

# Aklanon Tag- and Extra-Systemic Linguistic Phenomena

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*I am most pleased to have this opportunity to dedicate an article to Laurie Reid. Unbeknownst to him at the time (1967), he inspired my choice of a career in linguistics as he lectured a dozen or so starry-eyed Peace Corps Volunteers on comparative Philippine. Years later in 1973, he was enormously supportive of my work under Professor Dyen at Yale encouraging me to present two papers at the First Austronesian Conference in Honolulu. Furthermore, we both share an avid interest in morphology and syntax, as well as in language families other than Austronesian. While the majority of my writings in the Austronesian arena are assumed by some to have been in the historical-comparative sphere, there are many in applied linguistics and hence some forays into language theory. My initial work with the Peace Corps involved two dialog books for Peace Corps Volunteers, an Aklanon grammar (Zorc and de la Cruz 1968) and a dictionary (Zorc, Salas, et al. 1969). My daily work at McNeil Technologies Language Research Center often involves putting together grammatical sketches for our Newspaper Reader Series: Cebuano (Zorc 1987), Ilokano (Moguet and Zorc 1988), Tagalog (Sarra and Zorc 1990), Hiligaynon (Sunio and Zorc 1992), Bikol (Belchez and Moguet 1992), Kapampangan (Davidson and Pineda 1992) — and even more full-blown treatments outside Austronesian: Somali (Zorc and Issa 1990), Armenian (Zorc and Baghdasarian 1995), Oromo (Tucho, Zorc, and Barna 1996), Sotho (Zorc and Mokabe 1998), and Rwanda-Rundi (Zorc and Nibagwire, In Preparation). As has been Laurie's case too, I have been blessed with a multi-faceted linguistic career that has taken me into the Austronesian, Australian, Cushitic, Bantu, and Indo-European families. This article represents a merging of two "loves" of my life: a synchronic theoretical overview, based upon a perspective of language which has evolved through the years, with some historically-relevant notes about a closed but productive system in Aklanon. I trust Laurie and others will enjoy reading it as much as I did researching and writing it.*

## 1. Overview of Language Systems According to Zorc

Through time, I have noted that there are some paradoxes in linguistics and language study. The first can be noted between a linguist (who strives for abstractions, logic, scientific-systemization, elegance), and a speaker or language-learner (who strives for understanding, communication, rapport). Linguists often have the frustrating job of looking for logic that may not always be there: true DUALITY OF PATTERNING! But the second is more significant and disappointing: many linguists, who profess to deal

with some aspect of language, often fail to write in a manner that will communicate with language students, who, of all potential readers or users, are most in need of understanding what they are writing about. The excessive use of jargon and the proselytizing of a given linguistic theory become insurmountable obstacles for the vast majority of language learners. In well-researched and well-known languages there is no harm done, but in the arena of less commonly taught languages with precious few if any resources, the consequences are no less than tragic.

As a personal and relevant example, in 1998 I was learning Xhosa in order to produce a *Xhosa Newspaper Reader*. I was wearing the hat of a learner, rather than one of a linguist. In looking for references, I had assumed that a 417 page *Xhosa Syntax* (Du Plessis and Visser 1992) would serve me better than a 60 page manual (Einhorn and Siyengo 1990). Alas, the syntax turned out to be a transformational grammar of the language – while replete with diagrams for specific sentence constructions, it did not contain a single table of noun classes, agreement forms, pronouns, deictics, or verb inflections. One must read through the entire tome to come to grips with the overall language structure, drawing one's own tables (and conclusions) along the way. Meanwhile, the brief manual was replete with tables of noun classes, agreement forms, adjectives, verb conjugations, relative constructions, etc., and it presents in a readily-accessible graphic form exactly what I need to know.

I propose that we linguists should be dealing with and describing seven systems (or levels of abstraction) for any given language (see Table 1). These form the basic machinery of human speech and include:

1. PHONOLOGICAL - the SOUND SYSTEM which contains the various sounds used to build up words. Anyone who has learned a different language knows how difficult this can be. People who do not master the sound system often speak with a heavy accent. Regional variations within a language represent dialects that almost always have a different pronunciation characterizing that locale.
2. MORPHOLOGICAL - the system involved with WORD BUILDING.
3. SYNTACTIC - the grammatical system that determines the ORDER AND SHAPE OF WORDS in any given sentence.
4. LEXICAL - the WORD SYSTEM, specific for each language community, where forms are made to conform with the daily needs of the speakers.
5. SEMANTIC - the MEANING SYSTEM, where words and expressions get both their basic meaning and special overtones.
6. PRAGMATIC - the DISCOURSE SYSTEM, where appropriate words and patterns are selected for the specific situation at hand. Pronouns, both personal and demonstrative, which were traditionally taught as part of the grammar, are always discourse sensitive and governed by language-specific pragmatics.
7. ETHNOLOGICAL - the CULTURAL OR SOCIOLOGICAL SYSTEM within which language fits.

Each of these systems are both independent and interdependent. The independence of some has been well attested in linguistic studies that have dealt with, say, just the phonology of a language, its morphology and syntax, or its lexicon (i.e., a dictionary). The other levels have also received attention, to varying degrees, in the literature, such as the burgeoning field of pragmatics. Meanwhile, ethnological

phenomena have been limited to specialties such as sociolinguistics, anthropology, or psycholinguistics.

Their interdependence, however, has not received a great deal of attention, and it is here that I have recognized phenomena that have “slipped through the cracks” of one linguistic theory or another. True, when elements at the morphological and phonological levels intercept, there is the concept of MORPHOPHONEME. Within semantics, there has been discussion of the denotation (actual meaning) and connotation (implications) of words, but I would propose that what is happening in the case of a word like ‘piss’ is that besides its semantic characteristic (urine) it carries a culturally-imposed overtone of {rude}, i.e., its full explanation is ETHNOSEMANTIC. There is no linguistic study or textbook (to my knowledge) that has treated the three click sounds of English (bilabial, alveolar, and retroflex), probably because they are consonantal phones that do not combine with vowels. Nevertheless, at the ethnolinguistic level, we can and do express sympathy or irritation with an alveolar click (spelled *tsk*), cowboys urge horses on with the retroflex click, and rude standers-by express appreciation of a woman’s beauty with the bilabial click (*kiss*). I call these ETHNOPHONES, because they are sounds triggered by and in response to a specific cultural situation.

Sometimes a given phenomenon is located within a single system, such as the {causative} *pa-* in Philippine and other Austronesian languages, *-is-* in Bantu languages, *-i* in Somali, *-ts’nel* in Armenian. Such languages have a single morphological causative construction. Sometimes, it may be spread across a single system, as in Oromo, where a series of lexically-determined suffixes (*-s-*, *-eess-*, *-is-*, *-sis-*, *-siis-*) are involved. But it can also be spread across several systems, and therefore be less readily apparent, as the case is in English where {causative} can be:

- MORPHOLOGICAL (the prefix *en-* as in *enlarge* or the suffix *-en* as in *sweeten*),
- THEMATIC (as with *boil*, *cool*, *run* which constitute intransitive-transitive pairs),
- LEXICAL (*die* vs. *kill*),
- SYNTACTIC (using an auxiliary like *cause* someone to verb), or
- PRAGMATIC (where *let* implies willingness on the part of the caused actor / unwillingness on the part of the causer, while *make* implies willingness on the part of the causer / unwillingness on the part of the caused actor).

If one proposes that {causative} is an element of universal grammar, then it is MORPHOLOGICAL in languages like Aklanon, Tagalog, Somali, Sotho, Xhosa, and Oromo, but POLYSYSTEMIC in English.

There are also instances where a grammatical element is EXTRASYSTEMIC. That is, while there may be a full paradigm of forms which may be considered regular, there can be one or a few elements that are not part of this system. They are usually IRREGULAR, SECONDARY, and DEFECTIVE, i.e., they do not inflect according to the canons of the primary system. This is where Aklanon *tag-* fits into the scheme of things.

## 2. Aklanon *Tag-*

Aklanon is a member of the western Bisayan subgroup (along with Kinaray-a and Kuyonon) (Zorc 1972). Its higher-order sister-languages include Cebuano, Hiligaynon, and Waray, which are all in a macro-subgroup with Tagalog and Bikol (at the Central Philippine level) (Zorc 1977). Data presented here either come from the Aklanon Dictionary (Zorc, Salas, et al. 1969) or from my wife, Maria Nellie Reyes Prado Zorc.

Aklanon *tag-* is a productive derivational morpheme with the meaning ‘feel like.’ It was described in Zorc and de la Cruz (1968:128f) as a ‘stative verb qualifier,’ taking only the *na-* (real) and *ma-* (unreal) prefixes. What I have come to realize since, is that it is EXTRASYSTEMIC precisely because it is used with so few members of the verb conjugation (just three: *na-* PRESENT or PAST, *ma-* FUTURE, and *-un* DEPENDENT, see Table 2 for the standard full verb paradigm).

- (1) *Natandihú?*            ʔakú ʔit dú:ru.  
PRES.feel.excrete I OBJ very much  
‘I really have to go to the bathroom!’
- (2) Kaʔi:nah *natandihú?*            ʔakú ʔit dú:ru.  
earlier PAST.feel.excrete I OBJ very much  
‘A while ago, I really had to go to the bathroom!’
- (3) Ayáw ʔit súksuk ʔit háyhil, bá:si?  
NEG:IMP OBJ wear OBJ highheel, maybe  
*matagsaʔút* ka sa báyli.  
FUT.feel.dance you LOC dance  
‘Don’t wear high heels, you might feel like dancing at the party.’ (*sá:ʔut* ‘dance’)
- (4) Kun *imnún* mu tanán, gústu mu  
if drink.DEP you all, want you  
*tagʔihiʔún* ka sa dá:Ean?  
feel.urinate.DEP you LOC road  
‘If you drink it all, do you want to have to urinate while on the road?’

Unlike most verbal forms, which preserve the original accent pattern of the root, *tag-* may alternatively have a word-final effect on the accent pattern of any derivation with an open penult (regardless of where the accent originally falls). While exemplified correctly, but not recognized explicitly in Zorc and de la Cruz, this and other morphologically-determined accent patterns were described in Zorc 1977:64-69. Although some doubleting may occur, note in the following examples how accent may fall on the ultima, even if the root has a long penult, yielding a rightward accent pattern:

- (5) *natagʔihí?* ‘feel like urinating’ (*ʔi:hi?* ‘urine; urinate’)  
*natagtangís* ~ *natagtá:ngis* ‘feel like crying’ (*tá:ngis* ‘cry’)  
*natagpá:naw* ‘feel like leaving’ (*pá:naw* ‘go away, leave on a trip’) [long penult only]  
*nataghalín* ‘feel like leaving’ (*halín* ‘leave, go somewhere else’)  
*nataghibayág* ‘feel like laughing’ (*hibayág* ‘laugh’)

Although the examples immediately above are intransitive and take the usual topic or subject pronouns (*akó* ‘I,’ *ikáw* ‘you,’ *imáw* ‘he/she,’ etc.), the prefix can be used with verbs that take objects as well, e.g.,

- (6) *Natagʔinúm* akó ʔit Tandúʔay.  
PRES.feel.drink I OBJ Tanduay(Rum)  
‘I feel like drinking Tanduay (Rum).’ (*ʔinúm* ‘drink’)

- (7) *Natag*kaʔún ~ *natag*ká:ʔun akó ʔit mángga.  
 PRES.feel.eat PRES.feel.eat I OBJ mango  
 ‘I feel like eating mangoes.’ (*ká:ʔun* ‘eat’).
- (8) *Natag*bakáE akó ʔit ʔáwto.  
 PAST.feel.buy I OBJ car  
 ‘I felt like buying a car.’ (*bakáE* ‘buy’)

According to the phonotactic rules of Aklanon (and other Bisayan dialects), if the penult has a closed syllable, the accent always falls on the penult (Zorc 1977:243f). Hence no other accent pattern is possible on the following:

- (9) *Natag*ʔádtuh akó sa báyli.  
 PRES.feel.go I LOC dance  
 ‘I feel like going to the dance.’ (*ʔádtuh* ‘go’)
- (10) *Natag*símbah akó.  
 PRES.feel.worship I  
 ‘I feel like going to church.’ (*símbah* ‘worship’)

Dozens more examples could be given. This affix is productive. It has one lexically-determined allomorph *taN-* in the form: *natandihú?* ‘feel like defecating’ (reduction of *pandíhu?* ‘excrement (human)’ [N]; ‘to excrete’ [V]). However, this derivation is strictly limited to sentient/control verbs. It is decidedly excluded from all meteorological verbs, thus:

- (11) \*\**nataguEán* [incorrect] ‘feel like raining’<sup>1</sup>  
 \*\**nataghangín* [incorrect] ‘feel like being windy’

However, there is a noun derivation with a *tag-* prefix yielding SEASON NOUNS, which does not affect the accent pattern, i.e., the accent pattern of the root is maintained:

- (12) *tagʔuEán* ‘rainy season’ (*ʔuEán* ‘rain’ [N, V])  
*tagʔi:nit* ‘hot season’ (*ʔi:nit* ‘heat’ [N, V])  
*taghá:ngin* ‘windy season’ (*há:ngin* ‘wind’ [N])

### 3. Some Possible Historical Connections

Mintz (1994) describes what I see as a cognate prefix in Malay and Indonesian thus: “*Ter-* is a verbal and adjectival affix used to indicate a final or completed state. How this state is reached, whether intentionally or unintentionally, actively or passively, is not considered significant when this affix is used.”

<sup>1</sup> The capital E is an unrounded back semivowel which the Aklanons spell with “e.” Hence this orthographic symbol has two values: in vowel position, CV(C), it is pronounced as the front mid vowel in Spanish loanwords, e.g., *pwede*; in consonant position, it is the unrounded back semivowel. It was originally interpreted as a voiced velar fricative (Blake, early Zorc), but it lacks friction. The IPA symbol for the semivowel is Greek omega, while for the consonant it is a small Greek gamma.

With adjectives it “indicates a superlative or an intensive state” (Ibid.), e.g., *terbagus* ‘best, very best (at s.t.)’; *terbaik* ‘best, highest in quality’; *terbesar* ‘largest’.

With verbs, “the resultant meaning is most commonly a final or completed state with no particular consideration as to how that state was reached” (Op. cit., p.178), e.g., *terdapat* ‘be found’; *terletak* ‘be located’.

Such verbs are semantically passive, but not morphologically so (since *di-* is the morphological passive). However, if the verb is semantically active, then accidentality, unintentionality or minimal agent responsibility is implied (Op. cit., p.180; Phillip Thomas, pers. comm.), e.g., *terlihat* ‘accidentally saw’; *tertidur* ‘dozed off, happened to fall asleep’; *terrasa marah* ‘felt sudden rage’. Thus, depending on context, Malay *terbuka?* can mean ‘OBJECT is open’ or ‘AGENT accidentally opened (something).’

There is clearly a significant distance between Aklanon *taghibayág* ‘feel like laughing’ and Malay *tertawa* ‘burst into laughter.’ Nevertheless, along the lines deduced by Mintz, I see a semantic thread of {CURRENT RELEVANCE} connecting the disparate meanings and functions of this prefix. This is an aspect of the “perfective” verbal morphology I have encountered in Cushitic (e.g., Oromo) and Bantu (e.g., Swahili and Sotho) languages. While the literal translation of many verbs with this special inflection might seem to be ‘have VERBed,’ it implies that the action has current relevance, e.g., ‘has arrived (and is still here)’ or ‘is hungry (= has become hungry and is still so).’ The Aklanon verbal affix, while translationally equivalent to English ‘feel like’ can be seen to have evolved from ‘VERB is currently relevant,’ just as the Aklanon season nouns from ‘NOUN is currently relevant.’

Rasoloson and Rubino (2005) contrast two Malagasy RESULTATIVES (*voa-* and *tafa-*), where *tafa-* marks actions with more control than *voa-*. Neither “inflect for IMPERATIVE mode or PAST TENSE” (and are hence EXTRASYSTEMIC). Their description reads as follows:

*Tafa-* resultatives often encode a coincidental or unexpected state of affairs. The subject of *tafa-* resultatives exercises more control to bring about the resultant state than the subject of a *voa-* formative.

- (13) *Tafavèrina* tètò Antananarivo ny Filòha Zàfy.  
RES.return PAST.PRX.VIS Antananarivo DEF NR.head Zafy

‘President Zafy happened to return to Antananarivo.’

Keenan (1998:590) notes that “*voa-* may be used with reduplicated roots, while *tafa-* may not, e.g., *voalazalàza* ‘said a bit’; *tafavèrina* ‘returned’, but not \*\**tafaverimbèrina*.”

Etymologically, this prefix probably derives from either \**ta-pa-* or \**taR-pa-*, since Malagasy lost PAN \**R* in inherited forms. While they do not inflect for the past, the do indicate result or {accidental state achieved}. This is partially reminiscent of some of the functions of Malay *ter-*.

I suspect there is a common thread in adjective derivations with this prefix in Malay and other Austronesian languages (attributive state achieved), accidental senses (action or state achieved), all the way to stative nouns in some languages (e.g., ‘age’ or ‘fat’-state, even ‘expertise’ achieved). The existence of \**taR-* in the morphology of PAN would appear to be justified, but as is the case in Aklanon and Malay, it probably was not paradigmatic or systemic (e.g., within the verbal inflectional system of \*-um-, \*-en, \*Si-, \*-an, \*-in-, etc.) and hence could shift to specialized functions and senses, such as {excessive} or {superlative}. Since other verb paradigms were available for standard

stative expressions, i.e., \*na-, \*ma-, special senses of {accidentally-so} or {overtaken by} could evolve.

Since \*taR- was non-systemic, it would have been far more fragile and subject to loss. Thus, Tagalog does not have an equivalent verbal prefix to Aklanon, but it has been preserved as a season marker (*tagʔulán* ‘rainy season,’ *tagdilím* ‘period of the new moon,’ *taggútom* ‘famine, period of starvation,’ etc. It has been lost in the verbal morphology of Tagalog, but not in Aklanon (a near genetic relative). In Tausug, a member of the South Bisayan branch, *taga-* (with a fricative g) has an innovative existential attributive or quasi-possessive function, e.g., *tagalayag* ‘having sails’ or *tagabu’aya* ‘having crocodiles.’

Alternatively, there may have been several (possibly different) affixes, or even an entire affix system: \*t-, \*ta-, \*taR-, \*taRa-, \*tara-, all of which may have been etymologically related. One might propose that forms analyzable with a prefix \*tara- are a combination of a prefix \*ta- + the infix \*<ar>. The central Philippine evidence (e.g., Aklanon *tag-*) along with Malay *ter-* rather clearly points to a Western Austronesian \*taR-, which could be \*ta- + \*R- DURATIVE VERB, much like \*maR- may have been \*ma- + \*R-. The widespread central Philippine prefix *taga-* ‘hailing from’ (Tagalog, Aklanon, Cebuano, etc.), e.g., *tagaMaynila?* ‘native of Manila,’ *tagaBisáya?* ‘Bisayan,’ may further derive from \*ta- + \*R- + \*a- PROGRESSIVE, IMPERFECTIVE. There is also, for example, the derivation of Rukai locative and/or time nouns, e.g., *takanian* ‘eating place = table’ or *tatubian* ‘crying place or time,’ (Li 1973:292), which is reminiscent of the Aklanon and Tagalog season marker *tag-*. Since most dialects of Rukai have lost PAN \*R (i.e., \*R > zero) it could be further evidence for \*taR- in that function, or ambiguously for a separate (reduced) prefix \*ta-. The latter appears to be contained in a widespread reconstruction such as PAN \*talikúd ‘turn one’s back on’ > Aklanon, Tagalog *talikód* ‘turn one’s back to,’ Fijian *talikura* ‘warm oneself by the fire,’ (Dempwolff 1938:96) Kanakanabu *t<ar>aʔikuʔikúcu* ‘look back,’ Paiwan *tjailukuz* ‘more to the rear.’ This same prefix appears to be frozen on several Aklanon verbs, e.g., *takuróng* ‘put a crown on,’ *takilíd* ‘turn the side to,’ *talíwan* ‘pass by, go by,’ *talibág* ‘be out of order’ (Zorc and de la Cruz 1968:115).

Considerably more problematic is the kinship prefix PAN \*t-, found on etymologies such as PAN \*tama ‘father’ > Fijian *tama*, Tongan *tama/ʔi*, Samoan *tama:*, Futuna *tama/na*, Bunun *tama?*, Takituduh *tamah*, Saisiyat *tamæh* [ref], PAN\*tina ‘mother’ > Malay *be/tina* ‘mother animal,’ Fijian, Samoan *tina*, Tongan *tsina*, Futuna *tsina/na*, Takituduh *tináh*, Saisiyat *tinæh* [ref], PMP \*tumpu ‘ancestor, forebear’, PMP \*tu[h]aji ‘younger sibling.’ If at all related, it could be the result of syncope, or it could also be a reshaping of \*ta- to a single consonant kin-term marker. In a society where paternal uncles and maternal aunts took on the responsibility of raising orphaned relatives, the application of {currently relevant} mother or father is not far-fetched.

To return to my overview of language, Aklanon *tag-* and PAN \*taR- are (and were) extra-systemic morphemes, and, as such have “slipped through the cracks.” Thus far there is only a small amount of serious evidence for the reconstruction of an elusive PAN affix, \*taR-. However, fuller details of the morphology of Austronesian languages are slowly coming to light. I hope to have explained its rather limited function in Aklanon and trust this will spur similar studies. Evidence for this affix could be lurking throughout the family.

## Abbreviations

CONTIN	continuous	PAN	Proto-Austronesian
DEF	definite	PAST	past tense
DEP	dependent tense	PMP	Proto-Malayo-Polynesian
FUT	future tense	PRES	present tense
IMP	imperative mood	PROGRES	progressive
LOC	locative	ref	referent
NEG	negative	RES	resultative
NR	nominalizer	PRX	proximate
OBJ	object	VIS	visible

## Appendix 1

Table 1. Language systems or levels

Simple Term	Study	Abstraction	Example
sound	phonology	phone	/p/
word building	morphology	morpheme	<i>re-, un-, -ed</i>
grammar	syntax	grammon, part of speech	noun, verb, word order
lexicon	lexicography	lexeme, word	“gander”
meaning	semantics	sememe	{male + goose}
discourse	pragmatics	texteme	<i>he did</i> (= <i>John ate</i> )
culture	ethnology	ethneme	body language; rude vs. polite speech levels

Note: There are mixtures of levels, e.g.,

MORPHOPHONEME - *wives* = wayFS, different from *fifes* and *hives*

ETHNOPHONEME - the click sounds of English (e.g., *tsk* to express disapproval)

ETHNOSEMEME - the vulgar connotation of some words disallows their use in polite society or mixed company, yet scientific synonyms are acceptable.

Table 2. Aklanon verb conjugation

	Past	Progres.	Contin.	Future	Command
<b>Active</b>					
<b>Punctual</b>	-um-	[none]	-um-	ma-	#- (zero)
<b>Durative</b>	nag-	naga-	mag-	maga-	pag-
<b>Distributive</b>	naN-	nagapaN-	maN-	magapaN-	magpaN-
<b>Potential</b>	naka-	naka-	maka-	maka-	[none]
<b>Direct Passive</b>					
<b>Punctual</b>	-in-	[none]	-un	-un	-a
<b>Durative</b>	gin-	gina-	pag- -un	paga- -un	pag- -a
<b>Distributive</b>	ginpaN-	ginapaN-	paN- -un	paN- -un	
<b>Potential</b>	na-	na-	ma-	ma-	[none]
<b>Instrumental</b>					
<b>Punctual</b>	-in-	[none]	i-	i-	-án
<b>Durative</b>	gin-	gina-	ig-	iga-	i(pag)-
<b>Distributive</b>	ginpaN-	ginapaN-	ipaN-	ipaN-	ipaN-
<b>Potential</b>	nai-	nai-	mai-	mai-	[none]
<b>(alternate)</b>	kina-	kina-	ika-	ika-	[none]
<b>Local Passive</b>					
<b>Punctual</b>	-in- -an	[none]	-an	-an	-i
<b>Durative</b>	gin- -an	gina- -an	pag- -an	paga- -an	pag- -i
<b>Distributive</b>	ginpaN- -an	ginapaN- -an	paN- -an	paN- -an	paN- -i
<b>Potential</b>	na- -an	na- -an	ma- -an	ma- -an	[none]

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