CHAMORRO PREFIXES: I

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1. INTRODUCTION

This is the first in a projected series of papers describing the prefixes of Chamorro[1]. Chamorro is the native language of the Mariana Islands, and is a language especially rich in affixes of many types. To be covered here are the prefixes having an initial /a/.

Morphemes discussed will be written phonemically, except where appropriate for allomorphs to be given phonetically, in which case the form will be enclosed in phonetic brackets [ ]. (For the phonemes of Chamorro, see Witucki 1975, 1976.) All vowels which are uttered after pause are phonetically glottal plus vowel. Two vowel phonemes placed in sequence are separated by a glottal; i.e., /Iaa/ is [Ia?a]. This does not, of course, apply to the second member of the diphthongs /au, ai/.

Primary word stress will not be marked unless it differs from the general rule, according to which such stress occurs on the penultimate syllable. Stress, therefore, is not regularly phonemic in Chamorro, but it is used to distinguish between a fair number of homonymous words and affixes. This is true for several pairs of prefixes which, through one or another historical process, have come to have the same segmental phonemic components. An example of this is the stress opposition between /á-/ and /a-/, prefixes discussed in the following sections.

2. KNOWN PREFIXES WITH INITIAL /a/

Topping (1973:175-6) lists the following /a/ initial prefixes for Chamorro: /á-/ reciprocal; /án-/ 'left-over', and /atsá-/ equality. These will be briefly discussed below.

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2.1. /á-/

Topping states that this means reciprocal, and that it "is always attached to a verb" (ibid.). This explanation is identical to that of Safford (1904:6.528). When the affixed form is used as a verb, it requires a further prefix and a noun phrase to indicate dual or plural subject involvement. /-um-/ plus /á-/ is used for dual subject, /man-/ plus /á-/ for plural.

Examples:

> Umápatsa i dos.   *'The two touched each other.'*
> Umádiŋan dzu? dzan i lahi.   *'I talked with the man.'*
> Manágu?ti hit.   *'We* (plural) *grabbed each other.'*

In addition, the prefix /á-/ is employed as a noun-forming prefix. Nouns thus formed suggest the result of a reciprocal relation. The plural takes /á-/ + /fan-/.

Examples:

> átuŋu? *'friend'* < tuŋu? *'to know'*
> ágʷaⁱdza *'love affair'* < gʷaⁱdza *'to love'*
> áfantùŋu? *'friends' (term of address)*
> áfangà?tsuŋ *'companions' (term of address)* < ga?tsuŋ *'companion'*

2.2. /án-/

Topping (1973:175) assigns to this prefix the meaning of 'left-over'. However, this gloss fits the sense of only a few of the forms derived from its use. 'Left-over' is clearly inadequate, being too specific a meaning to suggest the function of the prefix with a variety of roots. The idea conveyed is more generally that which exists beyond, or overrules, the root-idea.

Examples:

> án-bali   *'dust (excess from sweeping)'* < Spanish barrer.
> án-kanu? *'left-over food (excess, uneaten)'* < kanu? *'to eat'*
> án-tuk   [an.nʊk] *'exposed, visible'; 'beyond cover'*; <
>   */tuk/² *'to hide, conceal'*. Shows morphophonemic
>   change /n + t/ → [nn].
> án-put   [am.mʊt] *'medicine, cure'*. As a root, */put/
>   means *'to swell up, swelling'*. The most talked-about
>   native ailment on Guam is /tsi?nut maipi/ *'hot sore,*
>   *a swelling that feels hot'*. To counter or 'overrule'
>   such a swelling is to cure it. The phonetic
>   representation results from the morphophonemic change
>   /n + p/ → [mm].

án-di?   'show-off, gaudy' < */di?/ 'small, smallness, small
                bit'. /án-di?/ is beyond or overruling smallness.

2.3. /atsá-/

Equality, sameness. Alternates with /tsá-/ in casual or rapid
speech (Safford 1904.6:110; Topping 1973:175).

Examples:

    atsá-uŋak   'to balance, make equal weights' < /uŋak/ 'to tilt'.
    atsá-taᵘtaᵘ   'peer, equal in age, status etc.' < /taᵘtaᵘ/ 'person'.
    atsá-hit   'we   < /hit/ 'we (pl)'
    atsá-igi   'to compete, contend' < /igi/ 'to outdo'.

This prefix is almost certainly derived from the ancient Chamorro
numeral for *'one'*. After the Spanish gained control of the Mariana
Islands in the middle of the 17th century, Spanish number words were
substituted for the corresponding native words. The native Chamorro
word for *'one'* is /hatsa/ (Safford 1904.6:95,97) which in this prefix-
usage takes stress on the second syllable. The loss of the initial /h/
is very common in modern casual Chamorro speech. (For another instance,
see section 3.2. of this paper.)

As a prefix meaning *'equality, sameness'*, /atsá-/ conveys the idea
that two or more entities share **one** quality, nature, or action. When
used in an assertion of equality, it is followed by a subject phrase
indicating the two or more entities being equated in some way.

Examples:

    atsá-lu?ka? i dos.   *'The two are the same height.'*
                          Literally, *'one-height the two'.*

    atsá-daŋkulu? i tres.   *'The three are equally large.'*

    atsá-taᵘtaᵘ si Maria i si Ana. *'Maria and Ana are equal
                                              (in status).*

3. FURTHER /a/ INITIAL PREFIXES

The prefixes in this section have not, to my knowledge, been dis-
cussed previously by other students of Chamorro.

3.1. /a-/

This prefix is unstressed, contrasting it with /á-/ reciprocal prefix
(2.1.). /a-/ means something like *'self'* or *'essence'*. If affix plus
root results in a noun-usage[3], it refers to something which is naturally,
without cause, an instance of the root meaning. If affix plus root

results in a verb-usage, it is an intransitive verb, a verb of self-
action.

Examples:

agaŋ	*'to call or beckon'* < */gaŋ/ 'noise'*. The tran-sitive is formed by adding /-i/: /agaŋi/ *'to call someone'*.
atuk	*'to hide, conceal (oneself)'* < */tuk/ 'hug, enclose'*.
akaŋkaŋ	*'molar, tooth, thing with multiple projections'* < */kaŋ/ 'projection'*. (The root duplication acts as pluraliser.) Compare /kaŋhilun/ *'horn or antler of animal'*, from < */kaŋ/ plus /hilu?/ 'on top'*, plus /-n/ relator.
adumídidi?	*'gradually, a little bit at a time'* (adverb usage). From /dídidi?/ *'a little bit'*, plus /-um-/ pro-gressive action.
agua?	*'to make a step up and over'*; the reference is to the pictured self-movement, not to what was stepped over. From */gua?/ *'upward, arching move-ment'*, as in /gua?gua?/ *'to cause regurgitation'*.
asu	*'smoke'* < */su/ 'coming out, away'*. Compare /na?su?i/ *'make it come out, take it out'* (as the guts of a fish). Smoke is that which always, naturally, comes out of a fire.
asugua?	*'support, for house rafters; that which comes out and up in an arching line'*. From /a-/ + /su/ *'come out'* + /gua?/ *'arching'*.

3.2.   /a-/ ∿ /ha-/

In a number of words, a prefix /ha-/ has a freely alternative form
/a-/. It is not clear at present whether /ha-/, with its /a-/ allo-
morph, is a prefix separate from the /a-/ prefix discussed in section
3.1. The functions of /ha-/ appear to fall within the range of the
usages of /a-/, which was glossed as *'self-act, self-essence'*. Topping
does not give a /ha-/ prefix without stress, though he does mention a
stressed prefix /há-/, said to mean *'usually, often'* (1973:178).

The following examples of the unstressed /ha-/ prefix illustrate its
free alternation with /a-/:

hatiŋ ∿ atiŋ *'black ant'* < */tiŋ/ 'carry'*
ha?if ∿ a?if *'torch'*
hatsún ∿ atsún *'torch for night fishing'*

haga?ña ∿ aga?ña   *'Agana'* (main town on Guam)

hagat ∿ agat   *'Agat'* (town on central west coast of Guam)

That the meaning of /ha-/ overlaps with the meaning of the /a-/ of 3.1. can be seen in the following:

haduk	*'dimple, in the skin or flesh, of human, fruit, or vegetable'.* Such a dimple is an uncaused or natural dent. From */duk/ *'dent or pit'.* Compare /maduk/ *'a dent made by some agent'.*
hagu?l	*'to reach for something'* < /ha-/ (probably) self-act emphasis, plus */gu?/ *'grasp'*, plus /-i/, transitive marker. Note that the sense is not that someone grasps something, as in /gu?ti/ (see 2.1.), but rather that the actor **moves** to grasp something -- he reaches for it. Such distinctions in the pictorial quality of actions are common and very important in Chamorro.

The /ha-/ prefix has a low frequency of occurrence, and this is a further reason to assume that all cases of the /ha-/ ∿ /a-/ prefix usage belong to just one morpheme. Given my present data, I hypothesise that a former prefix /ha-/ has in the majority of its usages come to be expressed as the modern preferred allomorph, /a-/. The alternation in a great many words of /h/ and /∅/, in initial, medial, and final positions, strongly supports this suggestion.

3.3. /á?-/

This affix is essentially an augmentative of the previously described prefix /a-/, self-essence or self-act. The addition of the glottal stop and stress apparently adds forcefulness, and/or deliberateness, to the doing of an act, or the actor who does it. When the resultant form is used as a noun, it denotes one who does such an act regularly or professionally.

Examples:

á?gaŋ	*'(to make) a loud noise, booming sound'* < */gaŋ/ *'noise'.* Compare /agaŋ/ *'to call'*; /agaŋl/ *'to call someone'.*
á?ada?	*'one who mocks or mimics'* < /ada?/ *'to mock'.*
á?adahl	*'one who protects or guards'* < /adahl/ *'to care for'.*
á?platsa	*'dirty, unclean; impurity (entirely unclean)'* < /platsa/ *'spot'.*

á?haga   [ák.ka.ga] *'fictive daughter, girl, miss'* <
                /haga/ *'daughter'*. An address term for one who
                'acts like a daughter', in terms of social
                functioning.

á?amuti   *'doctor, healer'* < /amuti/ *'to heal, cure'*.

á?aposta   *'gambler'* < /aposta/ *'to bet'* < Spanish apostar.

3.4. /aka-/

This is a rare prefix, which is clearly derived from a general root
with the meaning of *'biting, piercing, sharp'*. Compare /aka?/ *'to
bite'*.

Examples:

aka-ii?ii?   *'sharp-sighted'* < /aka-/ *'sharp'* + /ii?i?/ *'to
                see'*. Usually /ak.ii?.i?/.

aka-diduk   *'having sharp point, edge'* < /diduk/ *'deep'*;
                hence *'(it) bites deep'*.

aka-duk   *'nipple, teat'* < /aka-/ *'biting'* + /duk/ *'dent,
                bump'* → *'biting bump'*.

aka-gwi   *'left (direction)'*; possibly refers to the
                'cutting direction', the side one cuts to (in
                fighting, etc.).

This prefix is also produced as /ka-/, and as such is mentioned by
Topping (1973:178). He states that this prefix "is no longer pro-
ductive and is not easily labelled". He gives as examples the following:

ka-diduk   *'sharp'* < /diduk/ *'deep'*. This also occurs as
                /aka-diduk/; see above.)

ka-laktus   *'sharp'* < `laktus/ *'thorn'*.

It is probable that many other words produced with an unstressed
/ka-/ prefix are likewise exhibiting a reduced form of the /aka-/
prefix. There will be more on this in a future paper covering /k/
initial prefixes.

N O T E S

1. My analysis of Chamorro is based on speech data from four infor-
mants, all of whom derive from the same general geographical area, the
environs of Agaña, the capital city of Guam. Two of these informants,
Ruperta Blas and Robert Underwood, were Chamorro speakers temporarily
residing in Los Angeles. The other two were Rosario Sablan and
Remedios Perez, who generously aided me during a summer (1971) of
fieldwork on Guam.

2. Asterisked forms are general roots which are not used in speech
without grammatical alteration by affixing, duplication, etc.

3. The basic meaning forms in Chamorro are general roots, without
distinction as to 'parts of speech', like nouns, verbs, adverbs,
adjectives, etc. Roots are changed, by context as much as by affixing,
to have use as verbs, nouns, and so-on; even pronouns may be used as
verbs in this way. Hence the terms 'noun-usage, verb-usage', etc. are
convenient labels when discussing a root and its functions which differ
according to how it is employed in a phrase, sometimes regardless of
its affixes.

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