

Parallel Descriptions of Ilokano and English Personal Pronouns: A Contrastive Analysis

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Abstract: Personal pronouns are among the simplest grammatical features of the English language; however, learners still struggle translating this language unit from Ilokano to English. This study thus examined the structure, meanings, and usage of personal pronouns in both Ilokano and English languages as well as the contrastive structure in these two languages. This study employed a qualitative research design using contrastive analysis. The data used was from a qualified informant who confirmed the categorization of personal pronouns obtained from credible sources. Results showed that the two languages vary in terms of function, form and distribution depending on their social and linguistic environment. Their use of the personal pronouns also indicates a difference in the formality of language where Ilokano uses plural form in a formal conversation while the English language remains definite despite its formality. This result implies a contribution in the development of contextualized linguistic materials for Ilokano personal pronouns.

Keywords: linguistics, contrastive analysis, qualitative design, Ilokano personal pronouns, English personal pronouns.

INTRODUCTION

Bilingualism is not anymore a new concept in the context of language education. Many countries, including the Philippines, widely practice the speaking of multiple languages and use this principle in education vis-a-vis the notion that the acquisition of a second language is affected by the native language of the speaker. This is concurrent with the statement of Lado (1957 as cited in Alwan & Fahainis, 2019) which purported that the distinction between the learners' mother tongue (L1) and the language they are studying determines the difficulty of understanding particular structures in a second language (L2). In the Philippine context, Ilokano is one of the many languages that Filipino students would use as a native language springboard to learning English.

Ilokano is a regional "Austronesian" language spoken in the northern part of Luzon. Unlike the Tagalog language, it is not as adaptive to linguistic evolution but is still used by millions of Filipinos. However, because of its minimal adherence to linguistic change and the widespread use of English language in the country, lexical equivalence and grammar acquisition becomes a problem on the verge of language learning (Mattes, 2014). One of the problematic grammatical points in this language is the personal pronoun. Personal pronouns, in particular, are usually closed-class and unaffected by borrowing or code-switching. Nonetheless, despite being one of the easiest grammatical components, learners still have difficulty translating Ilokano to English and often result in errors on linguistic production (Dita, 2014).

Moreover, several linguistic analyses revealed that Ilokano personal pronouns have a number of grammatical eccentricities and complexities that are omitted from their English equivalents. Some of them are only useful in specific situations. Others may take on several forms depending on the context, and their placement is often unrelated to that of the nouns they replace (Astrero, 2017; Kim, 2009; Tabula & Salasac, 2015). This incongruence causes language interference between Ilokano and English which consequently affects the acquisition of the second language. Also, these discussions of linguistic error production and composition of Ilokano language relative to the English language are also subject to cultural-error.

Language is an inevitable consequence of culture, but it is also shaped by the perspectives that language is perceptive, demonstrating the interdependence of language and culture. Beckner (2009) posits that language structures emerge from interconnected patterns of experience, social interaction, and cognitive mechanisms. Further, the capabilities that a language aims to cultivate are most likely those that society considers proper. Unacceptable or unsuitable language makes it difficult for students to interact and communicate effectively with other members of their community. In this context, Ilokano speakers might not be able to accomplish their communicative goals and be understood. They may even offend or embarrass themselves. This is another case of native language interference and its adverse effect on a learner of a second language.

Looking into these retrospective studies on Ilokano language interference to English language acquisition, a contrastive analysis of the personal pronouns between the two languages is deemed important. This constitutes the attempt to mind the gap in language translation, comprehension and production. Unfortunately, there have been very few literatures to none that investigate the differences of the personal pronoun of the two languages (Holmer, 1970; Tabula & Salasac, 2015). This asserts that most of the studies conducted regarding Ilokano and English languages lack the field and grammatical structure specificity. Also, most of the studies that deal with this objective were conducted a long time ago. Given the shift and language trend, the produced researches as regards the topic are no longer relevant (Astrero, 2017).

The lack of research on contrastive analysis of personal pronouns made this study necessary. The study is also being pursued because of the volume of data acquired and the aim to focus on a single contrastive aspect, in this case the contrastive analysis of personal pronouns in English and Ilokano. The purpose of the study is to describe the distribution, use, and form of the English and Ilokano languages. This investigates the differences between the personal pronouns in the two languages in more detail. Due to its originality and regional focus, this study adds to the literature in the fields of mother tongue education and second language learning in addition to contrastive linguistics. It also offers an acceptable comparison model and some helpful guidance for ESL teachers in developing successful teaching methods and effective course materials.

RESEARCH METHOD

Research Design

The nature of the study focuses on exploring the similarity and differences of English and Ilokano languages especially in the grammatical context of personal pronouns. Hence, we utilized the qualitative approach of research in order to attain the purpose of the study.

A qualitative study focuses on meaning and comprehension, with the researcher serving as the main tool for gathering and analyzing data (Merriam, 2009). This type of study solves the research problem inductively by developing concepts, themes, or hypotheses from descriptions of the information to be acquired. These facts were used to establish links between the corpus, the corpus's contents, and the study's findings.

This study also employed contrastive analysis, which is predicated on the notion that the best content for teaching a second language is that which is based on a scientific description of the first language, carefully compared to a parallel description of the language to be learned or the target language (Mair, 2021). Contrastive analysis is one of the strategies that may be used to

assist people learning another language in identifying discrepancies and similarities between the source and target languages that sometimes lead to difficulties in the learning process.

Research Materials

The study utilized an Ilokano language, a variety used by the Batac City, Ilocos Norte speaking community in the Philippines. It is thought that the Ilokano people's northward and southerly dispersion began in this other half of the former Ilocos Province. Moreover, there were also two significant books used in eliciting the necessary data. These books include Dr. Nicholas L. Rosal's *Understanding an Exotic Language: Ilokano* published in 1982 and which presents the word formation and grammar of the Ilokano language. The second book, *A Brief Introduction to the Grammar of the Ilokano Language* by Dr. Howard W. Widdoes (1950), provides words and phrases that are used often in Ilokano. In addition to these resources, a notepad was used to record instances of Ilokano personal pronouns being used accidentally in regular interactions with the primary informant.

Agoo La Union, a province in the Ilocos Region, was the location of the key informant who underwent a virtual interview. She was 48 years old. She was chosen in accordance with particular inclusion criteria that contributed to the reliability of the information being obtained. The following qualifications were required for inclusion: a) fluency in the Ilokano language; b) having never left the Ilocos since birth; c) living in a rural location; and d) semi-literate. The Ilokano language's nativeness was the main consideration in choosing the aforementioned informant. Therefore, it was thought that she would be less impacted by other languages if she possessed the required traits.

Research Analysis

We selected to investigate the words and phrases of English and the Ilokano languages while assessing the study's data, based on Finegan's (2008) study on language use, which focused on standard linguistic constructs such as orthography, phonology, and semantics. However, for this study, we only focused on the orthographic aspect of his study. In this study, contrastive analysis was used to determine the similarities and differences between English and Ilokano personal pronouns in the areas studied of applied linguistics. The data were presented in tabular form and were explained according to their grammatical differences and similarities.

Finegan (2008) stated that a script or orthography is made up of a set of visible signs, forms, or structures known as characters or graphs that are linked to a language framework. Furthermore, semantics is the study of meaning in the branch of linguistics and logic. One of its sub-branches is lexical semantics, which studies word meanings and word relations.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the contrastive analysis of the two languages: English and Ilokano.

The Ilokano Personal Pronouns

Ilokano has two kinds of personal pronouns. There are independent personal pronouns which are pronouns that can stand alone and the personal pronouns that are suffixes which need to be attached into other parts of speech. To emphasize points and minimize ambiguity, pronouns that can stand alone as objects or direct objects are utilized. Depending on how they are used in the phrase, they may contain the linking verb "to be" and may indicate the nominative complement "the one/s."

The following table presents the Ilokano personal pronouns that can stand alone along with their English counterparts.

Table 1. Independent Personal Pronouns

Number	Person	Ilokano Personal Pronoun	English Counterparts
Singular	1 st	Siak	I, I am, I am the one.
	2 nd	Sika	You, You are, You are the one.
	3 rd	Isu;isuna	He/She/It, He/She/It is, He/She/It is the one.
Plural	1 st	Data; sita	You and I: Inclusive
		Dakami; sikami	We, but not you: Plural Exclusive, We are, We are the ones
		Datayo; sitayo	We & you: Plural Inclusive
	2 nd	Dakayo; sikayo	You People; You sir/ma'am (Formal), You are, You are the ones
	3 rd	Isuda	They, They are, They are the ones.

The speaker establishes a degree of distance, whether close or far, with the addressee by using personal pronouns (Astrero, 2017). In Ilokano, the first person plural pronouns are distinguished between inclusive (includes addressee) and exclusive (excludes addressee). Respect is added to pronouns in the second person. When speaking to an elderly person or someone in a respectful position, they will use the plural 'yo' rather than the singular 'mo.' This is a display of respect and should be used whenever possible to avoid offending someone. Also, in Ilokano, male and female pronouns are not distinguishable. It's worth noting that both 'he' and 'she' have the same pronoun: 'isuna.'

Independent pronouns may also stand alone in an utterance as full predicates (Rubino, 2000). For example:

Ilokano	English Translation
Asino ti napan?	Who went?
Siak	I did.
Isuna	He or she (did).

Independent pronouns may also predicate in initial position. When these pronouns are followed by a phrase or clause and indicate the nominative complement 'the one/s,' the word 'ti' is used to connect them to the rest of the sentence. For example:

Ilokano	English Translation
Siak ti napan.	I was the one who went.
Sika ti nasadut.	You are the one who is lazy.
Sika ti kayat.	You are the one I want.
Isuda ti bumabaknang.	They are the ones who get rich.

There are also instances that the independent personal pronouns are partially reduplicated, which express uniqueness. For example:

Ilokano	English Translation
Sisiak	Only I
Siksika	Only you
Is-isu (na)	Only he/she
dakdakami	Only us (exclusive)

A pronoun, on the other hand, can be a suffix that is immediately attached to the root as a sentence's subject or an action verb. Three groups of suffixes are included in this category: -ak, -ko, and -k. The -ak suffix form is used when a pronoun acts as the subject and the verb "to be"

acts as the implicit predicate. Depending on the tense, it is combined with the *ma*, *ag*, and *um* verb clusters.

Table 2. The –ak forms of Ilokano personal pronouns

Ilokano Personal Pronoun	Example	English Translation	Ilokano Word Formation
-ak (I)	Pilipinoak	I am a Filipino.	predicate + suffix
	Agsangitak	I will cry.	ag verb + suffix
	Uminomak	I drink.	um verb + suffix
-ka (you)	Pilipinoka	You are a Filipino.	predicate + suffix
	Agsangitka	You will cry.	ag verb + suffix
	Uminomka	You drink.	um verb + suffix
-kami (we:exclusive)	Pilipinokami	We are Filipinos.	predicate + suffix
	Agsangitkami	We will cry.	ag verb + suffix
	Uminomkami	We drink.	um verb + suffix
-tayo (we:inclusive)	Pilipinotayo	We are Filipinos.	predicate + suffix
	Agsangittayo	We will cry.	ag verb + suffix
	Uminomtayo	We drink.	um verb + suffix
-ta (we:dual)	Pilipinota	We are Filipinos.	predicate + suffix
	Agsangitita	We will cry.	ag verb + suffix
	Uminomta	We drink.	um verb + suffix
-kayo (you)	Pilipinokayo	You are Filipinos.	predicate + suffix
	Agsangitkayo	You will cry.	ag verb + suffix
	Uminomkayo	You drink.	um verb + suffix
-da (they)	Pilipinoda	They are Filipinos.	predicate + suffix
	Agsangitda	They will cry.	ag verb + suffix
	Uminomda	They drink.	um verb + suffix

On the other hand, the suffix form *-ko* of the subject pronoun is attached to *i* verbs family. Table 3 shows the examples of how such forms are used.

Table 3. The –ko forms of Ilokano personal pronouns

Ilokano Personal Pronoun	Example	English Translation	Ilokano Word Formation
-ko (I)	Itulongko	I help.	i verb + suffix
-mo (You)	Itulongmo	You help.	i verb + suffix
-na (He, She, It)	Itulongna	He/She/It helps.	i verb + suffix
-mi (inclusive)	Itulongmi	We help.	i verb + suffix
-tayo (We)	Itulongtayo	We help.	i verb + suffix
-ta (dual)	Itulongta	We help.	i verb + suffix
-yo (You)	Itulongyo	You help.	i verb + suffix
-da (They)	Itulongda	They help.	i verb + suffix

As illustrated in Table 3, the person and number are indicated by additional suffixes in the *-ko* forms of Ilokano personal pronouns. Despite this trait, the *-ko* dependent Ilokano personal pronoun is nonetheless a member of the *i* verb family.

The Ilokano personal pronoun is used with the *-k* suffix form for the verbs *en* and *an*. For instance, to change the Ilokano personal pronouns 'pakawanek' (I forgive.) from 'pakawanen' (Forgive him.) and 'Pangalaak' from 'pangalaan' (I get it.), one must remove the *n* from the root and add the *-k* suffix.

The English Personal Pronouns

Pronouns are considered as closed system grammatical items that can be used in place of nouns and noun phrases (Eka, 2008). Francis (1958) as cited in Tabula and Salasac (2015) classified personal pronouns into eight: I, we, you, he, she, it, they, and who. Except for who, all of these pronouns are typically classified as personal pronouns. This distinction is derived from other languages' grammar, which have various groups of different pronoun classes.

These personal pronouns have inflectional variants, but unlike with nouns, they cannot be attached with *-es* that forms plural or *'s* that indicates possession. However, these personal pronouns have different forms according to cases. Case refers to the changes a word goes through in respect to its syntactic relationships with other words in a sentence (Nkoporuk & Odusina, 2018). The three cases of pronouns are Subjective, Objective and Possessive. A pronoun is subjective (nominative) when it serves as the subject of the sentence, it is objective (accusative) when it is used as the object of the sentence while a pronoun is in a possessive case when it expresses ownership or possession relationship. Possessive pronouns can be categorized as first or second possessives. The classification of English personal pronouns is shown in Table 4.

Table 4. Classification of English Personal Pronouns

Subjective		Objective		First Possessive		Second Possessive
I		me		my		mine
We		us		our		ours
	you			your		yours
He		him			his	
She			her			hers
	it				its	
They		them		their		theirs
Who		who(m)			whose	

As seen in Table 4, English personal pronouns in subjective forms are *I, we, you, he, she, it, they* and *who*. The pronouns *you* and *it* can be both subjective and objective in form. *Her* can also be both objective and possessive while *his, its,* and *whose* can be first and second possessives. Among the English personal pronouns, only *I, we,* and *they* have four variously distributed forms. The pronouns *you, he, she,* and *who* have three forms while the pronoun *it* has two forms. According to Francis (1958) Francis (1958) as cited in Tabula and Salasac (2015), the members of the pronoun paradigm can be described in terms of stems plus inflectional suffixes, although this is a little too difficult.

Other distinguishing characteristics of English pronouns are person and number. Person describes the functions that entities carry out during speaking activities. Generally speaking, there are three (3) observable characters (first person, second person, and third person) in any speech situation, along with their duties as speaking, listening, and referencing. The speaker is referred to as the first person, the listener is the second person, and the person being referred to is the third person. On the other hand, the term "number" refers to the numerical separation that is made between the spoken characters. In this example, we have both the singular and the plural. The distribution of English personal pronouns by person and number is depicted in the table below.

Table 5. Person and Number of English Personal Pronouns

	Singular	Plural
First Person	I, me, my, mine	we, us, our, ours
Second Person	you, your, yours	you, your, yours
Third Person	he, she, it, him, her, his, her, hers, its	they, them, their, theirs

The gender of the characters involved in a speech activity can also be used to classify pronouns. There are three categories of gender: masculine (male), feminine (female), and neuter (for non-humans, infants, and occasionally indeterminate gender). He and him are examples of masculine pronouns, while she and her are examples of feminine pronouns. Examples of neuter gender words are I, Me, It, and Its.

English personal pronouns are categorized according to the situation in which they are employed. They are perceptive to alterations in the social context that result in changes to their noun referents.

Comparison and Contrast of Ilokano and English Personal Pronouns

Contrastive analysis is the comparison and contrast of two or more languages' linguistic systems based on the main obstacles in learning a new language induced by interference from the first language. It can be used in preparing teaching and learning materials, and can forecast the challenges between the two languages (Tajareh, 2015). As Ilokano and English personal pronouns are from two different languages that share similarities and differences in various aspects, this comparison and contrast study has significant implications in language pedagogies.

Primarily, Ilokano personal pronouns are used to indicate person (first, second, third), number (singular and plural), and respect (formal or informal). When speaking to an elderly or someone superior or when speaking about them, respectful forms of pronouns are used to address them. 'Dakayo' (you) and 'isuda' (they), which are both plural forms, are used instead of their singular forms 'sika' (you) and 'isu' (he/she/it) to show respect. 'Sika' (you) is also treated as an informal pronoun, so 'sikayo' is instead used in formal conversation. According to de Castro (2018), the usage of second person pronouns with relation to the addressee has been linked to expressions of politeness, formality, solidarity, and social distance.

This cultural characteristic found in Ilokano personal pronouns is not evident in English personal pronouns. Though English pronouns are also marked by person and number similar to Ilokano, they are strictly used as they are regardless of the position of the person spoken to or spoken about.

Ilokano personal pronouns also have no gender distinction in the third person singular. Ilokano used either 'isu' or 'isuna' referring to the same gender. Ilokano is an example of a genderless language in which it is characterized by a complete lack of grammatical gender distinction in the noun or pronoun system (Prewitt-Freilino & Caswell, 2011). This is in contrast with English, a gendered language, wherein personal pronouns have different forms assigned to different genders, such as 'he' for male, 'she' for female and 'it' for gender-neutral.

Another characteristic of Ilokano personal pronouns is that they have inclusive and exclusive forms in the first person plural. The addressee is included in the inclusive form, but not in the exclusive form. The pronoun form 'ta' (You and I) is inclusive which means that the person speaking and the person spoken to are included. The pronoun form 'kami' (we, but not you) is exclusive that indicates the exclusion of the person spoken to. The pronoun form 'tayo' is inclusive, which indicates that the person speaking and the persons spoken to are included in the speech activity. In English, such various forms of first person plural in different scenarios are not present. English personal pronouns only have 'we' in the first person plural in the nominative case.

Ilokano personal pronouns are also distinct when it comes to types. There are independent personal pronouns and there are those that cannot stand alone, which are the pronouns in suffix forms. The suffixes *-ak*, *-ko*, and *-k* are personal pronouns to be attached to another word to create meaning depending on the linguistic environment. These pronouns can be used regardless of the tense and mood of the sentence. There are three instances when the *-ak* form is used. It is when the pronoun is the subject and the verb to be is the implied predicate, when *ma-*, *ag-*, and *um-* are the verbs and their verb clusters, and when a sentence has an adjective as the nominative complement and a pronoun as the subject. The *-ko* form is only affixed when the pronoun is the subject and the verb belongs to the *i* verb family. When the verb belongs to the *en* and *an* verb family and the pronoun is the subject, *-k* suffix form is instead used. For example, the ‘pakawanen’ that means ‘to forgive’ is changed to ‘pakawanek’ which means ‘I forgive’. The *-n* from the word ‘pakawanen’ was dropped and replaced with the suffix *-k* to change its meaning, having a pronoun as the subject.

Such structures in Ilokano pronouns do not exist in English. English personal pronouns are all independent which can stand alone in a sentence. They do not have suffix forms that change the verb formation if the subject is a pronoun. The single word ‘agbuyaak’ in Ilokano that contains a verb and a subject pronoun is translated as ‘I watch’ in English which has two separate words: the ‘I’ as the subject pronoun and the ‘watch’ as the verb.

Van Gelderen (2020) stated that because pronouns are not diachronically stable, languages differ in whether they are arguments, topics, or agreements, as well as whether they are pronouns, clitics, or affixes. When a pronoun represents a noun phrase, the question of what grammatical category it belongs to arises. The answer is that it differs depending on the language.

Finally, partial reduplication of independent personal pronouns transpires in Ilokano. If the pronouns are in the nominative case, the first syllable is duplicated to express uniqueness and emphasis. Examples of this are ‘siksika’ (only you/you yourself) and ‘is-isuna’ (only he/she or he/she himself/herself). This process of reduplicating the first syllable of the pronoun is not existent in English. However, though the process is not the same, English pronouns also have reflexive forms, such as ‘myself’, ‘yourself’ and ‘herself’ that are used to emphasize the pronoun directly preceding it.

CONCLUSION

Personal pronouns are used as substitutes of nouns or phrases. They are used beyond the purpose of avoiding repeated nouns or hiding the explicit nouns. They give context, clarify the meaning of one’s statements, and shape one’s perceptions of people and things. These personal pronouns as grammatical elements exist in both Ilokano and English languages. However, though they possess similarities in terms of person and number, they vary in terms of function, form and distribution depending on their social and linguistic environment.

In Ilokano, the usage of personal pronouns can signify a culture of respect. The plural form of second person is more preferred in a formal conversation than its singular form. In English, second person personal pronouns are definite and can be used either in casual or formal conversation. In terms of gender, Ilokano has no distinction. It is in contrast with English that has assigned pronouns for male, female or neuter.

Furthermore, Ilokano personal pronouns can either be a free morpheme or a bound morpheme that needs to be attached to other words to create a concrete meaning in the sentence. This is way different from English where all personal pronouns are independent or can stand alone. Also, partial reduplication of personal pronouns occurs in Ilokano which is not evident in English.

These deemed differences in the characteristics of the personal pronouns of these two languages suggest an implication to education especially in terms of language learning and acquisition. The contrastive results will provide an addition in the repertoire of knowledge which can be helpful in the construction of learning materials contextualized to the learning of Ilokano personal pronouns. Further, these results will also add in the language universals that exist between the

two languages, hence, mitigate the impact of native language interference in the process of linguistic acquisition. Furthermore, this connotes a suggestion that language teachers should provide novel ways of teaching personal pronouns to the learners. In order for the students to easily understand the learning content, they must be taught how to analyze the differences between two languages. The pupils will be able to translate with ease and actively use English in speaking, listening, writing, and reading as long as they comprehend the pattern.

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