

A Comparison of Selected Grammatical Categories in Cebuano and English

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Frame of Reference for the Contrastive Study

The frame of reference for contrasting the two languages in this paper utilizes a two-way categorization of differences, namely, "over-differentiation" and "under-differentiation."

"Over-differentiation" from the point of view of a Cebuano learning English is the equation of many categories in English to one category in Cebuano; one signal in the native language (Cebuano) set against many in the target language (English). It is assumed that over-differentiated categories constitute the learner's major problem and most difficult to hurdle.

"Under-differentiation" is the reverse of over-differentiation, the equation of one category in English to many in Cebuano.

Over-Differentiation

English shows over-differentiation for the Cebuano-speaking learner of English in the categories of tense and aspect, word-order, emphasis, and number; in number concord, gender concord, prepositionals, case in pronouns, the contrast of definite versus indefinite articles, and split of non-focus markers /sa/ and /ug/.

Of those ten over-differentiated categories, there is time to discuss only two, tense and aspect and prepositionals.

Tense and Aspect in English

Tense and Aspect in English. Tense must be considered a totally new category to the Cebuano speaker. Mood in Cebuano is the category which comes closest to it semantically. There is some degree of overlap, but the segmentation of reality differs considerably in the case of the two categories.

"Mood," unlike tense which is a time concept, refers to the opinion of the speaker regarding the reality of an action. Cebuano has three systematic moods: the factive,¹ the non-factive, and the privative. The action which is, was, or will be a definite, clearly marked fact, we call "factive." An action which has something lacking in its definiteness, we call "non-factive." A third form which does not refer to factuality, we call "privative."

Chart A indicates various equations of mood and aspect in Cebuano goal-focus and actor-focus clause types, with English tenses and aspects in the active voice. From the chart we can see that processes in the past and present are equated with the factive, and processes in the future with the non-factive. (The Cebuano examples are in phonemic script and not in regular Cebuano orthography.) However, the factive and non-factive dichotomy is not based on a time concept. This can be seen from the following examples:

¹ J.D. v.d. Bergh, "Analysis of the Syntax and System of Affixes in the Bisayan Languages," pp. 4-5.

CHART A
TENSE AND ASPECT IN ENGLISH
VERSUS MOOD AND ASPECT
IN CEBUANO

	English	Cebuano	
		Goal-Focus	Actor-Focus
Unmarked:	eat (inf.-imp.)	-----/ ká?un / /	pagká?un /
Non-3rd Sing:	eat		
3rd Sing.:	eats		
Past:	ate	-----/	miká?un /
Pres. Perf.:	has eaten	-----/	giká?un / / nagká-un /
Past Perf.:	had eaten		(factive)
Pres. Prog.:	is eating		
Past Prog.:	was eating		
Future:	will eat	-----/	muká?un /
Future Perf.:	will have eaten	-----/	kán?un / / magká?un /
Pres Prog. Perf.:	have been eating		(nonfactive)
Past Prog. Perf.:	had been eating		
Future Prog.:	will be eating		
Future Prog. Perf.:	will have been eating		

a. An absolute certain future action may be expressed by a factive form.
/nahatuki?kí? silag pangatáwa #
ug ágig
pasa?úlug sa kada?ugan na?ángkun
ni prid
nangádtu silá sa pansitíriya/
"They roared with laughter. And by way of celebrating the victory Fred *would* certainly *receive*, they *went* to a restaurant."

b. All non-factive forms implicitly indicate "to be able to," "to intend to," "to want to."

/maká?un an súd?an/
"(Someone) *can eat* the food/the food *can be eaten* (by someone)."
/mahisulúd nímu an líbru sa kabán/
"You *can put* the book into the trunk."

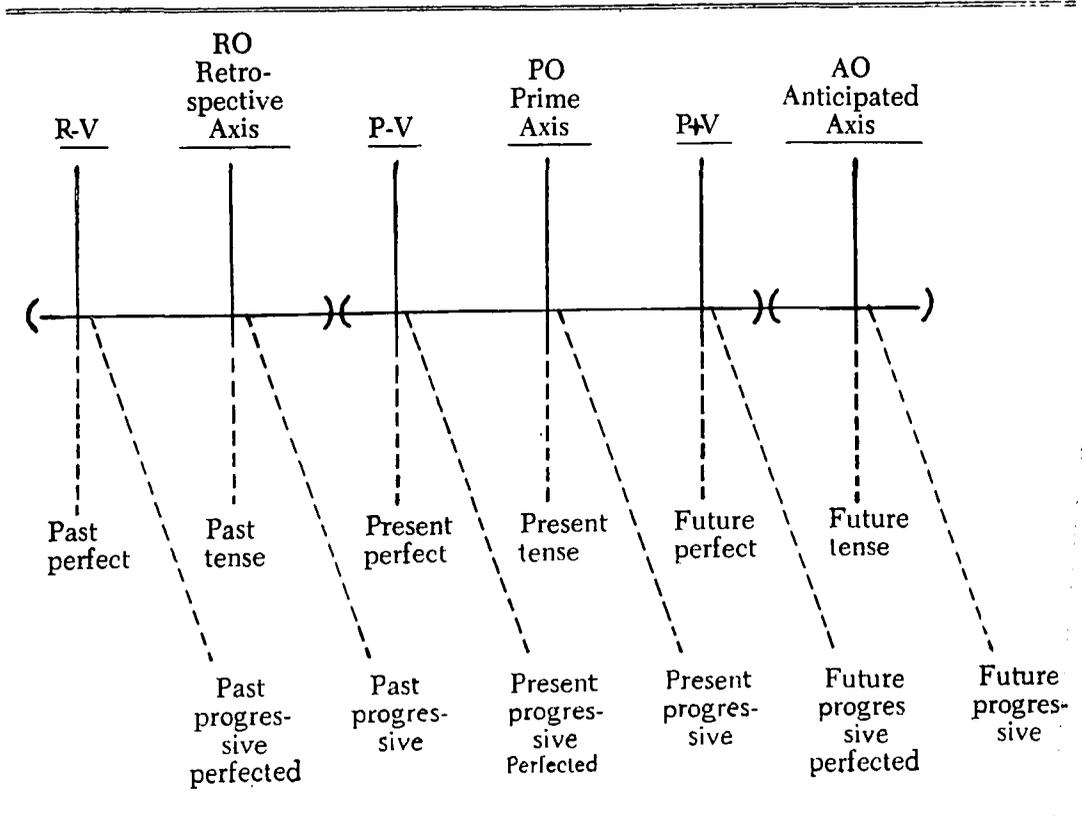
c. A past action may be expressed by a non-factive form.

/Kinsa guy magpalándung na munda'úg pa kadtu ákung sunúy/
"Who *would have thought* that my rooster could still win."

Thus to the Cebuano the entire system of tense axes would have to be learned. Some sense of the English verbal refer-

ence may be made for the Cebuano speaker through the frame shown in Chart B.

CHART B
SYSTEMS OF TENSE AXES IN
ENGLISH



The *prime axis* is the moment of speaking.
 The *retrospective axis* is a time anterior to the moment of speaking.
 The *anticipated axis* is a time posterior to the moment of speaking.
 A *perfected* event was completed before

the time specified by one of the three axes.
 A *progressive* event is one that continues at the time of one of the three axes.
Parentheses indicate the area oriented to a single axis.

This complex referential system of English verbs is not the total story complicated though it may seem. Further intricacies involve the auxiliary verb. Only the initial item of a verb phrase is ever marked for axis, the first and/or second for aspect, while the third and fourth do not carry any tense/aspect information but are conditioned by what precedes them.

This provides an explanation for the great difficulty that Cebuanos, or for that matter, speakers of other Philippine languages, have in mastering the tense and aspectual system of English.

Prepositionals. A system of focus marking and non-focus marking particles makes prepositions rather superfluous in Cebuano. English prepositionals can therefore be considered an almost completely new category. Next to errors in verb forms, mistakes with prepositions are the most prevalent. Whenever necessary or useful for understanding, auxiliary words with prepositional functions are often used in Cebuano. Going through the translation of the following examples, one can see that English prepositionals can appear as equivalents of almost any segment of a Cebuano clause.

Examples:

Note translations of /sa/ on the clause-level

/ihátag ku ang irú? sa báta?/
 "I will give the dog *to* the child."
 /sugínlan mu akú sa ma?ayong balita?/
 "You will tell me *about* the good news."
 /Nagpalít siyá ug sinína? sa áku?/
 "She bought a dress *from* me."

Note translations of /sa/ on the phrase-level

/áwit sa íyang kásingkásing/
 "song of her/his heart"
 /hígda? sa salúg/
 "sleep on the floor"

/túbig sa básu/
 "water in the glass"
 /magbutáng ka sa lamisáhan sa mgá búlak/
 "Put the table *among* the flowers."

The study of possible equations between English prepositionals and equivalences in Cebuano will be a project of considerable size but also of considerable importance. It must be undertaken by a native-speaker of Cebuano as it cannot be realistically done from a given corpus.

Under-Differentiation

A substantial number of explicit Cebuano signals are either missing altogether from English or are in a relationship of two or more forms or functions to one English form or function. In the first case, certainly the Cebuano speaker of English will from time to time attempt to supply some of them, though it is difficult to predict what shape they will take. In the second case, the Cebuano speaker faces English with the potential of making a choice that English does not allow. Types of under-differentiation include categories of delineation, focus and reference, personal substantiation, inclusive-exclusive distinction, particle tagmeme, and a vast member of coalesced categories.

This paper will discuss only delineation and focus.

Delineation. Cebuano verbs may be divided into two large classes, depending upon the presence or absence of a delineator. The class without a delineator belongs to the "singularity" class and the class with the delineator, to the "non-singularity" class.

The division is one manifestation of a fundamental polarity which undergirds the entire grammatical system of Cebuano. The positive pole of contrast is not a "singular" versus "plural" contrast

as in English, but rather whether an item is definite or clearly outlined or whether something is lacking in the definiteness of the item. This polarity was first discovered by J.D. v.d. Bergh in his "Analysis of the Syntax and System of Affixes in the Bisayan Language." The item definite in its individuality is "singularity." A thing, idea, process, or category not clearly marked is "non-singularity."

Non-singularity is indicated in various ways: accent contrast, the particle /*mgá*/, nasals, word-repetition, reduplication, certain affixes such as /-*kig*-/, /-*sig*-/, and /-*ay*-/.

It is true that the plural-singular categories of nouns in English, parallel to a large degree the non-singularity versus singularity contrast of substantives in Cebuano. Thus:

/ang *táwu*/ "the man" singularity-singular.

/ang *mgá táwu*/, "the men," non-singularity-plural.

Singular forms in English stand for things which tend to be clear and definite, and which therefore are expressed by singularity forms in Cebuano. With plural forms in English, however, the individual is not clearly defined, and therefore they correspond to non-singularity forms in Cebuano.

However there is a difference. Observe these examples:

Singularity

/usá ka ádlaw/ "one day"

Non-Singularity

/ma á usá ka ádlaw/ "about one day"

Singularity

/tulú ka ádlaw/ "three days"

Non-Singularity

/ma á tulú ka ádlaw/ "about three days"

We see that singular in English may be either singularity or non-singularity in Cebuano. On the other hand, singular-

ity in Cebuano may be either singular or plural in English.

The absence of the category of delineation in English accounts for a great deal of the difficulty the Cebuano speaker has in mastering English, for he distinguishes between that which is a clearly defined item as opposed to that which is not clearly defined.

Focus. The concept of focus, first used by Elkin,² is useful in describing Cebuano clause structure. Nominals are not primarily related to the process word in the manner of subject, object, indirect object, etc. of Indo-European languages. Rather, the nominals are either highlighted in an utterance or relegated to the background. In a real sense, they are *set in focus* or *kept out of focus*. This is done mainly by a series of overt signals which are either focus marking particles or verbal affixes. The element that is in focus we call the grammatical "topic" of the clause.

This category of focus, which involves both (1) the relationship of the topic to verb or *focal relationship* and (2) the identification of item as topic or *focal identification*, is absent in English.

Focal relationship in Cebuano is of two types: (1) goal-focus, indicating that the topic is a type of goal of the action of the verb, and (2) actor-focus, indicating that the topic is functioning as the instigator of the action of the verb.

Examples:

Goal-Focus

/giká?un ang kán?un/

"the rice was eaten (by someone)."

Actor-Focus

/nagka?ún ang báta?/

"The child is/was eating."

Focal relationship often resembles voice in English.

² Richard E. Elkins, "Syntactical Structures of Central Mindanao Manobo" (Summer Institute of Linguistics, University of North Dakota, no date), p. 5. (mimeographed.)

The first of our two examples, the goal-focus clause, is similar to an English clause in the passive voice. The actor-focus clause, on the other hand, resembles an English clause in the active voice. However, the example /giká?un náku?ang, súd?an/ — could just well have been translated: "I ate the food" as "The food was eaten by me."

The English passive voice is only part of goal-focus.

Note these goal-focus examples:

/gipútlán ang kalabáw ug dalunggan/
 "(Someone) cut off the ear of the carabao."

/natúlug ang báta/
 "The child slept."

Likewise, the English active voice is only part of active-focus:

/nagtrabáhu siyá/
 "He worked."

But,
 /nagmóngha siyá/

"She became a nun."
 /magasyindíru siyá/
 "He will be a gentleman forever."

Aside from focal relationship, a second manifestation of focus is "focus identification." The topic which is the center of attention of the clause is given this "in-focus" status by a focus-marking particle of the /ang/ class or one of its pronominal replatives. Other particles which introduce substantive phrases may be considered to be "out-of-focus" markers.

Examples of the Topic:

/naghilak ang bata/
 "The child is/was crying."
 /mupa? úli? si hwán ugmá?/
 "John will go home tomorrow."
 /ayáw basáhi silá/
 "Don't read to them."

A comparison of topic in Cebuano with subject in English is presented in the following page.

CHART C
 COMPARISON OF CEBUANO TOPIC
 WITH ENGLISH SUBJECT

Emphasis	Relationship to Predicate		
English: Contrastive Intonation	English : Word Order		
Cebuano: Focus Marking Particles	Cebuano: Verbal Affixes and Particles		
	Performer	Goal (passive voice)	Goal (active voice)
Emphasis: English Cebuano	Subject Topic	Subject Topic	Object —
Non- emphasis: English Cebuano	Subject —	Subject —	Object —

The Cebuano speaker may compensate for the absence of focus in English by over-using the passive. This absence may also account for awkward English expressions very frequently heard from

Cebuano speakers, such as "I will be the one to go," for "I will go," and "He is the one who got the book" for "He got the book."

CHART D
 CEBUANO FOCUS-ASPECTUAL-
 MODAL-DELINEATION SYSTEM^a

Goal Focus								
Mood	Objective		Referential				Accessory	
	Whole Reference		Partial Reference				Whole Reference Plus Something Else	
	Eventive Aspect	Agentive Aspect	Eventive Aspect	Agentive Aspect	Eventive Aspect	Agentive Aspect	Eventive Aspect	Agentive Aspect
<i>Singularity</i>								
Nonfactive	ma-	-un	ma-	-an	-an		mahi-	i-
Factive	na-	gi-	na-	-an	gi-	-an	nahi-	gi-
Privative	ma-	-a	ma-	-an	-i		mahi-	i-
<i>Non-singularity</i>								
Nonfactive	<i>mga</i>	<i>gipaN-</i> -an	<i>mga</i>	-an	<i>paN-</i>	-an	manghi-	<i>ipaN-</i>
Factive	<i>nga</i>	<i>gipaN-</i>	<i>nga</i>	-an	<i>gipaN-</i>	-an	nanghi	<i>gipaN-</i>
Privative	<i>mga</i>	<i>paN-</i> -an	<i>mga</i>	-i	<i>paN</i>	-i	manghi-	<i>ipaN-</i>

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Language: An Aid to Cross-Cultural Understanding

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This paper will attempt to show how language functions to achieve cross-cultural understanding. We will restrict ourselves to two aims of cross-cultural understanding: (1) to promote a more effective communication and (2) to be able to participate in the target society as a welcome outsider.

First, we must have a clear understanding of the nature and function of language. Secondly, culture should be clearly defined. Thirdly, a knowledge of the interrelationship between language and culture is needed.

Language does not consist merely of words or sentences. It is a system, a pattern, a structure of communication. Language develops in a social situation and functions to spread information through a group. Social control is impossible without a signalling system. Henry Lee Smith, Jr. defines language "as a system of arbitrary symbols by means of which the members of a speech community or subcultural group interact and hence communicate with each other in terms of common values, attitudes, as-

sumptions, and common experiences."¹ Thus language is primarily a mode of action and interaction for a group that has a common cultural experience.

Culture has attributes similar to language. As defined by Kluckhohn and Kelly, culture is a historically derived system of explicit and implicit designs for living, which tends to be shared by all or specially designated by members of a group. What man learns during acculturation is an organized set of behavioral patterns which he abstracts from and applies to situations of his daily experience as these arise. When new situations arise there emerge in the social group new patterns of living and modification of old patterns, abstracted consciously or unconsciously, from the situations and faced by the members of the group. It is this feature of cumulated patterns of living that characterizes human culture.²

¹ Henry Lee Smith, Jr., "Language and Culture, *Culture in Language Learning*, Supplementary Report of the 1960 Northeast Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages, eds. G. Reginald Bishop, Jr. and Jack Undank (New Brunswick, N.J.: The State University, 1960), p. 21.

² Clyde Kluckhohn and William Kelly, "The Concept of Culture," *The Science of Man in the World Crisis*, ed. Ralph Linton (New York: Columbia University Press, 1945); p. 98.