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

Fina Felisa Lavalle-Alcudia
West Visayas State University Iloilo City, Philippines
(ffllaldcudia@wvsu.edu.ph)

Ma. Asuncion Christine V. Dequilla
West Visayas State University Iloilo City, Philippines
(macdequilla@wvsu.edu.ph)

Daisy A. Rosano
West Visayas State University Iloilo City, Philippines
(drosano@wvsu.edu.ph)

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, entextualization

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
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, Akean on, 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) describe the codes in terms of orthography, semantics, syntax, and functionality; and

Kata kunci: bahasa ibu,linguistic korpus,translinguasi,entektualisasi
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 &
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:
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.
**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)
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:**

| English    | Hiligaynon       |
|------------|------------------|
| airport    | paluparan sang erooplano |
| 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
festival’. A structural analysis will show that translating an English compound noun to the local language will render a different meaning.

**Indigenized spelling**:

| English     | Indigenized |
|-------------|-------------|
| committee   | komite      |
| bulletin    | bulitin     |
| police      | pulis       |
| nurse       | nars        |
| doctor      | duktor      |
| leader      | lider       |
| position    | posisyon    |
| driver      | drayber     |
| position    | posisyon    |

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 tertí tri (thirty three), tertí 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 monophongs [E] 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
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 acquisition 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.
“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

REFERENCES

Alcudia, F.F., Bilbao, P., Dequilla, M.A.C., Germinal, A., Rosano, D., and Violeta, M. (2016). Mother tongue for teaching and learning. F.F. Alcudia (ed). Manila, Philippines: Lorimar Publishing, Inc.

Gumperz, J.J. (1972). The Speech Community. Language and social context: Selected readings. Pier Paolo Giglioli (ed). England: Penguin Education.

Halliday, MA.K. (1973). Explorations in the functions of language. New York: Elsevier.

Hymes, D.H. (1964). Language in culture and society: A reader in linguistics and anthropology. New York: Harper & Row.

Leech, G., Hundt, M. and Smith, N. (2012). Change in contemporary English: A grammatical study. Cambridge University Press.

Llamzon, T.A. (1997). The Phonology of Philippine English. English is an Asian language. Ma. Lourdes S. Bautista (ed). Australia: The Macquarie Library Pty Ltd.

Mahboob, A. and Lin, A. (2016). Using Local Languages in English Language Classrooms. English language teaching today: Building a closer link between theory and practice. H. Widodo & W. Renandya (eds). New York: Springer International.

McFarland, C. (1996). Subgrouping and number of the Philippine languages or How many Philippine languages are there? Readings in Philippine sociolinguistics. Ma. Lourdes S. Bautista (ed). Manila, Philippines: De la Salle University Press, Inc.

Oyzon, V., Fuller, M. and Cruzada, E. (2013). First one thousand commonly-used words in Waray: A Waray-English dictionary for MTBMLE educators. Tacloban City, Philippines: Ruby Star Enterprises.
Saville-Troike, M. (1996). The Ethnography of Communication. *Sociolinguistics and language teaching*. Sandra L. Mckay and Nancy H. Hornberger (eds). New York: Cambridge University Press.