Filipino Variety of Davao: A Linguistic Description

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ABSTRACT

Filipino is the evolving national language of the Philippines. Many believe that it is the Tagalog variety of Metro Manila which has pervaded the entire country through the media, local movies, and educational institutions. There are, however, emerging varieties of Filipino which deviate from the grammatical properties of Tagalog. These are influenced by non-Tagalog speakers whose native language competencies interfere with their usage of Filipino. These Tagalog deviants are undeniably distinctive and are used by a significant segment of the non-Tagalog population in the country. The Filipino Variety of Davao City (FVD) is a case in point. This paper describes FVD - its features, morphosyntax, and innovations and how they deviate from those of Tagalog. Using as data the language used by people on the streets and the cyberspace, it is observed that this type of variety allows its speakers to freely explore Filipino without the hindrance of "correct grammar" as defined by the Filipino language authorities in Manila. Indigenizing Filipino is an emergent phenomenon in the Philippine linguistic landscape. It empowers non-Tagalog Filipino speakers to actively participate in its evolution, and to bring about the de-Tagalization of the national language.
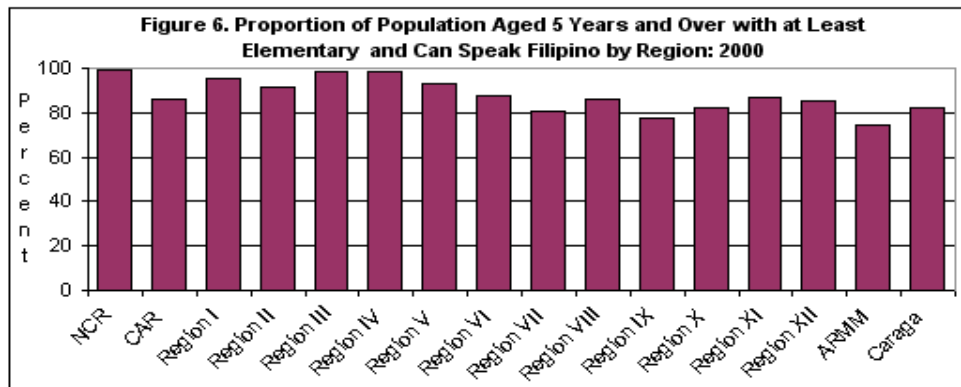

Keywords: evolution of Filipino, varieties of Filipino, de-Tagalization, indigenization of Filipino, Taglish, Bislog, Tagbis

1.0 Introduction

Davao City is the capital of Region XI, which includes the provinces of Davao del Norte, Davao del Sur, Davao Oriental, and the Compostela Valley. Its population of 4,156,653 (2007 census)[1] generally speaks Cebuano,[2] although English and Filipino are also widely spoken. English is used in institutions of learning as well as in commerce and trade. However, next to Cebuano, Filipino is widely spoken by the people of Davao.

Filipino is the evolving national language of the Philippines, as provided for by the 1987 Constitution (Art. XIV, Sec. 6). In the process of its evolution, it is used as the country's lingua franca, a code by which Filipino people from different regions of the country can communicate. Many consider Filipino as the Tagalog variety of Metro Manila which has pervaded the entire country through the media, local movies, and educational institutions. It borrows heavily from English. Thus, it is often called *Taglish*, a blend of the clips *Tag*(alog) and (Eng)*lish*. The Filipino language is understood by almost all Filipinos. The 2000 Census of Population and Housing reports that about ninety-six percent (96.4%) of the household population who have gone to school can speak Filipino. Figure 1 shows the percentages of population aged 5 years old or over who can speak Filipino across regions.

Figure 1 Percentage of Filipino-speaking Filipinos by Region

Source: http://www.census.gov.ph/data/sectordata/sr05153tx.html

Be that as it may, there are emerging varieties of Filipino which deviate from the grammatical properties of the Metro Manila Tagalog. These are influenced by non-Tagalog speakers whose native languages interfere with their usage of Filipino. These Tagalog deviants (nonstandard) are undeniably distinctive and are used by a significant segment of the non-Tagalog population in the country. The Filipino Variety of Davao City (FVD) is a case in point. This paper gives a linguistic description of FVD - its features, morphosyntax, and innovations and explores how these differ from those of Tagalog. Data for this study is the actual language used by people on

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[1] http://www.nscb.gov.ph/ru11/ [National Statistical Coordination Board Regional Division XI (Davao Region)]
[2] http://www.census.gov.ph/data/pressrelease/2002/pr02123tx.html

the streets and the cyberspace collected from 2006 to 2008. Though much of the data used here are from the cyberspace – i.e., blogs of some Davaweños and online publications, data from fieldwork have shown that this variety is also used in the day-to-day Davaweño discourse. This study documents how speakers freely explore the Filipino language in their own context.

2.0 The Davao City variety of Filipino

2.1 Two types of Filipino are noted in Davao City. The English-Filipino mix, very much like the FMM as shown in examples (a)[3] and (b)[4] taken from weblogs and (c and d) from billboards along the highway. The italicized words are borrowed from English in their original spelling.

a) Nagpapaka*serious* sa *work and* naglilibang sa *net* kung bakit pa kasi ako na*inlove*.

Eng: pretending to be serious at work and keeping busy at the internet, why did I have to

fall in love.

b) *Bro, dont do that...* naglilibang si pareng bobby alvarez, eh...

Eng: brother. . . . . .our friend bobby alvarez is relaxing, you know.

c) *Let's go* na po, sa paborito nato!

Eng: Come now, let's go, to our favorite (place)!

d) *Dad, I love it here*, *BUY* NA, *NOW* NA!

Eng: . . . . buy now, this instant.

Two things are noted in clauses (a-b) and (d): the English-Filipino code-mix and the use of grammar rules of Tagalog in phrases construction. Except for (c) which exhibits a three-language code-mix, English-Tagalog-Bisaya, with BIS *nato* (TAG*natin,* ENG*our*), this variety is very similar to FMM, thus, will not be discussed any further.

2.2 The second type is the Bisaya[5]- Tagalog blend. Lizada calls this *Tagalog na Binisaya* in his column, Papa's Table, in *Sunstar*.[6] This is also casually referred to as TAGBIS, the *Tag*(alog) and *Bis*(aya) clips blend, or BISLOG from *Bis*(ayang) (Taga)*log*.[7] For the purpose of this paper, TAGBIS is the Filipino variety of Davao (FVD). Note sample sentences (2a-c) taken from *Tagalog na Binisaya* and (2d-e) from *Galenga Talaga Niya Gyud, Uy!*[8]

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[3] Source: www.tristancafe.com/forum/46
[4] Source:mannypacquiao.ph/forum/viewtopic.php?t=12132&sid=996b764ed88d5d35bfd3c495f4a7cb63.
[5] The people of Mindanao call their language Bisaya or Binisaya. For them, Cebuano is the language of the people of Cebu. Bisaya and Cebuano mean the same in this paper and are used interchangeably.
[6] http://www.sunstar.com.ph/static/dav/2005/01/19/life/lizada.tagalog.na.binasaya.html
[7] From bisayabloggers.blogspot.com/2005_04_01_bisayabloggers_archive.html
[8] http://thespoke.net/blogs/yeoj/archive/2006/01/12/931047.aspx

2a) Dahil   wala akong   magawa ay *naglibang-libang* ako.

Because   neg 1SGen-link do-Apt   IM amuse-Perf   1PNom[9]

Because I could do nothing, I amused myself /kept myself occupied.

2b) Wag lang dagat na *magtabok*   kami   dahil   takot akong   sumakay

neg just sea that ConAF-cross 1PNom because afraid 1SGenlinker board- ConAF

ng   bangka para *tumabok*.

indefM canoe to   cross

Not just the sea where we need to cross because I'm afraid to board a canoe to cross.

2c) mas mabuti *kung muhawa*   *na lang mi*   *kay*   *kusog* lagi[10] ang ulan!

more good   if   AFleave-Con just   1PGen because hard   part   the rain

It is better if we just leave because the rain is really hard (it's raining really hard)

The Verb*naglibang-libang* in the context of (2a) is from TAG*libang* (to amuse or to keep busy), which does not appear in this form (viz., V_{af} –Root*libang*-totalRedupl)[11] in TAG. In BIS, *libang* affixed with *ma-* means "to defecate." *Libang* does not co-occur with the affix *mag-* in BIS. In (2b), BIS root *tabok* (TAG*tawid*) is affixed by *mag-* and *–um-* to mean "to cross". Do we see BIS rootwords here with Tagalog affixes?

The sentence in (2c) is Bisaya with TAG*mabuti*, verb *muhawa* (rootword: *hawa*, TAG*alis;* English *depart*); the phrase *ang ulan* is both BIS and TAG.

It can be seen from the examples that, generally, TAG words dominate this code-mix. Yet, speakers often use the words most convenient and natural for them (viz., Bisaya). This is shown in the insertion of BIS particles in clauses (2d and e).

2d) Mabait   bitaw[12] gyud   si   Weng

good-natured   part   really AM[13] Weng

Tag: Totoong mabait talaga si Weng.
Eng: Weng is really good-natured.

2e) Galenga   talaga niya   gyud,[14] uy![15]

    excellent really 3SGen part

    Tag: Ang galing niya talaga!
    Eng: She really is excellent!

Besides the particles, note the two morphemes in *galenga,* [*galeng* and *–a*], in (2e). The morpheme *–a* is usually affixed to BIS adjectives to express intensity, like *dakoa* (how big), *gamaya* (how little or how small).

Going back to (2a to c), note that affixation of BIS verbal affixes to TAG roots are done in accordance with the morphological rules of BIS. This is one of the characteristics of FVD. Other examples are given below:

2f) Hindi pa[16] man siya   nag-dating,   uy.[17]

   neg   part   part 3SNom   ProgAF-arrive part

    Tag: Hindi pa siya dumating kasi.
    Eng: S/he has not arrived yet. (What's taking her/him so long?)

2g) Ayaw kasi   nilang   mag-lapit   sa akin, di ayaw ko   na   ring

   neg   because 3PGenLinker ConAF-come near to 1SLoc so neg 1SNOm part part

   maglapit sa kanila.[18]

        to 3Ploc

    Tag: Ayaw kasi nilang lumapit sa akin, kaya ayaw ko na ring lumapit sa kanila.
    Eng: Because they don't want to come near me, so I don't also want to go near them.

From the foregoing examples, it is shown that the TAG V_{af} *–um-* is generally replaced with *mag-* in FVD. In (2h), BIS V_{af} *gi-* is affixed to TAG*sabi* and in (2i) BIS V_{af} *maka-* is used in accordance with BIS morphosyntax. Note the BIS translation of the clause.

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[14] BIS particle *gyud* from *gayud* expresses certainty
[15] BIS *uy* is clause final particle here expressing delight or surprise
[16] BIS particle pa means "yet"; The TAG*hindi pa* phrase here means "not yet."
[17] BIS *uy* particle final here expresses irritation or anxiety.
[18] Source of (2g and h): "*Pagkakaisa sa Gitna ng Pagkakaiba-iba,*" a homily delivered by Pastor Roderick Raut to the Tagalog congregation of the Davao City UCCP on May 2004.

2h) *Gisabi*   kasi   ni Helen na mag-absent   si Bernard bukas

PerfOF[19]-say because AM Helen that ConAF-absent AM Bernard tomorrow

Tag: Sinabi kasi ni Helen na aabsent si Bernard bukas.
Eng: Because Helen said that Bernard will be absent tomorrow

2i) Maka-inis   man yan siya,   uy!

AptCon-irritate part that 1SNom part

Tag: Nakakainis talaga siya!
Bis: Makalagot man na siya uy!
Eng: S/he really makes one mad!

One remarkable innovation in FVD is the *nakin* form of TAG*ko,* as shown in (2j) and (2k).

2j) Alam man nakin   `yan ba!

know part 1PNom   that part

Tag: Alam ko na man yan.
Eng: I already know that.

2k) Saan   nakin   kita[20] nakita   gani[21]?

where 1SNom   PerfAF-see part

Tag: Saan nga ba kita nakita?

Eng: Where have I seen you before?

3. Features of FVD; how do they differ from those of Tagalog?

3.1 The combination of words from BIS and TAG in a clause, including the insertion of BIS particles, like *bitaw gyud, lagi ba, gyud, uy.* This code-mixing is adopted by FVD speakers.[22]

Bringing the BIS lexicon into the FVD is a step toward enrichment of the evolving national language. Note the English-Tagalog code-mix in FMM and the Filipino-Bisaya code-mix in FVD. This is the first difference between these two varieties of Filipino.

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[19] PerfOF, perfected Object Focus
[20] *Kita* is a Tagalog pronoun that express the I-You paradigm as in *Mahal Kita* (I love you) or *Isumbong kita* (I'll tell on you).
[21] BIS particle *gani* is used here to express remembrance of something or someone.
[22] In FMM, the code-mixing is English and Tagalog.

3.2 The application of BIS morphosyntactic rules on TAG morphemes in the clause.

3.2.1 The suffixing of *–a* to adjectives to convey their intensive form, like in (2e) where *–a* is suffixed to adjective *galing*, deriving *galenga.* This is not grammatical in Tagalog which marks the adjective with *ang* instead; (2l) below is ill-formed in TAG; (2m) is the acceptable:

  2l) *Galenga ni Kulasa!
  2m) Ang galing ni Kulasa!
  Eng: How excellent Kulasa is!

3.2.2 The affixation of BISV_{af} on TAG lexical items (words) to derive FVD verbs. Additionally, BISV_{af} *mag-* or *nag-* is used in lieu of TAG *–um-* and V_{af} *gi-* in lieu of TAG *–in-* (2h). This [BIS + TAG] morphemes merger in verb derivation distinguishes FVD from Tagalog or FMM.

3.3 The FVD pronoun *nakin* innovation. This pronoun is neither Tagalog nor Bisaya. This distinguishes FVD from both Tagalog and Bisaya. The researcher is not sure whether there are other such pronoun innovations in FVD. Further study is needed to come up with conclusive statements on this.

There may be other features of FVD which are not mentioned in this paper. This is a seminal study which hopes to initiate more research documenting the use of Filipino by non-Tagalog speakers as it evolves into the constitutionally-mandated national language.

4. Conclusion

This paper presents a linguistic description of the FVD. Two features are found to be different from those of Tagalog and its Metro Manila variety, the FMM. Firstly, FVD mixes Bisaya-Tagalog codes, while FMM employs the English-Tagalog code-mix. Secondly, FMM adheres to the grammar of Tagalog while FVD sticks to the grammar of Bisaya. Can TAG words derived through BIS morphosyntactic processes be called Tagalog still? Is FVD Tagalog? FVD is not grammatical in Tagalog; therefore, not Tagalog, as far as Tagalog native speakers are concerned. Conversely, can these clauses be considered Bisaya because they are derived through BIS morphosyntactic rules? No, Bisayan speakers vaguely refer to FVD as Tagalog. If it is neither Bisaya nor Tagalog, what is it then? FVD, informally referred to as TAGBIS, is a language that is naturally evolving; thereby, allowing its speakers to freely explore Filipino in their own context, indigenizing it and calling it their own. Perhaps the *nakin* pronoun innovation, which is neither Tagalog nor Bisaya, attests to this.

This emergent phenomenon in the Philippine linguistic landscape empowers non-Tagalog speakers to actively participate in the evolution of Filipino, and to eventually bring about the de-Tagalization of the national language. Former University of the Philippines President Francisco Nemenzo said that the Filipino spoken in Davao is the core of real Filipino language, not the Balagtas Tagalog in Bulacan [Luzon]. "A language and its usage should grow and that is what is happening in Davao," [23] he concludes.

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[23]http://www.manilatimes.net/national/2005/jan/23/yehey/metro/20050123met1.html

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