On the Origins of Philippine Particle/Pronominal Sociolinguistic Use

Joseph F. Kess

University of Victoria

Tagalog, like the other languages of the Philippines, belongs to the Western Indonesian grouping of the Austronesian family of languages. Like many other languages, it exhibits forms of respectful address in terms of overtly shown categories. Such sociolinguistic devices express formally and explicitly the social relationship between co-locutors in a given interaction. The key formal devices for showing sociolinguistic differences in Tagalog are the respectful use of enclitic particle and pronominal forms. Two enclitic particles, *po* and *ho*, correlate with the use of the pronouns *ikaw/ka* 'you (sg)' and *kayo* 'you (pl)' in showing sociolinguistic differences in conversational interaction.

The possible historical origins of these sociolinguistic devices in Tagalog is assessed by examining the earliest available descriptions of Tagalog, and comparing them with later descriptive treatments. Another guide is the appearance or non-appearance of such respect forms in the syntax of other languages of the Philippines, as well as related languages like Chamorro in Guam. This examination is to ascertain whether other languages of the group, major or minor, employ either the enclitic particles or the pronominal forms as respect forms and if so, whether there is historical attestation of their appearance. Information on this point should shed some light on the possible extra-familial origins of the sociolinguistic use of enclitic particles and pronominal forms in Philippine languages.

The Tagalog respect forms are several in number. They have, however, the dual functions of distinguishing individuals as members of the same or different groups (acquainted or unacquainted) as well

as designating members of one's own group as equal or unequal socially for various reasons (superior, inferior, or equal). There are two basic ways of indicating respect in Tagalog. One of these is the use of the respect particles *po* and *ho* as contrasted with their absence (zero). This zero is paralleled in the language by the presence of three forms of the affirmative 'yes' (*opo, oho,* and *oo*), corresponding to *po, ho* and zero, respectively. Thus, respect use in simple affirmatives is replaced by a special pair of affirmatives, both meaning 'yes', but with the secondary feature of level of respectful address included. For example, compare *opo* 'yes (*po*)' and *oho* 'yes (*ho*)' with *oo* 'yes'. The negative simply follows the typical enclitic pattern of orderings, with *hindi* 'no, not', acting as the first full sentence word.

Respect particles fall under the heading of enclitics in Tagalog, usually appearing after the first full word or phrase in the sentence. This initial full phrase may be either a verbal or adjectival predicate or a nominal or prepositional phrase. There are, of course, other enclitics, and where two or more enclitics appear, the enclitics are ordered by a fairly rigorous set of occurrence privileges when other enclitics are also present in the same sentence, such that they occur in a rigidly predetermined order. If the full range of enclitics were to appear, they would appear in the following ordering; however, it should be noted that such a full constellation of enclitics rarely appears.

+ PREDICATE *na nga po ba din lamang sana* + Substantive Topic

In other uses, the *po* particle (but apparently not the *ho*) is simply frozen in such calcified greeting expressions as *Tao po* 'Anybody home' or 'Hello the house' (usually met with *Tuloy po kayo* 'Come on in!') and in *Mano po,* 'May I have your hand?' (a hand to head

ritual greeting with older respected individuals). It is interesting
to note that of the earlier studies in Tagalog, neither Totanes
(1745) nor the much later Blake (1925) and Bloomfield (1917) mention
ho (nor, consequently, *oho*). Of course, neither do some more con-
temporary studies, as for example, Aspillera (1979). Though this
may have been merely oversight on their part, it does not seem likely.
Only more contemporary pedagogical treatments concentrating on the
colloquial spoken seem to make clear mention of the two, for example,
Bowen et al. (1965). Moreover, the apparent variation between *po*
and *ho* has not only been noted in Bowen et al. (1956:5), where the
inherent variability of the po/ho continuum is noted by indicating
that "though *po* is usually considered more formal than *ho*, some speakers
prefer one, some the other, and some use both.

The other sociolinguistic device used to express respect is the
use of a plural pronoun to address an individual person. Commonly,
it is the second person plural pronoun *kayo* which is typically used.
Occasionally, and perhaps more rarely now, when the addressee is
especially esteemed for his elevated position, Tagalog makes use of
the third person plural pronoun *sila* in direct address. It also
makes occasional use of it as respectful reference in the axis of
conversational reference to a third person singular third party.
Such conventions are not unknown elsewhere (see Martin, 1964, for
an example of this in Japanese; Hoppe and Kess, 1978, for one in
English; and Kess and Juričić, 1978, for an example in South Slavic).
It is noticeably lacking in Spanish, classical or contemporary, if
one thinks of the latter as a possible origin for such sociolinguistic
practices.

Both *kayo* and *sila* contrast with the second person singular
pronoun *ikaw* (or *ka*, depending upon sentence position). The pronominal

system of Tagalog is presented below to place pronominal contrasts in focus. If we incorporate the first plural inclusive-exclusive distinction, Tagalog pronouns fall into two categories: (1) those which refer to the speaker (S), the hearer (H), the speaker plus hearer (S+H) or some other person (O), and (2) those which refer to each of the above plus others (See Stockwell, 1959).

	(1) Simple	(2) Plus others
S	ako	kami
H	ikaw/ka	kayo
S+H	kata	tayo
O	siya	sila

In fact, there are three parallel pronominal paradigms in Tagalog: the *ako* paradigm (presented above), the *ko* paradigm, and the *akin* paradigm. These correspond to the particles *ang*, *nang*, and *sa*, which mark the case functions of noun phrases in sentences. Thus, personal pronouns in Tagalog fall into sets corresponding to the three sets of nominal expressions marked by the particles *ang*, *nang*, and *sa*. The *ako*, *ko*, and *akin* pronoun classes are as follows.

	ang/si	*nang/ni*	*sa/kay*
Person:			
I	*ako*	*ko*	*akin*
thou	*ikaw*, *ka*	*mo*	*iyo*

	ang/si	*nang/ni*	*sa/kay*
I and thou	*kata*	*nata, ta*	*kanita*
he, she	*siya*	*niya*	*kaniya*
we (exclusive)	*kami*	*namin*	*amin*
we (inclusive)	*tayo*	*natin*	*atin*
you	*kayo*	*ninyo*	*inyo*
they	*sila*	*nila*	*kanila*

The rules affecting the respectful use of the second person singular and plural touch identically upon its manifestations in all three paradigms, i.e., for *kayo, ninyo,* and *inyo.*

The respect particles co-occur in principle, though not necessarily in each instance, with the plural pronoun *kayo.* While the particles or the pronoun may occur alone, where only one of them occurs, the absent form is alleged to be implied by the form which does appear. It is always possible to insert the absent respect form without any noticeable grammatical or lexical change in the content of the sentence, as for example,

Pumunta na (po) ba kayo?; Pumunta na (ho) ba kayo? = 'Did you go?'

On the other hand, solidarity and absence of status differences is expressed by the reciprocal use of the second person singular pronoun *ikaw/ka* and the non-use of the respect particles.

The occasions when the singular pronoun *ikaw* occurs with *po,* for example, are rare and are usually sociolinguistically marked. For example, in prayer addressing God or the saints one notes *ikaw* and *po* (see Schachter and Otanes, 1972); this is not unlike the use of *thou, thy, thine* in the Early Modern English version of the King James 1611 *Our Father* ('Hallowed be Thy name') or the Spanish version of the *Padre Nuestro* ('Santificado sea tu nombre'). The Tagalog use of both *ikaw,* the familiar pronoun, and the respectful *po* is simply the best compromise between the respectful awe and filial piety that

Christians are expected to show in respect to the Deity. The only other instances in Tagalog where such a paired presence (*ikaw-po*) occurs is in sarcastically marked speech, as for example, in *ikaw po* . . . . 'you think you're so important, but....' Here one is in disagreement with another's pretended greatness and issues a mocking form of address; the two are in direct contrast, a sociolinguistic contradiction in terms.

It is possible that such usage originates outside the Philippines. Not only are there some interesting differences in the uses of these devices within the Philippine languages themselves, but there are other instances of similar borrowings. For example, kin terms typically have respectful address overtones, since they are non-reciprocal and are embedded in the hierarchically structured familial system. Terms like *ama* 'father', *ina* 'mother', *amain* 'uncle', *ale* 'aunt', *impo* 'grandmother', and *ingkong* 'grandfather' have such dimensions. It is not generally customary for younger siblings to use respectful particles with older siblings, but distinctive terms for the children of a family unit distinguished by order of birth and sex do reflect non-reciprocity. For example, one notes terms like *kuya* and *ate* for the oldest brother and sister, *diko* and *ditse* for the second oldest, and *sangko* and *sanse* for the third oldest. One even has *inso* for spouse of the eldest son and *siyaho* for spouse of the eldest daughter.

Given the roots in *sangko* and *sanse,* one quickly suspects that they may be derived from some Chinese language. Certainly the care in the differential naming of oldest to youngest child in the family unit is a Chinese sociolinguistic practice of long standing. Comparing further the roots in Mandarin, one notes some remarkable similarities, more than could be due to chance. Thus, compare *di* 第 'second in a counting series' added to *ge* 'elder brother' 哥

and jie 'elder sister' 姐 (or zǐ 'elder sister' 姊) for
diko and *ditse*. One also has *san* 'three' 三 and the same previous
roots in *sangko* and *sanse*. This borrowing seems to have been extended
to *inso* and *siyaho;* compare *saǒ* 'elder brother's wife' 大嫂 for
inso and *jiě* 'elder sister' coupled wity *fū* 'husband' 夫 for
siyaho. One also has *pǒ* 'paternal' grandmother' 婆 for
impo and *gōng* 'paternal grandfather' 公 for *ingkong*. It is easy
to see parts of the highly respect-marked kin-address system as being
borrowed from some Chinese language.

Use of the respect particles is not a pan-Philippine usage, and
it is interesting to speculate on its possible origins. One pos-
sibility is that it is derived from Spanish sociolinguistic prac-
tices, though this is not easily demonstrated. Spanish, like all
the languages of Europe, was party to the courtly spread of the pro-
nouns of power and solidarity, and by the time of its colonial minis-
trations in Southeast Asia this was a permanent sociolinguistic fix-
ture in Spanish speech.

There is little question that the Spanish colonial regime had
a tremendous impact on Philippine culture, and there is a good deal
that can be told about the nature of Spanish-Filipino contact by the
types of Spanish linguistic elements which find themselves in Philip-
pine languages. Though the use of Spanish has practically disappeared
from the Philippine scene, bilingualism at one time was widespread.
One sees this both in the number of Spanish contact vernaculars as
well as in the large extent to which Spanish borrowings penetrated
the vocabulary core of Philippine languages. Wolff (1973:73) cites
approximately 25% of the total lexical entries in a Cebuano dictionary
as being Spanish in origin. He notes further that in this way
Cebuano is probably representative of languages spoken by Chrisitan
Filipinos. The sociolinguistic status of Spanish must have always

been that of the prestige language and Filipinos who did not master it would very likely have been wont to emulate it. Bilingualism must have been high in those speech communities which lived directly under strong Spanish influence and this influence must have permeated in some small fashion even the more remote peripheral areas by ripple effect.

The claim that Spanish had a large sociolinguistic influence on the general social mores of large urban centres in the Philippines is supported by lexical borrowings in many languages in the areas of sexual mores, master-servant relationships, superior-to-inferior exchanges, the reception and treatment of guests, and kin terms. It would not be surprising to discover that many other Spanish socio-linguistic conventions may have also found their way directly into the Filipino monolingual and bilingual communities.

Mention of Tagalog forms of respectful address is seen in the earliest Spanish treatments of Tagalog. Totanes (1745:17), for example, notes *po*, but observes that there is no need to add *kayo* (*cayo* in Totanes' text, following Spanish orthographic practices). It may be that the respectful particles were already in use as a Tagalog device and that only the use of pronominal forms were derived from Spanish. The exact extent of the usage is puzzling, and Totanes presents a very incomplete picture, such that we are not sure when he is in fact recording contemporary sociolinguistic usage or simply seeing Tagalog through Spanish eyes. He does list (p. 60) a verb *magpaico* (*magpa-ikaw?*), citing its gloss as *llamar de tu*, presumably the Tagalog equivalent of the Spanish *tutear*. He also (p. 17, paragraph 59) records use of the second person plural for singular addressees in Tagalog. For example, he makes reference to asking questions of an inferior using *ca* or *mo*, depending upon the sequence in question. He also notes the use of *cayo (kayo)*, comparing

it to Spanish usage in the use of *maano cayo?* for *¿Como está VMd.?*
It is interesting to note that the older form *maano* is used (cf.
paanó, 'how') instead of the contemporary borrowing from Spanish,
kumusta (from *¿Como está?*). This greeting thus entered Tagalog as a
fixed locution at a later time. While it is difficult to give a
time-scale for such events, the argument for Spanish origins would
have been more persuasive had the greeting been *Kumusta kayo,* reflect-
ing the intrusion from Spanish a little more convincingly. Totanes'
paragraph (p. 17, paragraph 59) is included below for its insights
into that earlier stage.

> 59. Con este *anó* se pregunta el parenteseo, ó dependencia, que
> uno tiene con otro, poniendo (para hablar con politica) al que fuere,
> o parceiere mayor en nominativo, y al otro en genitivo. Vg.:
> (preguntando al superior) *Anóca nitong babáye, 1. báta?* qué eres
> tú de esta muger, o de este muchacho? Y responde *Amá,* soy padre.
> *Asáua,* soy au marido, *Panĝinoon,* soy su señor, etc. *Anómo itong táuo?*
> (preguntando al inferior) *Amà,* es mi padre. *Amà* es mi padre. *Asaùa,*
> es mi marido, etc., aunque tambien ponen en nominativo á aquel á
> quien preguntan, sin atencion á mayor ó menor. *Anóca nitong babáye?*
> (preguntando á un chiquillo) *Anàc,* soy su hijo. Hablando asimismo
> el inferior á su superior como amo, ó P. Ministro, etc., y como
> usando nosotros nombres de Usted, ó de V. merced, lo practican del
> modo singuiente; en lugar de las particulas de *icáo, 1. ca,* usan de
> la partícula *cayó.* Vg : *maano cayó?* como está Vmd.? *Cun cayo, i,*
> *hindi napa sa Maynila?* si Vmd. no hubiera ido á Manila? y asi del
> mismo modo en todas las locaciones de esta clase: con la advertencia,
> de que al *cayo* no se le ha de añadir la partícula *pó:* con lo que se
> particulariza este comun modo de hablar, bastante usado en los mas
> advertidos.

By the time turn-of-the-century English descriptions like Blake's
appear, this sociolinguistic practice was already well-established,
and is of course a fact of current Tagalog usage. (Note that although
Blake's comprehensive work, *A Grammar of the Tagalog Language,* appeared
in 1925, his research was begun at the turn of the century, as

attested to by his many earlier publications.)

Language-in-contact situations often produce different results, and when we look at the other languages of the Philippines, this sociolinguistic device appears rather limited. Rather than all the languages which had intimate and continuing contact with Spanish having borrowed this practice, the following picture emerges. Tagalog is paralleled in its particle or pronominal usage by those languages which more or less surround it, suggesting a sociolinguistic drift of the practice. Except for Ilokano, which as a large and important language, may have either had more contact with Spanish or Tagalog or both, other languages of the group further north and further south are conspicuously lacking in this device. The same is also largely true for the languages of the Bisayas; this feature has in fact been cited as at least one characteristic differentiating Tagalog from the Bisayan languages. For example, in the Bisayas Cebuano uses titled forms of address. Similar respectful titles of address are found in Hiligaynon, but neither *po*-like forms nor pronominal deployment. On Luzon, Bikol has both respect marker *po* and a second person plural pronoun (*kamó*) usage for a singular addressee. Most interestingly, Mintz (1971:116) notes that *po* is generally used in the Naga dialect of Bikol and dialects north towards Manila, but is rarely heard in the south. It may be that this reflects the earlier spread of this sociolinguistic device from either Spanish or through Tagalog from Spanish making a case for the contact limitations of such sociolinguistic practices derived from Spanish. If this is in fact the explanation for this situation, one speculates that such geographic constraints would have been that much more restrictive in an age without mass media. Mirikitani (1972) notes the Kapampangan respect form *pu* as "a term marking deference and formality of speech (p. 12)", and the distinc-

tion between *ka* 'you, singular' and *kayu* 'you, plural' as being one
with politeness overtones (p. 21). Pangasinan has both the use of
the second person plural pronoun (kayó) with respectful address over-
tones and a respect marker *pa*.

Further north, the plural pronoun is used in Ilokano as a sign
of respect, but there is no use of respect particles. Similarily,
there is neither use of particles nor pronouns for Bontoc, nor for
Ivatan on the Batanes islands north of Luzon. An early study by
Scheerer (1905) notes that the Nabaloi dialect of Igorot has only
respectful overtones to the use of the first person pronouns inclusive
and exclusive (*sikatayo* and *sikame*). Scheerer (1905: 113) notes
that "*sikame* will be heard, for instance, in a respectful report to
a superior; *sikatayo*, on the contrary, in familiar talk among equals.
The same propriety in speaking is found in Ilocano, Tagalog, etc.,
but is especially noteworthy among Igorot who otherwise address every-
body, high or low, with *sikam* (thou) after the fashion of the Tyrolese
mountaineers." Scheerer, of course, would have been extremely conscious
of this distinction, given the status of *Du/Sie* exchanges in German,
and so we can accept his testimony as to its non-appearance in Igorot.
This is in keeping with the sociolinguistic practices of the other
northern languages. Dumagat, a Negrito language of north-eastern
Luzon, has neither pronouns nor particles as respectful address
devices.

In Mindanao, neither particles nor pronouns are used as respect-
ful respectful address devices for Maranao. Recalling that Maranao is
in Muslim territory, with Marawi City a predominantly Muslim city,
this absence would be entirely expected if the provenience of such
forms of respectful address is ultimately Spanish.

Chamorro, like Palauan, belongs to the Philippine subgrouping
by reason of its verb morphology and other characteristics. Chamorro

also has neither respect particles nor the respectful deployment
of pronouns like Tagalog. The Marianas were also discovered for
Spain by Magellan (chronologically just before the Philippines) on
his westward journey home while circumnavigating the globe for the
first time. There was also a mission there from the 1600's, and
Spanish exerted an early and lasting influence on Chamorro until
1898 when Guam went to the United States.

The presence and importance of Spanish influence linguistically
is also testified to by the Spanish contact vernaculars in the
Philippines — langauges like Caviteño, Ermiteño, Davaueño, and
Zamboangueño. In general, much of the vocabulary of these Spanish
contact creoles is Spanish in origin, though the grammar is markedly
Filipino in structure, giving some idea of the penetration of Spanish
in areas where it impinged closely and continuously on Filipino lin-
guistic communities. Not surprisingly, these contact vernaculars
typically show the residue of Spanish sociolinguistic practices,
since they were the result of creolization with Spanish, from whence
much of the original pidgin was derived. Thus, for example, while
there are no particles in Zamboangueño, the second person pronoun
set does have respectful uses like the Spanish and Tagalog (Zamboañ-
gueno second person singular pronouns *?uste, tu, ?ebos* and plural
?ustedes, bosotros, and *kamo* exhibit differences in respect usage).

In those Philippine languages which make use of this sociolin-
guistic device, the practice seems to run fairly parallel to that of
other languages. In fact, claims about sociolinguistic universals
have been made by Slobin et al., who suggest (1968;289) that 'it
is apparently a sociolinguistic universal that the address term
exchanged between intimates ("familiar pronoun," "first name," etc.)
is the same term used in addressing social inferiors and that the
term exchanged between non-intimates ("polite pronoun," "title and

last name," etc.) is also used to address social superiors.' The
universality of such observations is certainly open to question,
but those Philippine languages which do use it seem to follow the
general pattern. There is little quarrel with other such suggestions
that the greater the status difference between individuals, the
greater is the probability of nonreciprocal address in those lan-
guages which do have such sociolinguistic mechanisms. However, it
is certainly not a pan-Philippine characteristic, and many languages
do not use it or use other means.

As for extra-familial origins, the Spanish case is attractive,
but inconclusive. Either the sociolinguistic device of pronominal
deployment was borrowed and assimilated quickly enough from Spanish
to have appeared in Totanes (1745) or it was already present. One
would have expected other major languages of the grouping to have
also done the same; Ilokano seems to have vestiges of it, but Cebuano
and other Bisayan languages do not. The case would have been more
convincing, had all the major contacted languages had the feature.
Those languages surrounding Tagalog probably have it as a result of a
ripple effect from Tagalog but the question is whether this is
ultimately from Spanish origins or is a feature spread from Tagalog
itself. One plausible guess is that the pronominal deployment feature
was borrowed from Spanish, and very early, but there is no immediate
way of supplying incontrovertible proof for this speculation. The
respectful enclitic particles *po* and *ho* likely have their own native
history in Tagalog and the languages surrounding it. The best that
we can say at this point is that Tagalog is the likely source for such
particle/pronominal deployment, while Spanish influence remains a
distinct possibility.

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