

RAMOS, TERESITA V. 1971. *Makabagong balarila ng Pilipino*, edited by Ernesto Constantino, translated and arranged by M.N. Jorda and L.F. Gonzales. Quezon City: Rex Printing Company, Inc. Pp. 151.

Reviewed by GLORIA V. BAYLON, Philippine Normal College

As stated in the preface, the original English version of this book was based on 'A Synopsis of Tagalog Structures' prepared by Teresita Ramos for Peace Corps Volunteers. It was edited by Howard McKaughan and published by the Pacific Asian Linguistics Institute of the University of Hawaii.

It appears that the present edition was translated into Pilipino and rearranged by M.N. Jorda and L.F. Gonzales in order to answer the need of a growing number of students taking Pilipino.

This translation was published way back in 1971, or over a decade ago; if, therefore, the contents are not quite new or up-to-date at present, this need not be taken against the edition. The book deserves merit for the illumination it can offer to readers and for its contribution to scholarship on Pilipino.

The book consists of 151 pages and is divided into nine sections with an additional ten-page glossary.

Section I gives an inventory and description of the sounds (consonants, vowels, diphthongs) of Tagalog. Included in this section are phonemic charts and examples of minimal pairs to show the distribution of each sound.

Section II is divided into three subsections. The first gives a brief description of how words are formed; the second discusses the different parts of speech; and the third describes the affixation of basic words.

Section III distinguishes the predicational from the identificational sentence. The two elements of a sentence — the subject and the predicate — are introduced here.

Section IV classifies the basic sentences into declarative, interrogative, imperative. The affirmative and negative forms of the basic sentences as well as the normal and inverted order of sentences are explained in this section.

Section V enumerates the different ways of expanding basic sentences: nominalization, modification, coordination, and embedding.

Section VI gives an account of how adjectives are used to express the positive, comparative, and superlative degrees.

Section VII presents the two types of causative sentences, the single causative and the double causative.

Section VIII differentiates sentences without subjects or topicless sentences as being existential, phenomenal, temporal, those with auxiliary verbs, and those with the *ka*-affix verbs.

Section IX deals with two types of interjections: one without subject and predicate and the other, sentences introduced by exclamatory words to express sudden emotion, outcry, or surprise.

The last section is a glossary which supplies some of the definitions or meanings of terms used which are not clearly defined in the text.

The book does not expouse or mention any particular theoretical model in its description; nevertheless, the analysis and presentation show that features from different models have been adopted, as for instance, the use of phonemes in the classification of sounds, the process of affixation and representation of stress patterned after the INL

grammar, focus system and expansion of sentences similar to the classification given in the Tagalog Reference Grammar, and the classification of basic and topicless sentences by the author(s).

For a grammar text of only about 150 pages, covering a wide range of topics, it may be expected that treatment of the contents has scratched only the surface of some parts. Hence, a reader needs to have some linguistic orientation and good working knowledge of the structure of Tagalog to fill the gaps and straighten out the inconsistencies found in the text.

The following observations may signify the need to provide further explanation and discussion with respect to certain items.

- 1) Minimal pairs are presented (pages 2-7), but the purpose of the contrast is not explained. No distinction is made between the phonemic and orthographic representation of the data. The glottal stop is said to be found in initial, medial, between vowels, and in final position, but the data do not reflect these occurrences.
- 2) For the *ng*-pronouns, only one form is given – the post-position. Examples given in the book (page 20) are:

Ginawa mo ba ang bahay?

Sinulat niya ang kuwento.

These pronouns can also occur in pre-position as in the following form:

Iyo bang ginawa ang bahay?

Kaniyang sinulat ang kuwento.

- 3) A rule is mentioned (page 53 and 82) which says that *-an/-in* become *-han/-hin*, respectively, when the sound each follows is a vowel. Certain words like *gawain*, *lutuan*, *tahian* that fall outside the rule are, however, not accounted for.
- 4) The section on expansion of sentences describes what changes occur in the surface structure of the sentences, but does not explain how these expansions have been derived from the basic sentences. This section would possibly be clearer and more interesting to the reader if the different processes of expansion had been presented in detail.
- 5) Quantifiers and numerals are considered two different parts of speech because unlike adjectives, they cannot occur after the noun they modify. Not being adjectives they may possibly be considered as features of nouns, as Gonzalez (1973) explains.

There are also instances in the book where the same grammatical points are spread over several different pages. This makes it difficult for the reader to concentrate on the point being learned. Besides, these repetitive references to the same thing tend to result in some inconsistencies that are likely to confuse the reader. Some uncertain statements and inconsistencies that call for clarification or correction follow:

REVIEW OF
MAKABAGONG BALARILA NG PILIPINO

- 1) 'The consonant /y/ is palatal and voiceless and when pronounced, the tip of the tongue points to the upper teeth' (page 6, paragraph 3).

On the contrary, *y* is voiced (even the chart on page 1 shows that /y/ is voiced) and when pronounced, the tip of the tongue is pushed against the back of the lower front teeth.

- 2) 'The *iw* in *iwan* and *iwi* is considered a diphthong' (page 8).

By definition, *iw* cannot be considered a diphthong, since, *i* and *w* do not occur in the same syllable.

- 3) 'In Tagalog there are no nouns that are marked for gender' (page 16).

Certain nouns like *ina-ama*, *ginoo-ginang*, *tatang-nanang* do not seem to support the rule.

- 4) 'Verbs are classified according to their affixes. The affix identifies the complement of the verb in focus' (page 17).

The following examples do not support the rule:

Ikuha mo si Nena ng tubig. (benefactive focus)

Ibili mo ng aklat ang pera. (Instrumental focus)

Itago mo ang aklat. (object focus)

Labhan mo ang damit. (object focus)

Dalhin mo ang basket. (object focus)

Dalhan mo siya ng pagkain. (directional focus)

The above six examples show that verbs may not be classified according to their affixes; otherwise, this will stir arguments. It is the complement of the verb in focus that identifies the affix that is to be used to form the verb.

- 5) 'Verbs can be classified into: causative and non-causative. The prefix *pa-* is added to the verb to express causative action. In a causative sentence there are two actors, one who makes a second person do the action, and the other, the one who performs the action' (page 18).

Examples given in the book:

Causative: (1) Naglaba ako ng damit.

Non-causative: (2) Nagpalaba ako ng damit sa labandera.

A clear error is committed here. Sentence 1 is non-causative and 2 is causative.

- 6) 'The superlative degree of the adjective can be said even without mentioning the thing being compared with. These adjectives are modified by adverbs such as:



The first example contradicts the statement as shown by this sentence:

Di-hamak na magaling si Ana *kaysa kay Nena*.

The sentence is not complete if the portion is deleted. Without it, the statement may be used as an answer to a question and such question carries with it complete information about the topic.

- 7) 'Markers are words which are uninflected and devoid of meaning by themselves, but they can show relationships among the elements of a sentence' (page 43).

Part of this statement is not exactly true since the markers *si*, *ni*, and *kay* can be inflected for number. Thus we say *sina*, *nina*, *kina*.

- 8) 'The prefix *mang-* has a special function, it expresses plurality of action, habitual and/or repeated action' (page 49).

Exceptions to this statement need to be cited since verbs like *manganak*, *mangako*, *mangisda* may be used without the meaning of plurality, habitual or repeated action.

- 9) 'The affix *mag-* differs from *mang-* since the former expresses only a single action while the latter expresses habitual action directed towards several objects' (page 49).

This statement cannot stand by itself as a generalization since *mag-* can also express repeated action if there is a corresponding change in the stress of the root word, as in *magkuhá*, *magkaín*, *magtapón*, *magbaság*, etc. .

- 10) 'In some instances, the affix *-an* points to the subject as the object' (page 51). *Sa ilang pagkakataon, ang -an ay nagtuturong ang simuno ay siyang layon.* (Tagalog version) Example in the text: *Labhan mo ang damit.*

I suppose the problem here lies in the translation. To avoid misinterpretation, the sentence should have been translated thus: *Sa ilang pagkakataon, ang -an ay nagtuturong ang layon ang nagiging simuno ng pangungusap.*

- 11) 'There are two types of sentences in Tagalog: the predicational (*pagpapanaguri*) and identificational (*pagtitiyak*). In a predicational sentence, the predicate comes before the subject, while in an identificational sentence, the subject occurs before the predicate' (page 67). 'Another characteristic of a predicational sentence is the marker *si* or *ang* preceding the subject'. The examples given in the book are:

(A) Ilokano si Ernesto.

Maganda ang babae.

Ilokano siya.

Maganda ito.

REVIEW OF
MAKABAGONG BALARILA NG PILIPINO

'Aside from the subject occurring before the predicate, another characteristic feature of an identificational sentence is that both subject and predicate can be marked by *ang* or *si*, making them both definite. There is also a case of an indefinite subject but with a definite predicate' (page 68). Examples of definite subject and definite predicate are:

| <i>Subject</i> | <i>Predicate</i> |
|------------------------|------------------|
| (B) Si Ponciano Pineda | ang direktor |
| Siya | ang maganda |

Examples of indefinite subject but definite predicate are:

| <i>Subject</i> | <i>Predicate</i> |
|----------------|--------------------|
| (C) Pulis | ang matapang |
| Siya | si Binibining Paz. |

This classification tends to be confusing since from the examples (A), (B) and (C), there are similar structures such as *Si Ernesto* (subject in (A)), *Si Binibining Paz* (predicate in (C)), and *si Ponciano Pineda* (as subject in (B)), the analysis of which seems to be indecisive and unstable. Again on page 70, *ang maganda*, *ang pangit*, *ang mayaman* are classified as subjects, but in (B) and (C) above, *ang maganda* and *ang matapang* are categorized as predicates. It is my feeling that sentences wherein the predicate and the subject are both marked, are not really basic sentences. Rather, they are the results of transformation (which according to Schachter, in a class discussion, is a case of secondary topicalization to express emphasis). Most often, these sentences are normally used to answer questions requiring definite answers.

The Tagalog Reference Grammar (Schachter & Otanes 1972), page 529, gives this explanation:

'An unmarked noun occurring in predicate position is given a meaning of definiteness if it is preceded by the marker *ang*. Definitized predicates often occur in answers to information questions introduced by *sino*, *ano*, or *alin*. And also to express confirmation'.

Examples cited are:

| | |
|-----------------------|-------------------------------|
| Sino ang titser? | Ang Amerikano ang titser. |
| Ano ang nasunog? | Ang karne ang nasunog. |
| Alin ang pinakamahal? | Ang singsing and pinakamahal. |

If, however, the authors believe their claims to be correct, then perhaps their interpretation may call for a stronger basis or support. Every ambiguity is to be resolved satisfactorily.

- 12) On page 35, a passage runs thus: 'Remember that reduplication cannot occur in more than two syllables', but the examples given contradict the rule.

da-dalawa-dalawa (page 35)

da-dalawa-dalawampu't isa (page 36)

- 13) There seems to be a confusion regarding the definition of morphophonemic change. On page 80 and, likewise, on page 145, assimilation appears to be made synonymous with morphophonemic change. Assimilation is only a type of morphophonemic change.
- 14) 'There are three types of modals: those that do not accept an actor topic like *gusto* and *ayaw* . . .' (page 113). Examples given are:

Gusto ng batang maligo.

Ayaw ni Pedrong mag-aral.

The authors failed to note that if the non-focus complement is placed in initial position, it can be topicalized. Thus we can say:

Ang bata ay gustong maligo.

Si Pedro ay ayaw mag-aral.

- 15) I encountered difficulty in understanding some of the translations, particularly, the discussion about the verbs and their complements. Examples of these translations are:

* Hindi tumatanggap ng obligatoryong tagatanggap ang ilang pandiwang mang- na nagpapahayag na tagatanggap ng salitang-ugat. (page 91)

* Maaaring mangailangan ng obligatoryong ganapan ang ibang pandiwang di-tumatanggap ng tagatanggap sa pokus na kalaanan. (page 93)

* Karaniwan nang tumatanggap ng opsyunal na kaganapang tagaganap at ganapan ang mga pandiwang tumatanggap ng pokus na pangganap. (page 94)

* Samakatuwid, maaaring mayroon o walang di pokus na kaganapang pangganap ang pandiwang pokus na kaganapan. (page 94)

The copious use in a single statement of words with the same roots tend to make heavy demands on the mind and patience of the reader.

- 16) As a native speaker of Tagalog, I must say I do not feel at ease with some of the examples given (pages 52 – 56) that illustrate causative sentences:

Palabhan mo ang damit. (Buhat sa: labhan. Maaari rin: Ipalaba) * (page 53)

**REVIEW OF
MAKABAGONG BALARILA NG PILIPINO**

Ipabili mo ako ng yelo sa tindahan. * (page 55)

Ipaglalabhan */Ipagpalaba mo siya ng damit. (page 55)

Nakapagawa ako ng bahay. * (page 56)

Napagawa ko ang bahay. * (page 56)

If the aforementioned sentences with asterisks are dialectal or rarely used, then perhaps it is advisable to avoid them as examples; unless of course, these are used in describing a particular dialect, in which case, the dialect needs to be identified.

17) Some other sentences are given in the text that are not normally used and, therefore, may not be acceptable to other Tagalog speakers (pages 134-135):

* Ako ang nagpakain ng lugaw sa alila sa anak niya.

* Ang lugaw ang ipinapakain ko sa alila sa anak niya.

* Ako ang nagpapatulog ng anak niya sa alila.

The last sentence may be used, but a different meaning results.

Apparently some of the rules and conclusions were based on insufficient sample data so that the authors overlooked the irregular forms or exceptions to the rules that are usually found in a language.

In conclusion, it can be said that in spite of the gaps, inconsistencies, and debatable claims found in the book, the efforts exerted by the authors in the preparation of the materials and the insights and ideas therein that challenged the reviewer can be considered as significant contributions to scholarship in Pilipino.

It is hoped that the book will be revised to serve better the purpose for which it was written, whether in the original English version or in the Pilipino translation.

REFERENCES

- GONZALEZ, ANDREW B., F.S.C.** 1973. Classifiers in Tagalog: A semantic analysis. In Parangal Kay Cecilio Lopez, ed. by Andrew B. Gonzalez, F.S.C. 125-140. Quezon City: Linguistic Society of the Philippines.
- INSTITUTE OF NATIONAL LANGUAGE.** 1940. Balarila ng wikang pambansa. Manila: Bureau of Printing.
- SCHACHTER, PAUL and FE T. OTANES.** 1972. Tagalog reference grammar. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- TIANGCO, NORMA C.** 1970. Palaugnayang Pilipino. *Philippine Journal of Linguistics* 2.2,98-105.