

Original Article

Morphological Variations of the Cebuano and Hiligaynon-Visayan Languages in the Local Dailies of Negros Island

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Abstract. The study seeks to analyze morphological variation in Cebuano and Hiligaynon as used in local newspapers and magazines on Negros Island. Employing a descriptive linguistic analysis grounded in morphological theory, the study analyzes selected articles from local dailies on Negros Island between 2017 and 2018. A significant research gap exists in the detailed morphological analysis of Cebuano-Visayan and Hiligaynon-Visayan languages within the context of Negros Island's local dailies. Although phonological, lexical, and contextual aspects have been studied, research on morphological structures – such as nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs – in published media remains scarce. This gap limits our understanding of how these languages function in contemporary, real-world communication. The study analyzed a corpus of 30 local newspaper articles (approx. 20,000 words) published between 2017 and 2018, sourced from NewsRecord (15 articles), Pikpik sa Abaga (10), and other regional dailies (5), with individual articles ranging from 300 to 1,200 words and selected for their language use, cultural relevance, and a 100-word minimum length. The findings show that although there is significant lexical overlap between the two languages, there are also clear morphological distinctions, particularly in word formation, stress patterns, and affixation. The study highlights that although CV and HV share similar linguistic origins, they nevertheless exhibit distinct morphological traits shaped by regional and cultural factors. These results highlight the importance of preserving regional languages and expanding our understanding of the linguistic diversity in the Philippine context. The study's implications extend beyond classroom instruction to language preservation, documentation, and promotion, all of which are integral to cultural heritage management.

Keywords: *Sociolinguistics; Morphological variations; Descriptive-linguistic analysis; Cebuano-Hiligaynon comparisons; Philippine linguistics.*

The diversity of Languages worldwide, exhibited by their structures and uses, shows the rich cultural and historical backgrounds of the linguistic communities that speak them. Investigating morphological variations or the construction, structure, and formation of words (Lieber, 2021) provides insights into the linguistic complexity and evolution of languages. The study of morphology provides insight into language as a fundamental aspect of human cognition and social interaction (Aronoff & Fudeman, 2022). As an essential component of linguistics, morphology has broad applications in cognitive science (Arkadiev, 2020; Schiller, 2020), natural language processing (NLP) (Meurers, 2020), and language instruction (Levesque et al., 2021).

Asia's linguistic tapestry, especially in Southeast Asia, reflecting its diverse cultural and historical influences, is unique due to its wide variety of languages and dialects. The study of morphological variation in Asia has revealed numerous findings that reflect the cultural identity of specific linguistic communities (Williams, 2020; Badenoch & Choksi, 2020). Linguistic studies in South Asia, including investigations of morphological variation, remain uncommon and scattered, making them a "primary obstacle in the development of South Asian language technology" (Arora et al., 2022).

The Philippines, located in the linguistically rich Southeast Asian region, is home to more than 150 languages spoken by diverse ethnic groups across its islands (San Jose & Pilar, 2023). Each language plays a crucial role in shaping regional identities and fostering communication among its people. Morphological studies in the archipelago are driven by the desire to understand the linguistic community's thoughts and experiences, as reflected in its language, identity, cultural heritage, and preservation (Abiog & David, 2020; Piloton et al., 2024). The enrichment of mother-tongue-based learning (MTBL) in the K-12 education curriculum, which has been revised and replaced by the Matatag Curriculum, has also fueled recent studies on morphology in the Philippine language (Fortes, 2022; Penera, 2021).

Negros, as an island, is composed of two provinces with two major Visayan Languages, both spoken and written by the populace. These two major languages are Cebuano-Visayan (CV), spoken in parts of Negros Occidental and more prevalent in Negros Oriental, and Hiligaynon-Visayan (HV), widely used in written texts and conversation in Negros Occidental. These languages are prominently featured in local dailies, reflecting their importance in media and daily communication. Linguistic differences between these two languages are evident in morphological variation, even though people in a given speech community speak the same language. Slight variations were noted, such as minor word pronunciation or trivial changes in grammatical structure, which can hinder intergroup communication. Sometimes, there were also differences between written and spoken speech communications between men and women of different social classes.

Today, analyzing word formation is a challenge for Filipino learners. Teachers in both public and private elementary and secondary schools examined localized sample materials to be used as drills or exercises to suit learners' individual needs, particularly in the context of implementing Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE) in the Philippines. This scenario created misunderstandings and misinterpretations of the morphological aspects of both CV and HV Languages on Negros Island. A lack of knowledge of morphemes led to erroneous affixation in a language's morphological structure.

Several studies have explored the features of CV and HV. Abelito (2023) studied HV with some elements of morphological variations, but the focus was on the translation from English to HV. Biray (2023) investigated the derivational morphology of the Akeanon dialect, noting similarities with HV. There was also a study on phonological and morphological analysis of HV. However, they focused on speech production among Hiligaynon native speakers (Sales, 2022) and the gays' spoken discourses (Co-Tortogo et al., 2021), respectively. Beyond those studies, there has been a dearth of empirical data on the comparative investigation of CV and HV, particularly through morphological analysis of the available corpora of the two languages.

This study investigates morphological variation between Cebuano-Visayan and Hiligaynon-Visayan in local media texts, recognizing that morphological confusion not only affects linguistic precision and comprehension but also poses a significant barrier to effective literacy, intercultural communication, and cultural preservation. Addressing these variations is imperative to enhance literacy programs, improve educational materials, and foster clear communication among the diverse language communities on Negros Island. Thus, this study explored the texts used in the local dailies, such as newspapers and magazines written in the medium of CV and HV Languages in Negros Island, providing valuable insights into how these languages are used in written form, and highlighting the dynamic interplay between language, culture, and identity in the region. This research on the morphological variation of the CV and HV languages is an essential contribution to the global linguistic landscape, offering a deeper look into the intricacies of two languages spoken on a linguistically rich island in the Philippines.

Methodology

Research Design

This study employed a descriptive linguistic analysis (Kurbanova & Ataeva, 2020) focusing on the morphological structures of selected texts from local dailies on Negros Island. This study was anchored on Distributed Morphology Theory (Harley & Noyer, 1999), Hermit Crab Theory (Heath, 1998), Optimality Theory: Cophonology Approach by Antilla (2002), and Optimality Theory: Indexed Faithfulness Theory by Fukazawa (Fukazawa et al., 1998), Ito and Mester (2001). Notably, emerging research indicates the evolving nature of lexical and morphological features in digital and media contexts, underscoring the need to revisit morphological analysis in light of current data and perspectives. However, there remains a paucity of studies that explicitly examine morphological variation between Cebuano-Visayan and Hiligaynon-Visayan in contemporary media texts, underscoring the urgency and relevance of this investigation.

Data Gathering Procedure

Data were collected from the local dailies of one component city (Cebuano-Visayan) and the province of Negros Occidental (Hiligaynon-Visayan). The local dailies included newspapers, magazines, and pamphlets published between 2017 and 2018. The study analyzed 30 local newspaper articles totaling approximately 20,000 words, published between 2017 and 2018, from NewsRecord, Pikpik sa Abaga, and other regional dailies, each ranging from 300 to 1,200 words. It is selected based on language and cultural relevance, with a minimum length of 100 words.

The local dailies were selected using the following inclusion criteria: Articles must have been published between 2017 and 2018 in designated local newspapers (e.g., NewsRecord, Pikpik sa Abaga), Articles must be written primarily in Cebuano-Visayan or Hiligaynon-Visayan, Each article must contain a minimum of 100 words to ensure sufficient linguistic data, The content must focus on language use, cultural expressions, or community-relevant social issues to provide meaningful morphological variation, Articles must be accessible through digital or physical archives, and the researcher must have the permission or rights to analyze and cite the content.

The study employed purposive sampling to select relevant articles from local dailies (2017–2018), based on language, length, and cultural focus; data were collected from digital archives and analyzed at a university facility. To bolster validity, future research should implement specific verification methods—including triangulation, expert validation by a linguist fluent in both dialects, and formal inter-coder reliability measures—to strengthen coding, translation, and overall analytical credibility.

In the first phase, the local dailies were identified, collected, and read. In the second phase, potential morphemes, which served as the primary data, were highlighted and encoded in a PivotTable in a spreadsheet. The PivotTable was used to compare and analyze the data. In the third phase, the data were purified by selecting morphemes suitable for analyzing morphological variation between the two languages. In the fourth phase, in preparation for data analysis, the data were coded and translated into English to enhance readability and make the research accessible to non-Filipino researchers and readers. The coded morphemes extracted from the articles or stories were analyzed, with their roots and affixes separated. The affixes were examined through qualitative descriptions that addressed the study's objective. If applicable, also include interventions, pre-tests, post-tests, control/treatment groups, and measurement tools.

Data Analysis Procedure

The study assumed that the variations in Cebuano-Visayan and Hiligaynon-Visayan languages correspond to distinctions in the morphological structures of nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs. Identification of common and similar words involved constant reference to the Pivot Table, in which words were written in both languages, translated into English, and categorized accordingly. The morphological analysis used a qualitative method. The qualitative aspect was taken into account in the variation of the Cebuano-Visayan and Hiligaynon-Visayan languages on Negros Island. The morphological structures were analyzed, and it was ensured that all data were analyzed reliably and consistently. In the presentation of data, similar words were categorized as nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs. The morphological structures were analyzed with respect to free and bound forms, the lexicon and grammar, inflection and derivation, and word-formation processes. The validation of inter-coders and intra-coders contributed to the rigorous analysis of the data.

Ethical Considerations

The researchers sought to be objective, avoiding bias and any portrayal of language as superior or inferior, a crucial consideration in sociolinguistic contexts involving identity and social status. They observed respect for the cultural identities associated with Cebuano-Visayan and Hiligaynon heritage. They also used legally acquired local dailies and publications, adhering to intellectual property rights and maintaining data integrity by avoiding alterations that could distort original morphological structures. Lastly, all consultations with local experts on the languages studied were conducted with informed consent, ensuring that their rights and contributions were respected.

Results and Discussion

Based on the data gathered in the study, the following findings were revealed. Table 1 shows that most nouns in Cebuano-Visayan words are similar to Hiligaynon-Visayan words in terms of spelling of the same meaning, exact words of different meanings, or vice versa. However, there are a few spelling differences in the use of affixation, and some are borrowed words. Variations in Cebuano and Hiligaynon are unique, though nouns have more or fewer similarities, but only change when a prefix or suffix is attached to them. It is noted that Cebuano words in a component city are only borrowed from the original, as noticed there are irregularities in spelling like kistudiya, klasmet, or klasmit (might be a clerical error as used in the local daily, or it is really the spelling). The roots are capitalized for emphasis in this study; however, when a Cebuano or Ilonggo reader or speaker encounters these words, intonation and stress matter due to regional accents. It is also notable that certain words may be spelled with o or u, such as magamu/o, yuho/um, halo/uk, etc., which are now accepted.

Parker and Riley (1994) explained that words are made up of meaningful units (morphemes), which can be lexical (meaningful themselves) or grammatical (relate one lexical morpheme to another). Linguistically, to this day, Negros have used Spanish-derived words. Furthermore, borrowed Spanish and English words remain part of the linguistic community in both CV and HV. Thus, studying these words can confer on a person in one linguistic community a preference for being understood by other linguistic communities that share the same standard distinction.

Table 1. Words in Cebuano-Visayan and Hiligaynon-Visayan as to Nouns

Cebuano-Visayan Words	Hiligaynon-Visayan Words	English Translation
baBAYE	baBAYE	woman
BALAUD	LAYE	law
BALAY	PULUY-AN, BALAY	house
BANGKE(i)TA	BANGKETA	pavement
BATASAN	PANIMUOT	attitude
BIKTIMA	BIKTIMA	victim
BINGKA	BINGKA	rice cake
BINURO	BINORO	pickled fish
BOLUNTARYO	BOLUNTARYO	volunteer
BULAN	BULAN	month
BUTANG	BUTANG	object
DAGHANG	DAMU	many
DALAN	DALAN	road
DAUTan	maLAIN	evil
DEKORASYON	DEKORASYON	decoration
DEPENSA	DEPENSA	defense
DROGA	DROGA	drug
EBIDENSYA	EBIDENSYA	evidence
giKUOTan	ginKUOTan	victim of pickpocket
GOBYERNO	GOBYERNO	government
GRAMO	GRAMO	gram
GRUPO	GRUPO	group
HALOK or HAWOK	HALO(U)K	kiss
HAPON	HAPON	afternoon
HULAGWA	LARAGWAY	picture
ILAGA	ILAGA	rat
IRING	KURING	cat
KABAYO	KABAYO	horse
kaGUBOT	kaGAMO/U	disorder
ka-IGSOONan	kaUTO(D)ran	brethren
kaLABANan	IBAN	some

KALIBRE	KALIBRE	caliber
kaLINAW	kaLINONG	peace
KALYE	DÁLAN OR KALYE	street
kaMINGAW	kaPUNG-AW	loneliness
KAMOT	KAMÓT	hands
kaPULISan	POLIS or kaPULISan	policemen
kaSAULUGan	SAULOGan or Selebrasyon	celebration
KASO	KASO	case
KATILINGBAN	KATILINGBAN	society
KAWATAn	KAWATán	stealer
kinaBUHI	kaBUHI	life
KISTODIYA	KUSTODIYA	custody
KLASME(I)T	KLASMIT	classmate
KOMENTO	KOMENTO	comment
KORTE	KORTE	court
KWARTA	KWARTA	money
LAMAS	PANAKOT	spice
LASANG	kaKAHOYan or LASANG	forest
LINYA	LINYA	line
LISENSYA	LISENSYA	license
LUGAR	LUGAR	place
MANDO	MANDAR	mandate
Manu(T)NUBOS	Manu(T)NOBOS	Saviour
MENSAHE	MENSAHE	message
MERKADO	MERKADO	market
miABAG	BULIG	assistance
NAWAD-AN	NAWAD-AN or naDULAAan	lostness
NAWONG	GUYA	face or cheek
NAWONG	NAWONG or GUYA	cheek or face
NEGOSYO	NEGOSYO	business
NGALAN	NGALAN	name
OKASYON	OKASYON	occasion
OPERAsyon	OPERAsyon	operation
OPERAAtiba	OPERAAtiba	operative
OPISINA	OPISINA	office
PAMILYA	PAMILYA	family
PANAHON	PANAHON	time
PASKO	PASKO or PASKWA	Christmas
PISKALIYA	PISKALIYA	fiscal office
PISTA	PIESTA/PIYESTA/PISTA	feast
PISTOLA	PISTOLA or LUTHANG	pistol or gun
POSISYON	KAHIMTANGAN	disposition
PRISOhan	PRISUhan or BILANGGO/Uan	jail
PROGRAMA	PROGRAMA	program
PumUluYO	PumUluYO	residents
PUTOS	PUTO(U)S	bundle or parcel
REBOLBER	REBOLBER	revolver
RESIDENTE	RESIDENTE or TUMANDOK	resident
SAGBOT	HILAMON	grass or weeds
SEMENTERYO	SEMENTERYO or luLUB(O)NGan	cemetery
SILINGAN	TUPAD-BALAY or KAINGUD	neighbor
SIYUDAD	SIYUDAD or DAKBANWA	city
SUGA or LAMPARA	SUGA or LAMPARA	lamp or light
SUSPEK	SUSPEK	suspect
tagiPUSUon	tagiPUSUon	heart
TAMBAG	LAYGAY	advice or counsel
TAWO	TAWO	person
TAYTAYan	TAYTAY	bridge
TERMINAL	TERMINAL	terminal
TIAW/TIAW-TIAW	LAHOG-LAHOG or LANGO-LANGO	joke
TINDAhan	TIANGGI	store
TUDLO	TUDLÒ	finger or toe
TUGYANan	TUGYANan	one in charge
TUIG	TUIG	
TUYO	TUYO	intention
ULO	ULO	head
YUHOM	YUHO(U)M	smile

As revealed in Table 2, most Cebuano-Visayan and Hiligaynon-Visayan verb forms are usually synonymous. However, differences emerge when they are used in a sentence, and tense matters, especially when a prefix or suffix is inserted, depending on the situation to which it is applied. Due to their geographical proximity and close contact, Cebuano and Hiligaynon speakers may exhibit similarities. In addition, borrowed words are present due to the influence of Spanish colonizers, and, in fact, families with Spanish genealogy still exist, especially among elite Spanish-blooded individuals, some of whom are Hacienderos and politicians, spread across the island of Negros. Another point is that, when spoken, Cebuano-Visayan and Hiligaynon-Visayan words differ markedly in emphasis, stress, and intonation. It is also observable that the use of affixation is evident, but according to the tenses, one word may be changed; however, a few modifications to orthography, particularly in spelling.

It has been observed that inflectional morphemes in verbs are always between the root and the closing vowel, known as the verbal end. Secondly, it has been observed that when inflectional morphemes appear with derivational morphemes, in this case, noun prefixes always appear at the beginning and at the end of the word. Being aware of how morphemes function is necessary to develop competence in using the language communicatively (Gwilliams, 2020). Furthermore, this research implies that the effective use of bound morphemes, whether inflectional or derivational, requires a deeper understanding of Filipino language affixation. One can barely find a single Filipino sentence that does not contain any morphemes that undergo the process of affixation, since the affixes serve as important agents in forming three of the fundamental parts of speech, which are nouns, verbs, and adjectives.

Nevertheless, this research revealed that Filipino language affixes are agents that change meaning and tense, and even dictate the syntax and pragmatic use of the language. The linguistic choices in Negros Island's local newspapers are shaped by its multilingual environment, where Cebuano, Hiligaynon, and Filipino coexist. This language contact, following Fishman (1980), gives rise to phenomena such as code-switching and borrowing, as evidenced by the prevalence of mixed morphological forms. Furthermore, positive attitudes towards regional dialects encourage the use of local structures, as individuals favor expressions that reinforce their regional identity.

Table 2. Words in Cebuano and Hiligaynon as to Verbs

Cebuano-Visayan Words	Hiligaynon-Visayan Words	English Translation
DAD-ON	DAL-ON	bring
DAKOP	ginDAKOP	arrested
EDEKLARAR	DEKLARAR	declare
gaHULAT	nagaHULAT	waiting
gaKOMENTO	nagKOMENTO	commented
GAMITon	GAMITon	use
gaPUYO	nagPUYO	lived
gaSALIG	nagaSALIG	hope for or believe in
giBANTAYan	gin-GWARDYAhan or gin-paNILAGan	guarded
giBANTAYan	ginBANTAYan	guarded
giDILI	ginaDILI	unlawful
giDUDAhan	nagaDUDA or ginDUDAhan	suspecting
giGAMIT	ginGAMIT or ginaUSAR	used
giHANGYO	ginHINGYO	urged
gihiNGAnLAN	ginhiNGAnLAN	named
giKASA	ginTAYA	bet
giKUOTan	ginKUHAan or KinUHAan	took or taken away
gipang-TOKHANG	gin-TOKHANG	to knock on a suspected drug addict's home
giPAON	PAON	bait
giTUhU(O)-ang	ginaPATIhan or ginaTUUhan	believed
giTUTUKan	ginTULOK	look at
giULUhan	gina-pangULUhan	led
HILAM-OS	HILAM-OS	wash up
inugSUKMAT	inogSUKNA/SUKMAT	to ask or reproach
iTUYOK	nagaLIBOT	round
kaLIGO	naLIGO	taking a bath
KINAHANGLAN	KINAHANGLAN	need
KUHAan	BUHINI/nan	deduct
LIHOKa	OBRAha	do
maBAWI	ginBAWI	recover

maDAKPI	maARESTO or maDAKOP	arrested or caught
magLAKAT	maLAKAT or makADTU	going to
magaSALAMAT	mag/ pagpaSALAMAT	thanksgiving
maHUNONG	maUNTAT or magaUNTAT	stop
maHUROT	maUROT or maUBOS	exhaust
makaTILAW	maTILAWan	be tasted
maKAWATan	maDULAan/maKAWATan	loss or been lost
mam(B)ALIK	nagBALIK	returned
maNGUTANA	maMANGKOT	will ask
maPUG(ONG)ngi	maPUNGGI	controlled
miABAG	nagBULIG	helped
miHORAR	nagSUMPA	vow or sworn
miKUBIT	nagaKAW-IT or SAB-IT	hook in
MinARKAhan	ginTANDAan	marked
miSURENDER	nagSURENDER	surrendered
moBALIGYA	magBALIGYA	to sell
mo-COMMENT	magKOMENTO	comment
moINGON	m/ nag(a)SILING or	say
muBANGON	maBANGON	rise
muHATAG	ma(g)HATAG	give
na(S)ALA	nagSAYOP or naSAL(A)-an	mistaken
nAB(O)Tan	naDAKOP or naABTAN	caught
naDISKITAhan	naDISKITAhan or naDISKUBREhan	found out
nagBALOR/niBALOR	nagaBALOR or BILI	worth
nagDAKOP	nag/ ginDAKOP	arrested
nagHASIK instead of ABWAG	SABWAG	broadcast
nagHATAG	nag/ magHATAG	give
nagHILAK	nagHIBI	cry
naga(B)ALIGYAay	nagaBALIGYA	selling or dealing
nagPUYO	nagaPUYO	dwelling or residing
nagREKLAMO	nagaREKLAMO	complaining
nagSAKSI	nagapan(S)AKSI or naSAKSIhan	witnessed
nagSUROY-suroy	nagLAGAW-lagaw	wandered
naHIMO(U)	ginaHIMO or ginHIMO	worked or made
nahin(T)ABI	gin-INTERBYU	interviewed
nahiTABO	naTABO	happened or fell out
naIGO	na-IGO	hit
nakGINHAWA	nakGINHAWA	has breathed
nakGUWA	nag/ magGWA	went out
naKUHA	NAKWA or naKUHA or ginKUHA	took or taken away
naKURAT	naKIBOT	surprised
nam(P)AHUWAY	nagaPAHUWAY	resting
naSAKMIT	naKUMPISKAR	confiscated
naSAKMIT	ginKUMPISKAR	confiscated
naTAGTAG	nan(T)AGTAG	distributed
naTI(E)NTAL	naGANYAT or ginTINTAL	tempted
naTIKLO	naDAKPAN	arrested or killed
naTIMBANG	ginaTIMBANG	weighed
naTUMBA	naTUMBA	fell
naWALA	naDULA	lost
pag-FILE	ma-FILE	to file
pagpang(K)WARTA	pagpang(K)WARTA	extortion
pagpaTUMAN	magpaTUMAN	to implement
pagPIRMA	pagPIRMA	sign
pagSUGAT	pagSUGAT	meet
pan(S)INGIL	pan(S)UKOT	collect
paSAKAan	paSAKAan or pag-AKUSAR	to be charged/sued, accused of
SUSPETSAdong	gin-SUSPETSAhAn	suspected

Table 3 revealed that adjectives in CV may have shared commonalities with HV in terms of meaning but differ in spelling in some aspects in terms of alphabetic or syllabic writing systems, which may be written in two visual forms, such as *dako* (Cebuano spelling) and *daku* (Hiligaynon spelling), which both mean *big*. It is also revealed that both languages and others have regular spelling, as in Spanish. Furthermore, the theory of optimality (Antilla, 2002; Fukazawa et al., 1998; Ito & Mester, 2001) accounts for the direction of how the attachment of affixes and roots varied in terms of variation and the core of this theory on the direction of attachment is one property of

morphemes and with the phonological string in an empty position that at the same time not map in the phonological rules. Based on Greenberg's (2002) universal clause, which stated that derivation and inflection follow the root, and both are placed before the root, and the derivation is always between the inflection and the root, consequently.

Table 3. Words in Cebuano and Hiligaynon as to Adjectives

Cebuano-Visayan Words	Hiligaynon-Visayan Words	English Translation
ABTIK	maABTIK	active
ABUhon	maABO	ashy
ADLAW-adlaw	matag-ADLAW	every day
BAG-Ong	BAG-O	new
bug-at	maBUG-AT	heavy
BUGTONG or mao ra gyud	BUGTONG	only
DAGHANG	maDAMO	many
DAKOnG	DAKU	big
DAUTan	maLAIN	evil
DEMALAS	DEMALAS	unlucky
DIBUYNAS	maPALA(D)ron	lucky
DIRETSO	DIRETSO	straight
DULOM	DULOM	dark
GAMAY	GAMAY	little
gaPULA	maPULA	reddish
GARBUsO	maGARBO or BUGAL	pompous
gaSALIG	nagaSALIG	dependent
gaTIPUN-OG	nagaTUMPOK	filed
HINAY	maHINAY	slow
HIPID	maHIPID	neat
HUGAW	HIGKU	dirty
HUGOT O GUTOK	HUGOT O GUTOK	tight
ILAHAng	ILA	their
iLEGAL	iLEGAL	illegal
ITOM	kaITOM	black
IYAiya	IYAiya	respective
kaALIMUOTon	GIN-OT	airless
kaBUGNAW	maBUGNAW	cold
Kada	Kada	every
kaDAANun	DumAAN	old
kaGAB(I)hi-on	kaGAB-Ihon	deep night
kaHANGUL	kaDALOK	greedy
kaHAYAG	kaSANAG	shiny
kaKUSOG	maBASKOG	strong
kaKUSOG	maDASIG	fast
kaKUYAW	DELIKADO	dangerous
kaLALOM	maDALOM	deep
kaLAMI	(ma)NAMIT	delicious
kaLAPAD	maLAPAD	spacious or wide
kaLAWIGon	kaLAWIGon	long
KALIDAD	de-kalidad	of quality
kaMAGULANGAn	kaMAGULANGAn	eldest
kaMA-OT	kaLAW-AY	ugly or dirty
kaSALIGAn	ginaSALIGAn	trusted
Katas	maLAWIG	long or lasting
kaTAHUM	kaTAHOM	beautiful or lovely
kaTAM-IS	maTAM-IS	sweet
kaTAWHAY	maTAWHAY	quiet
KINAHANGLAN(on)	KINAHANGLANon	needed
KLARO	maTIGDA or KLARO	clear
KUMPLETO	KUMPLETO or BUG-OS	complete
LAIN	maLAIN	bad or wicked
LIBRE	LIBRE	free
LINONG	maLINONG	peaceful
LISUD	maBUDLAY	laborious
maAYO	maAYO	good
maDALI	maDALI	easy
magTAGAD	magSAPAK	mindful
maHIGALA-on	mainABYANon	friendly

maINITon (ulo)	maSINGKI	hot or fiery
MAlaHALon	MAlaHALon	expensive
maLIPAYon	kaLIPAY	happy
MALOI(OY)-on	maALWAN	generous
maLUM-OY	maLUM-OK	soft
maSAKTU	mag-IGU	fit
maSAL(A)-an	maSAL(A)-an	mistaken
maULAW	maHUYA	shy or timid
maWALAan	maWAD-AN	lost
miAGIng	nagLIGAD	past
MODERNO	MODERNO	modern
naTINGALA	naTINGALA	confused
paghiUSA	nahiUSA	united
pagkaSINSERO	pagkaSINSERO	sincere
pagLISOD	BUDLAY	difficult
PILIPINO	PILIPIN(O)hon	Filipino
pinakaNINDOT	pinakaNAMI	very nice
piPILA	IBAN	some
PUBLIKO	PUBLIKO	public
PUTIon	PUTIon	white
SARI-SARI	SARI-SARI	mixed
SIGURADO	PAT-UD	sure
SIMPLE	SIMPLE	simple
SUSPETSAdong	ginaPATIhan	suspected
TAAS	maLABA	long
TALAGSA-on	TALAGSAhon	rare
TALIWIS	maTILIWIS	pointed
TAMA(D)ran	TAMAD	lazy
TARUNG	HUSTO	right
TinUOD	maTUOD	true
TRADISYUNal	TRADISYUNal	traditional
UBAN	PIHAK or iban pa	other
UBAY-ubay	DAMO	plenty
ULIHI	pinakaU(O)LIHI	late

As revealed in Table 4, adverbs in these two languages (Cebuano and Hiligaynon) are still nearly synonymous in terms of meaning, conventionally share the same orthography with only a few irregularities in spelling, like the borrowed timingan (from the English word timing) instead of tayming, the use of o or u, but not so much with affixation. In Hiligaynon, emphasis is on the degree or manner adverbs, such as when used in superlative form, Hiligaynon speakers add *sing*, *sang*, *pwerte*, *gid*, or *pwerte gid*, aside from the use of the intensifier *very*, unlike in Cebuano speakers in San Carlos City, the use of intensifiers is not that evident. This research further revealed that affixes have different effects on the morphemes to which they attach, although some functions are nearly identical across affixes. Also, it gives the idea that the Filipino language is quite restrictive; in a manner that it does not allow more than two affixes to interact with a particular morpheme.

Several linguists have argued that languages share common elements and have demonstrated the existence of linguistic universals. Thus, one should be cautious in using them. Anwar and Rosa (2020), Imran et al. (2023), Sukying (2020), and Yadav and Yadav (2021) indirectly argued that Filipino students and other Filipino language learners should have a thorough understanding of how these morphemes function and how they modify the meanings of the words to which they attach. Thorough knowledge of how to use these morphemes can be attained through conscious consideration of how each morpheme functions, and this will enable them to communicate effectively in the Filipino language. The linguistic choices in Negros Island's local newspapers are shaped by its multilingual environment, where Cebuano, Hiligaynon, and Filipino coexist. This language contact, following Fishman (1980), gives rise to phenomena such as code-switching and borrowing, as evidenced by the prevalence of mixed morphological forms. Furthermore, positive attitudes towards regional dialects encourage the use of local structures, as individuals favor expressions that reinforce their regional identity.

Table 4. Similar Words in Cebuano and Hiligaynon as to Adverbs

Cebuano-Visayan Words	Hiligaynon-Visayan Words	English Translation
aTUBANGan	sa ATUBANG sang	in front of
BUGTONG	BUGTONG	Only
DALI	maDASIG	Fast
DIDTO	DIDTO(U)	In
DILI	INDI	never, not
DINHI	DIRI	Here
DIRETSO	DIRETSO	Directly
DUOL	maLAPIT	Near
gaDALI-dali	DALI-dali	Hurriedly
giDAYUN o dayun	giLAYON	directly, immediately
giKLARO	sing maayo	clearly explained
GYUD	GID, GUID	surely, truly
HALOS	HALOS	Almost
HINAYhinay	HINAYhinay	slowly
KAYO	KAYO	too
kada ADLAW	matag-ADLAW	always
kaNUS-A	SAN-O	when
KARON	SUBONG	today
LABAN	kaLABANan	mostly
LAYO-layo	LAYO	away
maLINAWon	maTAWHAY	peacefully
MAN	sang maAYU	(very) well
naTIMINGan	na-SWERTIhan	luckily
NGANOn	NGA-A	why
PIRMI	PIRME	always or constantly
PWERTE	PWERTE	very (superlative)
sa hiLABIhan gayud	sing or pwerte gid	very or extremely
SAYU	TEMPRANO	early
SULOD	SULOD	inside
TALAGSA	LAKA or TALAGSA	seldom
TINGUB or BUG-OS nga	BUG-OS nga	completely
TinUYU(o)-an	ginHUNGOD	purposely done
tungang GABI-I	tungang-GAB-I	midnight
UNSA-on	AN(O)hun o paa'no	how
USAHAY	KIS-A	sometimes
WALAy, WALA	WAAY, WALA	nothing, no

As shown in Table 5, most Cebuano-Visayan and Hiligaynon-Visayan words are bound morphemes, though they are nearly synonymous in meaning. In Cebuano-Visayan, the use of affixes such as ka-, kina-, na-, naka-, mu-, nag-, gi-, ga-, pan-, mi-, pag-, ma, maka-, -an, -han are evident in most verbs to show their tense, as in *mahitabo*, *nahitabo*, *natabo*, and other rules about affixation, suppletion, stress shift, and vowel change, all of which have morphological mechanisms and other effects. Moreover, gi-, (-was + past participle – requires doer to be identified), ga-, (short for naga-, formal –ing (gerund), gika- (had + past participle (past perfect passive)), gina- (being + past participle (passive present)). Ma- for -able that indicates time, description intensifier, becoming, while maka- means (will be able to) – with words beginning with li-, bi-, indicates inherent quality, and Inig- as future prefix.

In Hiligaynon-Visayan, affixation is also evident like na-, nag-, naga-, ma-, mag-, gin-, gina-, pag-, -han, and -an which are commonly used as well as tenses of verbs are observed both in oral and written situations such as to use *naga-* in present, *nag-* in past and *maga-* in future to be added to its root words. The prefix ma- can form adjectives by simple attachment to the root, like *malinaw* – calm, *matahum* – beautiful, and by adding also the suffix -on like *malipayon*. The suffix -an, for instance, *kabataan* – children, and adjectives like *gamhanan* – mighty, powerful, from *gahum* – might, power.

However, Cebuano and Hiligaynon share several affixal features, such as ma-, ka-, mag-, -on/-un, and -hon, as shown in the table above. Sometimes, one must be able to recognize meaningless morphemes in order to form meaningful words. The best examples of these are committed, receive, import, detain, etc. It seemed clear that these are prefixes since the same prefixes, con-, re-, in-, de-, per-, pro-, trans- and so on recur. Lastly, a small number of stems that can be identified include -mit, -ceive, -port, -tain, -fer, -late, -duce and -mote.

Table 5. Morphological Structures of Nouns, Verbs, Adjectives, and Adverbs in Terms of Free and Bound

Cebuano-Visayan Word	Category	Hiligaynon-Visayan Word	Category	English Translation
giKUOTan	Bound	ginKUOTan	Bound	pickpocketed
giTUhUan	Bound	ginaTUUhan	Bound	believed
gihiNGAnLAN	Bound	ginhiNGALANan	Bound	named
kaGUBOT	Bound	kaGAMO	Bound	disorder
ka-IGSOonan	Bound	kaUTOD(r)-an	Bound	brethren
kaPULISan	Bound	POLIS	Free	police
kaSAULUGan	Bound	SAULOGan	Bound	celebration
kinaBUHI	Bound	kaBUHI	Bound	life
maDAKPI	Bound	maDAKOP	Bound	caught
maHUROT	Bound	maUROT	Bound	exhaust
maKAWATan	Bound	maKAWATan	Bound	been stolen
na/nahiTABO	Bound	naTABO	Bound	happened
naIGO	Bound	naIGO	Bound	hit
naWALA	Bound	naDULA	Bound	lost
nagHILAK	Bound	nagHIBI	Bound	cried
pan/SINGIL	Bound	pan/SUKOT	Bound	collect
paSAKAan	Bound	paSAKAan	Bound	to be charged
tagiPUSOon	Bound	tagiPUSOon	Bound	heart
BIBINGKA	Free	BINGKA	Free	rice cake
PumUluYO	Bound	PumUluYO	Bound	resident
PRISOhan	Bound	PRISUhan	Bound	jail
TAYTAYAN	Free	TAYTAY	Free	bridge

Based on Table 6 as presented above, Cebuano-Visayan and Hiligaynon-Visayan are more on lexical morphemes and seldom on grammatical morphemes. There might be grammatical errors, but only a few. However, affixation is evident in both languages. However, if the aim is to teach new vocabulary, it could be achieved using the inflections already shown. In this way, children's lexical processing would be facilitated rather than taxed. In addition, because children are exposed to two languages, parents and teachers could emphasize the differences in their inflectional systems to prevent them from applying the same rules when forming inflections. Bhatia and Ritchie (1998) shared that the languages of the children as examined in this investigation happened to have contrasts in their syntactic rules (inflections are dictated by syntactic or, more generally, grammatical rules), and such differences may be stressed to children (Valentini & Serratrice, 2021; Shamsieva, 2021). This emphasis could help them distinguish the two languages, which is important because language separation is a significant aspect of bilingual linguistic competence. The linguistic choices in Negros Island's local newspapers are shaped by its multilingual environment, where Cebuano, Hiligaynon, and Filipino coexist. This language contact, following Fishman (1980), gives rise to phenomena such as code-switching and borrowing, as evidenced by the prevalence of mixed morphological forms. Furthermore, positive attitudes towards regional dialects encourage the use of local structures, as individuals favor expressions that reinforce their regional identity.

Table 6. Morphological Structures of Nouns, Verbs, Adjectives, and Adverbs in Terms of Lexicon and Grammar

Cebuano-Visayan Word	Category	Hiligaynon-Visayan Word	Category	English Translation
DAUTan	Lexical	maLAIN	Lexical	evil
miABAG	Lexical	BULIG	Lexical	help
NAWONG	Lexical	GUYA	Lexical	face
BALAUD	Lexical	LAYE	Lexical	law
DAKOP	Lexical	ginDAKOP	Lexical	arrest(ed)
DIDTO/U	Grammatical	DIDTU/O	Grammatical	there
gaDALI-dali	Grammatical	nagaDALI-dali	Grammatical	in a hurry
giDILI	Lexical	ginaDILI	Lexical	forbidden
giDUDAHan	Lexical	ginaDUDAHan	Lexical	suspected
HUGAW	Lexical	HIGKU	Lexical	dirty
KALIDAD	Lexical	de-KALIDAD	Grammatical	quality/ofquality
kaTAM-IS	Lexical	kaTAM-IS	Lexical	sweet
maBAWI	Lexical	ginBAWI	Lexical	recover
makaTILAW	Lexical	maTILAWan	Lexical	taste
nag-FILE	Lexical	mag-FILE	Lexical	for file/will file
NAWAD-an	Lexical	naDULAan	Lexical	lost
paSAKAan	Lexical	paSAKAan	Lexical	to be charged
PASKO	Lexical	PASKWA	Lexical	Christmas
TinUOD	Lexical	TUOD	Lexical	true
UNSA-on	Lexical	AN-HUN	Lexical	how

As shown in Table 7, Cebuano and Hiligaynon words for inflectional and derivational morphemes are not entirely identical; a given Cebuano word may also change when applied to Hiligaynon. This is true when each is used in a sentence; its meaning may change. Several studies affirm that Filipino languages, including CV and HV, have several affixes that can be classified as noun-, adjective-, and verb-forming affixes (Fontillas & Bantugan, 2024; Fortes, 2022; Perez, 2021). Some affixes have inherent aesthetic connotations that make the utterance polite (San Jose & Pilar, 2023). It is difficult to determine whether these language features are unique to these languages; in fact, the study of language politeness across different language contexts was prevalent several years ago.

Table 7. Morphological Structures of Nouns, Verbs, Adjectives, and Adverbs in Terms of Inflection and Derivation

Cebuano-Visayan Word	Category	Hiligaynon-Visayan Word	Category	English Translation
BUTO	Derivational	LUPOK	Derivational	bang/shot/bone/vagina
gaHULAT	Inflectional	nagaHULAT	Inflectional	is waiting
gaKOMENTO	Derivational	nagKOMENTO	Derivational	Commentator/commenting
maTILAW	Inflectional	maTILAWan	Inflectional	will taste/experience
muBANGON	Inflectional	maBANGON	Inflectional	get up
muHATAG	Inflectional	magHATAG	Derivational	give or to give
naALAAN	Inflectional	naSAL-An	Inflectional	Mistaken
naTAGTAG	Inflectional	naNAGTAG	Inflectional	had been distributed or distribute(s)
naTIKLO	Inflectional	TIKLO	Derivational	killed or stealer
naTUMBA	Inflectional	naTUMBA	Inflectional	Fell
pagpaTUMAN	Inflectional	magpaTUMAN	Derivational	Implement/To implement
TAWO	Derivational	TAWO	Inflection (either Sing or Pl)	person or persons
ULIHI	Derivational	pinakaULIHI	Derivational	late or very late
maSAKTU	Derivational	mag-IGU	Derivational	fit/to be correct/it's up to you
TARUNG	Derivational	HUSTO	Derivational	right/fix
ITOM	Inflectional	ka-ITOM	Derivational	black/dark/very black/dark
DUOL	Derivational	maLAPIT	Derivational	near/come
TUMAN	Derivational	tuman	Derivational	obey/follow/too
maLINAWon	Derivational	maTAWHAY	Derivational	peaceful/peacefully/not busy
BUGTONG	Derivational	BUGTONG	Derivational	Only
DIRETSO	Derivational	DIRETSO	Derivational	straight/ly, directly
gaDALI-dali	Derivational	nagaDALI-dali	Derivational	rushing/come/hurriedly
gaSALIG	Derivational	nagaSALIG	Derivational	dependent or trusting
giKLARO	Derivational	ginKLARO/ ginpaATHAG	Derivational	clearly/to clear up/to clear
GRABE(ha)/ hiLABIhan jud/gayud/gyud	Inflectional	sing/pwerte gid	Inflectional	very/extremely
LABAN	Derivational	kaLABANan	Derivational	most(ly)/give favor
LAIN	Derivational	maLAIN	Inflectional	not good/bad wicked
maWALAAan	Inflectional	maWAD-AN	Derivational	lost/will lose/to be lost
pinakaNINDOT	Inflectional	pinakaNAMI	Inflectional	very nice/nicest
SULOD	Derivational	SULOD	Inflectional	inside/come inside
TAAS	Derivational	LABA	Inflectional	long/tall/up there

Table 8 presents some of the words that were borrowed from Spanish and English. Code mixing was also evident in contemporary use. Reduplication and the use of two spelling variants were still observed in Cebuano and Hiligaynon. The borrowing of words and constructions from other languages resulted from language contact, geographic separation, and the migration or movement of linguistic communities from one place to another. Hermit Crab Theory added that the rules of reduplication may also be present in some languages. This theory includes not only reduplication but also such as morphological rules indicating SUMILFIXATION and truncation or combinations. In addition to affixation, the process whereby a word is repeated, as in hush-hush, or tut-tut. In languages such as English, this process is relatively peripheral and primarily serves expressive purposes. In other languages, reduplication may have a much more central role. In Indonesia, for example, reduplication is used to form the plural.

Code mixing as used in Negros is rarely observed. It is also notable that Negros exhibits a strong Spanish influence, as shown in Table 8. Some Spanish-origin words are used as variants of Cebuano-Visayan or Hiligaynon-Visayan words by both native and non-native islanders. The use of another word counterpart as a variant of either Cebuano or Hiligaynon word maintained its social status if one can speak or write in another language, as Spanish words

do. In summary, morphological variations of Cebuano-Visayan and Hiligaynon-Visayan have standard distinctions in morphological structures, though both share the exact meaning of some words, unique in spelling and different in stress, emphasis, and intonation when spoken.

Table 8. Morphological Structures of Nouns, Verbs, Adjectives, and Adverbs in Terms of Word Formation Processes

Cebuano-Visayan Word	Hiligaynon-Visayan Word	English Translation	Word Formation Processes
BOLUNTARYO	BOLUNTARYO	Volunteer	Borrowed word from Spanish.
DEKORASYON	DEKORASYON	Decoration	Borrowed word from Spanish.
EBIDENSYA	EBIDENSYA	Evidence	Borrowed word from Spanish.
gi-INTERBYU	gin-INTERBYU	being interviewed	Borrowed word from English; code mixing.
gipang-TOKHANG	gin-TOKHANG	to knock on a suspected drug addict's/ pusher's home	Word Coinage - Blending
GOBYERNO	GOBYERNO	Government	Borrowed word from Spanish.
HINAYhinay	HINAYhinay	Slowly	Reduplication
IYAiya	IYAiya	Respective	Reduplication
KALIBRE	KALIBRE	Caliber	Borrowed word from Spanish.
KALYE	KALYE	Street	Borrowed word from Spanish.
KLASMET	KLASMIT	Classmate	Borrowed word from English.
KORTE	KORTE	Court	Borrowed word from Spanish.
LAYO-layo	-	Far	Reduplication
LISENSYA	LISENSYA	License	Borrowed word from Spanish.
LUGAR	LUGAR	Place	Borrowed Word
MENSAHE	MENSAHE	Message	Borrowed word from Spanish.
MERKADO	MERKADO	Market	Borrowed word from Spanish.
miSURENDER	nagSURENDER	surrendered	Borrowed word from Spanish/English; code mixing.
mo-COMMENT	magKOMENTO	will comment	Borrowed word from English; code mixing.
nagBALOR	nagaBALOR	Worth	Borrowed word from Spanish; code mixing.
nagSUROYsuroy	nagLAGAWlagaw	wandered	Reduplication
NATI(E)NTAL	NATINTAR	Tempted	Borrowed word from Spanish.
na-TIMINGan	na-SWERTIhan	lucky/luckily	Borrowed word from Spanish/English; code mixing.
NEGOSYO	NEGOSYO	Business	Borrowed word from Spanish.
OPERAyon	OPERAyon	Operation	Borrowed word from Spanish.
OPERAAtiba	OPERAAtiba	Operative	Borrowed word from Spanish.
OPISINA	OPISINA	Office	Borrowed word from Spanish.
pag-FILE	mag-FILE	to file	Borrowed word from English; code mixing.
PAMILYA	PAMILYA	Family	Borrowed word from Spanish.
PISKALIYA	PISKALIYA	Fiscal office	Borrowed word from Spanish.
PISTA	PISTA/PIYESTA	Feast	Borrowed word from Spanish.
PROGRAMA	PROGRAMA	Program	Borrowed word from Spanish.
PUBLIKO	PUBLIKO	Public	Borrowed word from Spanish.
SARI-SARI	SARI-SARI	Mixed	Reduplication
SELEBRASYON	SELEBRASYON	celebration	Borrowed word from Spanish.
SEMENTERYO	SEMENTERYO	Cemetery	Borrowed word from Spanish.
SIYUDAD	SIYUDAD	City	Borrowed word from Spanish.
TERMINAL	TERMINAL	Terminal	Borrowed word from Spanish.
TIAW-tiaw	LAHOG-lahog	Joke	Reduplication
UBAY-ubay	-	Plenty	Reduplication

Conclusion

This study examined the morphological structures of verbs, adjectives, adverbs, and nouns in Cebuano-Visayan (CV) and Hiligaynon-Visayan (HV). These results show that both languages exhibit substantial morphological overlap, with significant differences in word formation processes, affixation, and emphasis, despite distinct orthographies and phonological systems. Specifically, lexical similarity analysis reveals that CV and HV share numerous roughly synonymous adverbs. Examining affixations, degree adverbs, and intensifiers, however, reveals distinctions. The morphological structures of the two languages differ, with bound morphemes predominating in verbs, nouns, and adjectives. It is clear from both languages that affixes such as "ka-", "ma-", and "nag-" denote aspect, tense, and modality. However, many affixes and roles differ between HV and CV. The results

also show how borrowed words from Spanish and English are integrated into both languages, indicating the impact of language interaction, migration, and social dynamics. Although uncommon, code-mixing can nevertheless be observed, particularly when English words are combined with local affixes. Reduplication, present in both CV and HV, is a process important for forming plurals and enhancing meaning. It is indicative of greater morphological patterns that are common to many Austronesian languages.

The study concludes that although CV and HV share similar linguistic origins, their morphological structures exhibit distinctive features shaped by historical, cultural, and regional usage. These observations advance our knowledge of the diversity and universality of languages within the Philippine linguistic context. Understanding these morphological subtleties is essential for educators to facilitate successful language instruction and acquisition, particularly in bilingual or multilingual environments where students may be confused by the differences between CV and HV. Beyond the classroom, this detailed morphological documentation serves as a vital resource for language preservation, policy, and promotion, directly contributing to the sustainable management of intangible cultural heritage in the Philippines.

Contributions of Authors

The sole author was responsible for the conceptualization and design of the study, development of research instruments, data collection, data analysis and interpretation, and writing of the manuscript. The author also handled the ethical clearance process, coordinated with participants, revised and finalized the paper, and prepared it for submission.

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