

# COMPOUNDING OLD AND NEW WORDS IN FILIPINO

Consuelo J. Paz  
University of the Philippines

As an affixing language, Filipino has the flexibility to form words from stems which at times are difficult to subject to traditional grammatical categorization. This is illustrated by the stem *bahay* (house) which can become *mabahay* (a location with many houses), *magbahay* (establish a home/house), *kabahay* (house-mate), *pambahay* (used in the house/home), *bahayan* (location used as a house/home). Sometimes, the stems by themselves also function as words.

In this language words are also formed by two stems or words (affix + stem) resulting in compound words (Cw)<sup>i</sup>. The resultant meaning may or may not be the aggregate meaning of both words, such as *kapit* (next to, cling to) + *bahay* (house), meaning neighbors; *bahay* (house) + *bata* (child) meaning 'uterus'; *bahay* (house) + *kubo* meaning 'thatched roofed hut, nipa hut'.

At times a Cw is formed by shortening the original form of the words, that is dropping one or two syllables of each word in forming the Cw. The resultant meaning is the aggregate of the original words, such as *tapsilog*, a breakfast meal of *tapa* (dried meat); *sinangag* (fried rice) and *itlog* ([egg] fried egg sunnyside up). This type of compounding is not included in this study.

This paper is of two parts. The first part describes the process which results in Cws, while the second part discusses compounds consisting of borrowed words and their effect on Filipino in the modernization of this lingua franca which is now recognized as the national language of the Philippines.

## The Cw

Compounds in Filipino are derived from a phrase which consists of two words joined by a marker (m). The marker is usually dropped or lost in the process of compounding when the marker is preceded by a consonant (C), or a variant of the marker is affixed to a preceding (V).

Some examples are:

*sawi na palad* > *sawingpalad* one who is unfortunate  
unlucky m palm of the hand,  
frustrated fortune

*bahag ng hari* > *bahaghari* rainbow  
g-string m king

*takip sa butas* > *takipbutas* substitute  
cover m hole

Resultant Cws are nouns, adjectives, and verbs such as:

nouns (n) –

*balatbunga* flattery, insincere comments  
skin fruit

*hanapbuhay* livelihood  
find life

*putingtabing* screen for films  
white screen

adjectives (adj.) -

*butot-balat* very thin  
bone skin

*mukhang-pera* materialistic  
face money

*agawbuhay* on the verge of death  
snatch life

verbs (v) -

*labaspasok* going in and out  
going out coming in

*akyatpanaog* going up and down stairs  
climb up climb down

*parot-parito* coming and going  
going coming (when worried or restless)

### **Types of Cws**

Compounds are derived from six kinds of phrases grouped here according to the first element in the phrase.

I. The first group of phrases consists of the attributive (atph) and the possessive phrase (posph).

#### **A. Attributive Phrase (atph)**

The attributive phrase consists of two words or stems (st) joined by an attributive marker (am), **na/-ng**. The variant **-ng** is affixed to the preceding word or stem which ends in a vowel. The resultant Cws are nouns.

1. A noun stem (nst) may be followed by another nst or n (nst +vaf), an adjective stem (ast) or adj (ast + adj af) or a verb (vst + vaf).

a. nst **am** nst, n > n

*bahay na kubo* > *bahaykubo* nipa hut/thatched roof  
house am hut hut

*bagoong na alamang* > *bagoong-alamang* salty sauce  
fermented sauce am minute shrimps of small shrimps  
*bantay na salakay* > *bantaysalakay* one who takes  
guard am surepticious attack advantage of what he/ she is  
supposed to be watching

*bahay na sanlaan* > *bahaysanlaan* pawnshop  
house am pawn -an (loc. af)

*bahay na sugalan* > *bahaysugalan* gambling den  
house am gamble -an (loc. af)

b. nst **am** adst, adj > n

*aso na ulol* > *asong-ulol* mad dog  
dog am crazy

*sili na labuyo* > *siling-labuyo* small hot peppers  
hot pepper am wild

*tubig na maalat* > *tubig-alat* sea water  
water am ma-(adj af), salty

c. nst **am** v > n

*lupa na hinirang* > *lupang-hinirang* native land  
ground am create, -in-(vaf)

2. Adjectives or ast and a nst, or a verb joined by the **am** is another attributive phrase from which a Cw may be derived.

adj, ast **am** v, nst > adj

*Matanda na tinali* > *matandang-tinali* bachelor  
ma-(adj af) old am tie up -in-(vaf)

*mahaba na buntot* > *mahabang-buntot*      spoiled  
 ma-(adjaf) long am tail      sensitive

*panghaba na buhay* > (*pang*) *habang-buhay*      forever  
 pang-(adjaf) long am life

*sawi na palad* > *sawing-palad*      unfortunate, unlucky  
 unlucky/frustrated am palm of hand, fortune

*mahaba na pisi* > *mahabang-pisi*      well funded/  
 ma-(adjaf) long am string      financed

## B. Possessive phrase (Posph)

The possessive phrases from which Cws are derived consist of a nst followed by another nst (the possessor) marked by the possessive marker **ng/-ng** (pm) The **-ng** is affixed to the preceding stem that ends in a v.

nst **ng** nst > n, adj

*bahag ng hari* > *bahaghari*      rainbow  
 g-string pm king

*bahay ng bata* > *bahaybata*      uterus  
 house pm child

*anak ng araw* > *anak-araw*      albino  
 child pm sun

*tenga ng daga* > *tengang-daga* a species of mushroom  
 ear pm rat

*tenga ng kawali* > *tengang-kawali*      insensitive, does  
 ear pm deep frying pan      not listen

*balat ng bunga* > *balatbunga*      flattery, insincere  
 skin pm fruit      words

*balat ng sibuyas* > *balatsibuyas*      sensitive, easily hurt  
 skin pm onion      criticism

*utak ng biya* > *utakbiya*      dumb, ignorant, pea brain  
 brain pm a kind of fresh water fish

*mukha ng pera* > *mukhang-pera*      materialistic  
 face pm money