BORROWINGS FROM ENGLISH IN A PHILIPPINE REGIONAL LANGUAGE: IMPLICATIONS FOR LANGUAGE TEACHING

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ABSTRACT

This sociolinguistic study was conducted in conjunction with a project on the development of a course syllabus and instructional materials for the teaching of Hiligaynon as mother tongue in Region VI Western Visayas, Philippines. A corpora of the first one thousand commonly-used in Hiligaynon was developed through an adopted concordancing software. Derived from corpus linguistics, a corpora study is a descriptive method of studying language in context and is ideal for a functional-based analysis of language (Meyer, 2004). The words were culled from various genres in the local language. These were analyzed for meaning, part of speech, and level of usage in Hiligaynon discourse. The corpora, however, yielded codes borrowed from English. A semantic, syntactic, and functional analysis of the words led to the following categories: adapted words, convenient alternative words, words occurring in compound nouns, indigenized spelling, indigenized pronunciation, and clipped words. The results imply that a purist approach in teaching mother tongue will limit the learners' acquisition of vocabulary and skills in meaning-making. It is recommended that language teachers take an eclectic posturing that considers multi-modalities, translanguaging, authenticity, linguistic resourcing, and entextualization.

Keywords: *mother tongue, corpus linguistics, translanguaging, entextualiztion*

ABSTRAK

Studi sosiolinguistik ini dilakukan bersamaan dengan proyek pengembangan silabus kursus dan materi pengajaran untuk pengajaran Hiligaynon sebagai bahasa ibu di Wilayah VI Western Visayas, Filipina. Sebuah korpora dari seribu pertama yang biasa digunakan di Hiligaynon dikembangkan melalui perangkat lunak konkordansi yang diadopsi. Berasal dari linguistik corpus, studi korpora adalah metode deskriptif mempelajari bahasa dalam konteks dan ideal untuk analisis bahasa berbasis fungsional (Meyer, 2004). Kata-kata itu diambil dari berbagai genre dalam bahasa lokal. Ini dianalisis untuk makna, bagian dari pidato, dan tingkat penggunaan dalam wacana Hiligaynon. Namun, korpora menghasilkan kode-kode yang dipinjam dari bahasa Inggris. Analisis semantik, sintaksis, dan fungsional dari kata-kata tersebut

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menghasilkan kategori-kategori berikut: kata-kata yang diadaptasi, kata-kata alternatif yang nyaman, kata-kata yang muncul dalam kata benda majemuk, ejaan berindigenasi, pelafalan terindigenasi, dan kata-kata yang terpotong. Hasilnya menyiratkan bahwa pendekatan murni dalam mengajar bahasa ibu akan membatasi perolehan kosa kata dan keterampilan peserta didik dalam membuat makna. Disarankan bahwa guru bahasa mengambil sikap eklektik yang mempertimbangkan multi-modalitas, translanguaging, keaslian, sumber daya linguistik, dan entextualization.

Kata kunci: bahasa ibu,linguistic korpus,translinguasi,entektualisasi

INTRODUCTION

The Philippines is a linguistically-diverse nation with several regional languages across the archipelago – *Tagalog, Hiligaynon, Kapampangan, Waray, Pangasinense, Tausug, Iloko, Maguindanaoan, Bikol, Maranao, Cebuano, Chabacano, Akeanon,* among others (Alcudia, Bilbao, Dequilla, Germinal, Rosano, & Violeta, 2016). Its colonial history, however, had established English as the language for wider communication in the domains of media, government, business, the church, and education. By virtue of Department of Education (DepEd) Order 74 s. 2009, Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education (MTB- MLE) was institutionalized. Consequently, the mother tongue in the respective regions of the country had to be used from kindergarten through Grades 1 to 3. This curricular innovation invited questions and skepticism from parents and teachers themselves. Despite massive capacity-building activities and institutional initiatives provided to teachers, anecdotal evidence suggests that teachers are not confident in the use of mother tongue. Moreover, they encounter parents who rationalize that their children are sent to formal education to learn English. Hence, a team of faculty members from the College of Education initiated a research project that looked into theories of learning and cognition to highlight the impact and usefulness of a child's mother tongue in learning other languages and in grasping concepts in learning areas in school.

This phase of the research-based project on the crafting of a course for teaching mother tongue and development of instructional materials therein attempted to gather data on real life use of one of the regional languages, *Hiligaynon.* Using the compendium of frequently-used *Hiligaynon* words as data source, it aimed to:

1) identify the English codes in the corpora and establish the frequency of their occurrence;

2) desribe the codes in terms of orthography, semantics, syntax, and functionality; and

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3) categorize the codes for generalizability and reference.

This study is informed by the *sociolinguistic* viewpoint that languages can be studied in reference to how societies and communities use them. According to Bautista (2010), the language of a community "is significant because they go to the heart of the local culture and marks out that community as different from others in its history, its way of life, its attitudes and traditions." Speakers and users generally draw linguistic devices from their repertoire and communicate in distinct ways and for specific functions. In a *speech community,* members share the same language, rules of speaking and interpretation of speech performance, and sociocultural understandings and presuppositions with regard to speech (Lyons, 1970; Hymes, 1972; and Sherzer, 1975 in Saville-Troike, 1996). The aggregate of speakers will have a *communicative repertoire* or the range of languages, varieties, and registers which are prominent in the social and cultural milieu. Each speaker, however, may use *codes* or varieties of a language: *styles* or varieties associated with age, sex, social class, and role relationships; and *registers* or varieties associated with the setting or communication situation (Saville-Troike, 1996). Given this range of varieties, a speaker who is competent can choose or *switch codes* according to rules of appropriateness laid out by the components of communication.

The British linguist J.R. Firth's viewed language as a "way of behaving and making others behave" (Brown, 2000). This attribute of language has been generally referred to as "function" upon which the widely held *functional approach* by M.A.K. Halliday (1973) was based. The functional approach means studying "how language is used," the purposes it serves, and how these are achieved through speaking, listening, reading, and writing. Moreover, it entails "seeing whether language itself has been shaped by use, and if so, in what ways – how the form of language has been determined by the functions it has evolved to share" (Halliday, 1973).

METHOD

Corpus linguistics was used to analyze the occurrence of English codes in the corpora of the *Hiligaynon* language. As an approach to language studies, corpus linguistics may employ both quantitative and qualitative methods. It can start with quantitative findings which can then be subjected to qualitative investigations as the tokens are scrutinized by the investigators to explain the patterns (Leech, Hundt, Mair &

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Smith, 2012). In recent years, corpus linguistics has become one of the widely-used methods to carry out linguistic analyses. It hopes to yield highly interesting, fundamental, and new insights about language.

Filmore (1992) identified the types of linguistic data that can be analyzed through corpus linguistics:

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1) data gained by intuition

    a. the researchers' own intuition ("introspection")

    b. other people's ("informants'") intuition (accessed, for example, by elicitation tests)

2) naturally occurring language

    a. randomly collected texts or occurrences ("anecdotal evidence")

    b. systematic collections of texts ("corpora")

A *concordancing software* designed for the use of the network of normal schools (teacher training institutions) in the Philippines was adopted for the purpose of the study. A corpus software of this type yields a database of texts with its value and use defined by its contents and purpose of investigation. If the set of texts is specific to an epoch or locality, it can assist researchers to understand the peculiar historical traits associated with the language. If it is expansive, the information can help the researchers study, understand and describe the grammatical features of a language.

In order to build the *Hiligaynon corpus*, texts of varied genres designated as conversation (transcribed), drama, essay, journalism and news articles, local lore, poem, religious text, song, and letter/correspondence were gathered and encoded in the software. The software determined the top 1000 frequently-used Hiligaynon words which were then arranged and described in a compendium. Each token was presented as an entry with information on meaning in English, parts of speech, and usage as given in the text where it occurred. These sample entries in the compendium are shown below:

babaylan: (noun). *priest or priestess.* Sia ang nagtudlo sa akon sa pagpamulong kag mga ginawi sang babaylan kag sa pagpangalap sang mga anting-anting.

bintana: (noun). *window.* Ako ang matrapo sang mga yab-ok sa bintana, lamesa kag mga siya.

bus: (noun). *bus (English loan word).* Nag-abot kag naglakat na ang mga **bus**.

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drayber: (noun). *driver; motorist; chauffeur.* Kon indi magsunod ang mga **drayber** sa mga traffic light, magagumon ang mga salakyan ukon mabungguanay sila.

kapitan: (noun). *captain (in local government); head of the barangay.* Ang **barangayhall** naman ang opisina sang aton mahinangpanon nga baranggay kapitan kag mga kagawad.

libo: (numeral [regular]). *thousand; the product of a hundred and ten.* Malapit sa isa ka libo ka mga bag-o nga **teaching positions** sa elementarya kag sekondarya ang ginpain para sa **dibisyon** sang DepED.

malapit: (adverb). *near.* Malapit man diri ang **geothermal power plant**.

pagtamod: (noun). *attention; consideration.* Ginhalimbawa sang gobernador nga sa bahin sang pagpa-konkreto sa mga karsada ginhatagan gid niya nga pagtamod ang mga **provincial roads**.

pagtuon: (noun). *studies; one's activities as a student or learner.* Ang **telebisyon** kag **computer** daku gid nga bulig sa kabuhi sang tawo apang kon indi husto ang paggamit mangin rason sa pagkaguba sang pagtuon sang aton mga estudyante.

From these culled out sentences, the preponderance of codes borrowed from the English language were noted and analyzed as they occurred in the *Hiligaynon* corpora in which was embedded the way of life, activities, beliefs, and stories of a people.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The codes in English were analyzed in terms of orthography, phonology, syntax, semantics, and functional use in the text. These enabled the researchers to describe and label the codes and categorize them as follows:

Adapted words:

apartment   shorts (piece of garment)

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hotel	reunion
magazine	order (in a restaurant)
computer	computer

The words are concepts or references in the culture of native English speakers. There is no evidence of their counterparts in the local language. They are literally "loaned" from English and have been fairly established in the repertoire of *Hiligaynon* speakers.

Convenient alternative words:

airport	*paluparan sang eroplano*
building	*edipisyo (edifice)*
party	*salosalo, pagtililipon*
newspaper	*peryodiko*
project	*proyekto*
port	*puerto*

These words have codes in the local language but are preferred for convenience or universality of usage. They could be preferred because they are shorter (airport) and have a more current sound and wider appeal (party, building, newspaper, port). For terms that have formal usage in Hiligaynon (e.g., *salosalo, proyekto*), the English codes are used instead especially in conversation.

Words occurring in compound nouns: city hall, high school, municipal office, provincial road, film festival, regional athletic meet, regional contest.

The compound nouns occurred mostly in official and public documents such as journalism articles that have a wider audience. Either one or both words in the compound noun have equivalences in Hiligaynon; however, using both will result in incongruence between syntax and semantics. For example, 'municipal hall' translates to 'municipal' = *munisipyo* and 'office' = *opisina* but is not equivalent to *opisina sang munisipyo*. The latter will mean 'office of the municipality' which means differently from the compound noun 'municipal office'. The same analysis can be done for 'provincial road', 'city hall', and 'film

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festival'. A structural analysis will show that translating an English compound noun to the local language will render a different meaning.

***Indigenized spelling* :**

committee	*komite*	leader	*lider*
bulletin	*buletin*	position	*posisyon*
police	*pulis*	driver	*drayber*
nurse	*nars*	position	*posisyon*
doctor	*duktor*		

Writing the borrowed code in the orthography of the mother tongue or any local language is becoming a feature of Philippine English. This "indigenization" has been cited in the literature as a form of "restricting English" in favour of the national language (Llamzon in Bautista, 1997). This restriction has found its way to spelling of words. A case in point, seen in a local fastfood, the number for the orders that customers are due to be served are inscribed as *terti tri* (thirty three), *terti por* (thirty four), and so on.

***Indigenized pronunciation*:** "editor", "bag", "bus", "regular", "motor"

Indigenization extends to pronunciation. The words appear in their spelling in English but are articulated in the sounds and suprasegmental features of the local language. For instance, the vowel monothongs [ɛ] in /bet/, [æ] in /bat/, [ʌ] in /but/, and [a] in /motor/ are not present in the sounds of *Hiligaynon*. Language learning theories would point out that among non-native speakers of a target language, the sounds of the language are close to impossible to learn with native-like proficiency.

Clipped words (TV, ID) and ***forms of formal address*** (Mr., Ms., Sir, Chief, Jr., Chairman, Mayor) have universal usage, hence their occurrences in the corpora.

CONCLUSION

Corpora is an ideal method for a functional-based analyses of language that are focused

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not only on providing a formal description of a language but also on its use as a communicative tool. The corpora can also serve as a repository of local culture as embodied by the language of a speech community. Even as language policies influence the medium of instruction or communication in schools, as in the case of the Philippines, English contributes to the Filipinos' repertoire or the "totality of linguistic forms regularly employed in the course of socially significant interaction" (Gumperz in Duranti, 1997). Evidences of these types modify the paradigm on English as a "universal language". English is universal not for its standard use, but for its contributions to the repertoire of non- native speakers of English in the same way that English words have derivations from Latin, Greek, Spanish, French, Italian, Yiddish, and other languages around the world. No language is pure; otherwise, it ceases to be dynamic, arbitrary, and functional for its users.

In teaching language in bilingual or multilingual contexts where the mother tongue or local language is used as medium of instruction or taught as a language subject, a purist approach may limit the learners' meaning-making and aqcuisition of vocabulary words. An eclectic posturing by the teachers will contribute to optimal learning in the learners' exploration of a language or languages. It is a widely-accepted pedagogical principle that learners learn by anchoring on what is familiar or known to them as part of their *schema*. For *Hiligaynon* speakers and other speakers of the regional languages in the Philippines, the English language is a necessary component of their schema that they use to carry out personal, social, academic, professional, and other functional activities (Alcudia, et al, 2016).

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that teachers adapt a framework or approach to language teaching that creates and promotes a context for multi-modalities, authenticity, metacognition, linguistic resourcing, *translanguaging* and *entextualization* (putting experience in text) (Mahboob and Lin, 2017). The perspectives on the use of mother tongue or local language should account for the first language experience that students bring with them in the learning process. Similar corpora studies undertaken by other regional groups in the Philippines or among Asian countries will further yield evidences on the actual use of English among non-native speakers.

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"Language is by its very nature a communal thing; that is, it expresses never the exact thing but a compromise – that which is common to you, me and everybody."

– T.E. Hulme

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