

## Short Research Article

# A Contrastive Analysis of English and Bisayan Languages: Cases of Pronouns in Focus

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### ABSTRACT

The Bisayan language, a subgroup of the Austronesian languages, has a sound system that is representative of the Malayo-Polynesian languages. It is used as a means of communication in the provinces of Cebu, Negros Oriental, Bohol, Southern Leyte, Southern Masbate, and almost anywhere in Mindanao. Bisayan speakers constitute the second largest ethno-linguistic group in the world. With the implementation of MTB-MLE, studying the similarities between English, the universal language, and Bisaya is considered significant. The objective of this contrastive study is to provide an overview of the patterns of personal pronouns in Bisaya in comparison to English. Specifically, the study focuses on the usage of pronouns in both English and Bisaya languages. Pronouns serve as replacements for a noun, noun phrase, or clause in a sentence. To achieve the goal of this study, children's stories written in Bisaya and translated into English were utilized as the study corpus. One notable finding of this study is that all pronouns in the Bisaya language can be used to refer to individuals of all genders, which differs from English. While the majority of the findings in this study align with previous investigations and provide supporting evidence, it is highly recommended that future research explores other linguistic aspects to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the distinctions and similarities between these two languages.

*Keywords: Contrastive analysis, Bisayan language, English language, pronouns, MTB-BLE*

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The Bisayan language, also known as Cebuano or Visayan, is a subgroup of the Austronesian languages and its sound system is representative of the Malayo-Polynesian languages [1]. It is used as a means of communication in the provinces of Cebu, Negros Oriental, Bohol, Southern Leyte, Southern Masbate and almost anywhere in Mindanao. Bisayan speakers make up about 20% of the population of the Philippines and are the second largest ethno-linguistic group in the world. In addition, 66.04% of households in Southern Mindanao use Bisaya for communication purposes [2].

In recent years, the Philippines educational system has implemented mother tongue-based multilingual education (MTB-MLE). It requires the use of the mother tongue or first language (L1) of kindergarten to third grade pupils as a means of instruction and evaluation [3]. In

addition, Article 5 of RA 10157, also known as the Kindergarten Education Act of 2011, states that the mother tongue of the learners shall be the primary medium for teaching and learning at kindergarten level. Furthermore, MTB-MLE refers to "first-language-first" education, in which schooling needs to start in the mother tongue and transfers to additional languages, especially Filipino and English, as soon as pupils enter the fourth grade [4]

The first language of a child will have a great influence on his or her ability to learn a second language [5]. The demand for learning materials with mother tongue as a medium of instruction has increased more than ever with the intention of the MTB-MLE to bridge second language learning through the use of a child's first language. This means that a sufficient knowledge of the Bisaya language is vital to the production of language materials based on linguistic concepts.

English, as an international language, is used in the Philippines as an official language of communication and instruction irrespective of the Filipino community, geographical roots, dialect, among others [6]. Prior to the implementation of the MTB-MLE, English was used as a medium for teaching and assessing almost all subjects in primary to tertiary education. It has therefore contributed to the difficulty of adopting the use of the mother tongue.

The varied linguistic features of the Philippines make the implementation process of the MTB-MLE challenging [7]. Most teachers were initially oppositional towards its implementation because of the lack of learning materials, but their mentality shifted significantly as they understood the pedagogical and learning advantages of mother tongue instruction in their own context [8]. In addition, the Department of Education provided various training courses on the application of the MTB-MLE, and workshops were organized by various private institutions to educate teachers of the linguistic characteristics of the mother tongue.

The use of contrastive analysis in determining the similarities and differences between English, the international language, and Bisaya, the mother tongue of most people living in Mindanao, will clarify and relate its linguistic characteristics. Contrastive analysis is a theoretical methodology that seeks to understand the complexities of second-language learning in relation to the relationship between linguistic systems in the native language. It is one of the branches of applied linguistics dealing with the study of two systems of languages [9]. A contrastive research on the formation and use of pronouns in English and Bisaya may explain the relativity of the two languages.

## **2. METHODOLOGY**

### **2.1 Research Design**

This study employs a qualitative research design focusing on contrastive analysis of the English and Bisayan languages in terms of personal pronouns. Qualitative research focuses on interpreting study question as a humanistic or idealistic approach [10]. While, contrastive analysis (CA) is a systematic comparison of two or more languages with the purpose of explaining their similarities and differences [11]. The English language in this study is compared to the Bisayan language in terms of the construction of the various personal pronouns.

### **2.2 Research Materials**

This research uses children's stories written in Bisaya and translated into English, which are posted on the internet. This will serve as the corpus of this analysis, since it offers adequate examples of word formation showing the use of pronouns. Corpus is a set of naturally occurring language text that is chosen to represent the condition or variety of the language.

### 2.3 Data Collection

Children's stories were collected for the purpose of gathering the actual linguistic data for this study. Since the study focuses on the formation of personal pronouns, the words in the selection were collected from the text. These words were then used as linguistic data for the study. The terms were placed side by side to allow for the contrastive analysis of their development.

## 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Pronouns, as the focus of this contrastive study, are referred to as a replacement for a noun, noun phrase or clause in a sentence. This consists of a small subcategory of nouns. One of the forms of pronouns is a personal pronoun. It refers to a person, a location, an item, an object, a concept or an idea, or even a feeling. Personal pronouns can take different forms depending on the number, gender or formality of the situation. In addition, personal pronouns may be nominative case, objective case or possessive case.

**Table 1. Comparison of the English personal pronouns in nominative case of English and Bisaya**

Person	English	Bisaya	Sentence
First-person singular	I	ako/ko/nako	(E) <b>I</b> bought a flower. (B) Namalit <b>ko</b> ug bulak. (E) <b>I</b> ate the mango. (B) Gikaon <b>nako</b> ang mangga.
First-person plural	We	kita/kami/mi/namo	(E) <b>We</b> bought a flower. (B) Mipalit <b>mi</b> ug bulak. (E) <b>We</b> ate the mango. (B) Gikaon <b>namo</b> ang mangga.
Second-person singular/plural	You	ikaw/ka/nimo	(E) <b>You</b> bought a flower. (B) Mipalit <b>ka</b> ug bulak. (E) <b>You</b> ate the mango. (B) Gikaon <b>nimo</b> ang mangga.
Third-person singular	They	sila/nila	(E) <b>They</b> bought a flower. (B) Mipalit <b>sila</b> ug bulak. (E) <b>They</b> ate the mango. (B) Gikaon <b>nila</b> ang mangga.
Third-person plural	he, she, it	siya/niya	(E) <b>He</b> bought a flower. (E) <b>She</b> bought a flower. (B) Mipalit <b>siya</b> ug bulak. (E) <b>He</b> ate the mango. (B) Gikaon <b>niya</b> ang mangga.

Table 1 shows the comparison of the English personal pronouns in nominative case and the personal pronouns in nominative case in Bisaya language. In the table, it can be observed that the first-person singular pronoun 'I' can either be 'ako', 'ko' or 'nako' in Bisaya. Moreover, the first-person plural pronoun 'we' is equivalent to 'kita', 'kami', 'mi' or 'namo' in Bisaya.

The singular and plural form of the second-person pronoun 'you' in English is the 'ikaw', 'ka' or 'nimo' in Bisaya. Based on the sentences presented, the usage of the second person pronoun depends on the words used in the sentence. When the verb 'mipalit' was used in the sentence, the pronoun 'ka' was used. However, the pronoun 'nimo' was used when the verb "gikaon" is present in the sentence.

The third-person singular pronoun 'they', if translated in Bisaya, becomes the pronoun 'sila' or 'nila' depending on the words used in the sentence. It can be observed that when the verb used contains the prefix 'gi-', the pronoun 'nila' was used. On the other hand, the pronoun 'sila' was used when the verb contains the prefix 'mi-'.

Furthermore, the English third-person plural pronoun 'he', 'she' and 'it' is the same with the Bisaya pronoun 'siya' or 'nila'. It can be observed that the gender of the pronouns vary in English and bisaya. The masculine pronoun 'he', feminine pronoun 'she' and common pronoun 'it' becomes a common pronoun 'siya' or 'nila' in Bisaya.

**Table 2. Comparison of the English personal pronouns in possessive case of English and Bisaya**

Person	English	Bisaya	Sentence
First-person singular	my/mine	Akoa	(E) That flower is <b>mine</b> . (B) <b>Akoa</b> na nga bulak.
First-person plural	our/ours	Amoa	(E) That flower is <b>ours</b> . (B) <b>Amoa</b> na nga bulak.
Second-person singular/plural	your/yours	Imoha	(E) That flower is <b>yours</b> . (B) <b>Imoha</b> na nga bulak.
Third-person singular	his, her/hers, its	Iyaha	(E) That flower is <b>his</b> . (E) That flower is <b>hers</b> . (B) <b>Iyaha</b> na nga bulak.
Third-person plural	their/theirs	ilaha	(E) That flower is <b>theirs</b> . (B) <b>Ilaha</b> na nga bulak.

Table 2 shows the comparison of English and Bisaya personal pronouns in possessive case. The first-person personal singular pronoun 'my' and 'mine' in English is equivalent to the pronoun 'akoa' in Bisaya. As presented in the table, the pronoun 'mine' in objective case comes after the linking verb 'is', while in the Bisaya translation, the pronoun 'akoa' comes before the subject. It can also be observed that the first-person plural pronoun 'our' or 'ours' becomes 'amoa' in Bisaya. Furthermore, the second-person possessive personal pronouns 'your' and 'yours' becomes 'imoha' when translated in Bisaya.

In addition, the masculine third-person singular pronoun 'his', the feminine third-person singular pronoun 'her' and 'hers' and the common third-person singular pronoun "its" becomes a common third-person singular pronoun 'iyaha' when translated in Bisaya. It can be observed that the pronouns in Bisaya are usually common in gender or may refer to either a man or woman. Additionally, the English third-person plural pronoun 'their' or 'theirs' becomes 'ilaha' in Bisaya.

**Table 3. Comparison of the English personal pronouns in objective case of English and Bisaya**

Person	English	Bisaya	Sentence
First-person singular	me	(sa) ako/akoa	(E) Rose gave the flower to <b>me</b> . (B)Gihatag ni Rose sa <b>akoa</b> ang bulak.
First-person plural	us	(sa)	(E) Rose gave the flower to <b>us</b> .

		amo/amo	(B) Gihatag ni Rose sa <b>amo</b> ang bulak.
Second-person singular/plural	you	(sa) imo/imoha	(E) Alex gave the flower to <b>you</b> . (B) Gihatag ni Alex sa <b>imo</b> ang bulak.
Third-person singular	him, her, it	(sa) iyaha	(E) Alex gave the flower to <b>her</b> . (B) Gihatag ni Alex sa <b>iyaha</b> ang bulak.
Third-person plural	them	(sa) ilaha	(E) Alex gave the flower to <b>them</b> . (B) Gihatag ni Alex sa <b>ilaha</b> ang bulak.

The table 3 presents the comparison of English and Bisaya personal pronouns in objective or dative case. It is presented in the table that the English first-person singular personal pronouns in objective case 'me' become 'ako' or 'akoa' in Bisaya. Furthermore, the pronoun 'us' was then translated to 'amo' or 'amo' in Bisaya. Additionally, the second-person pronoun 'you' becomes 'imo' or 'imoha' in Bisaya.

It can also be observed that the Bisaya gender common third-person singular pronoun in objective case 'iyaha' is the equivalent of the English pronouns 'him', 'her' and 'it'. Consequently, the third-person plural pronoun 'them' becomes 'ilaha' in Bisaya language. It is also presented in the table that the word 'sa' is added before the Bisaya pronoun to show its objective case.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

In comparison to English, the word formation of pronouns in Bisaya offered insights into the distinctions and similarities between the two languages. The study focused on three cases of pronouns, namely the nominative case, the possessive case and the objective case.

It was found out that there is no major difference between the constructions of English and Bisaya pronouns. The number of letters that composed the word may differ but it still functions the same way.

Furthermore, the placement of pronouns in English and Bisaya differs. For personal pronouns in nominative case, the pronouns come before the verb in English, while it comes after the verb in Bisaya. Moreover, the subject comes before the pronoun for personal pronouns in possessive case, while the subject of the sentence comes after the pronouns in Bisaya sentences. However, there is only a minimal difference between the English and Bisaya pronouns in objective case.

Moreover, different gender of pronouns is used in English. The pronoun he, his and him are used to refer to males. On the other hand, the pronouns she, her and hers are used to refer to females. However, in Bisaya, all pronouns may be used to refer to all gender.

While most of the findings of this study tend to be true and support previous investigations, further analysis with larger samples of texts should be conducted to generalize the results. Future researches may cover other types of data in order to validate the distinction between the languages of English and Bisaya in terms of the different cases of pronouns. In addition, future research efforts may explore other linguistic fields that can offer a clearer understanding of the differences and similarities between the two languages.

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