The Multidimensionality of Cebuano Pronominals - Avenues for a Qualitative Investigation

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Abstract: The study explores the properties of Cebuano pronominals in written discourse. Using Cebuano texts that are accessed online as its corpus, close textual analysis was done that aimed at determining the position of the pronouns in the clauses of written discourse. Findings reveal the dynamic nature of Cebuano pronominals in relation to the other morphological elements preceded or are followed by them. First, if the pronoun is attached to the verb, the position of the personal pronouns changes depending on the affix attached to the verb as the affix functions to denote the time the action was taken by the agent. Second, in terms of syntactic structure, Cebuano and English pronouns are similar. Third, the syntax of the personal pronouns is relative to the morphological unit these are attached to. In the case of a negative clause, deletion of the verb the initial pronoun follows is observed. Fourth, Cebuano pronominals are context-dependent rather than gender-determined. In sum, the findings open interesting avenues for students in Applied Linguistics to further investigate. For one, these observations may be explored individually using qualitative mechanisms of analyzing Cebuano pronominals and how they spell power relationships. Additionally, a contrastive analysis may be done between Cebuano pronominals and other Asian or Indo-European languages.

Keywords: Cebuano Pronominals, Experiencer, Subjective Case Pronouns, Objective Case Pronouns

1. Introduction

The Philippines is home to Filipinos who, because of the geographical separation among its 7,100 islands, speak different languages and dialects. To be specific, Tagalog is spoken by about 20 million Filipinos. The next predominant language is Cebuano (Visayan). Other languages are Ilocano, Hiligaynon, Bicolano, Waray-waray, Capampangan and Pangasinense.

Cebuano is an Austronesian language spoken in the Philippines by about 15 million people. Akin to languages like the Malaysian, Indonesian as well as other Filipino languages, Cebuano is spoken widely compared to other members of the Visayan languages. In fact, even if there is no educational institution in the Philippines that teaches Cebuano formally, it has the largest speaking population of the Philippines next to Filipino.

Research involving Cebuano language usually focuses on describing the grammatical and the syntactic features of the language. For example, Jubilado and Manueli [1] examine the components of the predicate and the temporal markings

of the clause structures of the Malay and Cebuano languages using the Minimalist Syntax. Specifically, Cebuano data were derived from Cebuano speakers in the Davao Region. On the other hand, the Malay data came from Malay speakers at the Kuala Lumpur Federal Territory. The focus of analysis – clause structures - are referred to as ditransitives, also known as triadic verbs.

Ditransitives are one type of predicate involving three arguments in its thematic structure. The findings reveal that analysis of the sentential constructions of the two languages provide two internal and one external arguments. Further analysis of the said languages, however, need to account for their differences in typology. While it is held that Cebuano maintains a predicate initial syntax, Malay observes a subject predominant syntax in its argument/thematic structure.

The basic notion here is that ditransitives are a type of transitive verbs with two objects, traditionally known as direct object and indirect object, in the domain of the VP structure. The two authors argue that, in the study of ditransitives, there is a need to delve more into the syntactic and semantic properties of this particular predicate type concerning

computation where the arguments and theta roles are economically addressed. In particular, the syntactic phenomena are concerned with the case properties of arguments and the conditions associated with the assignment of case. Meanwhile, in Luzares' [2-3] study on Cebuano verb morphology and verb classification, Luzares uses a case grammar approach derived from Fillmore's [4] and Cook's [5] models which she extended and modified to suit her purpose. Using 1,400 verbs from a Cebuano dictionary, Luzares' analysis reveals two things about Cebuano verb morphology. One, Cebuano verb morphology is rule- governed. Two, the basis for verbal affixation has semantic underpinnings. Another study involving translation from Tagalog to Cebuano, Fat [6] took Roxas, Devilleres, and Giganto's [7] suggestion of implementing and evaluating the performance of the machine translator known as T2CMT. T2CMT is a machine translator specifically designed to translate words from Tagalog to Cebuano. To be able to do this, Fat had to develop a Tagalog-to Cebuano dictionary, Using a four-step set of procedures that involved the use of C program and input of the *Book of Genesis* in the Tagalog version, the writer used an affix correspondence table to test the precision of translation from Tagalog to Cebuano affixes. The findings of the testing done on the machine translator revealed the following scores for average precision, recall and f-measure - 80.27%, 79.92%, and 80.09% respectively. These scores fall beyond the range of good performance (19), which means that the system is able to perform well in translating the *Book of Genesis* from Tagalog to Cebuano. However, the most significant literature on Cebuano is on its pronominals done by Dita [8]. Her study describes the grammatical functions of pronominals in ten Philippine languages, the Cebuano language included. In this study that employs 100,000word- corpus for each language, Dita describes pronominals in Cebuano language as portmanteau pronouns. She describes this property as a combination of ergative and absolutive case- markings. In the ergative component, the first pronoun in the subject part of the clause acts as the agent and the latter pronoun in the predicate part acts as the patient in a clause. She further discloses that absolutives in the Cebuano pronominal system function as the sole arguments or experiencers in intransitive constructions or the object or patient in a transitive construction. Given the

studies that explored Cebuano pronominals based on its structure and syntax in written discourse, this study aims to extend descriptions of Cebuano pronominals by determining their dynamic features in relation to the other morphological elements in the written texts and to suggest other areas in Applied Linguistics that researchers may venture into.

2. Method

The study used 50,946 word corpus of Cebuano texts that are accessed online. The first 44,086 Cebuano words were taken from the book of *Genesis*. The remaining words were derived from different genres also sourced online - poems, news and novelette. Analysis was done qualitatively on the position of the Cebuano pronominals in relation to affixes attached to the verbs. These affixes, particularly the prefixes, function to denote the time action was taken by the agent or the experiencer. Analysis also took into consideration the position of Cebuano pronouns in relation to other markers in a clause like the negative markers or the nouns the pronouns modify.

3. Findings

Several observations are noted regarding the position of the pronouns in relation to the other morphological components in the clause. First, if the pronoun is attached to the verb, the position of the personal pronouns changes depending on the affix attached to the verb as the affix functions to denote the time the action was taken by the agent. As shown in table 1, the prefix *mo-* or *mag-* appears after the 2nd person singular *ka* to denote modality of the verb. On the other hand, the prefix *nag-* appears before the 1st person singular *ako* to denote action done in the past.

Similarly, the prefix *gi-* appears before the 3rd person singular *siya* to denote action done in the past. Additionally, the prefix *manga-* appears before the first person inclusive *(ki)ta* to denote future action. The prefix *maka-* appears before the first- person exclusive *(ka)mi* to denote modality of the action. Next, the prefix *maka-* appears after the 2nd person plural pronoun *(ka)mo* to denote modality of action. All pronouns in these descriptions function as the agent of the clause.

Table 1. Subjective Case- Pronoun functions as the subject or agent of the clause.

Number	Person	Cebuano pronoun	English pronoun	Sample sentence	English equivalent
Singular	1st person	ako, (ako)	I	Kay naghunahuna ako (Genesis 20:11)	I said to myself
	2nd person	ka, ikaw	You (singular)	dili ka magkaon niini (Genesis 2:17)	You must not eat from any tree
	3rd person	Siya	he, she	Ug gikuha ni jehova nga Dios ang tawo ug gibutang siya tanaman sa Eden Genesis 2:15)	And the Lord God took the man and he put him in the Garden of Eden
Number	Person	Cebuano pronoun	English pronoun	Sample sentence	English equivalent
Plural	1st person (including person being spoken to)	(ki)ta	we (inclusive)	manganaug kita (Genesis 11:7)	We will go down
	1st person (excluding person being spoken to)	(ka)mi	we (exclusive)	Makakaon kami sa bunga sa mga kahoy sa tanaman: (Genesis3:2)	We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden
	2nd person	(ka)mo	you (plural)	Dili kamo makakaon sa tanan nga mga kahoy sa tanaman? (Genesis 3:1)	You must not eat from any tree in the garden?
	3rd person	Sila	They	Ug ginapanalanginan sila sa Dios (Genesis 1:21)	And they were blessed by the Lord

Second, similar to the English syntactic structure of DET + NOUN, Cebuano pronouns that function as determiner in the experiencer part of the clause, regardless of their number, are positioned before the nouns they modify. This observation is true for all persons- 1st, 2nd, and 3rd. Table 2 displays sample texts taken from Cebuano Bible. For example, *ang akong nasud* has the first person singular personal pronoun in the experiencer part of the clause acting as determiner. In

English, a personal pronoun also functions as a possessive determiner. The grammatical function of a possessive determiner is to indicate possession of or some other relationship to the noun. Some possessive determiners in English are *my, your, his, her, its, our, and their* and the interrogative possessive determiner *whose* [9]. Likewise, the second person singular *imong* is followed by the noun *tinguha* that it modifies in the subject part of the clause.

Table 2. *Pre –possessive Case – Pronoun functions as determiner in the subject part of the Clause.*

Number	Person	Cebuano Pronoun	English Pronoun	Sample Sentence	English Equivalent
Singular	1st person	ako, akong	mine, my	Akong nasud ang akong katabang sa pag asenso	My nation aids in my development
	2nd person	imo, imong	yours, your (singular)	ug ang imong tinguha mao ang pagpangandoy sa imong bana.(Genesis 3:16)	Your desire will be for your husband
	3rd person	iya, iyang	his, her, hers	Maoy iyang desisyon nga makuha siya	
Plural	1st person (including person being spoken to)	ato, atong	ours, our (inclusive)	Kay maoy maghatag balaka ug aliwaros sa atong kalag (*Ang pagkab-ot sa tinood nga kalipay* By Genamos_US of Washington DC, USA, p. 122)	
	1st person (excluding person being spoken to)	amo, among	Ours, our (exclusive)	Among balay kami nagdeskanso	
	2nd person	inyo, inyong	Yours, your (plural)	Kay hingbaloan sa Dios, nga sa adlaw nga kamo mokaon niini mangabuka ang inyong mga mata (Genesis 3:5)	For God knows that when you eat of it, your eyes will be opened
	3rd person	ila, ilang	Theirs, their	Ilang kahayupan ang ilang gidala (Genesis 46:6)	Their livestock is what they took with them

Third, if the pronoun examined is positioned in the predicate part of the clause, the personal pronoun syntax is relative to the other morphological unit it is attached to. If the personal pronoun attached to the noun functions as descriptor or modifier in the predicate part of the clause, the pronoun examined appears after the noun it modifies and before the verb that qualifies the noun. This is observed in *na ang balay nako nasunog*. However, if the initial pronoun functions as both agent and patient in the negative clause, the verb the initial pronoun follows is deleted. Moreover, the negative marker *dili* is placed at the head of the clause followed by the two pronouns *nimo* and *siya* appearing one after the other.

Here, *nimo* as the agent and *siya* as the patient refer to the same person. It is also observed that Cebuano pronouns do not recognize the gender of the agent. In fact, when translated, the first clause may also refer to *she*. This is unlike Arabic pronouns [10], as cited in [11]. This phenomenon is noted in the following examples:

(1) *Dili nimo siya anak.* (He is not your son.)
(2) *Dili nato sala.*(It was not our mistake.)

In the second clause, not only is the verb omitted, the personal pronoun it when used in the subject part of the clause is likewise deleted. More examples are found in Table 3.

Table 3. *Post –possessive Case – Pronoun functions as possessing something in the predicate part of the sentence.*

Number	Person	Cebuano Pronoun	English Pronoun	Sample Sentence	English Equivalent
Singular	1st person	nako	my	Gisultihan kita na ang balay nako nasunog	I told you that my house got burned.
	2nd person	nimo,	Your (singular)	Dili nimo anak siya	He is not your son.
	3rd person	niya,	his, her	Tungod kay niini nagpahulay siya gikan sa tanan niyang buhat nga gibuhat ug nahimo sa Dios. (Genesis 2:3)	Because of this, He rested from all his works.
Plural	1st person (including person being spoken to)	nato	Our (inclusive)	Dili nato sala	It was not our mistake
	1st person (excluding person being spoken to)	namo	our (exclusive)	nga giablihan namo ang among mga baluyot (Genesis 43:21)	We opened our baskets
	2nd person	ninyo	Your (plural)	Paanhion ninyo ang inyong igsoon nga lalake? (Genesis 43:7)	Bring your brother down here?
	3rd person	nila	their	Balay nila kini	This is their house

Fourth, Cebuano pronominals do not realize the gender of the agent and the patient in the subjective case as well as the objective case pronouns respectively. Gender determination

is based on the context [12, 13] the text was taken. For instance, in table 4, reference to *(ka)nimo* as second person singular is realized as pointing to a male persona because the

reader knows that the text is *Genesis* of the Bible. Further, the reader recognizes that the speaker is God addressing Abraham. Furthermore, the objective case third person singular pronoun *(ka)niya* is realized as referring to a male persona since the initial personal pronoun *siya* in *pagabuhatan ko siya ug katabang nga angay kaniya* points to Adam in Genesis when God was referring to His creation of a companion fit for Adam. It is observed that the object *siya* of the transitive verb is deleted upon translation into English.

In terms of position, Cebuano objective case pronouns are positioned at the last part of the clause that they were referred to. Similar to the English translation, Cebuano case pronouns are preceded by the verbs, Cebuano language, being most often a verb-first language [14, 15]. It is observed that if the objective case pronouns are preceded by prepositions, the prepositions are deleted. This is observed in *nakapabasul kanako* translated as 'mistake to me', *angay kaniya*, translated as 'fit for him', and *namakak ang tawo kanamo,* translated as 'the man lied to us'.

Table 4. Objective Case – Pronoun functions as object of the sentence.

Number	Person	Cebuano Pronoun	English Pronoun	Sample Sentence	English Equivalent
Singular	1st person	(ka)nako	me	Kay kini nakapabasul kanako nga gibuhat ko sila (Genesis6:7)	It was a mistake to me.
	2nd person	(ka)nimo,	you (singular)	Ug akong pagabuhaton kanimo ang usa ka daku nga nasud (Genesis 12:2)	And I will make you a great nation.
	3rd person	(ka)niya,	him, her	pagabuhatan ko siya ug katabang nga angay kaniya. (Genesis 2:18)	I will make a companion fit for him.
Plural	1st person (including person being spoken to)	(ka)nato	us (inclusive)	Ug minos-minos pa kanato (*Ang pagkab-ot sa tinood nga kalipay* By Genamos_US of Washington DC, USA, p. 122)	It cheapens us.
	1st person (excluding person being spoken to)	(ka)namo	us (exclusive)	Namakak ang tawo kanamo	The man lied to us.
	2nd person	(ka)ninyo	you (plural)	ug kini mao ang timaan sa saad sa taliwala kanako ug kaninyo (Genesis 17:11)	This is the sign of the covenant between me and you
	3rd person	(ka)nila	them	Kini mao ang mga sinugdan sa mga langit ug sa yuta, sa pagbuhat kanila (Genesis 2:4)	This is the beginning of heaven and earth, in creating them

4. Conclusion

In summary, the paper has provided a qualitative analysis of Cebuano pronominals based on the corpus of Cebuano words accessed online. Findings reveal the phenomenon of variation of pronoun positioning relative to the action denoted by the verb. Additionally, pronouns in the subjective case of the clause function in duality - as possessive determiner and as personal pronoun. Also, if the pronoun is followed by the verb in the subjective case of the clause, the property of verb deletion occurs. For negative clauses that begin with It, the Cebuano negative marker *dili* is positioned at the head of the clause while it is deleted Finally, Cebuano do not recognize gender both t in the subjective and the objective case of the clause. Instead, gender recognition is based on context. What the findings show are the many dimensions that the Cebuano pronominal system can be looked at. This study is significant to students of applied linguistics who believe that analysing the structures of a given language will open interesting dimensions to the existing studies that have been done about it. To end, future studies on Cebuano pronominals may look into the phenomenon of power relationships residing in their contexts of use.

Acknowledgements

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