

WORD BASE CLASSES IN BILAAN ¹⁾

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1. INTRODUCTION

Bilaan word bases when occurring uninflected in a complete utterance divide into three syntactic classes; verb, noun and adjective ²⁾. The utterances that serve to determine this classification are sentences of the verbal predication type, commonly called *topic-comment*, in which a topic element (a pronoun, demonstrative, noun or noun phrase) is announced and a comment (a verb) is made about it ³⁾.

¹⁾ Bilaan speakers, numbering about 30,000, reside in southern Cotabato and southwest Davao, Mindanao, Philippines.

Consonants of Bilaan are *b, d, f, g, h, k, l, m, n, ng, s, t, w, y*, and (glottal stop – represented only finally). Vowels are *a, d, e, é, i, o, u*. *d* is back and low; *e* is central, mid to high; *é* is front mid.

²⁾ A complete utterance is defined as one that can occur in isolation, is not imperative, and is not the response to a statement or question. Word bases are class of morphemes that can be inflected. In this paper relevant morpheme boundaries will be represented by hyphens.

Morphemes that cannot be inflected include particle classes of (1) adverbs such as *too* very, *fan* about to; (2) temporal particles such as *fayah* tomorrow, *kadang* later; (3) connectives such as *na* and, *du* because; (4) sentence qualifiers such as *kadi* for sure; (5) substantive markers such as *i*. The author deals in more detail with particles in his unpublished Master's thesis. "The Verb Complex in Bilaan," Interdepartmental Linguistics, University of Washington, 1960. The word base classes in this paper differ from those presented in the thesis.

³⁾ A word base, or a sequence of bases in the same form class, whether inflected or not, that occurs in complete utterances after *i* subject and object

Uninflected bases such as *bat* throw, *klang* cut, *bitil* be hungry, *banwe* place, and *fye* good have quite different distributions both in the number and type of elements that occur with them in the utterance.

bat-gu batu (throw-I rock) I throw a rock; *klang-gu kayu falakol* (cut-I tree hatchet) I cut the tree with the hatchet; *bitil ale* (be-hungry they) they are hungry; *teen-gu banwe* (see-I place) I see the place; *k-an-lang-gu i fye kayu* (cut-I i good tree) I cut the good tree. (In these examples *-gu* is an enclitic pronoun).

The first three of these bases occur as different types of verbs, the fourth is a noun, the fifth is an adjective. The non-nominal bases may also occur as nouns if there is further overt or covert grammatical modification, while all five bases may be further inflected, with differing subsequent constructions, in which case they occur as verbs or nouns depending on the construction.

The following are occurrences of non-nominal bases as nouns: *teen-gu i bat-um* (see-I what-thrown-your) I see the thing you throw; *bat-gu i klang-am* (throw-I i cutting-tool-your) I throw your cutting tool; *teen-gu i (to) bitil* (see-I i (person) hungry) I see the one who is hungry; *bat-gu i fye* (throw-I i good-thing) I throw the good thing.

The following inflected occurrences of these bases are verbs: *m-bat agu batu* (throw I rock) I throw the rock; *k-am-lang agu kayu* (cut I tree) I cut the tree; *t-n-itol gami* (made-hungry we) we are (experien-

substantive marker, or that can occur after *i* (for this marker varies with its absence), is a substantive (noun or noun phrase). Such a base or sequence occurring after *di* indirect object substantive marker (non-topic), after *dad* plural substantive marker, or after proper name markers *e*, *ku*, *kane* is also a substantive. *Dad* can occur in combination after other substantive markers. The terms substantive and noun will be used interchangeably.

Other single bases, whether inflected or not, that do not have the above distribution are verbs. Typical inflections are *-m-* actor focus, *-n-* non-actor focus *f-* causation, *s-* distributive, *g-* potential, *ma-* (or phonological variants *mg-*, *mag-*) past participle. Focus inflections are enclosed in hyphens, for they may be prefixed or infixed. *f-*, *s-*, *g-*, and *ma-* have focal and other grammatical distribution that will not be described in this article.

malfabí k-n-aán-la (i) dad anok (yesterday eat-they (i) plural chicken) yesterday they ate the chickens; *blé-n (i) k-n-aán-la di anok* (give-he (i) food-their to chicken) he gives their food to the chicken. In the first example *i* cannot occur before *k-n-aán-la*, without a change from verbal predication sentence type.

cing) famine; *m-anwe agu dini* (live I here) I live here ⁴⁾; *too ge fa-fye di dalan-am* (very you cause-good on path-your) be very careful on the way.

It is the thesis of this paper that these five classes of bases, when uninflected in utterances, demonstrate, in the order in which they have been listed, occurrences of (1) an action involving an object, (2) an instrument involving a use, (3) a condition of existence, (4) an object, and (5) a description of an object. In order to handle this adequately it will be necessary to describe first the basic syntax of Bilaan utterances and the identification of the sentence topic.

2. FOCUS AND SENTENCE ELEMENTS

In verbal predications, the topic is pointed out as being especially in view and may occur as the subject, object (goal) or indirect object of the sentence depending on the particular focus of the verb. Focus is that relation signalled by the verb base, or the verb base plus affix, that designates which of these three sentence elements is assumed by the topic of the utterance. At least one or two of these elements as non-topic usually occurs with the topic element, except in actor focus, in which case the verb plus subject is often the utterance. Further sentence expansion beyond subject, object and indirect object will not be described in this paper. The indirect object may be either an instrument, a location or a recipient.

k-am-lang ale kayu di bulul (cut they wood on hill) they cut trees (wood) on the hill. The elements in order in this sentence are *klang* cut, *-am-* actor focus infix, *ale* third person plural topic pronoun and therefore the actor or subject of actor focus constructions, *kayu* trees (direct object), and *di bulul* on the hill (indirect object as location).

3. IDENTIFICATION OF THE TOPIC

The pronoun as topic is any member of the *ale* series, which usually occurs after the verb, though it may precede it for emphasis. The following chart of topic pronoun class *ale* and non-topic pronoun classes *dale* and *-la* shows their parallel relationships. The third person plural form is chosen to represent the whole series of a pronoun class

⁴⁾ Morphophonemics is involved with the form *m-anwe*; the base is *banwe* place.

to avoid the formal ambiguity sometimes present between certain members of parallel classes.

Singular pronouns (# indicates absence of a morpheme)

I	<i>dagu (deg)</i>	<i>(a)gu</i>	<i>-gu</i>
you and I	<i>gite</i>	<i>ate (ite)</i>	<i>-ta</i>
you	<i>ge</i>	<i>ge</i>	<i>-(a)m</i>
he, she, it	<i>kanen</i>	<i>#, -(a)n, kanen</i>	<i>-(a)n</i>

Plural pronouns

we (speakers)	<i>gami</i>	<i>gami</i>	<i>-mi</i>
we (all)	<i>gito</i>	<i>ato (ito)</i>	<i>-to</i>
you	<i>gamo</i>	<i>gamo</i>	<i>-yu</i>
they	<i>dale</i>	<i>(a)le</i>	<i>-la</i>

Pronouns in parentheses are dialectal variants. In the *dale* series *gami* and *gamo* have a long first vowel.

Principal occurrences of the pronoun class *ale*. Actor focus: *ale m-alob* or *m-alob ale* (they wash or wash they) they wash; object focus: *n-ebe ale i to* (carry them *i* man) the man carries them; indirect object focus: *b-an-lé-la ale knaán* (give-they to-them food) they give food to them ⁵).

The non-topic pronoun *-la* series occurs immediately after a verb base or adverb as pronoun subject in certain constructions. It may also occur as non-emphasized possessor immediately after a noun. This series is a set of monosyllabic particles that are enclitic pronouns. It is convenient to write them as suffixes. *n-alob-la i fligo* (wash-they *i* dishes) they wash dishes; *gal-la n-ebe i kayu-la* (habitual-they carry wood-their) they always carry their wood ⁶).

The *dale* series pronouns occur before verbs as emphasized subject

⁵) Whereas *-m-* marks actor focus, *-n-* may mark object (goal) focus, or indirect object focus – in this example a recipient.

⁶) Temporal particles, discourse context or actual speech situations must often give the tense significance to an utterance. Short utterances may leave temporal considerations ambiguous.

Sentence glosses with plurals do not always have *dad* (plural) present in the text.

or before nouns as emphasized possessor. They occur in second, or further removed, position after verbs as non-topic indirect object.

dale k-m-adn (they-emphasized eat) they eat; *k-n-aán-la dale knaán* (eat-they their-emphasized food) they eat their food; *blé-la liblu di dale* (give-they book to them) they give the book to them.

The demonstratives, *ani* here, *ayé* there (near), and *atù* there (far) occur as topic if substitutable for *ale* pronouns. *linge ale i to* (hear them *i* man) the man hears them; *linge ani i to* (hear this *i* man) the man hears this.

A substantive, with or without preceding *i*, is identified as topic by one or more of the three following sets of conditions:

(1) The *ale* pronouns are the topic set, and any noun or phrase that can be substituted for them or is substitutable by them is the topic. *n-eye-la i to* (see-they *i* man) they see the man; *n-eye-la ale* (see-they them) they see them. The object is the topic, for *ale* substitutes for *i to* the man. Nontopics are the *-la* and *dale* pronouns, substantives that can substitute for these pronouns, and substantives that occur after *di*.

(2) In some actor focus constructions (marked by *-m-* or by actor focus verb bases) with two substantives following the verb, the topic is marked by the substantive marker *i* before the first substantive. If neither substantive is marked by *i*, the topic subject is the second noun after the verb. *m-akét i ayem kukù* (bites *i* dog cat) the dog bites the cat; *m-akét ayem kukù* (bites dog cat) the cat bites the dog.

(3) In goal focus constructions with two substantives the substantive immediately following the verb is the subject and the other is the topic object. *n-ebe lagi libun* (goal-focus-carry man woman) the man carries the woman. If a noun occurs immediately before the verb it is the object and noun immediately after the verb is the subject. *kukù n-akét ayem* (cat goal-focus-bite dog) the dog bites the cat. (See footnote 7).

In indirect object focus the topic can be the first substantive before the verb, or occur in third position after the verb (pronouns are counted as positions, articles are not). *falakol klang-gu kayu* or *klang-gu kayu falakol* (cut-I tree hatchet) I cut the tree with the hatchet. An example of the occurrence of topic indirect object farther removed than third position after the verb is unambiguously marked by *i*. *n-bat-gu kane twege-gu batu i ulad* or *n-bat-gu i ulad kane twege-gu batu*

(throw-I *i* snake for older-brother-my rock) I throw a rock at the snake for my older brother.

If following procedure (1), it must be remembered that the *ale* pronouns, if substitutable for a substantive, will immediately follow or precede the verb, or follow a *-la* pronoun after verb in their usual occurrence. *gal ale k-m-aán* (always they eat) they always eat; *n-akét ale i ayem* (bites them *i* dog) the dog bites them, but *n-akét ayem i dad to* (bites dog *i* plural man) the dog bites the men; *n-bat-la ale knaán* (throw-they to-them food) they throw food to them. Also, the plural pronoun *ale* should be used to test substitutability for substantives, since the singular pronoun *kanen* varies with its own absence. *k-m-aán* or *k-m-aán kanen* he eats.

Procedure (2) is significant for actor focus only when the *-m-* inflection is present. Otherwise the investigator will need to know which uninflected verb bases are actor focus. Procedure (3), to be workable, also requires knowledge of the focus of uninflected base classes. *bat i dad to ale dini* (throw *i* plural man them here) people throw them here. *bat* uninflected is a goal focus base.

4. VERB WORD BASES

Uninflected bases occurring as verbs divide into three types: 1. Goal focus (G); 2. Instrument focus (I); 3. Actor focus (A).

4.1. *Goal focus verb bases (G)*. Certain uninflected bases occur with a subject and topic object as obligatory elements of the sentence. The base may be said to have a goal pre-focus. The *-la* series is used as a pronoun subject. Subject and object substantives may occur with or without the *i* marker.

bat-la i agás-la (throw-they *i* spears-their) they throw their *spears* (the focused element in the sentence will be in italics in the translation)

bat i dad to ale dini (throw *i* plural man them here) the people throw them here

dsù-la i anok (sacrifice-they *i* chicken) they sacrifice a *chicken*

lyalo-la init du (feel-they heat sun) they feel the *heat* of the sun

linge-la i lingag-am (hear-they *i* song-your) they hear your *song*

Bases not of this G-class occur with *-n-* in the goal focus category.

k-n-aán-la i k-n-aán-la (*-n-eat-they i food-their*) they eat their *food*

n-ebe lagi sulát (*n-carry man letter*) the man carries the *letter*

Goal pre-focus bases optionally occur with a third element (a non-

topic indirect object) occurring as recipient or location. With *-n-* inflection these same bases have as a third element an obligatory topic indirect object.

| *bat-gu batu di ulad* (throw-I rock at snake) I throw a *rock* at the snake;
n-bat-gu batu i ulad (*n*-throw-I rock *i* snake) I throw a rock at the snake

n-bat ale dad angok benge kayu (*n*-throw to-them plural monkey fruit tree) the monkeys throw fruit of the tree *to-them*

dsù-gu i anok di tulus (sacrifice-I *i* chicken to spirit) I sacrifice a *chicken* to the spirit (goal focus) *d-an-sù-gu anok i tulus* (*-an*-sacrifice-I chicken *i* spirit) I sacrifice a chicken to the *spirit*

TABLE 1
Goal focus utterances

(G) indicates goal pre-focus base, (I) instrument pre-focus base, (A) actor pre-focus base; # indicates absence of inflection.

Inflection	Base	Subject	Object	Indirect Object
#	(G) <i>bat-</i> throw	<i>gu</i> I	<i>batu di gumnè</i> rock at house	
-n-	(I) <i>k-an-lang</i> cut	<i>gu</i> I	<i>kayu di bulul</i> trees on hill	
-n-	(A) <i>b-n-itol-</i> make hungry	—	<i>agu</i> me (I am ex- periencing famine)	

4.2. *Instrument focus verb bases (I)*. Whereas G type bases with *-n-* occur with obligatory subject, object and focused indirect object, certain bases such as *klang* cut, and *alob* wash, have a similar distribution without inflection. The indirect object category is usually instrumental. These bases may be said to have an instrument pre-focus.

klang-gu kayu i falakol (cut-I tree *i* hatchet) I cut the tree with the *hatchet* ⁷⁾

⁷⁾ Instrument pre-focus bases may occur without the object, though this appears to be the answer to a question of the type "What did you use ...?" *dét i bayád-am?* (what *i* pay-your?) what did you use as payment? *bayád-gu*

alob-gu fligo i yéél ani (wash-I dishes *i* water this) I wash dishes with this *water*

bayád-gu knaán sláh-gu (pay-I food beads-my) I paid for the food with my *beads*

G type bases occur with *-n-* for focused indirect object, while actor focus bases or bases with actor focus inflection *-m-* occur with the indirect object as non-topic and usually preceded by *di*.

b-an-lé-gu ale liblu (*-an*-give-I to-them book) I give the book *to them*
salu agu di mahén (go I to ocean) *I* go to the ocean

m-lé agu liblu di dale (*m*-give I book to them) *I* give the book to them

The instrument focus of I type bases contrasts with its non-focus category of location. *klang-gu kayu di bulul i falakol* (cut-I tree on hill *i* hatchet) I cut the tree on the hill with the *hatchet*. Further expansions of this type will not be treated in this paper.

I type bases with *-n-* (non-actor focus) occur as goal focus.

k-an-lang-gu i kayu (*-an*-cut-I *i* tree) I cut the *tree*

n-alob-gu i fligo (*n*-wash-I *i* dishes) I wash the *dishes*

TABLE 2

Indirect object focus utterances

(I) indicates instrument pre-focus base, (G) indicates goal pre-focus base; # indicates absence of inflection.

Inflection	Base	Subject	Object	Indirect Object
#	(I) <i>klang-</i> cut	<i>gu</i> I	<i>kayu</i> trees	<i>falakol</i> (with) <i>hatchet</i>
-n-	(G) <i>n-bat-</i> throw	<i>gu</i> I	<i>batu</i> rock	<i>i gumné</i> at <i>house</i>

sláhgu (pay-I beads-my) I used beads as payment. The construction designates "to use the instrument" to effect the action of the base. With I bases the instrument may precede or follow the verb-subject; with G bases it may only precede the verb. *klang-gu falakol* or *falakol (i) klang-gu* (cut-I hatchet) I use the hatchet as a cutting instrument. *batu (i) bat-gu* (rock (*i*) throw-I) I use a rock to throw with, or, the rock (emphasized) is what I am throwing. It appears that this last construction and the parallel construction *kukú n-akét ayam* (cat bites dog) the dog bites the cat (cat is what is bitten by dog) is a non verbal predication type, but more research is needed.

4.3. *Actor focus verb bases (A)*. Certain uninflected verb bases occur with an obligatory topic subject which may be an *ale* pronoun or a substitutable substantive. Some verbs of this class, which may be termed actor pre-focus, require an object or other element in the utterance.

kel agu malfábi (arrive I yesterday) *I* arrived yesterday. *kel* requires a category of time.

bitil agu (be-hungry I) *I* am hungry; *bitil i to* (be-hungry *i* man) the man is hungry

fulung agu (understand I) *I* understand

sut ale di kifuh (appear they at night) *they* appear at night.

Bases not in this class occur with *-m-* for actor focus. These, uninflected, are mostly I (instrument focus) and G (goal focus) types; some require only a topic subject, some also an object, others more.

(I) *m-alob agu* (*m*-wash I) *I* wash

(I) *m-imò agu i gusudeng* (*m*-make I *i* chair) *I* make a chair

(G) *t-m-undá ale sdè fayáh* (*-m*-send they pig tomorrow) *they* will send a pig tomorrow

A type bases only rarely occur with *-n-*. *b-n-itol ale* (*-n*-make-hungry them) *they* (experience) famine. This utterance appears to be goal focus with no subject.

TABLE 3

Actor focus utterances

(A) indicates actor pre-focus base, (G) goal pre-focus (I) instrument pre-focus base, (N) noun pre-focus base; # indicates absence of inflection. In the example (below) of noun pre-focus base, *dini* (here) is placed outside the chart, because it does not parallel any of the form classes represented in the verb focus chart.

Inflection	Base	Subject	Object	Indirect Object
#	(A) <i>fulung</i> understand	<i>agu</i> <i>I</i>		
-m-	(G) <i>m-bat</i> throw	<i>agu</i> <i>I</i>	<i>batu</i> rock	<i>di gumnè</i> at house
-m-	(I) <i>k-am-lang</i> cut	<i>agu</i> <i>I</i>	<i>kayu</i> trees	<i>di bulul</i> on hill
-m-	(N) <i>m-anwe</i> live	<i>agu</i> <i>I</i>		<i>dini</i> here

4.4. *Summary of the principal occurrences of verb bases.* Goal pre-focus bases occur uninflected with non-topic subject, topic object and optional non-topic indirect object. Inflected with *-n-* non-actor focus marker, they occur with non-topic subject, non-topic object and topic indirect object. Inflected with *-m-* they occur with topic subject and possibly other obligatory non-topic elements.

bat-gu batu (di gumnè) (throw-I rock at house) I throw a *rock* at the house

n-bat-gu batu i gumnè (*n*-throw-I rock *i* house) I throw a rock at the house

m-bat agu batu (*m*-throw I rock) I throw a rock.

Instrument pre-focus bases occur uninflected with non-topic subject and object and topic indirect object. Inflected with *-n-* they occur with non-topic subject and topic object and optional indirect object. Inflected with *-m-* actor focus, they occur with topic subject and other optional or obligatory non-topic elements ⁸⁾.

klang-gu kayu falakol (cut-I tree hatchet) I cut the tree with the hatchet

k-an-lang-gu kayu (*-an*-cut-I tree) I cut *trees*

k-am-lang agu kayu (*-am*-cut I tree) I cut trees

Actor pre-focus bases occur uninflected with topic subject and other non-topic optional or obligatory elements.

sudeng i dad to (sit *i* plural man) the *men* sit

ta kel ale (already arrive they) *they* have already arrived

Some exceptions or unusual occurrences of verb bases are worthy of note.

fatan wait (G) does not occur with *-m-* actor focus.

tlo call (I) does not occur with *-n-* non-actor focus.

The base *datáh* (high) does not occur except with inflection.

Two goal focus bases require a non-topic location as a third element. They are *slob* drop by (to get or give), and *tundá* send, conduct. *slob-gu sdè di dátù* (drop-by-I pig at datu) I drop by the datu's to get a *pig*.

⁸⁾ The basic pre-focus of G and I bases is further evidenced by their occurrence in constructions with non-focus subject and the demonstrative *ani* this. With G bases an action is signified and *ani* is the goal. *blé-gu ani* (give-I this) I give *this* (thing); with I bases, the base signifies an instrument and *ani* is a terminal of an equational type sentence. *imò-gu ani* (make-I this) this is my *tool* (instrument for working).

tundá-gu twali ditù di mahén (conduct-I younger-sibling there to sea)
I conduct my younger brother to the beach.

Several I type bases usually occur as nouns when uninflected, but may have rare occurrences as uninflected verbs. These include *ték* rise up, *falá* shovel *falakol* hatchet, *buk* smoke, *áful* lime, *sulát* letter, *benge* fruit, *bulek* flower.

5. NOUN WORD BASES (N)

Certain uninflected bases such as *banwe* place, *ulu* head, and *matá* eye, when occurring with following *-la* pronoun occur only as nouns, and never occur as verb plus subject pronoun with object or indirect object.

teen-la (i) *banwe-la* (see-they (i) place-their) they see their place.
teen-gu (i) *ulu-n* (see-I (i) head-his) I see his head.

Some of the members of this class may be inflected, in which case they occur as verbs. *m-anwe agu dini* (m-live I) I live here.

Dale and *-la* series pronouns are always possessors with these bases. Other members of the class include *neng* brightness, *nem* the taste.

6. ADJECTIVE WORD BASES (AJ)

Uninflected bases, if they occur as attributives immediately before any noun, with or without preceding *i*, are members of an adjective class. Members of this class include *bong* big, *tukay* small, *bukáy* white, *fulè* red, *fye* good, *sasè* bad, *baltik* fast, *falami* new, *kafag* dry, *fukal* small.

teen-gu (i) *fye banwe* (see-I (i) good place) I see the good place;
nimo-an i bong gumné (make-he i big house) he builds a big house.

This class never occurs with preceding *dale* pronouns or following *-la* series pronouns as possessors or predicate subjects. They may occur with *ale* pronouns to form an equational type utterance not described in this paper. *fye ale* (good they) they are good.

TABLE 4

Inflectional categories of bases as verbs

(Pre-focused bases listed are: (G) goal, (I) instrument, (A) actor, (N) noun, (Aj) adjective). Dashes indicate non-occurrence; the chart deals with focal inflections *-n-*, *-m-* and # (absence of inflection).

Base	Focus	(G)	(I)	(A)
<i>bat</i>	(G)	#	-n-	-m-
<i>klang</i>	(I)	-n-	#	-m-
<i>bitil</i>	(A)	-n-	—	#
<i>banwe</i>	(N)	—	—	-m-
<i>fye</i>	(Aj)	—	—	—

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