

THE VISAYAN DRIFT TO ENGLISH LANGUAGE IN THE SOCIAL MEDIA ERA

JAKE C. MALON

0000-0002-7255-2328

<https://orcid.org/jake.malon@bisu.edu.ph>

Bohol Island State University- Candijay Campus

Bohol, Philippines

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.54476/ioer-imrj/859499>

ABSTRACT

This content analysis study aimed to illustrate the specific aspects of Filipino-Visayan English by analyzing 30 selected posts from Facebook. Lexical and grammatical aspects, as well as graphology, syntax, and lexicon semantics, were explored in the posts. To describe the advancement of Filipino-Visayan English, the Language Drift Theory was employed as a foundation. Descriptive qualitative research was used to illuminate the posted statements. Textual analysis indicated the most prevalent lexical, grammatical, and linguistic qualities, which were displayed from most to least dominant linguistic features. The internet influenced the drift of English localization in the Visayan region of the Philippines as the data revealed. From a pedagogical view, teachers need to examine the innovative characteristics, variations, and distinctiveness of Philippine English, particularly Filipino-Visayan English, in comparison to other World Englishes. This study guided the teachers not to evaluate their students' outputs solely based on Standards in American and British English. The syntactical and semantical distinctions of Filipino-Visayan English are no longer viewed as flaws, but rather as emergent characteristics that distinguish Regional PE variety from other world English varieties. Hence, teachers need to take proactive initiatives to expose students to authentic English usage, including non-native English literature.

Keywords: Language Drift, Filipino-Visayan English, World Englishes, English Variety

INTRODUCTION

A variety of essential roles are played by the English in the lives of billions of people. Szmigiera claims that in 2023, There were roughly 1.5 billion native and second-language English speakers in the world (Statista Research Department, 2023). Moreover, English has evolved as it has adapted to local conditions and cultures, resulting in different variations of English in every country. The most widespread

language across the globe is English. It serves as the common language for science, computer technology, aviation, shipping, and, more broadly, communication (Strongman 2017).

English speakers can be grouped into three categories: native speakers of English, English as a second language speakers, and people who are English language foreign speakers. Kachru (1992) proposed a paradigm for classifying World Englishes into three concentric circles: *Inner circle*, *Outer circle*, and

Expanding Circle (Al-Mutairi, 2020). English is the language of identity for native speakers in the Inner Circle. When English is used in countries in the Outer and Expanding Circles, with diverse structural characteristics and a separate lexicon to categorize experience, it transforms into an alien form of expression (Tajeddin, & Pakzadian, 2020). It cannot be denied that the Philippines is one of the largest English-speaking countries in the Outer Circle.

Dating back to the American colonialization in the country, Filipinos have been accustomed to adopting English as a second language space with their regional language. While English was being used by Filipinos in their respective regions, a number of changes were made to the language's phonology, morphology, semantics, and syntax.

This brought linguistic drifting which gave rise to Regional Philippine English (RPE), a variant of English spoken by Filipinos (Malicsi, 2007).

Regional English from the Philippines, according to Malon (2022), is still distinguishable from English, but it has distinctive lexicons, structures, and accents that can only be discerned by Filipinos. In terms of features, functions, and forms, Philippine English is different from other World Englishes like Singaporean, Malaysian, and Thai English. Also, English's acceptance and legitimacy are predicated on how deeply it has permeated the historical, functional, cultural, and artistic contexts of the Filipino people (Santos, 2015). Furthermore, official publications in the fields of business, administration, law, medicine, and science are written in English. Primers in the sciences—mathematics, physics, biology, and chemistry—are written in English rather than in Filipino. Filipinos contend that English is more universal and sophisticated than their native languages because it is utilized to convey a sense of formality. With this, it is crucial to consider how significant English is as a global commodity of communication.

In social media, the influence of English on the way people speak is evident. Data shows that 80% of Filipinos use social networking sites, making the Philippines one of the countries with the highest rates of social media usage. (Camus, 2017). Moreover, the majority of the Facebook users are Visayan-speaking people. In addition, according to (Santos, 2015), the infusion of English into the culture and society of the Filipinos, has been facilitated by social media. Language has an impact on social standing. According to Shashkevich (2019), Language is a key expression of social identity as well as a means of communicating a community's beliefs, perceptions, attitudes, and goals. Because having a strong command of the English language is frequently regarded as a sign of education, most Visayan speakers use the English language to communicate on social media. Different social networking services have become popular among Filipinos in modern culture. In the Philippines, Facebook has over 9.5 million users as of 2018 (Pew Research Center, 2018). Visayan people can convey their views, ideas, and feelings through the act of "posting" on their accounts.

It was found that Facebook is widely used in the Philippines, particularly in the Visayan region. For centuries, there has been substantial contact between American English and Filipino-Visayan languages, raising linguistic influence and language evolution problems. Certainly, learning the Filipino-Visayan English variety is important since it simply identifies colors of Philippine culture, history, and the language development that has occurred in the region, which can be observed in how the language is spoken in today's generation. Thus, the researcher decided to use these data as a mark to start the investigation.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study aims to explore Facebook posts to better understand the

characteristics of Filipino-Visayan English. Thus, this reveals the contrasts between Filipino-Visayan English and American English, which is internationally known. Specifically, this strived to (1) determine the nouns, lexical verbs, adverbs, and adjectives used to characterize the lexical aspects of Filipino- Visayan English; (2) exhaust how are the grammatical features of the employment of prepositions, pronouns, auxiliary verbs, articles, and conjunctions described; (3) bring out the graphological substances present in each post; (4) expose the sentence structures and patterns used in the post; (5) reveal Visayanized idioms that have been translated into English, as well as any lexical innovations, in the chosen posts; and (6) recognize Filipino-Visayan English as a subset of International English based on graphology, syntax, and lexicons- semantics.

METHODOLOGY

This research employed a descriptive qualitative design, to identify and describe the variables needed in the study. The primary goal of descriptive research is to determine "what is." As a result, it tries to identify the language characteristics of the selected posts on Facebook. Furthermore, it attempts to distinguish the distinct linguistic traits of Philippine English from those of American English with the use of content analysis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Lexical Features for Content Words

The count noun was the most prominent among the other types of nouns stated, while the singular noun was more prevalent than the plural noun in the noun category. The results revealed six

The researcher selected the social media posts purposively to find out the linguistic features of their viewpoints which are needed for this investigation. One post from each of the 30 selected respondents were chosen from Facebook. According to Kemp (2022), the Philippines has 83.85 million Facebook users. Because of this, it can be gleaned that there are ample data to make the investigation complete. The following are the inclusion criteria in selecting the Facebook posts: (1) statements must be from 18 to 28-year-old Facebook users; (2) posts must be public default; (3) Facebook users must be natural-born Filipino and residents in the Visayan region specifically region 7; (4) The sentences were written in English as to be similar to that of academic English; and (5) the samples were posted between April 2021 and March 2022, covering one year.

The lexical and grammatical aspects of the 30 selected postings were evaluated. The content words, such as nouns, verbs, adverbs, and adjectives, were examined in terms of the texts' lexical features. Only function words like prepositions, pronouns, auxiliary verbs, articles, and conjunctions were studied in terms of the grammatical features of the texts. The researcher concentrated on punctuation and spelling in graphology. In terms of syntax, the study focused solely on the sentence level, which encompasses phrase patterns and structures. Furthermore, in terms of lexical semantics, only idioms and lexical innovations were the focus. The premise for Visayanizing of the English language in this study was validations in Language Drift Theory.

lexical verb categories. These categories included the base form, the -ing form, the -s form, the past participle form, the past tense form, and the infinitive of the lexical verb.



Table 1
Lexical Features in Terms of Content Words

Content Words	
Nouns	Posted words
Singular noun	Meal, breakfast, cup, tea, coffee, pandemic, traffic, ice, bicycle, motor, plant, vaccine, pen, road, TV, dress, father, mother, brother, sister, school, module, classmate, friend, head, car, bus, paper, house, virus, police, lockdown, facebook, twitter, plantito, plantita, pantry, alcohol, cellphone
Plural noun	Signs, siblings, we, moms, parties, papers, plants, trees, lockdowns, sunglasses, parents, messages, masks, doctors, nurses, boxes, advisories, things, texts, resorts, restaurants
Lexical Verbs	
base form	walk, drink, call, chat, talk, eat, make, write, meet, plant, laugh, take, run, twist, dance, cook, dine, visit, submit, gather, inform, work, watch, hear, cry, post, see, like, fail, connect, mix, drive, fry, encounter, sing, attach, search
s-form	Cooperates, makes, cares, administers, meets, performs, infects, confiscates, mandates, locates, seizes, approves, witnesses
ing-form	Combining, planting, walking, scrolling, schooling, driving, taking, reviewing, watching, learning, meeting, baking
past participle	Flown, shown, caught, bitten, driven, eaten, fallen, begun, gone, done
past tense	Wasted, adapted, made, pasted, posted, woke, sang, watched, wrote, took
Infinitive of the lexical verb	to read, to throw, to dance, to sing, to plant, to make, to guide, to attend, to compile, to file

The lexical verb's basic form was most frequently used. Adverbs of time, manner, location, degree, frequency, conjunctive adverbs, and adverb particles were the seven categories that were recognized within the adverb category. When compared to the other adverbial categories stated, time adverbs were the most frequently

used. Only three categories of adjectives—descriptive, quantitative, and possessive—were identified in the adjective category by the collected postings. The descriptive adjective dominated the adjective landscape, and the predominant degree type was positive.

2. Linguistic Analysis of Function Words in Grammar Features

As to the classification of prepositions, these are the classifications found, simple prepositions, compound prepositions, participle prepositions, and double prepositions. It was the simple prepositions that got the dominant among

the classifications. Moreover, from the pronoun category, almost every type of pronoun was present. Personal, possessive, indefinite, demonstrative, reflexive, and relative pronouns are a few examples of the pronouns existing in the post.



Table 2
Grammatical Features in Terms of Function Word

Preposition	Posted Words
Simple preposition	in, on, over, at, under, as, with, for, of, into
Compound preposition	amidst, around, about, below, beside, outside, within, without
Participial preposition	During, regarding, given, considering, provided
Double preposition	Out of, according to, because of

Pronouns	
Personal pronoun	I, you, he, she, it, we they, me, him, her, us, and them
Possessive pronoun	Mine, hers, theirs, yours
Indefinite pronoun	Everything, anything, somebody, no one,
Demonstrative pronoun	This, that, these, those
Reflexive pronoun	Myself, self, selves, himself, herself
Relative pronoun	who, where, when, why, which and how

Auxiliary Verbs			
	Structure	Tense	Posted words
Be	Progressive	present	is, are, am + ing
		Past	was, were + ing
		future	will be + ing
	Passive	Present	is, am, are + past participle
		Past	was, ware, + past participle
		Future	Will be + past participle
Do		Simple present	Do, does, doesn't
		Simple past	Did, didn't
		Present perfect	Have, has + past participle
Have		Past perfect	Had + past participle
		Future perfect	Will have + past participle

Personal pronouns were dominantly used in the category of pronouns in the data whencategorized by usage. The auxiliary verbs, these are the auxiliary verbs "BE," in particular, the present, and past. The future progressive and passive forms are emphasized in their posts. There arealso the auxiliary verbs "DO" in both the simple and past tenses. The chosen Facebook post was also found to contain the auxiliary verb "HAVE." Among those that have been stated, the auxiliaryverb BE is considered the customary in usage.

3. Linguistic analysis at the graphological level

Specific punctuation and spelling usage deviated from those expected in International English in terms of graphology. The following is an example:

post 26: Mark (pseudonym) January 02, 2021

There are things that I have to share to some in need (,) but I realize I still need them.

As to the study in Malicsi's (2007) study in a case of language drift in the Philippines, it was observed that the word "every day" as to the manner of how the word was written was evident. People in the Visayan region employ the one-word spelling "every day". The usage of the word functions as an adverb and adjective. To demonstrate this, the following post was displayed:

Post 8: Balzjan (pseudonym) March 22, 2021

Because of this holy week, I believe it's because people are on vacation, so fully-booked hotels and resorts. If the hotels and resorts can produce more competitive related jobs throughout the country, in this case, the nation's economy will be growing every day. (every day)

Furthermore, the respondents were found to have used the clipping and affixing strategy in their statements, as seen by their posts. These two inventive ways resulted in new spellings for regular English terms in the dictionary, which were referred to as coinages. Coinages according to Kuparadze & Akhvlediani (2016), are contemplated to be a special way to derive words. Instead of word construction or borrowing new words and word entities, it provides the chance to create new words, or more correctly, new meanings, utilizing already widely used terms. It was suggested that such linguistic impingement or linguistic shifting from a speaker's regional language which in this case, it is the Visayan language to the English language could be the source of such coining. The post demonstrates this.

Post 24: Cathy (pseudonym) May 28, 2021

My Obe (obstetrician) assisted me with all my pregnancy needs.

Post 16: Al (pseudonym) March 30, 2022

I'm almost 2 years into using testo (testosterone) for being a transman.

4. Linguistic Analysis at the Syntactical Level

When employing the Visayan syntax, Regional Philippine English is characterized by emaciated elements, loquaciousness, and inverted subjects and predicates. This conforms to the study of Genon-Sieras (2020), which ascertained these linguistic features are considered as one of the distinct characterizations of Visayan region English which were comparable to the sample posts. The contentions were supported by the use of phrase structures that begin with the predicate, which are common in the Visayan expressions. A distinguishing attribute was word order, which was not commonly recognized by English native speakers.

Emaciated Elements

Post 20: Fil (pseudonym) June 26, 2021

My father, mother, brothers, and sisters are in the living room very happily laughing so loud while singing to the music and I'm left alone here to clean up and wash dishes/

(Ang akong mama, papa at mga igsoon kay naa sa sala, lipay kayo ug kinatawa samtang nagkanta sa musika unya ako naa diri, nagtiwas ug hinlo ug hugas sa mga plato.)

[My family is laughing very happily while singing with the music in the lounge, while I'm here doing chores.]

Loquaciousness

Post 15: Badet (pseudonym) September 19, 2021

like I want to have face-to-face classes. That is very LEGIT. (Murag gusto ko sa face-to-face nga klase.)

[I seriously want to have face-to-face classes.]

5. Inverted Order of Subject and Verb

Post 10: Sandy (pseudonym) January 29, 2022

Hope I can meet a person who is true to you. Like they will treat you as one of their siblings.

(Nanghinaot ko nga makakaila ug tawo nga tinood gyud nimo. Murag ila ka isipon nga usasa ilang mga igsoon.)

[I hope to meet someone who will truly be true to you and treat you like a real sibling.]

There were five types of sentence structure found in the posts: subclause, simple sentence, compound sentence, complex sentence, and compound-complex sentence. The subclause and the structure of a complex sentence were most visible in the respondents' posts due to the loquaciousness and intricacy of the expressions in the post. Here are several examples to back this up:

Post 8: Balzjan (pseudonym) January 16, 2022

I believe it's because people are on vacation, so fully-booked hotels and resorts. (complex sentence) As long as hotels and resorts keep producing various related jobs all throughout the country, in this case, the nation's economy will be growing every day. (complex sentence)

Post 26: Gardo (pseudonym) February 27, 2022

Currently, a night person on workdays. (subclause) seems always in the graveyard. (subclause)

6. Probing for Lexicons-Semantics

As to the vocabulary-meaning perspective, lexical innovations and Visayan idioms translated into English were illuminated. These terms and phrases were created by

Visayanizing the existing word formations and terminologies from International English. This denoted the transfer of local-authentic linguistic features and meaning from the regional Filipino-Visayan language to a global standard, which is American or British English, resulting in the indigenized lexical terminologies. The succeeding posts' expressions represented Visayanizing idioms translated into English, as well as lexical innovations detected by the researcher. The following is a description of each sample's demonstration:

Post 4: Pedro (pseudonym) November 12, 2021

Be cautious about the existence of the thin line between educating pretentious individuals and forging sarcasm to them. For the reason that you can turn out to be worse in the end.

Instead of using the term "fine," the word "thin" was employed in the statement. The Americanized form of this regional term is "fine line."

Post 27: Wowo (pseudonym) March 05, 2022

The plantitos and plantitas receive a great feat during the time of the pandemic. Thanks to them they bring nature to home.

Plantitos and plantitas do not really exist in international English. This is the manifestation of localizing the meaning of the terminologies.

Post 10: Karen (pseudonym) April 15, 2022

Marcus (not real name) you really have a "light hand" to hurt your brother. It is the derivation of the Visayan idiomatic expression "gaan ug kamot" which was shown in the post.

CONCLUSIONS

Contrary to popular belief, Visayans have negated speaking American English and

instead appropriated it for their purposes. The data revealed the localization of English in the Visayan region of the Philippines, as demonstrated by the presence of regionally specific spellings, sentence structure, shifted idiomatic expression, and new lexical features. With this, Visayan English emerged from the linguistic standpoint of language drift. Considering the sample statements came from a social media site, it is reasonable to speculate that the internet drives English localization. Filipino-Visayan English (FVE) has a constant linguistic shift and creates more distinct features in this modern era as factors such as social media. Thus, teachers need to take proactive initiatives to expose students to authentic English usage, including non-native English literature.

RECOMMENDATIONS

From a pedagogical view, teachers need to examine the innovative characteristics, variations, and distinctiveness of Regional Philippine English, particularly Visayan English, in comparison to other World Englishes. This guided the teachers not to evaluate their students' outputs solely based on standard British and American English. Furthermore, the structure and distinct semantic features of Regional Philippine English, instead of being perceived as a limitation, this English language variety should now be seen as having emerging characteristics that set Regional Filipino English apart from other global English languages.

REFERENCES

- Al-Mutairi, M. A. (2019). Kachru's three concentric circles model of english language: An Overview of Criticism & the Place of Kuwait in it. *English Language Teaching*, 13(1), 85. <https://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v13n1p85>
- Camus, M. R. (2017, January). PH world's No. 1 in terms of time spent on social media. *INQUIRER.net*; <https://technology.inquirer.net/58090/ph-worlds-no-1-terms-time-spent-social-media>
- Genon-Sieras, S. V. (2020). Orthography, syntax, and morphemes in cebuano visayan news editorial: a linguistic analysis. *International Journal of English Language and Linguistics Research* <https://www.eajournals.org/wp-content/uploads/Orthography-Syntax-and-Morphemes-in-Cebuano-Visayan-News-Editorial-A-Linguistic-Analysis.pdf>
- Kachru, B. (1992). World Englishes: Approaches, issues and resources. *Language Teaching*, 25, 1-14. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0261444800006583>
- Kemp, S. (2022). Data reportal – Global digital insights. *DataReportal – Global Digital Insights*. <https://datareportal.com/reports/digital-2022-philippines>
- Kuparadze, G., Tsiuri Akhvlediani, & Mujiri, S. (2014, August 25). "Translation – Basis of Contrastive Linguistic Analysis" / On the material of English, French, German and... *ResearchGate*; unknown. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/299441608_Translation_Basis_of_Contrastive_Linguistic_Analysis_On_the_material_of_English_French_German_and_Georgian_Languages_G_Kuparadze_Ts_Akhvlediani_S_Mujiri
- Malicsi, J. (2007). Philippine English: A case of language drift. https://www.ritsumei.ac.jp/acd/re/k-rsc/lcs/kiyou/pdf_22-1/RitsIILCS_22.1pp29-58_MALICSI.pdf
- Malon, J. (2022). The drama on provincial accented speech. *International Journal of Language and Literary Studies*. <https://doi.org/10.36892/ijlls.v4i3.1031>
- Pew Research Center (2018). Social media use in 2018. <https://www.pewresearch.org/internet/2018/03/01/social-media-use-in-2018/>
- Santos, R. G. (2015). The effects of social media on Filipino culture and behavior. <https://www.scribd.com/document/290911246/The-Effects-of-Social-Media-to-Filipino-Culture-and-Behavior>
- Shashkevich, A. (2019). The power of language: How words shape people, culture. *Stanford News*; <https://news.stanford.edu/2019/03/27/words-shape-people-culture/> Stanford University.

<https://news.stanford.edu/2019/08/22/the-power-of-language-how-words-shape-people-culture/>

Statista Research Department (2022). The most spoken languages worldwide 2022 | Statista. (2022). Statista; Statista.
<https://www.statista.com/statistics/266808/the-most-spoken-languages-worldwide/>

Strongman, L. (2017). Language Evolution, acquisition, adaptation and change. sociolinguistics Interdisciplinary Perspectives.
<https://doi.org/10.5772/67767>

Szmigiera, M. (2023). Most used languages online by share of websites 2023.
<https://www.statista.com/statistics/262946/most-common-languages-on-the-internet/>

Tajeddin, Z., Pakzadian, M. (2020). Representation of inner, outer and expanding circle varieties and cultures in global ELT textbooks. Asian. J. Second. Foreign. Lang. Educ.
<https://doi.org/10.1186/s40862-020-00089-9>

IIMRJ. This is an open-access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution – Noncommercial 4.0 International License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4>).

AUTHOR'S PROFILE



Jake C. Malon is an EdD-ELT candidate at Cebu Normal University, Cebu City, Philippines. He obtained his master's degree in English Language Teaching as well

as his bachelor's degree in Secondary Education with vertical alignment to teaching English Language at Holy Name University in Tagbilaran City, Bohol, the Philippines. He is currently connected with the Bohol Island State University as Instructor I, where he teaches English Language, General Education and Professional Education

subjects in the College of Teacher Education. His research interest includes Languages, Education, and Literature.

COPYRIGHTS

Copyright of this article is retained by the author/s, with first publication rights granted to