb root)
Actor Focus 2	mag- / magpa-	magCV-	nagCV-	nag-	pag-
Actor Focus 3	ma-, maka-	maCV-	naCV-	na-	
Actor Focus 4	mang-	mangCV-	nangCV-	nang-	pang-
Object Focus 1	-in	CV- ... -in	CinV-	-in-	-a (or verb root)
Object Focus 2	i-	iCV-	iCinV-	i-...-in-	-an
Object Focus 3	-an	CV- ... -an	CinV- ... -an	-in- ... -an	-i
Locative Focus	-an	CV- ... -an	CinV- ... -an	-in- ... -an	
Benefactive Focus	i-	iCV-	iCinV-	i-in-	
Instrument Focus	ipaN-	ipaNCV-	ipinaNCV-	ipinaN-	
Reason Focus	ika-	ikaCV-	ikinaCV-	ikina-	

Verb Focus	Infinitive	Causative	Social	Recent Perfective	Plural
Actor Focus 1	-um-	i-, ika-	maki-	ka- + DUP _A -	ma(nga)gsi-
Actor Focus 2	mag-, magpa-	i(ka)pag-	maki(pag)-, makipagpa-	ka- + DUP _A - + pag-	ma(nga)gsipag- (+ X)
Actor Focus 3	ma-, maka-	ika-	maki-	ka- + DUP _A -	manga-, makanga-
Actor Focus 4	mang-	i(ka)pang-	makipang-	ka- + DUP _A - + pang-	ma(nga)gsipang-

Compounding:

Nominal:

Nouns:

Compounding is a very dominant process in Tagalog. Nominal compounding is very common and is very productive. Below are the five types of nominal compounds with examples; Descriptive compounds, object compounds, purpose compounds, possessive compounds and source compounds respectively.

42. N + N → N N + LINK + N

In this type of compound, the second noun describes or specifies the first noun. Example: *daan* “road” + *bakal* “iron” → *daa-ng-bakal* “railroad tracks”.

43. V + N → N V + LINK + N

In this type of compound, the first element expresses an activity or instrument and the second element expresses its object or goal. Example: *basag* “breaking” + *ulo* “head” → *basag-ø-ulo* “fight_N”

44. N + N → N N + LINK + N

In this type of compound, the first element represents an object and the second represents the purpose of use of the first element. Example: *bahay* “house” + *paaralan* “school” → *bahay-ø-paaralan* “schoolhouse”

45. N + N → N N + LINK + N

This type of compound indicates possession. The first noun expressed something possessed by the second. Example: *anak* “child” + *araw* “sun” → *anak-ø-araw* “albino”

46. N + N → N N + LINK + N

The first element represents designates an object and the second indicates its source. Example: *bata* “child” + *lansangan* “street” → *bata-ng-lansangan* “homeless child”

Verbal:

Compound Bases:

Compound bases for verbal derivation can be created from noun compounds of the type expressed in the transformation below and adjectival compounds by adding a verbal affix to the compound. Though Schachter notes that a compound base can be created from adjectival compounds, he does not explicate how adjectival compounds are formed.

47. V_{AFF} + N + LINK + N

Example: *basag-ulo* “fight_N” → *mag-basag-ulo* “engage in a fight”.

48. V_{AFF} + Adjective Compound

Example: *agaw-buhay* “near death” → *mag-agaw-buhay* “be near death”.

References

Schachter, P., & Otañes, F. T. (1972). *Tagalog reference grammar*. Berkeley: University of California Press.