

Discourse Motivations for Productive Verbalization in Bikol

Author(s): Steven Fincke

*Proceedings of the Twenty-Third Annual Meeting of the Berkeley Linguistics Society: General Session and Parasession on Pragmatics and Grammatical Structure* (1997), pp. 422-433

Please see “How to cite” in the online sidebar for full citation information.

Please contact BLS regarding any further use of this work. BLS retains copyright for both print and screen forms of the publication. BLS may be contacted via <http://linguistics.berkeley.edu/bls/>.

---

*The Annual Proceedings of the Berkeley Linguistics Society* is published online via [eLanguage](#), the Linguistic Society of America's digital publishing platform.

**Discourse Motivations for Productive Verbalization in Bikol<sup>1</sup>**  
**Steven Fincke**  
**University of California, Santa Barbara**

This paper describes the phenomenon of *verbalization* in Bikol, a Philippine language spoken on the southern peninsula of Luzon. I will use the term *verbalization* as parallel to *nominalization*: cases where constituents which usually do not function as verbs take on verbal morphosyntax, but there is no explicit derivation in verbalization. Verbalization is a subtype of a phenomenon which is pervasive in Bikol and other Philippine languages, such as Tagalog (Schachter 1985): constituents which tend to receive a particular morphosyntactic categorial treatment can and, with some frequency, do receive others in discourse with no special derivational morphology. Consequently, there is little evidence of types being assigned to lexical categories.

Ordinary Bikol verbs contain roots which usually function as verb stems and bear verbal morphology. In the following example, *ali* 'leave' is an ordinary verb bearing the future tense verbal prefix *ma:-*.<sup>2</sup>

- (1) Sonny: *ma:-ali'*        *na ako sa aga,*  
**FUT:AGT-leave** now 1s:TOP LOC morning  
 'I'm gonna leave tomorrow.' [sraf:1299]

In the following example, the presence of *ma:-* on *bayani* 'hero' and *boy scout* indicates that these items (usually nouns) are verbalized. Martin is explaining how he offered his seat on a jeep to a woman.

- (2) Martin: I really wanted to--. I thought that I would be a **hero** (lit.: 'I **will hero**'). I will stand.  
 Buboy: You were gonna be a **boy scout** (lit.: 'will boy scout').  
 Martin: I thought, "I'll be a **boy scout** (lit.: 'I **will boy scout**') and let her sit."

Martin: *ta muya ko talaga-ng mag-ano,*  
 because want 1s:AGTreally-LNK NOT.BGN:AGT-what

- *ma:-bayani niyako' ako a,*  
**FUT:AGT-hero** RPT:1 1s:TOP ah  
*ma:-[tindog niyako'] ako,*  
**FUT:AGT-stand** RPT:1 1s:TOP

---

<sup>1</sup> I thank Patricia Clancy, Marianne Mithun, Carl Rubino, Ivo Sanchez, Sandra Thomsson, and, especially, Susanna Cumming for their helpful comments and advice. I take full responsibility for all errors remaining herein.

<sup>2</sup> The database for this analysis consists of 10 natural interactions containing a total of 13,018 intonation units and 520 tokens of verbalization. All data were collected in Sto. Domingo, Albay, the Philippines. See appendices for explanation of abbreviations for glossing and transcripts. Examples are presented according to the transcription conventions of Du Bois *et al.* 1993.

- Buboy: [ma:-boy s-]  
 FUT:AGT-boy s-
- **ma:-boy scout,**  
 FUT:AGT-boyscout
- Martin: **ma:-boy scout** *niyako' ako,*  
 FUT:AGT-boyscout RPT:1 1s:TOP  
*ta pa-tukaw-on ko talaga siya.*  
 so CAUSE-sit-NOT.BGN:PAT 1s:AGT really 3s:TOP [tambay:535-41]

In this paper, I will show that there are two discourse motivations for verbalization in Bikol.

- A- Ensure that the stem of the morphosyntactic verb conveys new, focused and/or contrastive information.
- B- Ensure that the stem of the morphosyntactic verb is semantically rich and is not predictable from other sentence constituents.

The properties of the verb stem specified in Motivation A all can be subsumed under the functional category of *newsworthiness* (Mithun 1992). Moreover, instances of verbalization vary according to what kind of information the verbalized stem indicates about the event. Taking these factors into account, we can distinguish three types of verbalization: Adverbial, Schematic, and Verbalization Constructions.

### Type 1: 'Adverbial'

'Adverbial' verbalizations are expressions of manner, extent or duration. Their use usually satisfies Motivation A: information indicated by the verbalized constituent is usually newsworthy.

In the following example, a group of women are discussing the introductory visit of a priest, who had just been assigned to the community, to the barrio of Calayucay. In the first portion, they discuss a party in which the people, assembled together, met the priest. At the end, Thelma contrasts this with the phase of the visit in which the priest met the people at their homes, going door to door. Here, she verbalizes the manner expression *saro'-saro'* 'one by one,' which is in contrastive focus.

- (3) Ching: She said, "There were a lot of people there at Calayucay."  
 Lilian: There were a lot of people there.  
 Thelma: Probably, when they had their meeting--  
 Ching: He danced the Macarena. Mrs. De la Cruz said, "Why did Father Ramon dance the Macarena?"  
 Pen: Maybe--  
 Ching: She said, "No--" She said, "They gathered the people together."  
 Thelma: They visited the houses, **one by one** (lit.: 'They **one by oned** the houses.)

Ching: *ma-tawo ngani ngay*,  
ADJ-person indeed RPT:3

*duman sa [Kalayukay].*  
DEM.D.LOC LOC Calayucay

Lilian: *[ma-tawo duman.]*  
ADJ-person DEM.D.LOC

Thelma: *su may [2u{ru}ron gayod kan--2]*  
TOPEXIST {DIST}-converse probably NT

Ching: *[2nag-balye ngani2]ngaya an kan*  
BGN:ACT-dance indeed RPT:3 DEM.M.TOP NT  
*Makarena,*  
Macarena

*sabi ni Mrs. Dela Cruz.*  
say NT Mrs. De la Cruz

*nata' ngay nag-bayle si Father Ramon ki Makarena?*  
why RPT:3 BGN:AGT-dance TOP Father Ramon NT Macarena

Pen: *[ay baka'.]*  
oh maybe

Ching: *[ay dai nga]ya,*  
oh NEG RPT:3

*pagpa-*  
*nag-t{ir}ipon ngay kan tawo.*  
BGN.AGT-{DIST}-gather RPT:3 NT person

Thelma: *nagpara-*  
*aw s{in}aro-saro' garo su mga arong.*  
o {BGN:PAT}-**DIST-one**EPIST TOP PL house

[sroq:948-52, 954-9, 961-2]

In the next example, a focused temporal expression is verbalized as part of an answer to a question about time in reported discourse.

(4) Impay: *an pag-pa-ilaw ngay ano-ng oras,*  
TOP TEMP-CAUSE-lightRPT:3 what-LNK hour  
'S/he said, "What time (should I) turn on the lights?"

*basta niyako' nag-diklom na,*  
as.long.as RPT:1 BGN:AGT-dark already  
'I said, "As long as it has already gotten dark."'

*mag-**alas** **sais** niyako',*  
AGT-**at.hour six** RPT:1

'I said, "(Turn the lights on) at **six o'clock**.'" (lit.: '**Six o'clock** (it).')

[sraf:1149-1151]

The use of verbalizations for focused elements can also be found in question-word questions.

- (5) Baby: [*Ma mang-gura'no* *an Manila paper,*  
 ma NOT.BGN:AGT:HABIT-**how.much**TOP Manila paper  
 'Ma, **how much** (does) Manila paper (cost)?' [sew:1028]
- (6) Lydia: *ma:ano pa ako?*  
 FUT:AGT-**what** more 1s:TOP  
 'What else will I (do)?' [bday:955]
- (7) Chona: *nag-pira-ng* *aldaw man su gatas na*  
 BGN:AGT-**how.many**-LNK **day** also TOP milk LNK  
*p{in}a-dara,*  
 {BGN:PAT}-CAUSE-bring  
 'How many days (does) the milk that was sent (last)?' [sew:855]

Thus, Bikol speakers often make newsworthy expressions of manner, extent and duration stems of morphosyntactic verbs, satisfying Motivation A.

## Type 2: Schematic

In Type 2 verbalizations, the verbalized constituent participates in a *schema* that is evoked in the immediate discourse (Fillmore 1977). Schematic verbalizations are motivated by Motivation B, the avoidance of low-content or predictable verbs. Once a schema has been evoked, explicitly coding only one element of the schema is usually sufficient indication that the schema still pertains, and unexpressed elements of the schema can usually be inferred. Thus, explicitly coding of more than one schema element is redundant in most contexts. Type 2 verbalizations allow speakers to code the event with just one schema element.

The schema may be evoked in various ways before the Type 2 verbalization. In the next example, the schema of building a pigpen is explicitly evoked in the discourse.

- (8) Alex: *pwede бага tugduk-an iyan ki orig-an.*  
 able EMPH erect-LOC DEM.M.TOP NT pig-LOC  
 'A piggery could be built there.' [mama:103]

In the ensuing discussion, there are verbalizations with common design elements of pigpens serving as stems.

- (9) Alex: *salog-an бага daa iyan,*  
**floor**-LOCEMPH HEARSAY DEM.M.TOP  
 '(You would put a **floor** (in) there' (lit. '**Floor** that.')
- (10) Alex: *islab-on an,*  
**slab**-PAT:NOT.BGN DEM.M.TOP  
 '(You would lay a **slab** there' (lit. '**Slab** it.')

*paril-on*                      *iyán.*  
**concrete**-NOT.BGN:PAT DEM.M.TOP  
 ‘Concrete it’

[mama:152-3]

Sometimes, the schema is not evoked solely by the discourse, but the situation as well. The following is said in reference to an infant in the room after a long silence.

(11) Chona: ...*ma:-ihi naman talaga iyan,*  
 FUT:AGT-urine again really DEM.M.TOP  
 ‘She’s gonna pee again’

..*ta aki’ pa.*  
 because childstill  
 ‘because (she is ) still young.’

Cory: *dai mo pig-ki-Kimbies,*  
 NEG 2s:AGT BGN:PAT-IMPF-**Kimbies**  
 ‘You don’t (put her in) **Kimbies**?’ (lit.: ‘You don’t **Kimbies** (her)’)

[sew:831-2, 5]

*Kimbies* is a popular brand of disposable diapers in the Philippines. Diapering infants is only indirectly evoked in the discourse before Cory verbalizes *Kimbies*. Chona’s talk evokes diapering only when considered in relation to the current situation: as the infant apparently has just urinated and is in their care, Chona’s talk is hearable as a reason for waiting to put a new diaper on the infant.

Another aspect of Type 2 verbalizations is that nominally coded referents are available for further manipulation in the discourse, but stems of Type 2 verbalizations are not. Thus, in the first use of *resibo* ‘receipt’ below, the speaker has no plans for subsequent reference and thus uses a Type 2 verbalization, as the transaction schema has already been evoked. However, in the second case, the nominal form establishes a discourse referent for later tracking.

(12) Ching: ‘She had me buy some *achara*. She said, “You didn’t have (them make you) a **receipt** (lit.: ‘You did not make (them) **receipt**’) because when Father Jacob would have me (run) errands, I would sometimes have them **make a receipt**.’

Cita: ‘Oh, naturally’

Ching: ‘So, I would leave (**it**) there for him so (he) would have nothing to talk about (i.e. ‘he would have no grounds for making allegations of malfeasance.)’

Ching: *p{in}a-bakal baga ako ki atsara.*  
 {BGN:PAT}-CAUSE-buy EMPH 1s:TOP NT *achara*

*dai na ngaya pag-pa-resiboh-i.*  
 NEG already RPT:3 TEMP-CAUSE-**receipt**-LOC

*takon ako pig-sugo'*,  
because when 1s:TOP BGN:PAT-errand

*..ni Father Jacob,*  
AGT Father Jacob

*nugad pig-pa-gibuh-an,*  
sometimes BGN:PAT-CAUSE-make-LOC

*ki resibo,*  
NT receipt

Cita: [*awnatural,*]  
oh natural

Ching: [*ta i-kaag ko duman,*  
so BEN-put 1s:AGT DEM.D.LOC

*tanganing sabi,*  
so say

*dai-ng sabih-an.*  
NEG-LNKsay-LOC

[sroq:1478, 1481-9]

This contrast may be seen as reflecting *referentiality* in the sense of Du Bois (1980), or *tracking*, in the sense of Thompson (1997). It is also reminiscent of the discourse function characteristically associated with noun incorporation (Mithun 1984). This also follows from Hopper and Thompson's (1984) observation that constituents receiving nominal treatment are prototypically tracking, and constituents receiving something other than full nominal treatment are often non-tracking.

Thus, the stems of Type 2 verbalizations are non-tracking elements of schemas evoked in the discourse. This type of verbalization is a way of satisfying Motivation B by avoiding redundancy in the clause and avoiding the use of low-content verbs.

### **Type 3: Verbalization Constructions**

The third type of verbalization is verbalized constructions (Fillmore *et al.* 1988): they are productive idioms in which constituents of a specified class are verbalized, and there is some meaning coded neither by the stem nor by the verbal morphology, but the combination of the two. There are three common constructions: Reported Speech, Inchoative and Locational. The meanings expressed non-compositionally by these constructions correspond to some low-content verbs; thereby, these constructions are an alternative to using such verbs and a means for satisfying Motivation B.

I will discuss the first two constructions only briefly, as they are much less common than the third. The Reported Speech verbalization construction means 'to say X,' where X is the stem. This construction is only used for one-word utterances in my data.

- (13) Joy: *kan pig-ka'g-an ko ngayá iyan,*  
 NT BGN:PAT-put-LOC 1s:AGT RPT:3 DEM.M.TOP  
 'He said, "When I put that in (the agreement)'  
*nag-uho man ngayá ako ta,*  
 BGN:AGT-yes too RPT:3 1s:TOP because  
 'He said, "I (said) yes because"' (lit.: 'I yesed')  
*dai ako-ng antepara.*  
 NEG 1s:TOP-LNK eye.glasses  
 'I didn't have (my) glasses' [sew:47-9]

The second construction involves inchoative meaning. The stem represents a state, and the verbalization construction expresses that this state comes about. There is no special inchoative morphology.

- (14) Eliseo: *pag saro-ng semana,*  
 TEMP one-LNK week  
 'after one week'  
*dai mo pa na-ubos pag-deliver-a an sanggatos na*  
 NEG 2s:AGT yet BGN:PAT-consume TEMP-deliver-PAT TOP100 LNK  
*sako-ng bagas,*  
 sack-LNK rice  
 '(if) you haven't finished delivering all 100 sacks of rice'  
*m{umin}ahal an presyo kan bagas.*  
 {AGT:CONSQ}-expensive TOPprice NT rice  
 'the price of the rice (gets more) expensive' (lit.: 'the price of the rice  
 expensive') [sew:19-21]

The last construction, Locational, is by far the most frequent of the verbalized constructions in my data. The verbalized stem indicates a location, and the verbalization indicates that a verbal argument arrives at the location indicated by the stem. Therefore, verbalized locations indicate goals, never sources. The use of this construction satisfies Motivation B, as it is an alternative to using a low-content motion verb. In fact, there is no dedicated verb root in Bikol for general motion toward a goal, such as *go* in English.

- (15) Karen: The chickens are not going to come **out**. (lit.: 'The chickens will not **outside**.')  
 Arnel: Yes, (they will).  
 Karen: They're not gonna come **out**. (lit.: '(They) will not **outside**.)  
 Arnel: Yes, (they will).  
 Karen: *dai man ma:-luwas su ano,*  
 NEG also FUT:AGT-**outside** TOP what

*su manok,*  
TOP chicken

Arnel: *..iyo,*  
yes

Karen: *da[i man ma:]-luwas.*  
NEG also FUT:ACT-**outside**

Arnel: *[iyo,]*  
yes

[tind:245-49]

The chickens' potential movement is characterized by its goal, *luwas* 'outside'. Accordingly, *luwas* is verbalized twice.

Location verbalizations can also be used for caused motion. In the next example, Aaron comes to the house while Chicoy is frying lumpia. Below, Chicoy is offering Aaron some of the ones he has already fried.

(16) Chicoy: *kon gusto mo su ma-tagas,*  
if want 2s:AGT TOPADJ-hard  
'If you want some tough ones'

Aaron: *a,*  
'um'

Chicoy: *su ma-tagas,*  
TOPADJ-hard  
'tough ones'

Aaron: *dai na-ng su ma-lumoy?*  
NEG now-LNK TOPADJ-soft  
'There aren't any soft ones.'

*digdih-an na su ma-tagas,*  
DEM.PROX.LOC-LOC now TOPADJ-hard  
'(Bring) the tough ones **here**.' (lit. 'Here the tough.')

[bday:1013-17]

In the last line, Aaron verbalizes the proximal locative demonstrative *digdi(h)*. He uses it in a request to have something brought to him.

Unlike Type 2 verbalizations, the stem of Locational verbalizations can be tracking and even given (Chafe 1994). In the next set of examples, a group of women are discussing fiestas that will be held in various communities in the Bikol region. Below, they start discussing Peñafrancia, the most attended fiesta in the region.

(17) Thelma: *maka-Peñafrancia sana,*  
NOT.BGN:ACT-Peñafrancia just  
'Then, there will be Peñafrancia' (lit.: 'will Peñafrancia')

Ching: *uho,*  
'yes'

*iyo na.*  
yes now  
'That's right'

Thelma: *a-baba-on ngunyan an Peñafrancia.*  
ADJ-low-INTS now TOP Peñafrancia  
'Peñafrancia (will be) early in the month this year.' (lit. Peñafrancia (will be)  
low now.)' [sroq:477-80]

The women discuss the date of the Peñafrancia festival for the following 43 intonation units. Then, they start discussing attending the festival. They verbalize the distal locative demonstrative *duman*, referring to Peñafrancia.

(18) Tita: *nag-du-d{ur}uman kamo?*  
BGN:AGT-IMP-{DIST}-DEM.D.LOC 2p:TOP  
'Do all of you usually (go) **there?**' (lit.: 'Do you (pl.) **there?**')

Ching: *kon may kwarta,*  
if EXIST money  
'If (we) have money' [sroq:524-5]

They continue to use *duman* 'there' to refer to the Peñafrancia festival. Below is one example of the verbalized tokens that follow.

(19) Ching: *ako pira pa pagka-gadan kaito-ng si May dai*  
1s:TOP how.many more TEMP:PST-dead DEM.D.NT-LNK TOP mother NEG  
*na ako naka-duman.*  
already 1s:TOP BGN:AGT-DEM.D.LOC  
'Me, how many (times have I gone?) I haven't (gone) **there** since my mother died.' (lit.: 'I haven't **thered.**') [sroq:534]

Thus, locational verbalizations can be used to track referents through discourse.

Type 3 verbalizations are constructions. Their use satisfies Motivation B by allow the avoidance of low content verbs.

### Conclusion

In conclusion, this paper has discussed three types of verbalization: Adverbial, Schematic, and Verbalized Constructions. Their appearance is due to two discourse motivations.

A- Ensure that the stem of the morphosyntactic verb conveys newsworthy information.

- B- Ensure that the stem of the morphosyntactic verb is semantically rich and is not predictable from other sentence constituents.

Adverbial verbalization is motivated by A. Schematic and Verbalization Constructions are motivated mainly by B, and sometimes also by A. Since a wide range of constituents function as verb stems with no explicit derivation, the phenomenon of verbalization heavily undermines the status of *verb* as an organizational category in the Bikol lexicon. In doing so, however, it allows morphosyntactic verbs to perform particular discourse functions more consistently, such as satisfying Motivations A and B.

In view of the potency of Motivation A and B demonstrated here for Bikol, we might expect them to have similar impact in the rest of the world's languages. However, this is not the case. In many languages, *verb* is a much more robust category for the organization of lexical types: a narrower range of constituents can receive verbal treatment without explicit derivation. To explain this, we must postulate another motivation, Motivation C, to compete with A and B and curb their effect.

- C- Ensure that a stem that bears verbal morphology belongs to the lexical category verb.

The lexical category of verb has semantic as well as discourse-functional motivations (Hopper and Thompson 1984). Sometimes, not all three motivations can be satisfied. In Bikol, A and B win out, and the functional transparency of the verbal constituent is maintained. In many other languages, C wins more often. *Verb* is maintained as a category of lexical types, and motivations, such as A and B, promoting the functional transparency of the verbal constituent are more likely to be compromised.

## References

- Chafe, Wallace. 1994. *Discourse, Consciousness, and Time: The Flow and Displacement of Conscious Experience in Speaking and Writing*. University of Chicago Press.
- Du Bois, John W. 1980. Beyond Definiteness: The Trace of Identity in Discourse. In, Wallace Chafe, ed. *The Pear Stories: Cognitive, Cultural and Linguistic Aspects of Narrative Production*. 203-274. Norwood, NP: Ablex.
- Du Bois, John W, Susanna Cumming, Stephan Schuetze-Coburn, and Danae Paolino. 1993. Outline of Discourse Transcription. In Edwards, Jane A. and Martin D. Lampert, eds. *Talking Data: Transcription and Coding in Discourse Research*. Hillsdale, N.J.: Earlbaum.
- Fillmore, Charles J. 1977. Topics in Lexical Semantics. In Roger W. Cole, ed. *Current Issues in Linguistic Theory*, 76-138. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Fillmore, Charles J., Paul Kay and Mary Catherine O'Connor. 1988. Regularity and Idiomaticity in Grammatical Constructions: The Case of *Let Alone*. *Language* 64: 501-538.
- Hopper, Paul and Sandra Thompson. 1984. The Discourse Basis for Lexical Categories in Universal Grammar. *Language* 60: 703-52.
- Mithun, Marianne. 1984. The Evolution of Noun Incorporation. *Language* 60: 847-93.
- Mithun, Marianne. 1992. Is Basic Word Order Universal? In, Payne, Doris, ed. *Pragmatics of Word Order Flexibility*, 15-61. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Schachter, Paul. 1985. Parts of Speech Systems. In Shopen, Timothy, ed. *Language Typology and Syntactic Description*, I: 3-61. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Thompson, Sandra. 1997. Discourse Motivations for the Core-Oblique as a Language Universal. In Kamio, Akio, ed. *Directions in Functional Linguistics*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

**Transcripts Cited**

Abbreviation	Name	Description
bday	Birthday	Family members preparing for a another family member's birthday celebration
mama	Mama	Neighbors talking on a roadside bench
sew	Sew	At the home of a seamstress
sraf	San Rafael	Baranggay ('barrio') council meeting for San Rafael
sroq	San Roque	Older women preparing food for a baranggay fiesta
tind	Tindahan	Family members and neighbors at a home with a small store and livestock
tambay	Tambay	Men sitting and talking by the side of the road

**Glossing Abbreviations**

ADJ	adjective	M	medial
AGT	agt	NEG	negative
BGN	begun	NT	Non-Topic
CAUSE	causative	PAT	patient
CONSQ	consequential	PL	plural
D	distal	PROX	proximal
DEM	demonstrative	PST	past
DIST	distributive	RECIP	reciprocal
EMPH	emphatic	RPT:1	first person reported speech
EXIST	existential	RPT:3	third person reported speech
FUT	future	TOP	Topic
HABIT	habitual	TEMP	temporal
INCEP	inceptive	1i	first person plural inclusive
IMPF	imperfective	1s	first person singular
INTS	intensive	2p	second person plural
LNK	linker	2s	second person singular
LOC	locative		