

The game of naming: A case of the Butuanon language and its speakers in the Philippines

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Abstract: This study is an attempt to give an overview of the distinctive grammatical features of Butuanon mainly spoken in Butuan City (northern Mindanao, the Philippines) in comparison and contrast to Cebuano structures. The study also examines links between language and ethnicity by focusing on the multiple labels applicable to Butuanon speakers in a sociocultural environment heavily influenced by a pervasive trend toward Bisayanization (convergence to Cebuano culture and language). The compiled data sets of Butuanon and Cebuano are expected to establish points of reference that serve as the baseline for future studies in language change in contact. Furthermore, based on the observation that the language and ethnicity link has become vulnerable among peoples of different ethnolinguistic groups in Butuan, the use of multiple self-designated and externally-imposed labels among Butuanons was examined. Those discussions led to the probability of forming a quasi-ethnic place-based identity (“quasi-Butuanon”) with a renewed sense of “Butuanon” that the locals across ethnolinguistic boundaries embrace in favor of further development of urbanization, industrialization, and modernization.

Key words: Butuanon, Cebuano, grammatical comparison, language shift, ethnic group labelling

1. Linguistic minorities in the Philippines

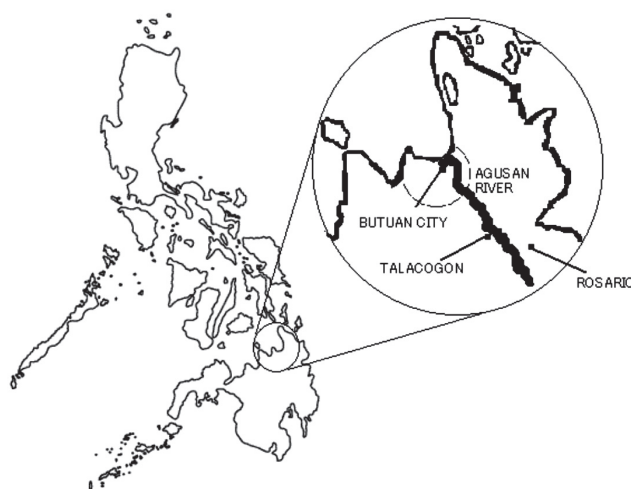
The Philippines is well known as a multilingual nation, where Filipino (national and official language) and English (official language) play roles in Filipinos’ everyday life. Local vernaculars are indeed vital for immediate communicative needs in widespread Philippine multilingualism. Linguistic situations differ from one community to another with the functional distribution of languages and dialects from sociolinguistic viewpoints, though there exist some overall similarities generally observed in the use of Filipino (or Tagalog) and English throughout the entire country, particularly in the domains of technology, public administration, education, business, etc.

The number of existing languages and dialects in the Philippines is still in question, though there have been continuous efforts in modeling groupings and sub-groupings of

Philippine languages and dialects. On the definition of minority and majority Philippine languages, scholars (Sibayan 1985, Gonzalez 1998, Constantino 2000) take slightly different positions to define major Philippine languages (8 or 10 languages as “major”), though every scholar adopts the very basic definition of “languages” as “codes which are not mutually intelligible or understandable” (McFarland 1994). It is notable that the Census 1990 listed 988 labels for languages/dialects as respondents’ mother tongues, but the latest research on language endangerment (Quakenbush and Simons 2015) identifies 177 individual languages (40 institutional, 65 developing, 45 vigorous, 13 in trouble, 10 dying and 4 extinct, in reference to levels of language endangerment). Linguistic minorities are often numerically small, politically weak, economically disadvantaged, and geographically peripheral in local contexts, which have received limited scholarly attention, and the lack of scholarly attention to minorities accordingly results in the paucity of theoretical and empirical research in linguistics and other related academic disciplines.

2. The Butuanon language and its speakers

Butuan is located at the mouth of the Agusan River (approximately 250km long) which drains almost one-third of the island (Map1). Butuan City has grown to be a highly urbanized city and the administrative center of Caraga Region (Region XIII) and its local economy is heavily dependent on agriculture and forestry-related industries with coexistence of residential, industrial, commercial, public and recreational types of service-oriented industries. From a historical viewpoint, the place is also well-known for its major archaeological discoveries from the pre-Spanish period and controversy on the first Catholic mass by Ferdinand Magellan. “Long before there was the Philippines, there was already Butuan,” is often heard as an iconic expression for its historical significance.

Map 1. Location of Butuan City in Mindanao

The natives in Butuan (“*Butuanons*”), otherwise known as “*Lapaknons*” (swamp dwellers), have been historically regarded as one of the indigenous groups in Mindanao and the Butuanon ethnolinguistic group is well known nationally and locally for its linguistic distinctiveness and cultural traits, for instance, “*laksoy*” (nipa palm wine). Historically, Butuanons seem to have been integrated as a lowland Christian constituent into a larger Philippine mainstream society. Butuanons are “highly urbanized with a defined Visayan culture influenced by the Cebuano” (Peralta, 2000: 49). This process of assimilation and acculturation, “Bisayanization” (Yengoyan 1966), usually has brought about attitudinal changes among the members of linguistic minorities, but language remains as the only differentiating element in ethnic cultures, particularly among those in adjacent and contiguous territories in Mindanao (Jocano 1998). Even though the importance of linguistic approach to ethnolinguistic minority groups has been generally accepted by scholars, unfortunately, not many studies have been done on the Butuanon language except for a few with its partial linguistic descriptions (See Zorc 1977, Yap 1977, Pallesen 1985, Gallman 1977, Cembrano 1998).

Kobari (2009) conducts a comprehensive study on the situation of the Butuanon language and its speakers in a multi-cultural/lingual environment heavily influenced by a pervasive sociocultural trend toward Bisayanization, where there is relentless pressure to accommodate to a broader, more dominant Cebuano language and culture. However, Butuanon is still used in the home and local community, and maintains great symbolic importance as a marker of identity and positive emotional significance to members of the

in-group. Butuanon has such a strong local presence, in fact, that some in-migrants of other ethnolinguistic backgrounds learn it to communicate with their neighbors. Although the study confirms that the current form of Butuanon that younger speakers use shows such convergence toward Cebuano with the reduced amount of Butuanon distinguishing features transmitted from the preceding generations that it becomes questionable whether Butuanon is actually surviving, and the possibility exists that it may one day be swallowed up in a more generic Cebuano language and culture. In this local context, Butuanons are increasingly negotiating multiple ethnic and social identities and through multiple languages (Butuanon, Cebuano, Tagalog/Filipino, English).

With regard to the current state of Butuanon, the latest web-version of *Ethnologue* identifies its language status as “shifting” (7th ranking in 10 points measuring rod for language shift) in the Expanding Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale (EGIDS). The previous three official censuses (Census of Population and Housing) include a section for “Distribution of Household Population by Mother Tongue” in which the Butuanon language first appeared in 1990. Combined with the 2013 data on indigenous/ethnic population from the Department of Interior and Local Government, the following table (Table 1) clearly indicates drastic fluctuations in the ratios of the number of Butuanon and Cebuano mother tongue speakers among the population of Butuan City in the past 25 years.

Table 1. Mother Tongue Speakers in Butuan City from Official Data

	Year	1990	1995	2000	2013*
Language					
Cebuano		87.4%	72.6%	24.1%	10%
Butuanon		3.4%	12.8%	35.2%	52.1%

Note:

The figures for 1990, 1995, and 2000 were taken from Statistical Profile of Butuan City as of 2002 based on the Census of Housing and Population (CPH) conducted by National Statistics Office (NSO).

*For the 2013 data, the percentages of “Cebuano” and “Butuanon” mother tongue speakers were taken from the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) webpage on Butuan City in Region XIII-Caraga Administrative Region.

Contrary to some previous findings from the field, the simple and straightforward interpretation of changes in number that the number of Butuanon mother speakers has been drastically increasing while Cebuanos have been losing ground within a relatively short span of time appears to be quite misleading. Although the operational definition of the term, mother tongue, is equated with ethnicity and provided as the language or dialect spoken by

a person at his or her earliest childhood, the numbers in official surveys require particularly careful analysis and interpretation.

In the Philippines, ethnic identities often matter in everyday encounters, carrying multiple stereotypical images and different levels of stigma and discrimination widely shared among the majority of the population, lowland Christian Filipinos. As Appel and Muysken (1987) assert, “various aspects of bilingualism can only be understood rightly if the (potential) language-ethnicity relation is taken into account” (p.16).

3. Purpose of the paper

Based on the comprehensive understanding of the Butuanon language and its speakers in reference to some major academic publications and the findings of the author’s intermittent fieldwork over the past 15 years, the paper is designed to primarily focus on two perspectives, “language” and “ethnic identity,” in a language shift situation. The paper aims (1) to offer an overview some of distinctive grammatical features of Butuanon as “points of reference” in a systematic and comparable-contrastive manner which highlight similarities and differences between the two languages based largely on the codified data of Bisayan languages by Zorc (1977) and (2) to analyze the current intertwining relationship between language and ethnic identity (ethnic labelling) among Butuanon and other language speakers in a northern Mindanao context.

4. Some grammatical features of Butuanon

The existing structural similarity among Bisayan languages in some morpho-syntactic features is illustrated below.

Because of the various productive inflectional and derivational systems into which a stem may enter among Bs (Bisayan) dialects, words are classified on the basis of their inflectional behavior. Stems inflected for case are **nominals** (with subclasses of **pronouns**, **deictics**, **personal names**, and **common nouns**); for intensity, **adjectives**; for aspect and voice, **verbs**. In addition, Bs have a number of semantic affixes associated with one or another of the parts of speech. (Zorc 1977:61)

*The above parentheses for “Bs” are added by the author.

In this section, some previously codified grammatical features of Butuanon and Cebuano are partially excerpted from Zorc (1977) to compare and contrast the two linguistic systems in the categories of personal pronouns (Appendix 1), deictics (Appendix 2), predicative

and existential deictics (Appendix 3), personal name markers (Appendix 4), common noun case-marking particles (Appendix 5), locationals (Appendix 6), interrogatives-temporals (Appendix 7), interrogative-locationals (Appendix 8), interrogative-numerals (Appendix 9), interrogative-adverbials (Appendix 10), pseudo-verbs or homosemantic equivalents (Appendix 11), negatives (Appendix 12), existential predicate and affirmation (Appendix 13), followed by the lists of the Butuanon and Cebuano verb inflectional systems (Appendix from 14 to 20).

The comprehensive lists of verb inflection from the perspectives of voice, tense, aspect, and mode, are comprehensively summarized in “Butuanon Verb Inflection” (Appendix 14) and “Cebuano Verb Inflection” (Appendix 15). Voice has 4 categories, such as “active,” “instrumental,” “passive,” and “local”. Tense is divided into categories as “actual,” “contingent,” and “aorist” categories. Aspect is characterized along the “perfective-imperfective” and “punctual-durative” distinctions. Mode has “general,” “potential,” and “imperative” modes.

The detailed patterns of verb affixation of Butuanon and Cebuano are presented in “Active Durative Potential Verb Affixes” (Appendix 16), “Instrumental Durative and Potential Verb Affixes” (Appendix 17), “Passive Durative and Potential Verb Affixes” (Appendix 18), “Local Durative and Potential Verb Affixes” (Appendix 19), and “Aorist Durative and Potential Affixes” (Appendix 20) in order to seek to build a referential framework that might serve as a guiding hand for future descriptive and analytical studies on the two languages.

All these compilations of Butuanon and Cebuano grammatical features are expected to serve as the points of reference for further cross-linguistic examination on the nature and direction of language change in language contact. However, in a series of fieldwork on Butuanon in attempts to confirm and reconstruct its linguistic norms in a constant state of fluctuation, a need for closer examination is identified in the two grammatical areas of Butuanon, (1) common noun case-marking particles (the use of nominative-indefinite [-y] and genitive-indefinite [huj], marked with an asterisk in Appendix 5) and (2) verb affixes (the use of [gi-] and [gi--an] Cebuano constructions, marked with an asterisk in Appendix 17, 18, and 19). These two changing tendencies among Butuanon speakers are hypothetically assumed to be caused by two phenomena: (1) the semantically expanded use of Butuanon affixes within its grammatical structure (morpho-syntactic expansion) and (2) the gradual intrusion of Cebuano semantic and morpho-syntactic reference framework into the Butuanon grammatical system (substitution).

5. Multiple labels of the Butuanon speakers

A variety of “ethnicity” definitions have been suggested by a number of leading scholars in different academic disciplines. However, there is some agreement on the term: ethnicity is a socially constructed category in a context-specific reality in relation to other social variables and formed by subjective and objectives views (Fought, 2006:4-8). Admitting apparent contradictions encountered in the field, Dorian (1999) postulates the ideal case of a language-ethnicity link in the following.

In the ideal case, it really is straightforward. There is a particular place where a certain group of people live, and in that particular place they speak a certain language. They have a name for themselves and their language, and no other people go by that name or claim to speak that language as a mother tongue. If you seek them out, they will tell you who they are and what language they speak; and if they see that you are really interested in them, they will teach you about themselves and their language, perhaps help you out learn to speak their language if you desire. (p.25)

The use of multiple labels for an individual and a single label for individuals of different overlapping/altered groups is quite confusing for researchers from outside the community under study, although the locals might be well aware of all the subtleties of social, cultural, ethnic, racial, and linguistic differences in their immediate contexts where multiculturalism/multilingualism is the norm. In language contact situations, languages serve as the primary screening measures for field linguists in defining group memberships who possess basic linguistic competence and adequate communication fluency. The names of languages often coincide with ethnic group names, but ethnic labels are not always good guides to linguistic field research. On this point, it is theoretically and methodologically important to examine the use of multiple identity labels among the researched and the concept of ethnic identity should not be treated as “a pre-given and self-explanatory unit/object of analysis”, but as “a subject of analysis” in its formation and reformation processes. MINDANAWON, CARAGANON, and AGUSANON

There are several ethnonyms applicable to Butuanon speakers and each label involves varying degrees of positive, negative and neutral connotations depending on the particular context in which a label is self-designated or externally imposed and the relationship between language and ethnic identity seems to be quite perplexing in the field. There are time when the locals associate themselves with specific area-based labels, such as “*Mindanawon*” (from the name of Mindanao island), “*Caraganon (Karaganon)*” (from

Caraga/Karaga region), and “*Agusanon*” (from Agusan province), on occasions in which the awareness for wider social and cultural cohesiveness of local and regional spheres is heightened.

BUTUANON

The filed interviews revealed that all of Butuanon speakers positively identified themselves as “*Butuanon*” with a sense of pride in being a member of the group and most of them generally shared a strong sense of historical continuity from their ancestors in Butuan. Some further claimed their purity/authenticity with an emphatic expression, “*Taal nga Butuanon ako*” (I am a pure/real Butuanon).

BISAYA

The special attention should be drawn to the interpretation of the ethnic label, “*Bisaya*” (“*Visaya*” in English), particularly in the Mindanao context. The origin of the term, “*bisaya* [bisayáq],” is unclear, but the word is the local term used to describe a region and group of people in the central Philippines. The term is spelled as “*Visaya*” in English, adopted from Spanish, denoting a region while “*Visayan*” refers to a person from that region. The ethnic label, “*Bisaya*,” generally involves those who have their ancestry ties with the Visayan islands other than Cebu or those who were born and raised in Mindanao while “*Cebuano*” specifically refers to those who have their ancestry, birthplace, and previous residence in the Cebu island. The locals who identify themselves as “*Bisaya*” are basically speakers of one of the Visayan languages, such as Cebuano, Hiligaynon, and Waray-Waray.

A certain degree of confusion exists in the term, “*Cebuano*,” which connotes two different meanings, the ethnic group name and the language name. Furthermore, in the northern Mindanao context where the majority of people are predominantly Cebuano speaking and the language serves as a regional lingua franca, “*Bisaya*” is commonly adopted as the label for self-identification as well as language among people who use Cebuano as an ordinary spoken language for everyday communication. Although Cebuano speaking locals have a sharp sense of linguistic distinction between “*Cebuano*” and “*Bisaya*” when these terms are differently applied to ethnic identity or language name in a local context, the “*Bisaya*” or “*Bisayan*” language is linguistically almost identical with Cebuano in the central Philippines. This creates the confusing situation for outsiders in which the members of “*Bisaya*” ethnolinguistic group speak “*Bisaya*” which is basically the Cebuano language with slight regional variations.

From socio-cultural and historical perspectives, the term “*Bisaya*” has been loaded with the concepts of Christianization and modernization since Visayan migrants have served as carriers of socio-cultural changes into indigenous communities in the hinterlands.

Due to the cultural acculturation and assimilation process that caused the internal migration mainly from the Visayas to Mindanao, the members of ethnolinguistic minorities tend to have feelings of inferiority toward their own groups, which consequently results in the behavioral tendency to integrate a wider ethnic identity, “*Bisaya*.” In fact, it is often observed that most of Visayans possess derogatory stereotypes toward linguistic minorities. LUMAD and LAPAKNON

The term, “*lumad*,” is a Cebuano word meaning “indigenous” which was officially adopted as the collective name for the 15 ethnolinguistic groups (Bagobo, B’laan, Banwaon, Dibabawon, Higaonon, Mandaya, Manguangan, Manobo, Mansaka, Subanen, Tagakaolo, Talaandig, T’boli, Tiruray, and Ubo) in a Cotabato Congress in June 1986 in order to distinguish its members from the other Mindanawons, Moros or Christians (NCAA 2015). This is the first time that various indigenous groups agreed to establish a coalition under the name of “*Lumad*” and to achieve self-determination within the centralized Philippine nation-state structure where the uneven distribution of wealth and questions of access exist. “*Butuanon*” or “*Lapaknon*” is not officially recognized as one of the indigenous peoples in the list, but the term “*Lapaknon*” is mistakenly regarded by many as one of “*Lumad*” groups in some occasions As to the choice of a Cebuano word as the collective name for indigenous people in Mindanao, Rodil (1994) describes;

The choice of a Cebuano word – Cebuano is the language of the natives in Cebu and in the Visayas – was a bit ironic but it was deemed to be most appropriate considering that the various Lumad tribes do not have any other common language except Cebuano. (p.34)

In most cases, Butuanon speakers interchangeably use “*Lapaknon*” as alternative self-identification, but there are some who consciously express their unwillingness to accept the term for self-identification based on widely accepted prejudice toward members of indigenous minority groups among lowland Christian Filipinos that the Lumad members have relatively lower socio-economic status and more limited access to resources, education and civilization in the modern Philippine society. Common words and phrases, such as “*natibo*” (native), “*tribo*” (tribe), “*mga tao sa bukid*” (people in the mountains), “*wa’y grado*” (no basic education) and “*lumad*” (indigenous), are used to describe the characteristics of ethnic minorities in unequal socio-political and economic relations with negative connotations in the lowland Filipino context.

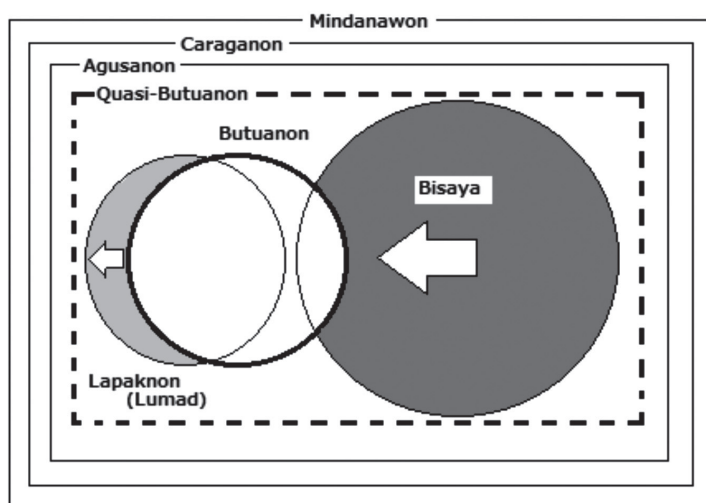
The stereotypical dichotomies are intuitively contextualized in the relation between majority and minority ethnolinguistic groups (for instance, “lowland and upland,” “Christian

and non-Christian,” “civilized and uncivilized,” “modern and traditional,” “local and migrant,” “urban and rural,” “educated and uneducated,” “rich and poor” and others). Through a brief review of social and cultural conditions of group labels for Butuanons, it is presumed that the above-mentioned dichotomous categories have become an integral part of the mechanism to determine the complex and contextual nature of a language and ethnicity link, which consequently influences the identity formation process of different ethnolinguistic peoples in Butuan. These symmetric relations between groups of people have seemingly been formed and reformed in accordance with ever-changing ethnic balance in power and prestige within socio-cultural structures of wider local, regional, and national politics in the Philippines.

6. Formation of a “Quasi-Butuanon” identity

Generally, the ethnic label that a multilingual chooses to wear would differ according to social contexts. In order to understand the meaning of a self-designated or externally-imposed “*Butuanon*” label, the conceptual relationships among other labels (“*Mindanawon*,” “*Caraganon (Karaganon)*,” “*Agusanon*,” “*Bisaya*,” “*Lumad*,” and “*Lapaknon*”) are tentatively schematized in the following model of Butuanon ethnic identity, in search for a new form of a quasi-ethnic place-based (“quasi-Butuanon”) identity (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Tentative Model of Butuanon Identity



All Butuanon speakers admit the “*Butuanon*” ethnic label and most of them positively accept “*Lapaknon*” as alternative self-description. However, “*Butuanon*” and “*Lapaknon*”

are not exactly coterminous for those Butuanon members who wish to intuitively dissociate themselves from the derogatory Lapaknon images of “primitiveness” and “backwardness” associated with the groups of indigenous peoples. On the other hand, some Butuanons label themselves as “*Bisaya*,” which accordingly implies that the concepts associated with “*Butuanon*” and “*Bisaya*,” such as a divide between natives and immigrants, are not contradictory with the concept of self, though the majority of Butuanons still maintain a sharp sense of Butuanon ethnic boundary against other ethnolinguistic groups. At base, there are two notable tendencies observed among Butuanon speakers in their attitudinal changes of dissociation from “*Lapakon*” (de-ethnicization) and association with “*Bsiaya*” (multiple identities).

The existing language and ethnicity links among Butuanons might become vulnerable as observed in partial language shift where pervasive socio-cultural forces toward Bisayanization (linguistically, convergence to Cebuano) are at work, but it is most likely that the label of “*Butuanon*” would remain irrespective of the language used among the members of Butuanon ethnolinguistic group.

Furthermore, as the data on the number of mother tongue speakers in Butuan City (See Table 1) indicates, the number of self-identified Butuanons has been drastically increasing to the point where more than half of the city’s population affiliate themselves with the label, “*Butuanon*.” It is hypothetically assumed that the ideology of a quasi-ethnic place-based identity has been increasingly accepted by many peoples in Butuan, regardless of their ethnolinguistic backgrounds in the long-standing culture contact over centuries where the distinguishing “Butunon-ness” has been substantially diminished by convergence to Cebuano culture and language in the Bisayanizatin process. Furthermore, the in-migrants of “*Bisaya*” have simultaneously increased a sense of belonging to “the place of origin” over generations and gradually accepted a place-based identity (“I am from Butuan City”) with weakening ties with their ancestral homeland, the Visayas.

Conclusion

We are all aware of the fact that language means more than words and sentences. In this paper, a brief review of some Butuanon grammatical features that distinguish its linguistic distinctiveness from Cebuano counterparts was summarized and the compiled Butuanon and Cebuano data set is expected to serve as the baseline for future studies in language change, especially in the field of language maintenance and shift, including language loss and attrition.

Furthermore, the current state of ethnic labelling tradition was briefly examined with

a primary focus on the “*Butuanon*” label in ethnic classification as a mechanism of social stratification. It is our common understanding that the meanings of names are always subject to change and the act of naming has power and significance for those in the manipulation of self-labeling and being labeled. Ethnic labelling is situated in the namer-named relation in a specific context of contact that always involves boundary ambiguity about in-group and out-group membership. An attempt to understand the dynamics, complexities and ambiguities of the ethnic label, “*Butuanon*,” consequently reveals the dynamic and changing nature of the language-ethnicity link in a particular time and space configuration. A marking mechanism traditionally used as a differentiating device of ethnolinguistic distinctiveness in the locality appears to have been gradually transformed into a provisional tool of integration and a symbol of wider socio-cultural and place-based identity.

The central components of Butuanon ethnic identity might have been reconfigured over time in response to continuous changes in the social, economic and political environments and a quasi-ethnic place-based identity (“quasi-Butuanon”) is deemed to be currently in the incubation phase of its formation absorbing members of different ethnolinguistic groups. The “quasi-Butuanon” identity seems to have centripetal forces which unify ethnolinguistic peoples by inspiring them to have an increasing sense of belonging to their place of origin, Butuan, and a shared vision for the future that the people in the locality embrace in favor of further development of urbanization, industrialization, and (agricultural) modernization.

On the fate of ethnic minorities in language shift, many scholars in the field of language contact arguably support the hypothesis that the recessive language would retain some of its linguistic distinctiveness even in heavy contact situations, but Thomason and Kaufman (2001) refer to the probable outcome of its complete transformation into the dominate language, at least when two languages involved are closely related. In such a situation where the Butuanon language diffuses its linguistic distinctiveness in contact with genetically-related Cebuano, although the language and ethnicity link might be greatly focused and strengthened among Butuanon speakers in potential danger of extinction, there is a slim chance of active revitalization of the Butuanon language at this stage in the current sociolinguistic environment and, as a result, the existing language-ethnicity link might ultimately be lost while maintaining the label, “*Butuanon*,” with a strong sense of attachments in the city of Butuan. Linguistic competence in Butuanon might not be a precondition for membership in a “quasi-Butuanon” collectivity across existing ethnolinguistic boundaries.

Finally, as to future research directions, the systematic documentation and description of endangered and minority languages through fieldwork should be carried out with a partial reconstruction from mostly unwritten and/or under-researched languages spoken

by informants in a mutilated form with reference to the codified linguistic norms in previous descriptive research. Furthermore, it is recommended to examine the labelling of membership of ethnic groups along stereotypical categories pertinent to the groups in question and to clarify the label-identification process in terms of de-ethnicization, multiple ethnic identities, or conceptual change of ethnic identity/label in the complexities of language, culture, and identity in the dynamic of Philippine multilingualism.

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APPENDIX

1. Personal Pronouns in Butuanon and Cebuano

	Nominative		Genitive			Oblique	
	Basic set	Enclitic	Proposed	Postposed	Enclitic	Basic set	Enclitic
I							
Butuanon	qakú			ku		kanákuq	
Cebuano	qakú	ku	qákuq	nákuq	ku	kanákuq	nákuq
we(excl.)							
Butuanon	kamí			námuq			
Cebuano	kamí	mi	qámuq	námuq	---		
we all (incl.)							
Butuanon	kita			nátuq		kanátuq	
Cebuano	kitá	ta	qátuq	nátuq	ta	kanátuq	nátuq
thou							
Butuanon	qikáw	kaw		mu		kanímu	
Cebuano	qikáw	ka	qímu	nímu	mu	kanímu	nímu
you							
Butuanon	kamo			niyu		kaníyu	
Cebuano	kamú	mu	qínyu	ninyu		kaníyu	nínyu
he, she							
Butuanon	siya			níya		kaníya	
Cebuano	siyá	sya	qíya	níya	---	kaníya	níya
they							
Butuanon	silá	---		níla		kaníla	
Cebuano	silá	---	qíla	níla	---	kaníla	níla

Note: Pronouns are nominals that show reference in terms of the speaker-addressee relationship.

2. Deictics in Butuanon and Cebuano

Gloss	Dialects	Nominative	Genitive	Oblique
this nearest speaker [first speaker]	Butuanon Cebuano	qíní kírí ~ rí	haní ní-qírí ~ qírí	dínhi dirí ~ ñarí
this near speaker & addressee [first and second person]	Butuanon Cebuano	kiní ~ ni	ni-qíní ~ qíní	dínhi ~ ñánhi
that near addressee [second person]	Butuanon Cebuano	qiyán kanáq ~ náq	haqún ni-qána ~ qánaq	disaqún dínhaq ~ ñánhaq
yon, that most remote [third person]	Butuanon Cebuano	qídtu kádtu ~ tu	hádtu ni-qádtu ~ qádtu	dídtu dídtu ~ ñádtu

3. Predicative and Existential Deictics in Butuanon

Butuanon	[first] This is it. Here it is.	[first + second] This is it. Here it is	[second] That is it. Three it is.	[third] Yon is it. Yonder it is.
	yání	---	yaqún	yádtu

4. Personal Name Markers in Butuanon and Cebuano

Gloss	Dialects	Nominative	Genitive	Oblique
Singular	Butuanon & Cebuano	si	ni	kaŋ
Plural	Butuanon Cebuano + Leyte Cebuano	síla siláŋ silá-si	níla nílaŋ níla-ni	kánda sa-qílaŋ sa-qíla-ni

5. Common Noun Case-Making Particles in Butuanon and Cebuano

	Nominative		Genitive		Oblique
	indefinite	-definite- past non-past	indefinite	-definite- past non-past	Future
	(-y*) -y	qaŋ qaŋ qaŋ	(huŋ*) qug qug	huŋ sa sa	sa sa sa

Note: (-y*) and (huŋ*) are added by the author of the paper, but originally there is no morpheme for the nominative-indefinite and genitive-indefinite slots in Zorc's (1977) study.

6. Locationals in Butuanon and Cebuano

	near	far	left	right
Butuanon Cebuano	dáqig duqúl	ha-ayúq layúq	kawaáh- waláh-	tuqúh- tuqúh-
	inside	middle	(be)side	
Butuanon Cebuano	suúd sulúd	tungáq tuŋáq	--- kílíd	

	(H) --- Down --- (V)		(H) --- Up --- (V)	
	bottom under	downstairs below	top over	upstairs above
Butuanon Cebuano	láwum dálum	qubús qubús	taqás Ceb+Ley qibabáw Ceb+Boh qibábaw	taqás qitaqás qitaqás

Note: Ceb=Cebuano, Ley=Leyte

7. Interrogatives: Temporals in Butuanon and Cebuano

	what	who	whose	when	
				past	future
Butuanon Cebuano	ŋáan qúnsah-	sínuhq kínsa	kanínqu kaŋ-kínsa	gánqu kanúsqa	kúnqu qanúsqa

8. Interrogatives: Locationals in Butuanon and Cebuano

	Time-oriented sets	General interrogatives
Butuanon & Cebuano	where (past) diqín	where Cebuano siqín
Butuanon & Cebuano	where (present) haqín	
Butuanon Cebuano	where (future) kaqín qása	

9. Interrogatives: Numerals in Butuanon and Cebuano

	how many	how much
Butuanon Cebuano	piláh- piláh-	píla píla / tagpíla

10. Interrogatives: Adverbials in Butuanon and Cebuano

	why	how (manner)
Butuanon Cebuano	ḡánsi ba ḡánu (man)	qúnhun qunsáqun

11. Pseudo-Verbs or Homosemantic Equivalents in Butuanon and Cebuano

	should	must/need	like/want	can
Butuanon Cebuano	dápat dápat	kinaháḡan kinaháḡlan	gústuh- gústuh-	pwídi púydi
	know how	know fact	know person	
Butuanon Cebuano	maḡiyát ka-hibalú	mi-sáyud naka-hibalú sáyud	kilaah- ka-qilah-	

12. Negatives in Butuanon and Cebuano

	prohibitive	Existential	future preverb
Butuanon Cebuano	qayáw qayáw	waáq / waáy / waq waláq / waláy	diq dílíq/diq

13. Existential Predicate and Affirmation in Butuanon and Cebuano

	there is [proclitic]	there is [independent]	yes
Butuanon Cebuano	yaqú-y may	yaqún (qa)dúna	húqu qú / qúqu

14. Butuanon Verb Inflection

	ACTUAL	CONTINGENT	AORIST
ACTIVE punctual durative potential	mi- ga- ~ naga- mika- maka-	(ga)- maga- ~ mag- maka-	mu- mag- -----
INSTRUMENTAL punctual durative potential	----- ----- piga- qingka-	----- qi- qika-	----- qi- -----
PASSIVE punctual durative potential	----- ----- ----- piga- mi- ma-	(-un) paga- -un ma-	-a -a -----
LOCAL punctual durative potential	----- ----- ki- -an piga- -an ----- ka- -an	----- paga- -an ka- -an	----- -i -----
USES	progressive, past	future, habitual	commands; with preverbs

15. Cebuano Verb Inflection

	ACTUAL	CONTINGENT	AORIST
ACTIVE punctual durative potential	ni(ŋ)- ~ mi(ŋ)- nag(a)- ~ ga- naka- ~ ka-	mu- mag(a)- maka- ~ ka-	mu- mag(a)- maka- ~ ka-
INSTRUMENTAL punctual durative potential	gi- *gina- gika- ~ na-	qi- *qiga- qika- ~ ma-	qi- *qiga- qika- ~ ma-
PASSIVE punctual durative potential	gi- *gina- na-	-un *paga- -un ma-	-a *paga- -a ma-
LOCAL punctual durative potential	gi- -an *gina- -an na- -an	-an *paga- -an ma- -an ~ ka- -an	-i *paga- -i ma- -i ~ ka- -i
USES	progressive past	future habitual	commands; with preverbs

16. Active Durative and Potential Verb Affixes in Butuanon and Cebuano

Dialects	DURATIVE				POTENTIAL			
	Past	Progressive	Future	Dependent	Past	Progressive	Future	Dependent
Butuanon	ga- ~ naga-		maga- ~ mag-		mika-	maka-		
Cebuano	nag- ~ naga-		maga- ~ mag-		naka-	maka-		

17. Instrumental Durative and Potential Verb Affixes in Butuanon and Cebuano

Dialects	DURATIVE				POTENTIAL			
	Past	Progressive	Future	Dependent	Past	Progressive	Future	Dependent
Butuanon	(gi*) piga-		qi-		qiŋka-	qika-		
Cebuano	gi- ~ gana-		qiga- ~ qig-		gika-	qika-		

Note: (gi*) is added by the author of the paper as a possible deviation influence by Cebuano.

18. Passive Durative and Potential Verb Affixes in Butuanon and Cebuano

Dialects	DURATIVE				POTENTIAL			
	Past	Progressive	Future	Dependent	Past	Progressive	Future	Dependent
Butuanon	(gi*) piga-		paga- -un (~ -un)		mi-	ma-		
Cebuano	gi- ~ gina-		paga- -un ~ -un		na-	ma-		

Note: (gi*) is added by the author of the paper.

19. Local Durative and Potential Verb Affixes in Butuanon and Cebuano

Dialects	DURATIVE				POTENTIAL			
	Past	Progressive	Future	Dependent	Past	Progressive	Future	Dependent
Butuanon	<div>ki--an piga- -an paga--an (-an)</div> <div>(gi—an*)</div>				<div>ki- -an ka- -an</div> <div>(gi—an*)</div>			
Cebuano	<div>gi--an gina- -an paga--an -an</div>				<div>na- -an ma--an</div>			

Note: (gi--an*) is added by the author of the paper.

20. Aorist Durative and Potential Verb Affixes in Butuanon and Cebuano

Dialects	ACTIVE		INSTRUMENTAL		PASSIVE		LOCAL	
	Perfect	Imperfect	Perfect	Imperfect	Perfect	Imperfect	Perfect	Imperfect
Butuanon	<div>mag-</div> <div>†pag-</div>		<div>qi-</div> <div>†pagqi-</div>		<div>-a</div> <div>†pag--a</div>		<div>-i</div> <div>†pag--i</div>	
Cebuano	<div>mag- ~ maga-</div>		<div>qi- ~ qiga-</div>		<div>-a ~ paga- -a</div>		<div>-i ~ paga--i</div>	

Note: †= Affix is limited to negative commands, viz: after Bs “qayáw” *don’t!*