VARIATIONS IN HYPHEN USAGE WHEN WRITING 'TAGLISH' VERBS

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When English root words are mapped onto Tagalog stems 'Taglish' verbs are created. These verbs are inflected for both focus and aspect in the same way that Tagalog verbs are; however, despite the fact that the Tagalog orthographic system has strict rules on hyphen usage, writers of Taglish verbs are showing variation in how they use such hyphens. In analyzing sentences from just five samples, six differences were discovered. Such results suggest that Taglish is an orthographic system still in flux.

1. Introduction

Filipinos, who are nearly all bilingual (Bautista, 1991, p.28), are incredibly skillful at merging languages. One result of such merging is 'Taglish' - a combination of both Tagalog and English - with Tagalog remaining the dominant language. (If more English than Tagalog were to be used, then the new system would be called "Engalog" (McArthur, 1992, p. 1020).) This paper looks in particular at how Taglish verbs are created and notes that when English root words are "mapped onto" (Poplack, 1980, p. 586) Tagalog stems, variations in hyphen usage appear. In a study of just five written samples, six differences were discovered, suggesting that perhaps Taglish is an orthographic system still in flux.

In this paper the term 'merging' will be used for what is traditionally known as 'code-switching,' 'code-mixing,' and 'borrowing.' This is partly due to the fact that the cut-off points between what constitutes switching, mixing, and borrowing have not always been well defined (Bautista, 1991, p. 30). In addition, previous research done on Taglish seems to suggest that the code-switching model does not adequately account for the way that Filipinos combine Tagalog and English. [1]

Although Taglish is used predominantly in Metro Manila and its surrounding provinces (McArthur, 1992, p. 1020), it is enjoyed by a much larger

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[1] For example, Bautista reports on her 1989 testing of Poplack's (1980) 'equivalence-of-structure constraint' and 'free-morpheme constraint' finding that the first "seemed to apply" but that the latter "was being violated all the time." She also found that Berk-Seligson's (1986) 'size-of-constituent constraint' was marginally opposed, with smaller units being merged more often (51%) than larger ones (1991, p. 25).

Filipino circle. Both national and international audiences are reached through the distribution of comics, magazines, newspapers, local films, and radio and television broadcasts (Rafael, 1995, p. 117). It seems, also, to be gaining strength as a system of communication. Firstly, the two languages on which it is based hold positions of high status. Tagalog is spoken by almost 30% of the population as a first language (Gonzalez, 1998, p. 492), and many Filipinos use it as an auxiliary language. In addition, Tagalog forms the structural base of the national language, 'Filipino.' According to a survey done in the late 1990's, at least 84% of the then estimated 70 million people in the Philippines spoke Filipino; English, a co-official language, was spoken by 56% (Gonzalez, 1998, p. 489). Taglish, then, draws from a potentially large pool of speakers.

A second factor, which encourages the use of Taglish, involves the ongoing implementation of language planning policies aimed at restricting the use of English. In 1974 new legislation introduced a bilingual program to replace English as the only medium of instruction in schools and universities (Gonzalez, 1998, p. 497). Subjects such as science, civics, and history began to be taught in Filipino. As part of this thrust the 'Commission of the Filipino Language' (an agency that began operating in 1992), helped to produce "bilingual lexical lists of technical terms for the academic disciplines" (Gonzalez, 1998, p. 498). In this process, which Sibayan calls "the intellectualization of Filipino" (1991, p. 69), Taglish has been flourishing. As both students and teachers were, and are, caught in linguistic middle ground between the two mediums, language-merging in classrooms has become more prevalent (Bautista, 1991, p. 30; Gonzalez, 1996, p. 210; Espiritu, 1996, p. 145). In fact Taglish is so favored now that Bautista suggests some Filipino children might be acquiring it as their mother tongue, and wonders whether or not it is "becoming a creolized variety" (1991, p. 29). For all of these reasons, the study of Taglish is worthwhile.

2. Structure of Verbs in Tagalog

Before analyzing the structure of Taglish verbs, it is important first to review how verbs are constructed in Tagalog. The verbs on Table 1 (below) represent only a small fraction of Tagalog verb types. They have been included because they reflect the kinds of Taglish verbs used in the samples, thus providing a reference point for discussing both inflection and hyphen usage.

Table 1. Tagalog Verbs Inflected for Focus and Aspect

Column A	Column B	Column C	Column D	Column E	Column F	Column G
Stem (meaning)	Focus affix	Root word	Timeless aspect	Completed aspect	Incomplete aspect	Proposed aspect
1. *pag-*	*m-* (AGT)	**luto** (to cook)	*Magluto*	*Nagluto*	*nagluluto*	*magluluto*
2. *pag-*	*m-* (AGT)	**umpisa** (to start)	*mag-umpisa*	*nag-umpisa*	*nag-uumpisa*	*mag-uumpisa*
3. *makapag-* (potentiality)	Ø (AGT)	**aral** (to study)	*makapag-aral*	*nakapag-aral*	*nakakapag-aral*	*makakapag-aral*
4. *ma-* (potentiality)	Ø (OBJ)	**kita** (to see)	*Makita*	*Nakita*	*nakikita*	*makikita*
5. *ma-* (potentiality)	*-an* (LOC)	**unawa** (to comprehend)	*maunawaan*	*naunawaan*	*nauunawaan*	*mauunawaan*
6. *pa-* (causative)	*i-* (OBJ)	**gawa** (to make)	*Ipagawa*	*ipinagawa*	*ipinagagawa*	*ipapagawa*

2.1 Inflecting for Focus and Aspect

Throughout the rest of this paper, for ease of identification, stems and affixes will be written in italics, root words will be highlighted in bold print, and reduplications will remain in normal type. Tagalog verbs are formed by using a stem (which, as in English, is sometimes just the root word). There are over sixty different stem types and many of them carry their own individual meanings. For example, Table 1 (column A) shows that both the *makapag-* (3) and *ma-* (4 & 5) stems add the element of 'potentiality.' When added to the root words (column C) they express the meanings of being 'able to study,' 'able to see,' and 'able to comprehend.' The *pa-* (6) stem (column A) is a 'causative,' and when added to its respective root word (column C), it carries the idea of 'getting someone to make something.'

An affix (prefix, infix, or suffix) is then attached to either the stem or the root word to indicate what role is in focus (see column B). A Tagalog sentence can highlight one of eight roles: agent (AGT), object (OBJ), location (LOC), instrument (INS), beneficiary (BEN), reason (RSN), performer (PER), or company (COM) (*Learning to Speak Tagalog*, 1987, p. 11). (The zero affix (Ø) is used when other grammatical features indicate the sentence focus (*Learning ...*, p. 31).) Of the verbs on Table 1 numbers 1-3 focus on the 'agent' (AGT) or person doing the 'cooking,' 'starting,' and 'studying.' Verbs 4 and 6 focus on the 'object' (OBJ). When added to the root word (column C) they express

'what' is being 'seen' and 'made.' Verb 5 puts 'location' (LOC) in focus and expresses 'what' or 'who' is being 'comprehended.'

Verbs in Tagalog are inflected not only for focus but also for one of four possible aspects: timeless (infinitive and command form), completed (usually past tense), incomplete (either past or present), and proposed (usually future) (*Learning* ..., p. 36). These aspects are outlined in columns D to G on Table 1. Aspect is marked on the verb by the particular position of the focus affix in relation to the root word, by changes in spelling to the stem and/or focus affix, and by a reduplication in some part of the verb (*Learning* ..., p. 36). For example, consider verb 1 on Table 1. The focus affix *m-* (column B) is attached to a *pag-* stem (column A) and these are then placed in front of the root word **luto** (column C) in order to form the timeless aspect (*magluto* – column D). To change from the timeless to the completed aspect (*nagluto* – column E), the *m-* affix becomes *n-*. In the incomplete aspect (*nagluluto* - column F) the *n-* affix remains the same, but the first syllable of the root word 'lu' is reduplicated. The proposed aspect (column G) uses an *m-* affix and keeps the reduplication of the root word (*magluluto*). Verb 2 follows a similar pattern, with the focus affix *m-* being connected to a *pag-* stem and these being placed before the root word **umpisa**. In moving from the timeless to the completed aspect the *m-* affix also changes to *n-*, and in the incomplete aspect the 'u' of **umpisa** (as the first syllable of the root word) is reduplicated. The proposed aspect uses the *m-* affix and also keeps the reduplication.

Verbs 3, 4, and 5 change the spelling of the stem, from *makapag-* and *ma-* (column D) to *nakapag-* and *na-* (column E). This is because verbs 3 and 4 have no focus affix (∅) to change, and verb 5 takes the focus affix (-*an*) after the root word (as in *maunawaan* –column D) instead of before the root. Reduplication in verbs 4 and 5 is similar to the pattern for the first two verbs; the first syllable of the root word is repeated (*nakikita* and *nauunawaan* – column F). Verb 3 differs in reduplication in that repetition occurs in the stem, adding an extra 'ka' so that *makapag-* (column D) becomes *nakakapag-* (column F) and *makakapag-* (column G), rather than the root word **aral** being changed. Finally, verb 6 shows several differences in inflecting for focus and aspect. The focus affix *i-* (column B) is placed before (rather than after) the *pa-* stem (column A) and these are then positioned in front of the root word **gawa** (column C) forming the *ipagawa* verb (column D). The completed and incomplete aspects for this verb take an -*in*- infix between the focus affix and the stem (*ipinagawa* – column E and *ipinagagawa* – column F), and reduplication sometimes occurs on the stem (*ipapagawa* column G) and sometimes on the root word (*ipinagagawa* - column F).

2.2 Use of Hyphens

With respect to the verbs on Table 1, the Tagalog orthographic system inserts a hyphen between a *pag-* stem (and its inflected form) and any root word beginning with a vowel. (Hyphen usage within other types of Tagalog verbs will not be discussed in this paper.) For example, consider the verbs in column F expressed in the incomplete aspect. Verbs 1 to 3 (*nagluluto*, *nag-uumpisa*, and *nakakapag-aral*) are all built on a *pag-* stem, with the first two taking the inflected form (*nag-*) of the stem. Two of the root words (umpisa and aral) begin with a vowel, so a hyphen is employed. The root word luto starts with a consonant, so no hyphen is needed. Verbs 4 to 6 in column F (*nakikita*, *nauunawaan*, and *ipinagagawa*) are not constructed from a *pag-* stem so, even though one of their root words (unawa) begins with a vowel, no hyphens are used.

3. Use of Hyphens in Taglish Verbs

The Taglish verbs analyzed in this paper come from five different written samples. Only a few sentences from each sample have been considered, but even within such a small range, variation in hyphen usage can be seen. Samples 1 (S1) are taken from a leaflet written by a Hong Kong Bank in 1994 advising Filipino workers, within Hong Kong, how to best deposit money into their accounts (McArthur, 1998, p. 13). Samples 2 (S2) are from a newspaper gossip column appearing in *Balita*, written on June 14, 1996. Samples 3 to 5 (S3, S4 & S5) are sections from personal letters emailed to the current researcher from two former housemates. The first two letters (S3 & S4), written on July 15 and July 29, 2001, are from the same person. Samples 5 were written on December 18 of the same year.

Taglish verbs are formed in the same way that Tagalog verbs are constructed, except that the root word being mapped onto the Tagalog stem is in 'English' (rather than Tagalog), and there seems to be no standard rule concerning when and how to use the hyphen. Consider the following variations. The verbs in question are underlined and have been cross-referenced to a similar Tagalog verb. For example, (5G) refers to verb 5, column G, on Table 1.

3.1 Following the Tagalog Orthographic System

In all of the underlined verbs a hyphen has only been inserted between a *pag-* stem (and its inflected form) and a root word beginning with a vowel, thus conforming to the Tagalog orthographic system.

(S1) *Ito ang pinakamahusay na paraan* to make sure *na sapat ang pera sa inyong* Cash Card account *pag kailangan, lalo na kung* **maaarange** [sic] (5G) *ninyo sa inyong* employer *na sueldohan kayo sa pamamagitan din ng* Standing Instruction.

(This is the best way to make sure that you have the right amount of money in your Cash Card account when it's needed, particularly if you can also arrange for your employer to pay you by Standing Instruction.)

(S4) *Okey lang na* **mag-email** (2D) *ka sa akin sa* [name].

(It's okay if you email me at [name].)

(S4) *Kasi* **na-hold-up** (4E) *yung sinasakyan kong dyip noong isang linggo – akala ko mamatay na ako.*

(Because the jeep I was riding on last week was held up – I thought I was going to die.)

(S5) Hope you will appreciate the card *ipina***draw** (6E) *ko yan sa isang* youth *sa* Church *na* artist!

(Hope you will appreciate the card that I got one of the Church youths, who's an artist, to draw!)

3.2 Inserting a Hyphen Before a Root Word Beginning with a Consonant

In the following examples, however, a hyphen has been inserted where an English root word (consonant initial) maps onto a Tagalog stem.

(S1) *Mag-***transfer** (1D) *ng regular* amount *bawa't buwan* (by Standing Instruction) *galang* [sic] *sa inyong* Current *o* Savings Account, whether the account is with Hong Kong Bank or not.

(Transfer a regular amount every month (by Standing Instruction) from your Current or Savings Account, whether the account is with Hong Kong Bank or not.)

(S3) *Sa* Computer 7 *ipina-***scan** (6E) *ko yung mga* pictures *natin para sa isang* presentation.

(In Computer 7 I got someone to scan our pictures for a presentation.)

(S4) *Bumagyo ulit dito noong isang linggo,* **na-stranded** (4E) *ako sa* Floodway *kasi baha na ulit sa* Makro, *buti na lang wala na tayo doon.*

(Last week we had another typhoon and I got stranded at Floodway because it was flooded again at Makro, it's just as well that we're not living there now.)

3.3 Inserting a Hyphen Before a Root Word Beginning with a Vowel, (not a *pag-* Stem)

If this verb were to be written according to the Tagalog orthographic system no hyphen should appear. Even though the root word begins with a vowel, the verb is not built on a *pag-* stem.

(S2) *Na-***appreciate** (5E) *rin 'yon ng mga* Japanese *na nanood na ayon kay direk* Lamasan *ay umiiyak ang mga ito no'ng nagbukas na ang mga ilaw pagkatapos ng* screenings.
(The Japanese moviegoers also appreciated it and, according to director Lamasan, were crying when the lights came on after the screenings.)

3.4 Deleting a Hyphen Before a Root Word Beginning with a Vowel, (a *pag-* Stem)

In this instance, the verb is built on a *pag-* stem and the root word begins with a vowel but no hyphen has been inserted between the two. (The hyphen appears within the root word itself.)

(S3) *Pasensiya rin kasi hindi ako madalas na* <u>*makakapag*</u>**e-mail** (3G) *sa iyo medyo mahal na ang renta dito.*
(Sorry also that I'm not able to email you often, the rent here is rather expensive now.)

3.5 Inserting a Hyphen in Reduplication

In each of the verbs from Samples 2 the first hyphen reflects usage according to the Tagalog system. However, the second hyphen splits the repetition of the first syllable of the root word and the root word. The verb from Sample 3 also contains a hyphen in the reduplication; in this case, the first syllable has been spelled according to the way the writer pronounced it.

(S2) *Nasa States pa rin si* Sheryl Cruz *at* <u>nag-e-**enjoy**</u> (2F) *sa pagbabakasyon niya roon sa piling ng kanyang* Mama (Rosemarie Sonora).
(Sheryl Cruz is still in the States and enjoying her holiday at her Mama's side (Rosemarie Sonora).)
(S2) Called "*Bonggahan sa* Hawaii", <u>mag-so-**show**</u> (1G) *ang mag-amang* Ricky *at* Sheryl *kasama ang ilang* local performers *doon* on July 12, 13, and 15 *sa* Honolulu, Maui *at* Kawaii respectively.
(Called "Bonggahan in Hawaii", the father-daughter team of Ricky and Sheryl, including a number of local performers, will perform in shows there on July 12, 13, and 15 in Honolulu, Maui and Kawaii, respectively.)

(S3) *Madalas nale-**late*** (4F) *ako kasi malayo at mahirap talagan* [sic] *sumakay mula sa amin papunta sa opisina.*
(I'm often late because it's really a long way and difficult to ride from our place to the office.)

3.6 Using Gaps instead of Hyphens

One writer chose neither to use the Tagalog orthographic system, nor to use a hyphen in the way that other writers had; instead, a gap was left.

(S5) *Marami na talaga ang nag **kakarol*** (1F) *lalo na mga bata.*
(There are really a lot of people singing carols now, especially children.)
(S5) *Medyo nag **adjust*** (2E) *ako sa mga bagong kasama pero ngayon okey na.*
(It took a while for me to adjust to my new colleagues but it's okay now.)

4. Concluding Remarks

This paper has highlighted six differences in hyphen usage as found within five written samples of Taglish. Although only a small number of sentences from each sample were analyzed, a relatively large variation in usage was discovered, suggesting that Filipinos are still in the process of deciding how to write Taglish. A larger sample may demonstrate an even greater range of creative use. Examples in the first variation (see 3.1) conformed to hyphen usage within the Tagalog orthographic system, and comments regarding the remaining variations were made also with reference to this system. However, it may not be the case that written Taglish should follow this pattern. Examples in variations 3.2, 3.3, and 3.6 showed that Taglish users favor marking the point where an English root word maps onto a Tagalog stem, with either a hyphen or a gap. This may be significant and needs to be taken into consideration if, and when, Filipinos decide to standardize written Taglish. It will be interesting to see whether or not Taglish does become a 'creolized variety', and if Filipinos will ever push for its codification.

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