
Coping with the Bisaya Accent by Ethnic Groups Philippines: A Case Study

I. Introduction

The Philippines has more than 111 dialects spoken, owing to the subdivisions of these basic regional and cultural groups. Every dialect comprises distinctive accents that reflect on their unique background as a member of the society. Furthermore, aspects of language, such as accent, play a crucial role in the formation and categorization of one's cultural identity. Recent work on accent emphasizes the role of it in a person's perception and social categorization, demonstrating that accent also serves as a meaningful indicator of an ethnic category.

Ethnologue suggested that there are 22.5 million or a quarter of the population in the Philippines who speak Tagalog whereas outnumber the Visayan language which has only 16 million speakers second to the aforementioned native dialect.

Relative to this, Manila has been the principal city of the Philippines for four centuries and is the center of its industrial development and economic growth. For these reasons, Filipinos from different parts of the country tend to migrate to Manila City for bigger opportunities leading to hectic adjustments of culture to avoid being left over. Parallel to this, increased mobility and migration within a country results in ethnically diverse individuals so does their accent. In this sense, the Visayan accent has been an explicit marker of Bisaya's identity and thereby sought to change to blend with Tagalog speakers which is dominant in Manila City.

However, having an unfamiliar accent may cause some difficulties in communicating with other major speakers. Moreover, society has taken accents particularly the Visayan as a way of entertainment and mockery which has been a widespread controversy. This oppression often is characterized by prejudice and discrimination and is defined as negative attitudes and behaviors toward a specific group based on traits that one believes to be uniformly displayed by all members of that group.

This negative reaction is characteristic of the dominant group's attitudes to non-dominant groups (Reber & Reber, 2001).

Alternatively, the researcher observed that non-dominant outgroups were oppressed and differentiated by placement at the lower end of any hierarchy based on accent. As a result, the researcher is persistent to parse this case study wherein the major goal is to identify common ethnocentric problems and formulate strategies to mitigate it in the context of migration concerning ethnic diversity.

I. Objectives of the Case Study

Certain issues proving accent-shaming is rampant in modern times. This study focused on the problems involving ethnocentrism in terms of language accent. Issues concerning ethnic diversity problems faced by Bisaya people were included as well. Also, there is a need to parse this investigation to address the issue on how to cope up with the Visayan accent. Specifically, this study aims to:

- Identify the reasons why Visayan accent was labeled as inferior to Tagalog accent.
- Determine the common ethnocentric problems concerning language and accent.
- Formulate strategies to mitigate the implicit discrimination and accent-shaming against Visayan accent.
- Conclude the possible results if the formulated plan will be implemented.
- Address the issue and raise awareness as it demands an objective view of the researcher.

II. Presentation of the Case

The Philippines is an archipelago of 7,107 islands. It ranges from the south of China to the northern tip of Borneo. The nation has over a hundred ethnic groups and a mixture of global influences that have formed a distinctive Filipino culture. The Filipinos are divided geographically and culturally into regions, and each regional group is recognizable by distinct characteristics and dialects associated with accents such as; the sturdy and frugal Ilocanos of the north, the industrious Tagalogs of the central plains, the carefree Visayans from the central

islands and the colorful tribesmen and religious Moslems of Mindanao. Tribal communities can be found scattered across the archipelago. The Philippines has more than 111 dialects spoken, owing to the subdivisions of these basic regional and cultural groups. In the present day, people are likely to encounter an individual with an accent that differs from their own (Bruce, To, & Newton, 2012).

Parallel to this, every speaker has an accent, a way of pronouncing words that indicates their geographical or social background. Although the production of specific vowels and consonants is a key component of a particular accent, prosody, including rhythmic stress and intonation, also plays apart. Deviations from a familiar accent in any of these features can cause difficulties for the listener, although evidence indicates that prosodic differences have a greater effect on comprehension than segmental (i.e. vowels and consonants) differences. A variety of factor shave been found to affect the comprehension of utterances produced with an unfamiliar accent, including grammatical complexity, familiarity with the topic and with a particular speaker. A speaker's accent may elicit positive or negative reactions in the listener, depending on the stereotypes associated with a particular ethnic group, and listeners with negative attitudes towards an accent tend to rate the speaker as more difficult to understand.

Since Manila City serves as the center of industrial development in the Philippines, Filipinos, specially Bisayans move and migrate to the before-mentioned city. As a matter of fact, demographic suggested that the original settlers of Manila were the Tagalogs, on which Filipino, the national language is based, and widely used in the island of Luzon, particularly the Metropolitan area. Throughout the centuries, there has been a constant migration of other ethnicities particularly Bisayans. And since there are quite a lot of Bisayans in greater Metro Manila, the accent is heard all over the city. However, native settlers treat the Visayan accent as a laughing-stock and form of entertainment. This happens when a Bisayan speaks Tagalog it is natural for them to do while using the rules of their Visayan language. Nonetheless, this can be quite different from Tagalog and may not sound right to native speakers of the language, making it difficult for them to understand. This can cause frustration for the speaker as they are then asked to repeat what they have said or to find another way to explain themselves. Or

worse, they often experience accent-shaming and receive mock comments.

III. Proposed Solutions and Recommendations

Understanding accents is something that people have to develop. This skill shows that a person can communicate well with others and that he/she have a great experience interacting with others. In conclusion, there is a need to address this issue concerning accent-shaming experienced by the Bisayan people as it discusses the ethnocentrism and discrimination against their dialect. By solving this issue, a Filipino must:

- Know the significance of appreciating the Bisaya culture and its dialect accent.
- Learn how to embrace ethnic diversity and respect it.
- Be proud of their usage of native dialect.
- Mitigate discrimination among others as it includes the attitude towards promoting their own culture.
- Think in a cultural relativism perspective to better understand the society.

IV. References

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