COMPOUNDING OLD AND NEW WORDS IN FILIPINO

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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). 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 > bahag hari rainbow
g-string m king

etakip 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

   *bagoong na alamang > bagoong-alamang* salty sauce
   fermented sauce *am* minute 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
dalaga ng bukid > dalagang-bukid  country lass,
young women pm field a kind of fish

balita ng kutsero > balitang-kutsero  rumor
news pm driver of horse drawn vehicle

dahon ng palay > dahompalay  poisonous green snake
leaf pm rice plant

buto ng pakwan > butong-pakwan  dried water-melon
seed pm water melon seed

tawa ng aso > tawang-aso  insincere smile/laugh
laugh pm dog

buka ng bibig > bukang-bibig  something habitually
open pm mouth said by an individual

kisap ng mata > kisapmata  one instance
blink pm eye

luto ng makaw > lutong-makaw  contrived, a set up
cook pm Macao

A few of such Cws retain their original form as phrases:

lukso ng dugo > lukso ng dugo  intuitive feeling that
jump pm blood one is related to a particular person

hulog ng langit > hulog ng langit  unexpected help or
dropped pm sky material gain

II. The next set of Cws are derived from phrases containing a v and nst or v marked by sa ‘lm’ (locative marker), ng ‘om’ (objective marker), at ‘cm’ (coordinate marker), and ang ‘dm’ (descriptive marker). The first element of the phrase is always a verb (vst + vaf) and except for some exceptions, the verbal affix is dropped in the resulting Cw. The general rule holds, hence the marker is dropped.

A. Locative Phrase (loph)

These phrases consist of a verb (v) a locative marker (lm) and a noun stem from which noun Cws are derived.
tinakip sa butas > takipbutas substitute
cover -in-(vaf) lm hole

sinampay sa bakod > sampaybakod vagrant, good for
to hang on something, -in-(vaf) lm fence nothing

tinakip sa silim > takipsilim sunset
cover -in-(vaf) lm light

The Cw takipsilim may be explained as assimilation of the d of dilim
‘dark, darkness’ to s of sa before this marker was dropped

tinakip sa dilim > takipsilim sunset
cover -in-(vaf) lm dark, darkness

The Diccionario Tagalog - Hispano of Serrano Laktaw (1914) lists
silim as Spanish sol - Tagalog araw (sun or day); ilaw (light) and Spanish
el anochemes - Tagalog takipsilim. But, in some Tagalog dialects the verb
sumisilim (to stay in the shade) is still in use.

B. Objective Phrase (obph)

The Cws derived from the objective phrase consists of a v followed
by the object marker (om) which marks the object or noun stem. These
result in nouns and adjective Cws. The om is dropped after -C and the
variant -ng is affixed to a preceding -V. Most of the time the vaf is also
dropped.

nagbayad ng utang > bayad-utang retribution
pay, nag-(vaf) om debt

nag-agaw ng tulong > agawtulog on the verge of sleep
snatch, ng-(vaf) om sleep
dropping off

naghanap ng buhay > hanapbuhay job, source of income
look for, nag -(vaf) om life

ginantihan ng pala > ganting-pala prize, reward, award
revenge/reward/response
-in-(vaf)-han (vaf) om grace, blessing

magbasag ng ulo > basag-ulot fight, rumpus
break mag-(vaf) om head

makadurog ng puso > makadurogpuso causing extreme
maka-(vaf) crush on heart       sadness

\textit{di makabasag ng pinggan} > \textit{di makabasagpinggan} well-neg maka-(vaf) break on plate behaved, good character

Notice that in the last example the negative \textit{di} is retained in the resultant adjective.

**C. Descriptive Phrase (deshp)**

The Cws of this group are derived from a phrase which consists of a verb and nst marked by \textit{ang} (dm). The vaf is dropped and the variant of \textit{ang} which is -\textit{ng} is affixed to a preceding vowel. The resultant forms are adjectives and nouns.

\textit{binigay ang kaya} > bigaykaya       with full effort/ability
give, -in-(vaf) dm ability

\textit{dinala ang tao} > dalang-tao       pregnant
carry, -in-(vaf) dm person

\textit{tinaas ang noo} > taasnoo          proud, proud of accomplishment   raise
-in-(vaf) dm forehead

\textit{binukas ang palad} > bukaspalad    generous
open-in-(vaf) dm plam/fortune

\textit{kinapos ang palad} > kapospelad    unlucky, unfortunate
short, inadequate -in-(vaf) dm plam/fortune

\textit{tiniklop ang tuhod} > tikloptuhod  humble, contrite
bend/fold -in-(vaf) dm knee

\textit{winala ang puso} > walang-puso      hard, hearted, unkind
none, loose -in-(vaf) dm heart

\textit{linuksjo ang tinik} > luksong-tinik  a children’s game
jump -in-(vaf) dm thorn

**D. Coordinate Phrase (coph)**

The coordinate phrase which consist of 2 verbs or 2 noun stems marked by the coordinate marker \textit{at} (cm) results in verb, noun or adjective Cws. The \textit{at} is dropped after consonants or the variant \textit{-t} is affixed to a preceding vowel and at times the vaf is also dropped.
1. \( v \) at \( v > v, n \)

\textit{lumabas at pumasok} > \textit{labaspasok} \quad \text{in and out}

out, -\textit{um-} (vaf) cm in-\textit{um-}(vaf)

\textit{magbantay at magsalakay} > \textit{bantaysalakay} \quad \text{one who}

watch, mag-(vaf) cm attack, mag (vaf) \quad \text{takes advantage of}

what he/she is supposed to guard/care for

\textit{mag-urong at magsulong} > \textit{urongsulong} \quad \text{undecided,}

mag -(vaf) move backward cm mag-(vaf) \quad \text{going backward and}

move forward \quad \text{forward}

\textit{pumaron at pumarito} > \textit{parotparito} \quad \text{to pace, come and}

go -\textit{um-} (vaf) cm come, um-(vaf) \quad \text{go}

\textit{pumanik at pumanaog} > \textit{panikpanaog} \quad \text{restlessly going}

climb/go up, cm comedown \quad \text{up and down}

-\textit{um-} (vaf) \quad -\textit{um-} (vaf)

\textit{humigit at kumulang} > \textit{humigiti kumulang} \quad \text{more or less}

over/more than, -\textit{um} (vaf) cm \quad \text{lack -\textit{um-} (vaf)}

The last examples show the Cw retaining the verbs of the phrase. The cw \textit{parotparito} shows that the last consonant of \textit{paron} possibly assimilated to the -t of \textit{at} before the cm was dropped.

2. \( nst \) at \( nst > n, \text{adj.} \)

\textit{buto at balat} > \textit{butot-balat} \quad \text{very thin, skin and bones}

bone cm skin

\textit{pulot at gata} > \textit{pulotgata} \quad \text{honeymoon}

honey/syrup, cm coconut milk
Summary:

1. ph $\rightarrow$ ph₁, ph₂
2. ph₁ $\rightarrow$ atph, posph
3. ph₂ $\rightarrow$ locph, obcph, coph, desph

4. atph

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\begin{bmatrix}
  \text{nst} \\
  \{\text{adj}\} \\
  \{\text{ast}\}
\end{bmatrix}
```

```
\begin{bmatrix}
  \text{am} \\
  \{\text{n}\} \\
  \{\text{ast}\} \\
  \{\text{adj}\} \\
  \{\text{v}\} \\
  \{\text{nst}\}
\end{bmatrix}
```

5. posph $\rightarrow$ nst + pm + nst
6. locph $\rightarrow$ v + lm + nst
7. obph $\rightarrow$ v + om + nst
8. desph $\rightarrow$ v + dm + nst

9. coph $\rightarrow$

```
\begin{bmatrix}
  \text{v} \\
  \{\text{nst}\}
\end{bmatrix}
```

```
\begin{bmatrix}
  \text{cm} \\
  \{\text{v}\} \\
  \{\text{nst}\}
\end{bmatrix}
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\begin{bmatrix}
  \text{nst} \\
  \{\text{adj}\} \\
  \{\text{ast}\}
\end{bmatrix}
```

```
\begin{bmatrix}
  \{\text{n}\} \\
  \{\text{ast}\} \\
  \{\text{v}\} \\
  \{\text{nst}\}
\end{bmatrix}
```

```
\begin{bmatrix}
  \text{Cwn} \\
  \text{Cwadj}
\end{bmatrix}
```

\[ \text{nst} + \text{pm} + \text{nst} \Rightarrow \text{Cwadj} \]

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\begin{bmatrix}
  \text{lm} \\
  \text{v} \{\text{om}\} \{\text{nst}\}
\end{bmatrix}
```

```
\begin{bmatrix}
  \text{Cwn} \\
  \text{Cwn, Cwadj}
\end{bmatrix}
```

```
\begin{bmatrix}
  \text{v} \\
  \{\text{nst}\}
\end{bmatrix}
```

```
\begin{bmatrix}
  \text{cm} \\
  \{\text{v}\} \\
  \{\text{nst}\}
\end{bmatrix}
```

```
\begin{bmatrix}
  \text{Cwn} \\
  \text{Cwn, Cwadj}
\end{bmatrix}
```

```
\begin{bmatrix}
  \text{Cwn} \\
  \text{Cwn, Cwadj}
\end{bmatrix}
```

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\[
\begin{align*}
\left( \begin{array}{c}
\text{nst} \\
\text{adj} \\
\text{ast} \\
\end{array} \right) & - C + m + \left( \begin{array}{c}
\text{nst} \\
\text{adj} \\
\text{ast} \\
\end{array} \right) \\
\Rightarrow & \left( \begin{array}{c}
\text{nst} \\
\text{adj} \\
\text{ast} \\
\end{array} \right) - C
\end{align*}
\]

\[
\begin{align*}
\left( \begin{array}{c}
\text{nst} \\
\text{adj} \\
\text{ast} \\
\end{array} \right) & - V + m + \left( \begin{array}{c}
\text{nst} \\
\text{adj} \\
\text{ast} \\
\end{array} \right) \\
\Rightarrow & \left( \begin{array}{c}
\text{nst} \\
\text{adj} \\
\text{ast} \\
\end{array} \right) - V \left( \begin{array}{c}
\text{-ng} \\
\text{-t} \\
\end{array} \right)
\end{align*}
\]

\[
\begin{align*}
\{ \text{vst + vaf} \} & \begin{array}{c}
\text{lm} \\
\text{dm} \\
\end{array} & \text{nst} \Rightarrow \text{vst nst}
\end{align*}
\]

\[
\begin{align*}
\{ \text{vst + vaf} \} & \begin{array}{c}
\text{om} \\
\text{cm} \\
\end{array} & \left( \begin{array}{c}
\text{nst} \\
\text{vst + vaf} \\
\end{array} \right) \Rightarrow \text{vst (vaf) am vst (vaf)}
\end{align*}
\]

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Idioms

As shown in the previous discussion it is evident that the elements of the phrases from which the Cws are derived have individual or different meanings. The meaning of the resultant Cws are either a composite of the meaning of the elements of the phrase or have completely different meaning, and are idiomatic. Examples of the first type are:

\[\text{bahaysanglaan} \quad \text{pawnshop} \]
\[\text{house pawn} \]
\[\text{lampa} \text{stu} \text{hod} \quad \text{passed the knee (a measure for water, over/passed knee} \quad \text{water depth)} \]

The resultant idiomatic Cws are shown by the following examples:

\[\text{balatsibuyas} \quad \text{sensitive} \]
\[\text{skin onion} \]
\[\text{bayad-utang} \quad \text{retribution} \]
\[\text{pay debt} \]
\[\text{walang- puso} \quad \text{cruel, insensitive to suffering of others} \]
\[\text{no/none heart} \]
\[\text{anak-araw} \quad \text{albino} \]
\[\text{child sun} \]
\[\text{bahag} \text{hari} \quad \text{rainbow} \]
\[\text{g-string king} \]

Both types of Cw are perceived as one word or expression hence a single concept, object or quality. Whereas other phrases in the language are not considered so.

\[\text{galing sa itaas} \quad \text{coming from above} \]
\[\text{come from l} \text{m above} \]
\[\text{bahay ng byuda} \quad \text{house of the widow} \]
\[\text{house p} \text{m widow} \]
\[\text{magandang babae} \quad \text{beautiful woman} \]
\[\text{ma-(adj af) beautiful} \quad \text{-am woman} \]

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In other words, not only the structure of the phrase or form of the phrase characterizes the Cw but also the single word concept, which is in the real world of the speaker/hearer and may or may not evolve into an idiom.

**Orthography**

One of the current issues in the propagation of Filipino as the National Language is the standardization of its orthography. One of these issues is the orthography of Cws. Dictionaries of the language show that at present, there is no standard form by which Cws are written, that is whether to use a hyphen or not. The dictionary of Leo English (1977) has entries such as *bukas-isip* (open-minded), *bukas-puso* (gladly) but also *bukas palad* (generous). Even entries in dictionaries of the English language show this inconsistency such as:

- holdup (n) Webster
- hold-up (n) Cobuild
- makeup (n) Webster
- make-up (n) Cobuild
- ice-cream/ice cream  Cobuild

Actually, one can ask whether it is really necessary to follow a standard way of writing down Cws, obviously a problem to language teachers.

It is proposed here that the hyphen may be used in two situations, as indicated in the examples given in the different sections above. A hyphen is used:

1. when the second word starts with a vowel like *basag-ulo* (fight brawl), *bukas-isip* (tolerant, open minded), which recognizes the existence of a glottal stop before initial vowels, though not represented when the word is written separately, following the (c)cv(c)(c) syllable pattern of Philippine languages;
2. when the marker or part of it is an enclitic or is not dropped such as in *sawing-palad, bukang-bibig, butot-balat*, the hyphen comes after the enclitic phrase marker.

**Language Modernization**

This discussion attempts to show how Cws are formed in an effort to analyze part of Filipino morphology as it modernizes. The influence and change brought about by constant contact with foreign cultures pressures the language to respond to these rapid changes in all aspects of the ecology
of Filipino. In other words, the modernization of the language means the
development of its vocabulary in response to needs brought about by: the
influence of foreign cultures on daily living through the different forms of
modern communication; the need to learn and adopt to modern technology
transfer; and the ability to sustain international interaction.

Certain strategies have been used to modernize Filipino. Two of these
are: semantic addition to words already found in this language or other
Philippine languages, and borrowing from foreign languages. The first one
is usually the result of efforts to keep the language from acquiring loan
words. Good examples of this strategy are the words pag-unlad and batis.
The latter means ‘spring or stream’, but in recent years has been given the
additional meaning of ‘original source or data source’ by academician,
especially historians. Pag-unlad (progress), now also means ‘development’
in the jargon of the government. The other strategy or borrowing words
from foreign languages is indicated by the tremendous influx of words from
English into Filipino. This strategy is the one addressed in this present
study.

A great amount of borrowing from English, which shows no let up in
these times of rapid change, is largely due to the colonial influence of
American life, advertising, media such as movies and TV, information in
printed sources and transfer of technology coming from that country.

Numerous words in Filipino which were originally Cws in English or
Spanish, were not considered Cws by the majority of the speakers of the
language at the time the borrowing took place. This is probably because
Filipinos more often than not, were unaware of this fact. The cultural
object or concept was entirely new to them and was considered a simple
term and not a Cw.

Even considering the Spanish loans like todoslosantos (Holy week)
and amorpropio (self pride), Filipino speakers were not aware or did not
consider the fact that these Cws consist of single words in Spanish. The
Spanish Cw loan like the colloquial term buena mano (after you) has
undergone semantic change in Filipino, and now means ‘the first buyer or
customer’. Unlike these are the innovations such as kontrabida (villain in a
story, one who supports the unpopular stand) from the Spanish words
contra (against, contrary) and vida (life). The Filipino Cw matapobre is
another innovation since it consists of an indigenous word mata (eye) and
Spanish pobre (poor).

From English are the words:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Filipino</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>blakkord</td>
<td>blackboard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>holdap</td>
<td>hold up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bolpen</td>
<td>ball pen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>meykap</td>
<td>make up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>polosyert</td>
<td>polo shirt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>peyrol</td>
<td>pay roll</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>barbel</td>
<td>barbell</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Cws such as these are spoken and often written as one word regardless of their forms in English. Those who claim to know English well have a problem writing them down or accepting them as Cws knowing they are two words in English. Other examples:

- tsuwinggam/chewinggam/tsuwinggam chewing gum
- naytgawn/nayt gawn night gown
- sosyal-sayans/sosyal sayans social science

Since borrowing is rarely done deliberately, that is the loan eases into the language either as a result of a need or language prestige, the borrowed item usually adjusts to the rules of Filipino. It also happens that these rules are modified to accept the change brought by the loans. These changes are done unconsciously and without resistance when spoken. The trouble starts once these loans are recorded in written form since this is done deliberately and with a permanent effect on the borrowing language as shown above. Hence the orthographic changes lag behind and pass a controversial stage before being fully accepted. Such is the case of the Cws in Filipino which originated from loans.

These loans have had a significant effect on the syllable structure of Filipino. New consonant clusters are now present in the different positions of the word. The effect of this change results in new cluster such as gs, kr, ks, wd, sp, st, yt, kl, and rt.

- ayskrim ice cream
- teksbuk text book
- lawdspiker loud speaker
- naytklab night club
- portpolyo portfolio

Most of these Cws are not idiomatic since they are loans that retain the meaning as found in English. But there are Cws which are innovations constructed with loans previously borrowed from English. Some examples are:

- paybsiks - usurious interest rates (from payb [five] and siks [six])
- oberluking - spectacular view (from ober [over] and luking [looking])
- brawn-awt - electrical outage (from brawn [brown] and awt [out])

Relatively a young language with speakers who have different native languages and who are subject to rapid cultural change from within and
without the country, Filipino is undergoing rapid modernization. Since it is one of the languages taught in schools and is now gaining wider use as the language of instruction, it is presently highly pressured to standardize.

**Note:**

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1 Two studies on this topic may be cited: *Balarila ng Wikang Pambansa*, 1950 by Lope K. Santas and *Makabagong Balarila ng Pilipino*, 1971 by Teresita Ramos.

**References:**


