

**YAP, GLORIA CHAN. 1980. Hokkien Chinese borrowings in Tagalog.
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When Gloria Chan-Yap defended her dissertation in 1974 to become the first person to receive a Ph.D. degree from the PNC-Ateneo de Manila Consortium in Linguistics, I was myself a new 'doctor', newly-arrived in Manila, and deeply involved in my own career problems, so that I did not pay too much attention to her work. Now, as I read her completed work in book form, I find myself quite impressed, and also thinking what fun it might have been to advise such a scholar in preparing such a dissertation. Not that I would necessarily have been a better advisor, but my advice would have been different.

First, let me say that I am quite impressed with the data contained in this book. The data are very well-documented, especially in terms of establishing the probable Hokkien source words for the borrowings into Tagalog. Occasionally, we are told that a given word is a borrowing from Chinese simply because it 'looks' or 'sounds' Chinese, or because it might have been compounded out of two existing Chinese monosyllabic words, even though such a compound does not exist in Chinese.

Chan has identified Hokkien words, usually disyllabic compounds, as the words actually borrowed into Tagalog and has rejected Tagalog 'loanwords' whose sources could not be so identified. The result has been to reduce the size of her data set, but at the same time to make of it a very solid set of data. And it is this data set which will make her book a permanent and valuable reference in this field. It is valuable not only to linguists studying the historical development of the Tagalog language, but also to anthropologists, historians, and others. For this data set alone, Chan deserves high congratulations.

As the writer's imagined advisor, I might have been tempted to say that, given this data set, nothing else was needed in the dissertation. She might have described in more detail the manner in which she identified probable Hokkien borrowings in Tagalog, the sources in Hokkien, and reached a decision as to whether a given word is a Hokkien borrowing or not. Together with the data, this would be her dissertation.

Of course, I realize that most of my colleagues feel a dissertation should contain at least some theoretical discussion. And I do admit that there is a place for theory. However, I differ from some of my colleagues in my belief that while linguists come and go, data – good data – is eternal. And thus in this type of work, the data should be the culmination and not merely a vehicle for supporting or rejecting a particular linguistic theory. If I had been the advisor, we might have moved the data set from its rather subordinate position as an appendix and made it the climactic chapter of the work. The theoretical discussion would have been subordinated to the data—leading up to it, supporting it, strengthening it, perhaps pruning out some unqualified pieces, but intended always to contribute to the strongest possible set of data.

Let us consider, for example, the discussion of Chapter 2 (The Phonology of Hokkien Chinese Loanwords). Now, I have no – strong – objections to the use of the generative phonological framework. I personally have never used it and perhaps as a result, find it difficult to read. To someone who is more familiar with it, it is probably quite usable. I can not resist, however, raising two very simple points.

First, given the primacy of features over phonemes, generative phonology would seem to predict that phonemes which occupy gaps – unfilled intersections of features – should be readily perceived and borrowed. For example, Tagalog possesses the feature [\pm voiced], as in *b:p*, *d:t*, and *g:k*. It also has the apical fricative *s* (+ continuant, +

strident, + anterior, + coronal, – voiced). It does not have *z*, the voiced counterpart of *s*. **Notetheless** *z* should be readily perceived. Yet native Tagalog speakers – at least those whose English is not very good – do not perceive the distinction between *s* and *z*. And English words with *z* are regularly borrowed with *s*. For example, *Miss* and *Ms.* /miz/ are homonymous in Tagalog. Well, Hokkien does not have *z* either, so it is not a problem here.

Second, feature notation identifies only those features which distinguish pairs of phonemes. But in dealing with the ‘phonology’ of borrowing, we are also concerned with the phonetic similarity of sounds in different languages. It would seem essential to ‘flesh out’ the feature notation with more complete phonetic descriptions.

In any case Chan seems to have presented a neat and proper analysis based on generative phonology. What I could not help asking as I read it was what was the point of it. For example, she states as assumptions ‘that the phonetic shapes of the loanwords in Tagalog are very close to their counterpart in present-day Hokkien’ and ‘that Tagalog phonology at the time of the inception of the Hokkien loanwords is not very different from present-day Tagalog phonology’ (4). These points would seem to constitute rather interesting conclusions of the phonological analysis or at least observations made in the course of it. They are neither necessary nor justified as assumptions.

The process of borrowing differs radically from the ordinary processes whereby languages develop and change within a linguistic community. A language is passed on from one generation to the next, primarily as a result of the attempts by the latter to imitate communications between members of the former and between generations. Massive quantities of observed communications and attempted imitations are involved. Imitation is imperfect, and over a period of time the language changes, but never so abruptly as to disrupt the ability of members of the community to communicate with each other. There is, furthermore, continuity between generations in the sense that no speaker can be identified as a permanent member of one or another generation, and in the sense that there is no time at which a person may be said to transfer from an acquiring generation to an imitated generation. In fact, as soon as a child begins to communicate, his own communications become part of the model for imitation; but throughout his life, even the mature speaker will continue to imitate and adjust his speech to those around him.

The massiveness of this process and the continuity within the speech community give to the ordinary process of language development an extremely high degree of consistency and regularity. It is thus possible to formulate laws of language change and employ very strict methodology in dealing with ordinary language development.

Borrowing, on the other hand, tends to be a discontinuous, haphazard process of the exchange of words between diverse members of distinct speech communities, at diverse times, in diverse places, and under diverse circumstances. If, in examining a particular set of borrowings, we discover a high degree of consistency, this can lead us to certain important conclusions, such as that the borrowing took place between relatively homogeneous speech communities over a period of time short enough that no significant changes occurred in the phonology of either language.

As for ‘trans-linguistic rules’, it should be made clear that these are not ordinary rules. As presented it would appear that every Tagalog speaker has the Hokkien phonological rules in his deep structure together with rules for converting Hokkien phonology into Tagalog phonology. In fact, we are dealing with two different kinds of ‘rules’ – ‘rules’ of perception, and ‘rules’ of adjustment and development.

Let us suggest an interesting experiment. This is something which could actually be done for a future paper, thesis, etc. A number of Hokkien words are read by a native speaker and recorded. To compensate for native-speaker variation, and depending on available resources, several native speakers can be used and/or several tapes can be made by each speaker. The words should be chosen in such a way as to include all Hokkien

sounds several times; these should not be words which have been borrowed and may be familiar to Tagalog speakers. The tapes are played for a number of Tagalog speakers, who are asked simply to repeat what they have heard. These recorded repetitions are then compared with the original words.

We would expect to observe several different cases:

- (1) The Tagalog repetitions of a particular Hokkien sound are highly consistent.
 - (a) The Hokkien and Tagalog sounds are essentially the same phonetically.
 - (b) The Hokkien sound is shifted to the phonetically nearest Tagalog sound.
 - (c) Two Hokkien sounds are perceived and repeated as a single Tagalog sound.
 - (d) The Hokkien sound is consistently not perceived at all.

- (2) The Hokkien sound is repeated inconsistently as two Tagalog sounds.
 - (a) The Hokkien sound is phonetically intermediate between the two Tagalog sounds.
 - (b) The range of variation of pronouncing the Hokkien sound extends across a Tagalog phonemic boundary.

- (3) The Tagalog repetitions of a Hokkien sound are highly inconsistent and random.
 - (a) The Hokkien sound is not phonetically close to any Tagalog sound.
 - (b) The sound may be so different as to disrupt perception of the entire syllable or word.

On the basis on such an experiment we could formulate 'rules' of perception, at least to cover the areas of consistency. Even in the absence of such an experiment, we can predict certain rules. For example, since tone is not distinctive in Tagalog, we could predict that Hokkien tone will not be perceived by Tagalog speakers (see 'Detonalization', page 28). Since aspiration is not a Tagalog feature, pairs of aspirated and unaspirated voiceless stops in Hokkien will be perceived as single phonemes (e.g. Hok. *t*, *tʰ*: Tag. *t*) (see 'Detonalization', page 30). Vowel length is distinctive in Tagalog in non-final, open syllables. While vowel length is not distinctive in Hokkien, we might predict that Tagalog speakers would perceive all Hokkien syllables as long, and thus tend to place vowel length (and accent) on all vowels in penultimate open syllables in Hokkien borrowings. In inherited words, Tagalog does not have long vowels in closed syllables. Thus Hokkien borrowings with closed penultimate syllables would tend to have no vowel length, and thus be accented on the final syllable (see 'Stress Placement Rule', page 51).

Actual borrowings can be compared with the predicted forms based on these 'rules' of perception. Divergence from the predicted forms could result from changes in Hokkien or Tagalog phonology since the borrowing, from words having been borrowed from another dialect or language related to Hokkien, etc. Or the words may have been 'adjusted' in some way. In such cases we are usually dealing with unique developments; it is difficult to speak in terms of rules.

We would predict that Hokkien *kòtʰá* would be perceived and reproduced as **kúwa*; there is nothing in Tagalog phonology to prevent it. It happens, however, that there are no inherited Tagalog words containing the sequence *-úw-* (or *-íy-*). For some unexplained reason, there seems to be psychological pressure to avoid such sequences. Thus **kúwa* could be altered to fit the Tagalog pattern either by removing the vowel length (**kuwá*) or by changing the *w*-glide to a *y*-glide. The latter is the choice which has prevailed, yielding the present Tagalog *kúya* (and *gúyaq*) (see 'Y-Glide Insertion Rule', page 37).

Glottal stop (*q*) is a Tagalog phoneme; we would predict that final glottal stop in Hokkien words would be perceived and reproduced by Tagalog speakers. But Tagalog *q* is a rather vulnerable phoneme; even a number of inherited words have lost an original *q*, or acquired a non-original one. Such a development is at least partially explained by the fact that Tagalog *q* does not occur before another consonant (*waláq + na > walá na*). Phrases such as *walá na* may create confusion as to the original form of the word, and result in the loss or acquisition of *q*. In any case this is a problem affecting not only borrowed words, but inherited words as well (see 'Glottalization', page 36).

Some developments are likely to remain unexplained.

The types of analysis outlined above should give an interesting perspective to the discussion of phonology and may contribute evidence in making certain types of decisions and conclusions.

The semantic analysis (Chapter 3) is also well-done mechanically, but, well, done mechanically. It is hard to see what conclusions it might be leading us to. While the semantic classification is interesting and useful, there are other classifications which could and should have been made. There is no reason to restrict the analysis to any single type of classification.

Comparative linguists distinguish cultural borrowings from intimate borrowings. In cultural borrowing, new objects, concepts, etc. are borrowed into a society along with the words which designate those objects, concepts, etc. In this type of borrowing, the meanings are totally new to the language, and the new words do not replace existing words in the language. Cultural borrowings are often transmitted in connection with trading relations, the spread of religion, etc.

Intimate borrowing is usually associated with the domination (political, economic, etc.) of one language community over another and involves the replacement of existing words with words from the dominant language.

It can be seen that Hokkien borrowings fall almost exclusively into the cultural type of borrowing and reflect the non-dominant position (politically at least) of the Hokkien community in the Philippines. In contrast, many Spanish borrowings are of the intimate type, reflecting the long period of Spanish domination.

We might also consider the parts of speech of the borrowings. We find that the Hokkien borrowings are predominantly nouns. This may again reflect the fact these are predominantly cultural borrowings. It may also indicate that these are relatively recent borrowings. It is rather easier for old, established borrowings to work their way into the inflectional system, and become verbs, adjectives, and so forth. Again, Spanish borrowings are of all parts of speech — even conjunctions (*péro*), modals (*gustó*) and adverbs (*siyempre*).

These types of classification also provide some checks on the validity of words included in the list of borrowings. For example, Chan has included *hiyáq* 'shame' as a Hokkien borrowing. This word stands out as atypical, first, because it would be an intimate borrowing. 'Shame' is an old concept in Austronesian languages, and *hiyáq*, if borrowed, must have replaced a word already in the language. It is atypical, secondly, because it possesses fully inflected forms as a verb (*nahíhiyáq*), and adjective (*mahiyáqin*), etc. Thirdly, in Chan's classification *hiyáq* falls into a semantic category with few borrowings, 'Man-Invisible (Qualities)'. In spite of this atypicalness, we could still accept *hiyáq* as a borrowing if the phonological and semantic relationships were particularly strong. But unfortunately, Hokkien *hiyáq* means 'forehead'; the development from 'forehead' to 'shame', while possible, is by no means compelling. Only the strong phonetic similarity between the Hokkien and Tagalog words supports its candidacy as a borrowing; this similarity could very easily have been accidental. A final point is that Hiligaynon has a cognate form *huyáq*. This tends to indicate that the word is at least as old as the parent language of Tagalog and Hiligaynon, thus dating from a time earlier than the period of Hokkien borrowing into Tagalog. For these reasons we would reject *hiyáq* as a Hokkien

borrowing and treat it as a native Tagalog word. (This is the only word on Chan's list about which I have serious misgivings.)

The kinship terms, which are indisputably borrowed from Hokkien, appear at first glance to be exceptional in that they seem to be intimate borrowings. Yet, when we examine the traditional Tagalog kinship terminology, we find that the kinship terms do not form a very strong matrix of semantic components. In particular the dimension of sex is very weak. Except for *iná* 'mother' and *amá* 'father'; most other kinship terms make no sex distinctions. It was apparently fairly recently – after contact with the Spanish – that the kinship system of Tagalog (and other Philippine languages) was expanded to incorporate the sex dimension. In most Philippine languages, and to some extent in Tagalog, this expansion was accomplished through the addition of Spanish terms which make a sex distinction (*tíyo* : *tíya*; *lóló* : *lólá*). In Tagalog, an additional source of terms was available because of that language's contact with Hokkien Chinese. In this case, however, some of the terms carried semantic components on an additional dimension. One of these dimensions (order of birth of siblings) and its terms were at least partially incorporated into the Tagalog system.

It should be noted that as a general rule, the borrowed terms did not replace existing Tagalog terms; in some cases they entered into complementary relationships with them, for example, with the original terms as terms of reference and the borrowed terms as terms of address. We might thus arrive at the conclusion that this is really a special case of cultural borrowing. The borrowed entities were semantic components, which were expressed by a number of terms arranged in pairs, sets, etc.

To sum up: my major criticism of this work is that its discussion is quite flat, lacking in perspective, and tending not to lead us to interesting conclusions. The discussion might have been improved by the inclusion of some of the matters discussed here. Some minor criticisms: (1) Chan might have given more demographic data about the position of the Hokkien Chinese in the Philippines. (2) She might have made reference to the place of the Hokkien borrowings in the overall historical development of Tagalog as an Austronesian language. (3) She should have been more careful in insuring that accent was marked on all Tagalog forms cited. (4) She could have been a little kinder in her review of Manuel's *Chinese elements in the Tagalog language*.

These criticisms do not detract from the quality of Chan's data set. To rephrase my earlier observation: these criticisms and this review will be soon forgotten. Chan's very fine data set will be remembered and used for many years.