

A Comparative Analysis of English and Hiligaynon Sentence Structure Patterns for the Development of Materials for Teaching English as a Second Language*

by
Esperanza M. Catedral

Researches, especially by linguists, on the nature and functioning of language have constantly been undertaken. In recent years this interest has brought about a new approach in the teaching of languages. This new approach, better known as the second language approach, can be more effectively used if the teacher understands the structuring of the native language of the learner as well as that of the new language before teaching the new language to him. The new approach also requires teaching materials which are based on a scientific description of the native language of the learner and the

target language. The interest in this new approach has spread in many countries.

After the second World War this approach caught the interest of Philippine educators, and today it is being implemented in many schools. The need for the second language approach is not far to seek: every Filipino child is taught to be multi-lingual. Because of the diverse languages or dialects in the Philippines, there is a real need for a descriptive analysis of these different dialects, if language is to be taught scientifically. It is only after such studies are made that more effective teaching materials

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can be prepared. It is for this reason that this study was undertaken.

METHODOLOGY

The body of this thesis is a study of the different Hiligaynon sentences which form the corpus of this research. The utterances and their responses were recorded as they were heard from different types of people in and around the city of Iloilo, a speech community comprehensive enough to represent the dominant speech of the Western Visayas region, the Hiligaynon.

These utterances were next sorted according to Fries¹ method: classifying the utterances according to their responses. This procedure closely followed Fries even to the point of terminology, in anticipation of the comparative study later to be undertaken. Through this procedure, the questions, the commands and requests, the calls, the leave-takings, greetings, and the statements in Hiligaynon were isolated.

After this step, the sentences were examined for their structural signals, to find out what distinguish them from each other. The

questions were analyzed first and sub-types were isolated. This detailed analysis involved the study of the significant features of the original sentences in the corpus. After this was done, these same utterances were manipulated to discover which of the features are the significant signals of a type of utterance in that their signalling value is not nullified by the manipulation. These were set in frames or patterns for their identification. The same procedure was followed in the analysis of the other types of utterances which the corpus yielded.

After identifying and isolating the Hiligaynon statements, the next step was to discover the significant internal features of these utterances between two attention signals that the writer as a native speaker of Hiligaynon could react to as one statement. After ascertaining the significant features, these were made the criteria to set against longer utterances, in order to determine how many statements are found in them. Every recurrence of the set of features is considered evidence of the occurrence of another statement.

¹Charles C. Fries, *The Structure of English* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1952), Chapter III.

After the basic pattern was discovered, the statements in the corpus were examined again to find out how many types of Hiligaynon statements there were. To help determine the function load of statement structure patterns, a random sampling of statements from two Hiligaynon weekly magazines was taken. A tally was made of the statements with inflected verbs. These were sorted out according to whether the statements begin with a verb form or with some kind of nominal. Another tally was made of the statements which begin with inflected verbs to find out which had actor focus and which had goal focus.

The analysis of English was not undertaken anymore as the description of English sentences made by Fries, Warfel and Lloyd, Roberts, and Lado,² whose works have been referred to in this study, were relied upon and used.

The basic communication situations were taken as a starting point of the comparative analysis. Using Lado's procedure,³ in the comparison of two grammatical structures, examples of patterns in English and Hiligaynon which are

usually said in a communication situation were set side by side. The patterns were then compared for their significant features such as number tie, word order, intonation pattern, concord in gender between some pronouns and their antecedents, and distribution. The problems of production, recognition, and meaning, were listed under each comparison. When this was done for all the patterns, a summary of the problems of the Hiligaynon speaker learning English was drawn.

This work is only spadework for a more scientific and intensive study of Hiligaynon sentence patterns. This study has tried to reveal some of the structural differences and some similarities between English and Hiligaynon sentence structures.

FINDINGS

The analysis conducted was made from the perspective of a teacher trying to make effective use of linguistic findings she herself conducted. In other words, this research was done as if the researcher were two persons: a linguistic student and a teacher of language.

²Robert Lado, *Linguistics Across Cultures* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1957).

³Ibid: Chapter 3

The following observations point out sources of trouble which may pervade all the statement patterns when one with Hiligaynon background tries to use English:

a. Dichotomy in the structure of Hiligaynon sentences:

One type of sentence has a verb, or is predicating; the other is without a verb, or identifying. English statements usually have verbs.

b. Number Tie.

Whereas, in English, a verb in the present form usually agrees with its subject in number and in person, the same concord does not obtain in Hiligaynon.

c. The use of two or more forms in English for one form in Hiligaynon.

This is especially true in the use of the present tense.

d. The concord in gender between some pronouns and their antecedents, in English.

In Hiligaynon no distinction is made in the use of pronouns between the masculine and feminine gender.

e. Word Order.

Word order in Hiligaynon is not as rigid as it is in English. However, most free Hiligaynon predicating statements in the corpus

begin with the verb, although it is just as correct to place the subject first.

f. Identification of Nominals.

The Hiligaynon nominals are identified by certain particles just as English nominals are. In Hiligaynon, however, particles signal grammatical categories as follows: *Ang/Si* for the "nominative"; *Sang* for either the "accusative" or "genitive"; *Sa kay* for the "dative" and *Sa* for the "locative", and *Ni* for the "agentive."

In English, distinction in the use of articles depends upon altogether different considerations. *A/An* signal a singular noun that is mentioned for the first time and is not definitely identified; *the* signals both singular and plural nouns which refer to definite things. Furthermore, the choice between *a* and *an* is conditioned by phonetics. *A* is used before a singular countable common noun beginning with a consonant while *an* is used before such a singular noun beginning with a vowel.

g. The corpus shows that Hiligaynon speakers have the tendency to express themselves in passive constructions. In English, common utterances with transitive verbs tend to be expressed in the active

form, except when the speaker is unknown, when an impersonal report is made, or when emphasis or importance is placed on either the "beneficiary" or the undergoer of the action of the verb.

CONCLUSIONS

a. This study has shown that Hiligaynon and English have different perspectives, so they do not report experience and thought in the same way. Hiligaynon speakers studying English have to rearrange their thinking when they study the new language. In order to get the "feel" of the new language, a student has to do his thinking in English.

The two languages are different because their systems are different. English belongs to the family of Indo-European languages while Hiligaynon belongs to the family of Malayo-Polynesian⁴ languages of which Indonesian is one of the branches and to which Tagalog, Bisayan, and Ilocano belong. Hiligaynon is one of the Bisayan dialects.

b. A phonemic study of a language, in order to be of any

value at all, must be a report of all its features, not just a transcription of its consonants and vowels. Gleason⁵ observed that an obstruction in the study of the grammar of any language is the mistaken belief that its report of the phonemic system should stop with consonants and vowels. If the present researcher did not listen to features like intonation, she would have missed the most significant feature of the Hiligaynon sentence.

c. A language is more than just its vocabulary items. The systems of word arrangement, word-forming habits, rhythm, stressing, and intonation are far more important to the structuring of a language.

d. One can see now why students have difficulty handling the English verb forms and their tenses, gender forms, etc. The persistence of these problems is due to several factors: one form in one language being split into two or more categories in the other; obligatory categories in one being absent in the other; certain old linguistic habits or forms finding new uses in the other language.

⁴H.A. Gleason, *An Introduction to Descriptive Linguistics* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1955), p. 363.

⁵*Ibid.*, p. 175.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations based on the findings of this study are advanced:

a. The formal study of Hiligaynon by language arts teachers.

Ability to speak a language is not an indication that one knows the system of that language. Unless one studies his own language he will not be able to know its significant features. When languages come in contact in classroom work and the teacher knows how each language works, he will be able to anticipate interference in the learning process as well as use similarities to facilitate learning.

b. Extensions of researches in Hiligaynon.

Although other studies have already been made on Hiligaynon and English such as those made on Verbs and Tense Aspect⁶ by Macario B. Ruiz, on Number Concord⁷ by Loreto Juntado, and

on Common Hiligaynon Patterns⁸ by Lily Kapili, more studies are needed to complete the description of Hiligaynon. Researches on the following are recommended:

1. The system of particles.
2. The structure of modification involved in expansions.
3. It is to be remembered that the present study has tried to limit itself to the basic structure patterns.
4. A parallel study to this present one of other types of Hiligaynon sentences.
5. Common errors in sentence constructions observed among present students of English.
6. Function load of sentence types in Hiligaynon and in English.

Before any appropriate teaching materials can be prepared for Hiligaynon speakers learning English, the function load of each pattern should be determined. This is necessary in order to avoid a

⁶Macario B. Ruiz, *A Contrastive Analysis of English and Hiligaynon Verbs*. An unpublished work (Central Philippine University, 1960). *Weighting and Sequencing English Tense-Aspect Modifications for Hiligaynon Speakers*. A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education (UCLA, Los Angeles, California, 1963).

⁷Loreto Juntado, *Number Concord in English and Hiligaynon*, A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education (Ann Arbor, University of Michigan, 1961).

⁸Lily Kapili, *A Study of Common Hiligaynon Patterns as an Approach to English*, Unpublished thesis for a Master's degree (Central Philippine University, Iloilo City, 1960).

waste of time in teaching the students what they already know. More time then could be spent on the trouble spots or learning burdens, and the materials used could be properly prepared.

c. This study has been limited to the comparison of kernel forms of statements, and not of expansions; so it is recommended that this contrastive analysis be extended to include expanded forms.

d. Extension of the life of the Philippine Center for Language Study.

The Philippine Center for Language Study has been of tremendous help in the implementation of this new approach in language teaching, so it is recommended that it continue to exist and make available the services of its experts to the different schools who may need them. ■