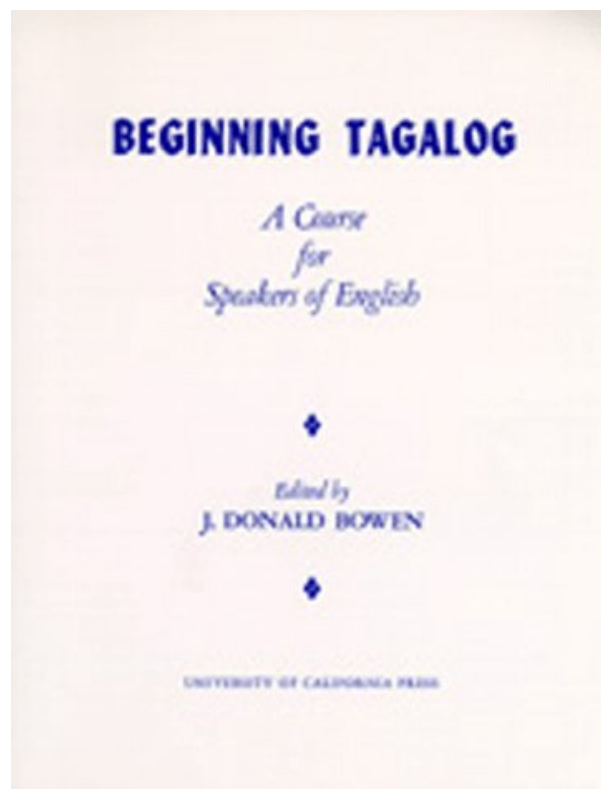


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BEGINNING TAGALOG

*A Course
for
Speakers of English*



Edited by
J. DONALD BOWEN



UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA PRESS

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A comprehensive, one-year introductory textbook for Tagalog, the language spoken in the Philippines.

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- G. Comprehension-Response Drills
- H. Readings (from Unit XIII)"

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53 of 53 people found the following review helpful.

Don't let appearances put you off!

By Amazon Customer

This is an excellent book, despite its unfortunate presentation. It's the only introductory manual I've seen that isn't scared to describe and teach Tagalog grammar and usage without fudging the significant differences between Austronesian and European languages. Other texts do that in a vain attempt to make Tagalog seem "easy" to foreigners, but the end result is that they make it harder than it needs to be, because they present a Europeanised version of the language that leaves learners helpless when confronted with authentic texts and native speakers.

The key to grasping Tagalog is understanding the related concepts of "topic" and "focus", and this course has as its backbone the mastery of those notions. It also avoids the misleading claim that Tagalog has "tenses" and teaches how aspect plus particles does the same job in a different way. Another strong point is its detailed representation of pronunciation and intonation in the dialogues and examples. Stress is crucial in Tagalog for distinguishing between very different meanings of words apparently spelled the same, and solo learners especially need to see the stress patterns of the new words they learn (other manuals tend to mark stresses only in glossaries at the back, but just as students of French need to learn the gender of each and every noun as they first meet it, so learners of Tagalog need to see and learn up front the correct stress of every new piece of vocabulary).

The only criticism I have of the core content is that it doesn't teach the techniques of root derivation which all learners need to acquire if they are to venture beyond the textbook itself (e.g. by dipping into the Tagalog resources available on the Internet). The majority of Tagalog words encountered "in the wild" are not to be found in their apparent alphabetical place in dictionaries. To look them up you need to know how to spot the root of the word, under which the dictionaries list it. If this issue had been tackled, then this book, used in

conjunction with Fr Leo English's superb Tagalog-English Dictionary (sadly not sold outside the Philippines) and the Revised Edition of Carl Rubino's bilingual dictionary (much more restricted in scope than Fr. English's, but good for current colloquial usages) would really be all the serious learner needed to get a good grounding in the language.

Given its fine qualities, it's a pity the book looks so awful. Large areas are taken up with poor-quality artwork with very dated images, and the real meat of the linguistic commentaries and cultural notes is mingled, without adequate typographical distinction, with often unnecessary full expansions of all the possible responses in the various drills suggested for class use. Given that the original work was always designed to be in two volumes, it would have been preferable to put these drills in vol 2 and incorporate the readings which make up Vol 2 (alas long since out of print) into Vol 1. Or at least the drills could have been moved to an appendix in Volume 1 so as not to swamp the exposition of key points.

But despite the poor design and layout, the editing has clearly been meticulous. Typos and misprints can be disastrous when introducing a language to learners who are in no position to spot them, and they are pretty frequent on some of the other Tagalog primers on the market. But in this book I have yet to discover a single misprint, or indeed any error of any description.

It would be great if this book could be given a thorough design makeover (including making the readings available in print once more) while retaining those high editorial standards. But even in its present unappealing guise, it's the best there is, by a long way.

8 of 8 people found the following review helpful.

Don't lose the drawings!

By Kelly Parker

I am very glad this is back in print, as an old dusty copy (sans the original reel-to-reel tapes) in my university library gave me good foundation in Tagalog. Personally, I love the drawings! So what if they are from the 1960's; the inspired me to learn Tagalog just as my old Hayden books inspired me to learn electronics: retro drawings are cool!

If this is an exact reproduction of the original, it is helpful for teachers of Tagalog, as well as students. It makes it clear how to construct the different aspects (nominative, benefactive, locative, imperative, etc.) and actually names them in such a way that makes more sense than more recent books on Tagalog grammar (Aspillera, Ramos, Alejandro, for example).

Today's language teachers might see the audiolingual approach as a throwback, but drilling myself before spending a summer in the Philippines was worthwhile. The notes on stress and pronunciation are accurate, at least to my ears, and the example sentences have lines above them to guide the learner with sentence stress.

I wish this book came with a CD, not an audiocassette, and encourage the publisher to get with the times. Other than that, the price is right for a complete first-year Tagalog learning system!

7 of 7 people found the following review helpful.

Aged but Experienced

By Denise Sunico

The book, as some would point out, has been published over two decades ago. However, apart from being culturally outdated, I would definitely applaud in its efficiency. Basic grammar, vocabulary and common phrases were tackled so well that I sadly learned that I would no longer talk behind my husband's back in Tagalog. :p (He is, though, very interested in language, so persistence played a huge part)

Bottom line: The book offers great instruction; it presents a good structure of the language and is something I would definitely recommend, if the person learning does not mind the age of the publication date.

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