

CHAMORRO INFIXES

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1. THE TWO KNOWN INFIXES IN CHAMORRO¹

All previous discussions of Chamorro infixes mention only two, and clearly state or imply that these two are the only infixes to be found in the language. These two common and well-studied infixes of Chamorro are /-um-/ and /-in-/. They occur also, in identical form and with comparable functions, in many Philippine languages; hence their existence and uses in Chamorro were 'givens' even to early students of the language.

One of the first to attempt a comprehensive grammatical explanation of Chamorro was William Edwin Safford. Safford noted the use of /-in-/ as forming abstract nouns (1903:5:305), and as indicating single-agent passive in certain verbs (1904:6:506, 511, 525). Safford likewise mentions several uses of /-um-/. For example, /-um-/ is said to form the reciprocal of nouns (1903:5:301) and verbs (1904:6:528); the 'infinitive' (ibid:508); and various forms of present and past progressive (ibid:501-3, 515, 518-9).

The most recent grammar of Chamorro is that of Donald Topping, who states: "There are two infixes in Chamorro..."; one is the Nominalising Infix -ln-, as in *hinasso* 'thought, knowledge', from *hasso* plus -in- (1973:170). Later he discusses -in- as being also the Goal Focus Infix and the Adjectivising Infix (ibid:187), and as having yet several other functions (ibid:188-9). Topping refers to -um- as the Actor Focus Infix, and as a Verbalising Infix having several different functions (ibid:184-5). In these explanations, Topping adds little to Safford's presentation other than terminological innovations derived in part from the structuralist approach to language analysis (affix labels like

verbalising, nominalising, etc.), and in part from the custom of recent analysts to characterise Philippine languages in terms of a "focus system" (i.e., having actor, goal, location, and/or other focus constructions).

The many labels given to these infixes by Topping, and the many functions assigned to each by both Safford and Topping, suggest that a more natural analysis of their functions and contexts remains to be done. Regardless of this fact, both authors leave no doubt that they are dealing with only two infix forms. Nevertheless, several other infixes most certainly exist in Chamorro, as I have found in the course of analysing my field data.² One of these 'new' infixes is relatively common; its form, meaning and usage are the subject matter of this report.

2. A THIRD CHAMORRO INFIX

The shape of this third Chamorro infix is /-V|-/, with restrictions on the /V/ (vowel) to be noted shortly. Topping (1973:175) vaguely speculates on the possible existence of such an affix. He states:

"There is no doubt that some affixes which were formerly productive have now become fossilized in a few words. For example, there is an obvious relationship between *papa* 'wing' and *palapa* 'to flap wings', but the meaning of -la- (if there ever was one) has been lost. We find it in a few other words such as *chalaochao* (from *chaochao*) 'shake, rattle', *kalaskas* (from *kaskas*) 'rustling sound', and *palangpang* (from *pangpang*) 'explosion'. Even in these words the meaning of the affix -la- is not clear."³

The true form of the affix glimpsed by Topping, in the words in his examples, is /-a|-/, not /-la-/. This conclusion derives from two items of evidence. (1) The only two well-known Chamorro infixes, /-um-/ and /-in-/, both have the structure /-VC-/. (2) The word *chalaochao* (mentioned by Topping in previous quotation) must be derived from *chaochao*. To get *chalaochao* from this plus Topping's infix -la-, the latter would have to be inserted between the /a/ and the /o/ of the diphthong /ao/. This is unlikely, and equally inadmissible is the infix insertion rule logically derived from all of Topping's examples, given his statement that the affix form is -la-. That is, the insertion rule would be:

/-la-/ is inserted after the C_1V_1 - of a stem;
 if V_1 = diphthong /ao, ai/, the affix
 is inserted between the [a] and the
 following [o] or [i].

Certainly there are allophonic changes in Chamorro where a diphthong is blended into one phonetic segment (e.g., [tauto] 'person' from /tautau/); a diphthong may also be reduced to its primary (first) phonetic component (e.g., [tatatauñʌ] 'his body' from /tautautauña/). However, splitting of diphthongs is certainly not found in Chamorro. For these reasons, then, the affix derived from Topping's examples is best described as /-aɪ-/, not /-la-/.

However, /-aɪ-/ is still an insufficient formula for this 'new' affix, because the affix occurs not only in words with /a/ or /au/ in the first syllable, but in words with other first syllable vowels. Words with root vowels other than /a/ and /au/ have correspondingly different vowels in the infix. That is, vowel harmony is in effect here. Examples follow for four of the five Chamorro vowel phonemes:⁴

Root Vowel	Derived Word	Gloss
/i/	/tiliŋtiŋ/	'jingling'
	/biliŋbiŋ/	'buzzing'
/u/	/bulukbuk/	'bubbling'
	/duluk/	'stab, puncture'
	/tulungtung/	'hammering'
/a/	/palapa/	'flapping (wings)'
/au/	/ʔalauʔau/	'rattling'

I do not have an example with first syllable vowel /ai/ -- the fifth Chamorro vowel phoneme. I expect to find the pattern /-a-ai-/, as exists for example in the word for 'canoe', /galaidiʔ/. (But there is no proof that this word comes from the hypothetical stem /gaidiʔ/.)

3. THE MEANING OF THE INFIX /-Vɪ-/

The meaning of infix /-Vɪ-/ has been difficult to determine; however, the most appropriate tentative hypothesis seems to be to assign to it the meaning of augmentation. That is, the action or action-result denoted by a word is reported to be maximised or maximally extended in time or space by use of the affix. The exact significance of the 'augmentation' varies with the stem to which it is applied. The primary and common senses of /-Vɪ-/ are indicated by the sets of examples given below:

(a) Augmentation including time extension:

- /papa/ 'wing' → /palapa/ 'to flap; flapping noise'
 /bukbuk/ 'to uproot' → /bulukbuk/ 'boiling, bubbling (noise)'
 /kaskas/ 'crisp, dry' → /kalaskas/ 'rattling, crackling'

- /pakpak/ 'explode, boom' clap' → /palakpak/ 'crackling noise as thunder, gun; chattering, babbling (talk)'
- /tuntun/ 'to pound clothes' → /tuluntun/ 'hammering; pounding clothes'
- /kamtin/ 'active, restless' → /kalamtin/ 'to be in motion, to move'
- /biŋbiŋ/ 'to buzz' → /bilingbiŋ/ 'buzzing'
- /t̄aūt̄au/ 'to shake, rattle' → /t̄alaūt̄au/ 'shaking, rattling'
- /panpan/ 'to explode; explosion, blast, concussion' → /palanpan/ 'sound of explosion(s), of falling down stairs; noise in car mechanism, etc.'
- /taktak/ 'to peck' → /talaktak/ 'pecking sound'
- /dzaka?/ 'to knead, work into mass as dough' → /dzalaka?/ 'to beat up a thin batter, stir up a salad'

(b) Augmentation implying spatial extension:

- /(ma)duk/ 'a hole' → /duluk/ 'stab, puncture, or pierce (to extend a knife or other instrument)'
- /(ma)bakbak/ 'scooped out, as the neck of a dress' → /balakbak/ 'bag or suitcase'
- /t̄ak/ 'chop' → /t̄alak/ 'a cut to the bone, as that made in a fish to season it before cooking'

4. USAGE OF THE INFIX

I do not have many examples of in-context usage of the infix /-Vl-/, since I was not aware of its existence at the time that I did my field work, and I do not now have a local informant. However, the following are sentence usage examples gleaned from a search through data collected from various informants in the past. Note that infix /-Vl-/ can be used with both /-ir-/ and /-um-/.

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|----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| /Tsul i magi i dzinalaka?/ | 'Bring me the beaten (batter).' |
| /Hu duluk i hilitai/ | 'I stabbed the lizard.' |
| /Kumalamtin i lahi/ | 'The man is moving (away).' |
| /Bulukbuk i kadun maruk/ | 'The chicken stew is boiling.' |
| /Ti dzahu i palapakña/ | 'I do not like her chattering.' |

5. DISCUSSION

For comparison and corroboration, I call attention to a similar infix in some Philippine languages. The form is usually the same as that of the Chamorro infix, though sometimes an /r/ replaces the /l/,

and vowel harmony may not occur. I do not include here instances of these differences, nor do I offer a hypothesis for the meaning of the infix in the several Philippine languages. As far as I can ascertain, there is (as in the case of the Chamorro infix) no published analysis of this infix for any Philippine language. A few examples follow:

Isneg: (Vanoverbergh 1972):

/batáy/ 'to stand on a support' → /balatáy/ 'bridge'
 /bátug/ 'in front of' → /balátug/ 'a row of stepping stones
 leading from one house to
 another'
 /báwi/ 'a hut' → /baláwi/ 'a spirit who protects huts'

Hiligaynon (Motus 1971):

/tágsa/ 'only one per person' → /talágsa/ 'rarely, seldom'
 /pákpak/ 'feather, wing' → /palákpak/ 'clapping of the hands'
 /gátuŋ/ 'to burn as firewood' → /galatúŋ/ 'firewood'
 buscar, 'to search for' is the probable Spanish base for /balúskay/
 'to make a thorough search'

Cebuano (Yap and Bunye 1971):

/pándaŋ/ 'scarf, headcovering' → /palándaŋ/ 'to shelter oneself'
 /páŋga/ 'love, endear' → /paláŋga/ 'beloved one, favourite'

Returning to Chamorro, and to the examples illustrating the meaning of the infix /-VI-/, it should be noted that the 'augmentation' meaning often implies loudness or noisiness. Thus, /-VI-/ usually involves the maximisation of energy and force being perceived through the hearing sense. It is interesting in this regard to find that /taŋa/ means 'sound' in Chamorro and /taláŋa/ means 'ear', the organ of hearing.

In the Chamorro language in general, there is a great stress on sound and its perception. Sound symbolism is an obvious and frequent influence in word formation, and is quite evident in many of the word examples cited in this paper. Informants⁵ have volunteered statements to me indicating the importance to them of sensation and its perception by self and others. Underwood stated that Chamorro speech tends overall to convey 'pictures'; that is, communication is through verbal re-creation of images, sounds, emotional perceptions, etc. Mrs. Sablan, who taught me to cook (a little) in the Chamorro style, revealed that she cooks much by sound perception, which can be illustrated by two examples: (1) When waiting for the pot to boil, one does not watch it, as we do, for the beginning of bubbles. Instead, the Chamorro listens, for the 'buk-buk' which is the sound of boiling. (The word for boiling or bubbling is /bulukbuk/.) (2) When frying fish, one does not watch

for it to change colour, or flake, or whatever; one again listens, and "you know when the fish is done when the sound changes" (because the moisture has been expelled from the skin).

In conclusion, augmentation of various sorts seems often to be recognised by Chamorro persons through perception of an increase in volume and/or continuation of sounds. This recognition is expressed through the use of the infix /-vi-/; which, however, expresses spatial extension as well.

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N O T E S

1. Chamorro is the native language of the Mariana Islands in Micronesia. Differences between the varieties of Chamorro spoken on the different islands (Guam, Rota, Saipan, etc.) are not significant for this study.
2. My field data on Chamorro was gathered during the summer of 1971, when I lived with and was helped by Mrs. Rosario Sablan of Merizo, Guam. Another informant on Guam was Mrs. Remedios Perez, of Agaña.
3. Note that Topping's works employ standard Chamorro orthography (as used in schools and newspapers in the Marianas), and (usually) not phonemic or phonetic notation. For example, he uses 'ch' for /tʃ/, 'ng' for /ŋ/, in the examples given in this paper. My representations of Chamorro speech sounds are phonemic if given in slants, and phonetic if given in brackets.
4. Chamorro vowel phonemes are: /a, i, u, au, ai/. See Witucki 1973, 1974.
5. In addition to the informants named in note two, above, I had as informants in Los Angeles Mrs. Ruperta Blas and Mr. Robert Underwood.

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