

SOUND CHANGES IN TAGALOG WORDS OF CHINESE ORIGIN

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(Received March 15, 1973)

0. INTRODUCTION

In Llamzon and Thorpe's review of Panganiban's *Talahuluganang Pilipino-Ingles* (PJL: Dec., 1972), a count of Tagalog word roots reveals that 42% are of foreign origin. Of the 42%, Spanish loans constitute the biggest percentage – 33%, followed by Chinese and Malay, each of which has a contribution of 4%. then by English – 1%, Arabic – .07% and Sanskrit – .62%. When considering the words of foreign origin separately, Chinese has an almost equally great contribution as Spanish in the category of kinship and relations: Spanish, 20%; Chinese, 19%; and, in the category of food, Chinese has a substantial 12% (p. 135).

A cursory examination of the words of Chinese origin in Panganiban's dictionary indicates that about 95% are specifically of Amoy or Hokkien origin. Hokkien is a major Chinese language spoken by the great majority of the Chinese in the Philippines. Manuel's *Chinese Elements in the Tagalog Language* (1948) provides etymologies that are predominantly Hokkien. It is apparent from linguistic data that the Chinese who had the longest and most extensive contact with the Philippines came from the southern province of Fookien.

Manuel mentions seven guidelines which he followed in determining whether a Tagalog word is of Chinese origin or not (p. 8), one of which is phonetic correspondences. But nowhere in his book are the phonetic correspondences given systematization and used as criteria for the inclusion or the rejection of a Tagalog word as a Chinese loan. Obviously, the reason for not doing this is the fact that Manuel, who does not speak any Chinese language, has in his list words which come from different Chinese languages such as Hokkien, Cantonese and Mandarin. It would indeed be too great a task for a non-speaker of Chinese to set up systematic sound changes for all three Chinese languages. In view of this, therefore, this paper will attempt to systematize the sound changes that have taken place in the Tagalog words of Hokkien origin.

1. THE PHONEMES OF HOKKIEN

Hokkien has seventeen consonant phonemes, five oral vowel phonemes, five nasal vowel phonemes and five phonemic tones.

1.1 CONSONANT PHONEMES. The consonant phonemes of Hokkien are shown in the chart below:

	Bil.	Alveo.	Pal.	Vel.	Glott.
Stops:					
VI.	p _h p	t _h t		k _h k	q
Vd.	b			g	
Fricatives:					
VI.		s			h

Affricates:

Vl.

c^h
c

Nasals:

Vd.

m

n

ng

Lateral:

Vd.

l

1.2 ORAL VOWEL PHONEMES. The oral vowel phonemes of Hokkien are shown in the chart below:

	Front	Mid	Back
High	i		u
Mid	e		o
Low		a	

1.3 NASAL VOWEL PHONEMES. The nasal vowel phonemes of Hokkien are shown in the chart below:

	Front	Mid	Back
High	ĩ		ũ
Mid	ẽ		õ
Low		ã	

1.4 TONE PHONEMES. The tone phonemes of Hokkien are:

Rising	/ˊ/	kaú	'monkey'
Falling	/ˋ/	kaù	'nine'
High	/ˊˊ/	kaû	'to hook'
Low	/ˊˋ/	kaũ	'to reach, arrive'
Mid	/ˊˊˋ/	kaū	'thick'

2. TONE LOSS

Hokkien words borrowed into Tagalog have completely lost their tone distinctions since the latter is a non-tonal language.

3. CONSONANTS

Hokkien loan words in Tagalog show that Hokkien consonants have undergone two sound processes: merging and split.

3.1 CONSONANT MERGING. Hokkien voiceless aspirated and voiceless stops are merged in Hokkien loan words in Tagalog.

Voiceless aspirated bilabial stop with voiceless bilabial stop:

/p^h/ and /p/ > /p/

Examples: Hok. /lâk/ 'fall, loosen,' /p^hâk/ 'to prostrate oneself on floor' in

Tag. /lagpak/ 'to fall' Hok. /péq/ 'white,' /hí/ 'fish' in Tag. /pehe/ 'fresh or salted crabs or shrimps'

Voiceless aspirated alveolar stop with voiceless alveolar stop:

/t^h/ and /t/ > /t/

Examples: Hok. /t^háng/ 'worm,' /à/ 'diminutive particle' in Tag. /tanga/ 'clothes moth'

Hok. /tiêng/ 'lamp,' /laú/ 'tower' in

Tag. /tanglaw/ 'thing that gives light'

Voiceless aspirated velar stop with voiceless velar stop:

/k^h/ and /k/ > /k/

Example: Hok. /k^hín-c^hǎi/ 'celery' in

Tag. /kintsay/ 'same'

Hok. /kō-ǎ/ 'older brother' in

Tag. /kuya/ 'same'

3.2 CONSONANT SPLIT. Hokkien affricates, which are treated as single phonemes, are split into two unit phonemes in Tagalog loan words.

Voiceless alveolar affricate split into Tagalog voiceless dental stop and voiceless dental fricative:

/c/ > /t/, /s/

Examples: Hok. /dī/ 'second,' /cì/ 'sister' in

Tag. /ditse/ 'second older sister'

Voiceless aspirated alveolar affricate split into Tagalog voiceless dental stop and voiceless dental fricative:

/c^h/ > /t/, /s/

Example: Hok. /pēq-c^hǎi/ 'Chinese cabbage' in

Tag. /petsay/ 'same'

The above phenomenon is an instance of the convergence of two sounds – Hokkien /c^h/ and /c/ – which later split into two different phonemes, a phenomenon which Hoenigswald describes as the "split of a merged phoneme" (1960: 115). The convergence and the split are, of course, in this case, in another language.

3.3 OTHER CONSONANTS. The rest of the consonant phonemes of Hokkien have not undergone sound changes.

Voiced bilabial stop: /b/

Example: Hok. /bi/ 'rice,' /kō/ 'pastry' in

Tag. /biko/ 'sweetened rice cake'

Voiced velar stop: /g/

Example: Hok. /gū-à/ 'small cow' in

Tag. /guya/ 'calf, whether cow or carabao'

Voiceless alveolar fricative: /s/

Example: Hok. /sò/ 'lock,' /sí/ 'key' in

Tag. /sosiq/ 'key'

Voiceless velar fricative: /h/

Example: Hok. /hé/ 'shrimp,' /kō/ 'salted or pickled' in
Tag. /heko/ 'same'

Voiced lateral: /l/

Example: Hok. /lūn-piá:/ 'rolled Chinese waffles' in
Tag. /lumpyaq/ 'same'

Voiced bilabial nasal: /m/

Example: Hok. /mǐ/ 'noodle,' /soǎ:/ 'thread' in
Tag. /miswa/ 'wheat-flour noodles'

Voiced alveolar nasal: /n/

Example: Hok. /pùn-tāu/ 'device for gathering dirt' in
Tag. /puntaw/ 'same'

Voiced velar nasal: /ng/

Example: Hok. /sàng/ 'give,' /lè/ 'rite' in
Tag. /sanglaq/ 'to pawn or mortgage'

4. ORAL VOWELS. The oral vowels of Hokkien have undergone processes of merging, syncope, and metathesis. In other instances, they have remained constant.

4.1 VOWEL MERGING. Tagalog loan words show the merging of two Hokkien front vowels and two back vowels in syllable final position.

High front with mid front vowel:

/i/ and /e/ > /i/

Example: Hok. /hō/ 'weave,' /sē/ 'yarn' in
Tag. /husi/ 'cloth from pineapple'

While a great number of Hokkien loan words follow this sound change, a small number do not. One such word is Tag. /toge/ 'bean sprouts' which originated from Hok. /taŭ-ge/ 'same.' Such inconsistencies do happen, and comparativists have theorized that these are due to either one of two causes: (1) the words came into the borrowing language at a later stage, and (2) the words entered the borrowing language indirectly through another language (Hockett, 1958: 418).

High back with mid back vowel:

/u/ and /o/ > /o/

Example: Hok. /taŭ-hū/ 'soy bean cake' in
Tag. /taho/ 'same'

4.2 VOWEL SYNCOPE AND METATHESIS. These sound processes are not widespread in Tagalog words of Hokkien origin. A good example of vowel syncope is in the Tagalog word /paslang/ 'to kill someone' which comes from three Hokkien morphemes: /p^hâq/ 'to beat,' /sì/ 'to die,' /láng/ 'person,' where the medial /i/ disappeared. Metathesis occurred in disyllabic words such as Tagalog /upo/ 'white squash' which comes from Hok. /ǒ-pú/ 'same' and in Tag. /hukboq/ 'army' from Hok. /hǒkbǔ/ 'same,' where there is an interchange in position between initial and final vowels.

4.3 VOWEL STABILITY. Hokkien vowels in Tagalog loan-words do not undergo sound change if they occur in syllable initial position.

High front vowel: /i/

Example: Hok. /hĩ-kaũ/ 'earring' in
Tag. /hikaw/ 'same'

Mid front vowel: /e/

Example: Hok. /pěq-čai/ 'Chinese cabbage' in
Tag. /petsay/ 'same'

High back vowel: /u/

Example: Hok. /lũn-piã/ 'rolled Chinese waffles' in
Tag. /lumpyaq/ 'same'

Mid back vowel: /o/

Example: Hok. /hõ-piã/ 'sweet bean cake' in
Tag. /hopyaq/ 'same'

A counter-example to this formalized sound change is the Tagalog word /husi/ which comes from Hokkien /hõ/ 'weave and /sẽ/ 'yarn.' Again, this may be due to one of two reasons mentioned in 4.1.

Low central vowel: /a/

Example: Hok. /bãq/ 'meat,' /č^hui/ 'pieces' in
Tag. /batsoy/ 'chopped entrails of pig'

5. DIPHTHONGS. Hokkien has quite a number of vowel combinations, the majority of which are composed of either /i/ or /u/ as first or last element (Bodman, 1955:2), thus: /ia/, /iu/, /ai/, /au/, /ou/, /ui/, and /iu/. In the Tagalog loan words, the diphthongs become either monophthongized or are replaced by a semi-vowel; in the case of the latter process, either the first or the last element is replaced by /w/ or /y/.

5.1. MONOPHTHONGIZATION. Several Hokkien diphthongs are merged, then monophthongized in Tagalog loan words.

/iu/ > /o/

Example: Hok. /bi/ 'rice,' /ciũ/ 'thick liquid' in
Tag. /bitso-bitso/ 'rice-flour cake'

/au/ > /o/

Example: Hok. /taũ-koã/ 'bean curd' in
Tag. /tokwa/ 'same'

/ui/ > /o/

Example: Hok. /iãn-sui/ 'colander' in
Tag. /yansoy/ 'same'

In the following sound changes, only monophthongization has taken place:

/ie/ > /i/

Example: Hok. /hiēng-à/ 'chest' in
Tag. /hinga/ 'to breath'

/ua/ > /a/

Example: Hok. /tuã-kaú/ 'greedy' in
Tag. /takaw/ 'same'

5.2. VOWEL REPLACEMENT. If the initial or final element of a Hokkien diphthong is /i/, it is replaced by the semi-vowel /y/ when borrowed into Tagalog. If the initial or final element is /o/ or /u/, it is replaced by the semi-vowel /w/.

/io/ > /yo/

Example Hok. /sãm/ 'to sprinkle,' /iõq/ 'medicine' in
Tag. /samyõq/ 'fragrance, to inhale the aroma'

/ai/ > /ay/

Example: Hok. /pēq-c^hǎi/ 'Chinese cabbage' in
Tag. /petsay/ 'same'

/oa/ > /wa/

Example: Hok. /taŭ-koã/ 'bean curd' in
Tag. /tokwa/ 'same'

/au/ > /aw/

Example: Hok. /hī-kaú/ 'earring' in
Tag. /hikaw/ 'same'

5.3. SEMI-VOWEL INSERTION. Tagalog loan words would have a /y/ inserted between two vowels that are the final and initial elements of two separate morphemes in the Hokkien source: thus, Hok. /gū/ 'cow' /à/ 'diminutive particle' becomes Tag. /guya/ and Hok. /kò/ 'older brother' /à/ 'address particle' becomes Tag. /kuya/ 'older brother.' This phenomenon illustrates what Lehman calls "syllable balancing" (1962:167).

6. NASAL VOWELS

Tagalog loan words indicate that Hokkien nasal vowels undergo denasalization and split in certain environments.

6.1. DENASALIZATION. Hokkien nasal vowels are denasalized when they appear in the final position in Tagalog loan words. Examples of this sound change are:

Hok. /taŭ-koã/ 'bean curd' in Tag. /tokwa/ 'same'

Hok. /lūn-piã/ 'sweet bean cake' in Tag. /lumpyaq/ 'same'

Hok. /hō-piã/ 'sweet bean cake' in Tag. /hopya/ 'same'

6.2. SPLIT. Nasal vowels change into a vowel + nasal combination when they appear in initial position in Tagalog loan words. Where they appear as single phonemes in Hokkien, they are reinterpreted as a combination of two phonemes in the borrowed forms. An example of this phenomenon is Hok. /sã-ci/ 'third older sister' in Tag. /sanse/ 'same.'

7. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The foregoing sections have shown what sound changes and what sound processes are involved in Tagalog loan words of Hokkien origin. It is to be expected that Hokkien, being a language entirely different from Tagalog, would undergo "drastic" sound changes once it came into contact with the latter. The more important sound changes that Hokkien underwent include:

1. the loss of tone distinctions
2. the loss of phonemic distinctions between aspirated and unaspirated stops
3. the loss of diphthongs
4. the loss of nasal vowels

The most common phonological processes involved in these sound changes are:

1. merging
2. split
3. monophthongization
4. vowel replacement

While the investigation has not been an exhaustive one, it has nonetheless come up with a set of sound laws which can be used in the future to determine whether a Tagalog loan word is of Hokkien origin or not. What needs to be done further is the investigation

of the exceptions to the sound laws with the hope of arriving at a more precise and accurate picture of the nature of Hokkien influences on the Tagalog language in general.

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