

LEARNING TAGALOG

Fluency Made Fast and Easy

Second Edition

Course Book 1

Frederik and Fiona De Vos

LearningTagalog.com

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Preface

It began in the Philippines in 2007. Fiona and I, both freelance translators at the time, had just moved to Los Baños. Since Tagalog was now a part of my everyday life, I set out to really learn the language. I bought some books and started to learn it on my own as I had done with other languages in the past.

But this time, it was different. Tagalog was different in many ways – not difficult, just very different. In fact, Tagalog is easier than English in many respects, once you understand how it works.

As I progressed, I found that the materials I used lacked some essential information. This prompted me to develop a basic online Tagalog course that would include all the elements I often missed while learning Tagalog.

These elements are:

- dialogues for context and drills for practice
- audio recordings paired with pronunciation marks in the text
- literal and natural translations
- cultural and grammatical notes in the lessons, and a grammar reference for a complete overview
- a well-thought-out structure that introduces useful material early on while still being easy to follow

In other words, I wanted to offer a course that is “complete,” in that it provides sufficient information to gain a good understanding of the language and to be able to speak it fluently.

Over the next two years, I wrote and rewrote the dialogues, based on what I heard around me. During that time, Fiona didn’t get involved that much. She just answered my questions.

After several failed attempts at producing good audio recordings at home for the dialogues, we decided to use a recording studio.

For Fiona, this was a sign that the project wasn't a hobby anymore and she got fully involved.

We then practically rewrote half of the stories together in preparation for the studio recordings. In the meantime, we had moved back to Europe. After the recordings in Vienna with Fiona's brother, Ralph, we retranslated the stories and further developed the online interface.

Fiona gathered all the grammar resources she could find to write explanations for the course. This proved to be a long and painstaking process of reading, or rather dissecting, linguistics papers and *Tagalog Reference Grammar* by Schachter and Otnes, among other resources.

The fruits of this intense period were an online course and a grammar reference, which were both released in February 2010 on *LearningTagalog.com*.

Spurred on by the enthusiasm and feedback of the learners, we continued to improve the course and the grammar, and added new materials.

Now, two years later, Learning Tagalog has grown into a fully integrated suite of Tagalog learning materials: a course (online, books, ebooks), a grammar book (online, book, ebook), workbooks (books, ebooks), course audio (CDs, MP3s), free videos and free downloads.

All our Tagalog materials have been created with one goal in mind: to get you to speak Tagalog fluently in a fast, fun and easy way.

I wish you the time of your life learning and speaking Tagalog!

Frederik De Vos
July 2012

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- **The users of the online course** on *LearningTagalog.com* for their useful input and great feedback

Introduction

Goal of the course

The goal of this course is simple:

To get you to speak Tagalog fluently in a fast, fun and easy way.

The course will get you to the point where you can understand and participate in everyday Tagalog conversations.

Method

This course teaches Tagalog by example and repetition, using natural dialogues and drills taken from everyday life in the Philippines.

Natural dialogues

The advantage of using natural dialogues is that they teach you the “whole” language in its cultural context with all its nuances, emotions, typical expressions and choice of words, all of which depend on the situation. The stories are engaging and easy to relate to. As a result, you will be able to apply what you learn intuitively in your own life.

Drills

The sentence patterns in the stories are reinforced and expanded in the drills. The drills also introduce new vocabulary and related expressions.

Build-up, repetition and overlap

The lessons have been carefully designed to introduce new material little by little in order of importance. There is some degree of repetition and overlap, which allows you to recall and reinforce what you have already learned.

After having immersed yourself in the hundreds of sentences in the course, you will get a feel for how Tagalog works, and you will be able to build your own sentences intuitively.

Audio recordings

The audio recordings are an important part of the course. Together with the pronunciation marks in the text, they will help you to learn the correct pronunciation by repeating the sentences out loud.

Furthermore, the natural intonation in the recordings will help you better understand and remember the sentences.

Literal and natural translations

The meaning of each Tagalog word or group of words is presented in the literal translations, in a matching color. The literal translations are only attempts at capturing the exact meaning of the words. Sometimes, there is no corresponding word in English, and then a descriptive hint is presented between square brackets. The literal translations also help you understand the structure of the sentences. They help to bridge the gap between Tagalog and English.

The natural translations convey the same meaning as the Tagalog, in natural-sounding English, without straying too far from the original Tagalog text.

The translations in the course are not the only possible translations.

Notes and references to the grammar

The lesson notes provide concise explanations about Tagalog grammar, cultural points or the use of certain words. They are necessary to take the guesswork out of the learning process.

The notes also point to chapters in *Essential Tagalog Grammar: A Reference for Learners of Tagalog (ETG)*, which provides useful tables, examples and explanations in a simple and clear format.

In references to ETG, two page numbers are provided. The first page number corresponds to the small paperback and small ebook editions, while the second corresponds to the hardcover, large paperback and large ebook editions.

Workbooks

The exercises in the workbooks are an ideal way to practice the vocabulary and sentence patterns you have learned in the lessons. They also allow you to check your progress.

An answer key is provided at the end of each workbook.

How to use this course

This course was intended to be taken in the order in which the lessons are presented.

We recommend setting aside 15 to 30 minutes per day for your Tagalog practice. At that pace, you can complete the course in about 6 months. How fast you progress depends entirely on you. Only advance as fast as you feel comfortable, and don't worry if you get set back during busier times.

The audio recordings are an important part of the course. Listen to them frequently, as they will help you memorize the material.

Doing the exercises in the workbooks will allow you to practice what you have learned. You might want to review the corresponding lesson at least a second time before doing the exercises.

The grammar reference will come in handy whenever you need an overview of a particular topic. You'll find it a useful resource, even after you have completed the course.

Advice for beginners

A lesson might provide too much information for a single day. Therefore, it may be best to split up a lesson over more than one day, as follows:

Day 1: Read the story for the first time

Day 2: Repeat the story and read the drills for the first time

Day 3: Review the whole lesson

In any case, we recommend studying a lesson for two days before moving on to the next. Alternatively, you can do two sessions on the same day if you want to advance more quickly.

Review is important. It's a good idea to review previous lessons every 5 lessons by listening to the audio and following along in the lesson overview. There will be reminders at the end of Lessons 10, 15, 20 and so on.

Give yourself some time to get used to the language. It may take a few weeks before you start getting a feel for it. Until that point, you may find it hard to build correct sentences. This is completely normal. Eventually, after repeating hundreds of sentences in this course, your mind will have built the necessary mental connections to make sense of the language and feel at home with it.

Advice for intermediate learners

Go through the first lessons as fast as you feel comfortable. Be sure not to skip anything completely because some important topics are covered early on.

As you start to encounter more new material, you may want to slow down and split a lesson over two or three days (or over two or three sessions on the same day).

Advice for advanced learners

You might want to take the whole course as a refresher, skimming the parts you find too easy. However, we recommend reading the notes as they may contain interesting pointers to grammar topics.

Listening to the audio recordings while reading along on the overview pages is a good way to reactivate your knowledge. When there is something you don't understand, you can go to that particular phrase in the lesson to find out more about it.

Reading selected chapters in ETG will surely deepen your knowledge. As an exercise after reading a chapter, you can cover the English translations of the examples and translate the Tagalog sentences or the other way around.

How to use the audio recordings

The course audio is provided as downloadable MP3 files and as a set of 6 audio CDs and 1 MP3 CD.

As the natural-speed recordings may be too fast in the beginning, a digitally slowed-down version of the recordings is included. Using the slower version might be best when you read a lesson for the first time. The natural-speed recordings could then be used for review.

The downloadable MP3 files contain one phrase each. That is, each lesson consists of about 20 MP3 files in a separate folder. This way, you can easily create a playlist for each lesson.

On the audio CDs, each track corresponds to a lesson. Track 1 corresponds to Lesson 1 and so on. There are 3 CDs containing the natural-speed recordings and 3 CDs containing the slowed-down version of the recordings. On the MP3 CD, the MP3s are provided in two formats: one lesson per MP3 and one phrase per MP3.

The most effective way to train your pronunciation and aid your memory is to repeat the sentences out loud. Also, try to mimic the intonation and emotions in the recordings. This will make you more spontaneous and will help you express what you feel in Tagalog naturally.

What you will learn

Lessons 1–20 (this book)

- pronunciation
- greetings and common expressions
- all pronouns
- to go somewhere, to be somewhere (or not)
- expressing that something exists (or not)
- to have something (or not)
- expressing how things are (or not)
- some adjective intensifiers
- expressing that something is intended for someone or something
- basic verbs, vocabulary and sentence patterns
- polite speech
- buying something
- introducing people, pets and things
- days, months, past, future, telling the time
- giving directions
- questions
- expressing likes, dislikes, wants and needs
- numbers, prices and counting
- comparing things
- expressing agreement, doubt, wonder and other emotions or nuances
- **na, pa, naman, pala, yata'** and other enclitic particles
- cultural insights through situations and dialogues
- about 30 verbs*

Lessons 21–40 (Course Book 2)

- verbs, verb affixes and their aspects
- **-um-, mag-, ma-, maka-, makapag-, -in, maki-, i-, -an, magpa-, pa-...-in, pa-...-an, ipa-, ipag-, makipag-**. Some of these verb affixes have different meanings depending on the verb.
- complex sentences with clauses

- more vocabulary and expressions
- further consolidation of material from Lessons 1–20
- cultural insights through situations and dialogues
- over 90 new verbs*

Lessons 41–60 (Course Book 3)

- more verb affixes: **ika-**, **mag-...-an/han**, **mang-** (At this point, you will know how verb affixes and aspects work, and you will be able to learn new ones easily.)
- recently completed aspect
- noun affixes
- adjective affixes
- ordinal numbers, other number expressions, dates
- sentence patterns used in written Tagalog and formal spoken Tagalog
- more vocabulary and expressions
- further consolidation of material from Lessons 1–40
- cultural insights through situations and dialogues
- over 55 new verbs*

* You will learn over 175 roots combined with various affixes. You will also learn how to use pseudo-verbs; **may**, **mayroon/meron**, **marami** and **wala'** (for “to have,” “there is/are/was/were (not)” etc.), and verbless “to be” sentences.

Lessons 1–20

Lesson 1

Ang bakasyon



Listen to the audio and repeat each phrase out loud a few times. In the story, Mark and Linda talk about their vacations.

A 01

Ang bakasyon

The vacation

The vacation

The Tagalog phrase on the first line is translated literally on the second line and highlighted in a matching color. The third line gives a natural translation of the whole sentence. Literal and natural translations will help you understand how Tagalog works.

A 02

Kumusta?

How are you?

How are you?

Kumusta means *how is/are/was/were (...)*. By itself, it is used as a greeting: *How are you?*

You can simply listen to the audio for the pronunciation and read the pointers in the notes. For an overview, watch the pronunciation videos at learningtagalog.com/videos, or read the pronunciation chapter in the grammar (ETG p. 17/15).

A 03

Mabuti. Ikaw?

Good. You?

Fine. (And) you?

Mabuti means *fine, good or well*.

In this course, underlined syllables are stressed, that is, the vowel in the syllable is long. Optional reading: Long vowels (stress) (ETG p. 21/18).*

The /i/ in the final syllable of native Tagalog words can be pronounced as /e/ when followed by a pause, like in **mabuti**.

* The page number depends on the edition. See p. 13.

A 04

Mabuti rin.

Good too.

I'm fine too.

Rin (or **din**) means *too, also* or *either*. **Rin** is commonly used after words ending in a vowel. **Din** is commonly used after words ending in a consonant. However, this rule is not strict.

A 05

Kumusta ang bakasyon mo?

How was the vacation your?

How was your vacation?

This is a very typical sentence pattern in Tagalog. You'll soon get used to it.

A 06

Masaya. Pumunta ako sa Banaue.

Fun. Went I to Banaue.

It was fun. I went to Banaue.

Masaya – *happy, fun*. **Sa** can mean *to, on, at, into, onto, through* etc.

A 07

Wow! Maganda ba ang Rice Terraces?

Wow! Beautiful [question] the Rice Terraces?

Wow! Are the Rice Terraces beautiful?

Ba turns a statement into a question. It often follows the first word of the sentence.

A 08

Oo, ang ganda talaga!

Yes, very beautiful really!

Yes, very beautiful!

Ganda – *beauty*.

Ang can be added to a quality (e.g. **ganda**) to mean *how* (...) or *very* (...). **Ang ganda!** – *How pretty!* This **ang** is different from the **ang** in the previous sentence, which means *the*.

A 09

Ikaw, kumusta ang bakasyon mo?

You, how was the vacation your?

(And) you, how was your vacation?

Masaya rin.
Pumunta ako sa London, sa New York at sa Sydney.

Fun too.
Went I to London, to New York and to Sydney.

It was fun too. I went to London, New York and Sydney.

Masaya – happy or fun (adjective).

Saya – happiness or fun (noun).

In **masaya**, **saya** is the root, which carries the core meaning of the word. **Ma-** is an affix, which means *having (a certain quality)* or *having a lot of (something)*.

Optional reading: Roots and affixes (ETG p. 29/25).

Talaga?

Really?

Really?

Joke lang. Nasa bahay lang ako.

Joke only. Was at home only I.

Just kidding. I just stayed home.

Nasa is used to indicate where someone or something is. It is equivalent to *is/are/was/were in/on/at* etc. Nasa Cebu – *is in Cebu*; nasa mesa / nasa lamesa – *is on (the) table*.

Drills

B 01

Pumunta ako sa Maynila'.

Went I to Manila.

I went to Manila.

Notice the /' at the end of **Maynila'**. In this course, the symbol /' is used to indicate either (1) a glottal stop, when it is followed by a pause; or (2) a long vowel, when immediately followed by another word.

An example of a glottal stop in English is the sound represented by the hyphen in *uh-oh!*

Optional reading: Final glottal stops (ETG p. 22/20).

B 02

Masaya ba ang bakasyon mo?

Happy [question] the vacation your?

Did you have fun on your vacation? (Was your vacation fun?)

B 03

Oo, ang saya talaga!

Yes, very happy really!

Yes, I had a great time! (It was really fun!)

B 04

Kumusta ang pamilya mo?

How is the family your?

How is your family?

B 05

Mabuti.

Good.

Fine.

The root of **mabuti** is **buti** (goodness).

B 06

Salamat.

Thank you.

Thank you.

B 07

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

B 08

Pasensya na.

Patience now.

Sorry.

B 09

Sorry.

Sorry.

Sorry.

B 10

Ingat.

Take care.

Take care.

The lesson overview on the next page allows you to review the whole lesson one more time. Listen to the recordings and try to understand everything.

You might want to do the same lesson for two days before moving on to the next lesson.

The key to success in learning Tagalog is daily practice. By setting aside 15 to 30 minutes a day, you will be amazed at the progress you are making.

Ang bakasyon

Kumusta?

Mabuti. Ikaw?

Mabuti rin.

Kumusta ang bakasyon mo?

Masaya. Pumunta ako sa Banaue.

Wow! Maganda ba ang Rice Terraces?

Oo, ang ganda talaga!

Ikaw, kumusta ang bakasyon mo?

Masaya rin. Pumunta ako sa London, sa New York at sa Sydney.

Talaga?

Joke lang. Nasa bahay lang ako.

Drills

Pumunta ako sa Maynila'.

Masaya ba ang bakasyon mo?

Oo, ang saya talaga!

Kumusta ang pamilya mo?

Mabuti.

Salamat.

Thank you.

Pasensya na.

Sorry.

Ingat.