

## Demystifying the Morphosyntactic Features of the Tagalog and English Languages: A Contrastive Analysis

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### ABSTRACT

This study was conducted to analyze the morphological, syntactical, and morpho syntactical features of the Tagalog and English languages. This study employed a qualitative contrastive analysis research design. According to the findings, the two languages are made up of distinct morphological components: grammatical inflection is comprised of inherent inflections, pronoun and adjective inflections, and declensions; derivational affixation is comprised of verb conjugations; and grammatical markers are comprised of bound morphemes. When it comes to the syntactic patterns, Tagalog adheres to the predicate-initial pattern, also known as the V-S-O syntactic pattern, whereas English adheres to the S-V-O pattern. In contrast, in terms of morphosyntactic feature, the subject does not have a direct effect on the verb in Tagalog, whereas in English, the subject has a significant impact on the verb. Constructions using the active and passive voices are also different between the two.

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## INTRODUCTION

While the Tagalog language is spoken widely in the Philippines, the English language has been considered in the Philippines as the second language. Today, English is recognized by the Constitution of the Philippines as one of the country's official languages, and it continues to play an important role in the daily life and culture of the Filipino people. According to Cabigon (2015), English is the language that is used in international communication as well as in the fields of international commerce, science, and technology. It can be found in the nation's print and broadcast media, as well as in the active artistic and literary scene. The ability of native Filipinos to communicate effectively in English is the driving force behind the country's booming and world-leading outsourcing industry, as well as its rapidly expanding education sector, which is luring an increasing number of students from other countries.

The Tagalog and English languages are closely related as they are used by the Filipino people whether in education, business, politics, and in daily conversations. Some similarities are observed and differences are undeniable as well. Hence, this study aimed to reveal the extent of sameness and distinction between these languages in terms of morphological, syntactic, and morphosyntactic features. The result of this study would be beneficial to the new learners of these languages as they would find learning easier by identifying several cognates in Tagalog and English language. This would also be of aid to linguistic teachers who can utilize the provided examples in elucidating the linguistic processes found in these two languages. Furthermore, this would also benefit the future researchers as they would conduct further researches with the result of this study as basis.

## THEORETICAL REVIEW

Languages vary across the nations. In the Philippines, Tagalog is a member of the Malayo-Polynesian language family and is the primary language spoken in the Philippines's central region. One of the most important languages spoken in the Philippines is tagalog. Filipino is the name of the standardized form of the language Tagalog. The Philippines have declared Filipino to be their official language. Both Filipino and English are recognized as valid means of communication in the Philippines (Malabonga & Marinova-Todd, 2007).

Furthermore, Tagalog is the national language of the Philippines and is spoken in Manila, as well as most of central Luzon and Palawan. There are also people of Filipino descent living in Canada, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, the United Kingdom, and the United States who speak Tagalog as their native language. Large concentrations of Filipino immigrants can be found in the following states in the United States: California, Hawaii, Illinois, New Jersey, New York, Texas, and Washington (Camarota & McArdle, 2003).

## METHODOLOGY

### *Research Design*

This study employed a qualitative study using contrastive analysis. The qualitative approach was chosen over the quantitative approach because, rather than being concerned with statistics, the researchers were interested in learning

more about the Tagalog and English languages, particularly in morphology, syntax, and morphosyntactic areas. Qualitative research methods are intended to aid researchers in better understanding individuals and their social and cultural surroundings (Creswell, 2007). Moreover, the theoretically grounded, systematic, and synchronic comparison of usually two languages, or at most a small number of languages, is referred to as contrastive analysis in linguistics. According to Mair (2018), the languages being compared may or may not be genetically linked, as well as typologically similar or dissimilar. Some comparisons, especially those with a more theoretical bent, are symmetrical in that they cover the specifics of one language in a balanced fashion when compared to another.

### ***Data Sources***

The data of this qualitative research were from the words of the Tagalog and English languages. The researchers scoured the internet for information, which served as the primary source for the analysis. To be more specific, the data came from reliable sources such as academic journals and other similar publications.

### ***Data Collection***

Upon the conduct of the study, the researchers started off by gathering all of the necessary materials for the study. The information was obtained solely from reliable sources such as academic journals and other sources of a similar nature. After that, the materials were analyzed, and then observations and inferences were drawn from that. Data collection, according to Creswell (2007), consists of four fundamental processes: observation, audio materials, interviews, and study-related documentation. Only related documents were collected for this investigation.

After selecting the materials from the Tagalog and English languages, analysis of the words involving morphological, syntactical, and morphosyntactic features of the two languages was done. The analysis was supported with different literatures and theories to make the claims valid and reliable.

### ***Data Analysis***

The researchers selected to investigate the Tagalog and English languages, based on Finegan's (2008) study on language use, which focused on standard linguistic constructs such as morphological, syntactical, and morphosyntactic features. In this study, contrastive analysis was used to determine the morphological, syntactical, and morphosyntactic features between Tagalog and English languages in the areas studied of applied linguistics.

## RESULTS

### *Morphological Features*

Morphological features may be classified as grammatical inflection and derivational affixation.

### *Grammatical Inflection*

As proposed in Booij (1994), inherent inflection is the kind of inflection that is not required by the syntactic context, although it may have syntactic relevance. Examples are the category number for nouns, comparative and superlative degree of the adjective, and tense of verbs. Other examples of inherent verbal inflection are infinitives and participles.

In English, category of number nouns is known as *declension* which refers to determining whether a number is plural or singular. Shown in the table is how the Tagalog and English languages determine its number nouns. For regular nouns, adding a -s or -es to the end of a word to denote plurality, as when student becomes students in the English language. However, this is not the case in the Tagalog language since it does not have declensions but only grammatical markers, for example, 'mga'.

<b>Tagalog</b>	<b>English</b>
Ang mga aso	the dogs
Ang mga pusa	the cats

Moreover, in terms of the *tenses and aspects of verb*, this is basically how a verb changes to show a different person, tenses, number, or mood. In Tagalog and English, the affix added to verbs varies depending on the sentence's focus. If the sentence is agent focused in Tagalog, the verb can be appended with various affixes depending on the term. However, words added with -um form their future tense by repeating the first syllable of the root word as shown below. On the other hand, in English, verb conjugation is through regular verbs, which follow a standard pattern when conjugated according to tense. As shown below, based on tense, simple present 'fly' becomes simple past 'flew' to simple future 'will fly'.

**lipad = lumipad - lumilipad - lilipad**

<b>Tagalog</b>	<b>English</b>
Lumipad ang ibon.	The bird flew.
Lumilipad ang ibon.	The bird is flying.
Lilipad ang ibon.	The bird will fly.

**tulong = tumulong - tumutulong - tutulong**

<b>Tagalog</b>	<b>English</b>
Tumulong ang mga mag-aaral sa mga guro.	The students helped the teachers.
Tumutulong ang mga mag-aaral sa mga guro.	The students are helping the teachers.
Tutulong ang mga mag-aaral sa mga guro.	The students will help the teachers.

Additionally, there is affix “kaka” in Tagalog, which is used to denote that the action was just recently completed as shown below.

<b>Tagalog</b>	<b>English</b>
Kakagising	Just woke up.
Kakaligo	Just finished bathing.
Kakarating	Just arrived.

Furthermore, *comparative and superlative forms* in Tagalog and English language differs from each other. In Tagalog, as shown in the table, to show comparative degree is to add -mas to the positive degree while superlative is to add -pinaka.

<b>Positive</b>	<b>Comparative</b>	<b>Superlative</b>
Mayaman	Mas mayaman	Pinakamayaman

In English, it has three forms. For one-syllable adjectives, to show comparative degree is to add -er to the positive degree while superlative is to add -est. Second, two-syllable adjective takes -more for comparative degree and -most for superlative degree. If the two-syllable adjectives end with -y, change the -y to -i and add -er for the comparative form while change -y to -i and add -est for superlative form.

<b>One-syllable</b>	<b>Comparative</b>	<b>Superlative</b>
Weak	Weaker	weakest
<b>Two-syllables</b>		
Intelligent	More intelligent	Most intelligent
<b>Two - syllables that ends in -y</b>		
Wealthy	Wealthier	Wealthiest

### *Derivational Affixation*

The process of adding affixes to roots or bases in order to change function or meaning is known as derivational affixation. This procedure, unlike grammatical inflection, converts a stem or word from one part of speech to

another. Certainly, specific Tagalog words go through this process shown in the table below.

<b>Noun</b>	<b>Adjective</b>
yaman (wealth)	mayaman (wealthy)
<b>Verb</b>	<b>Noun</b>
Tulong (help)	Katulong (helper)
<b>Noun</b>	<b>Verb</b>
Ulan (rain)	Umulan (rained) Umuulan (is raining) Uulan (will rain)

Although Tagalog and English derivational affixation have the same idea for morpheme as prefix, they differ on morpheme as suffix since the derivational morpheme only works as prefix and suffix in English. Some derivational inflections in Tagalog denote verb conjugation, particularly from the grammatical category N to V, which denotes tenses and aspect.: umulan (past or rained), umuulan (present progressive or is raining), and uulan (simple future or will rain). On the other hand, in English, the verb conjugation is observed when using inflectional morphemes such as root + present, root + past, root + past participle, and root + present participle.

### *Syntactic Structures*

The Tagalog language is known for being a predicate-initial language. This means that the predicate (verb) comes before the subject (noun). Therefore, the Tagalog language follows a V-S-O structure, in which most Philippine languages also follows the same structure. For example:

<b>Tagalog</b>	<b>English</b>
<i>Naglalakad si Maria sa eskinita.</i>	<i>Maria is walking at the street.</i>

Due to the fact that English follows the SVO pattern, the structure of sentences in Tagalog is the exact opposite of what you will find in English. The tone of one's voice determines where the emphasis lies in English. On the other hand, placing a marker in front of the word to indicate that it is the focus of the sentence is how it is done in Tagalog. The marker comes before a noun such as *ang*, *ng*, and *sa* as stated above.

Furthermore, S-V-O in the English language is unconventional in the Tagalog language, although it is possible. For example:

<b>Tagalog</b>	<b>English</b>
<i>Ang mga guro ay tinuturuan ang mga estudyante.</i>	<i>The teachers are teaching the students.</i>

***Morphosyntactic Features***

The subject does not have a direct effect on the verb in Tagalog. The verb remains the same regardless of whether the noun is singular or plural. Hence, the change only happens depending on the tense. This property is not the same in English since the subject affects the verb.

In this study, it was also revealed that Tagalog and English have both the active and passive voice. For Tagalog, the verbs are conjugated differently depending on the focus of the sentence. Consequently, the subject changes (specifically the form of pronouns).

**Agent Focus**

<b>Tagalog</b>	<b>English</b>
Umiinom ako ng tubig.	I am drinking water.

**Patient focus**

<b>Tagalog</b>	<b>English</b>
Iniinom ko ang tubig	I am drinking the water.

Notice that in Tagalog, 'ako' becomes 'ko'. Also, the affix -um in the active voice is a tense marker. The rest of the forms do not carry overt tense markers. Actor voice affix like -um is associated with nominative case, marking on the NP denoting the thematic actor. On the other hand, the patient voice affix like -in is associated with nominative case on the thematic patient. In the given samples, the nominative case is signaled by the case marker -ang and -ng.

Furthermore, the case is made in English by downgrading the active subject into a prepositional phrase, elevating the object to the subject position, and replacing the action form with the comparable passive form. In Tagalog, however, it is different. It shows morphologically different voices related with non-actor thematic roles, which reveals some additional voices available in Tagalog.

<b>Tagalog</b>	<b>English</b>
Bibilhan ng mayamang negosyante ng saksakyan ang Mall.	The rich businessman will buy a car at the mall.
Ibibili ng mayamang negosyante ng saksayan ang kanyang anak.	The rich businessman will buy a car for his son.
Ipambibili ng mayamang negosyante ng sasakyan ang pera.	The rich businessman will buy a car with money.

The subject is always the first noun or pronoun in the Subject-Verb-Object sequence in English. Tagalog, on the other hand, uses a different approach because the topic can be in any position. Tagalog verbs are either

doer-focused or receiver-focused, in other words. It simply means that verbs can change the subject's role from doer to recipient. Tagalog verbs, unlike English verbs, must be conjugated to produce a statement in active or passive voice.

In active and passive construction, English uses the S-V-O pattern, while Tagalog uses the V-S-O pattern.

## **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Every language is a unique beauty of its own. There is always something distinguishable about a language no matter how many similarities a group of languages have. This goes to show the importance of contrast analysis in understanding languages since it shows us that no matter the countless similarities, there will always be a difference.

The Tagalog and English languages are a representation of the richness of culture and history reflected in the language. In this process of contrastive analysis, we can say that the two languages are somehow less complicated to deal with. They share many similarities in terms of their structure and meaning but there will always be difference triggers that somehow ripples the effect of one difference to another aspect and then to another aspect, creating a typology out of the contrasting made.

In conclusion, having a knowledge of morphosyntax that is reasonably adequate helps students improve their ability to metalanguage. Students are able to understand the structure of words, phrases, sentences, and even sounds with the help of this type of cognitive strategy. This also indicates that students are attempting to discover and define a mental state or a level of competence, and consequently linguistic knowledge.

Awareness of morphosyntax is a crucial factor in enabling comprehension and ensuring a crystal clear understanding of the forms, meaning, and contexts of various aspects of language. Morphological awareness is said to be linked to the development of reading and writing skills as well as better language performance, as this entails a larger bank of vocabulary and better comprehension (Paredes, 2020). Additionally, Zakiyah (2018) stated that morphological awareness mindfulness is intertwined with various components of metalinguistic awareness and etymological capability, in particular syntactic awareness mindfulness and vocabulary information.

When students develop a critical awareness of morphosyntax, they will be able to critically determine the meanings of words by deciphering how these words are structured together in the same way that they decipher the meanings of words based on their constituent elements (Endarto, 2020). Additionally, a distinct awareness in this type of study affords the opportunity to become more acquainted with characteristics that are and are not shared by all languages. In this regard, they would comprehend the peculiarities that are shared by all languages, as well as the constraints and variations that are characteristic of linguistic parameters. It is also very important to note that critical awareness of the issue has a huge impact on language learners' ability to listen to and



communicate effectively in Tagalog and English. This is an extremely important point to keep in mind.

Evidently, there is a significant connection between students' knowledge of the forms and structures and their capacity to produce discourses that are comprehensible and consistent, and this connection bears mentioning (Arizo et al., 2020). In light of the fact that morphosyntax plays a significant part in facilitating language acquisition and learning, the teacher is obligated to emphasize morphosyntax awareness as both a metalinguistic ability and a cognitive strategy within the classroom setting.

As was just mentioned, this further suggests that teachers of languages should participate in trainings, seminars, and workshops on the subject of teaching linguistics. Morphosyntax is unquestionably something that a teacher will be able to instruct their pupils on in an appropriate manner if they have an extensive educational background in linguistics. Morphological awareness can be taught in the classroom by teachers as part of their explicit language instruction, of course, if it is applicable or suitable to the level of their students.

Moreover, morphological awareness can be taught in the classroom by teachers by application. This is typically done in the context of teaching vocabulary or providing vocabulary instruction. It enables students to dissect words into their constituent morphemes and to understand how affixes and roots can be combined to create new words from existing ones. After the process has been completed, the instructor has the option of constructing sentences using these words.

This research unquestionably improves the grammar of both languages, which is traditionally broken down into two distinct but interconnected fields of study: morphology and syntax. Knowledge of these two areas is essential to the study of linguistics because they are the building blocks of linguistic form, meaning, and context.

## **FURTHER STUDY**

Since the nature of any research emphasizes replicability, this qualitative study using contrastive analysis proposes a further look at other aspects of phonology and pragmatics which are two important components of language learning and acquisition. The research is only limited to the morphological and syntactic features of the languages.

In addition, the research made use of chosen words to conduct the contrastive analysis. This perceives the utmost limitation of the possibility for comparison and contrast. Hence, future researchers may use more specific corpora in contrasting the languages. This way, the pragmatic application of the languages is included, making analysis more competent.

Also, the research is so general that it did not cater to all the rules and principles that must be included because of time and resource constraints. Hence, future researchers can choose a particular part of speech of the languages he/she would like to work. For example, a contrast of the prepositions of two languages. This way, there is specificity and focus of study.

Finally, in order to gain a better knowledge of Tagalog and English languages, a model may be developed, which assumes the use of grounded theory as a qualitative research design technique. By doing so, numerous variables and diverse aspects of language variation can be discovered.

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