

# SURIGAONUN MORPHOLOGIC STRUCTURATION IN THE LYRICAL TEXTUALITY OF SURIGAONUN POPULAR SONGS

Teresa A. Alas

Surigao del Sur State University- Cantilan Campus, Cantilan, Surigao del Sur, Philippines

For correspondence: E-mail: [alasteresa190@gmail.com](mailto:alasteresa190@gmail.com)

**ABSTRACT:** *This study investigates the morphologic structuration of content and function words in the lyrical textuality of Surigaonun popular songs. Using structural analysis, three songs from each of Surigao del Sur and Surigao del Norte provinces on the island of Mindanao, Philippines are idealized and lexical morphemes (content words N, V, ADJ, and ADV) are analyzed according to forms, roots, and affixes. The idealization of data involves the processing of raw textualities from irregularities to their natural linguistic features: phoneme-grapheme correspondence, retrieval of ellipses, word-order inversions, and contractions. The retrieval of ellipses and contractions entails writing the original forms of words that are clipped or contracted; while in the word order inversions, sentences are rewritten following the Malayo-Polynesian SVO, VSO, and VOS sentence orders. Grammatical morphemes (function words- PRON, PREP, ART, and CONJ,) are analyzed according to their constituents and functions in the sentences. Findings reveal morpho-phonemic irregularities as seen in the deletions, alternations, metathesis, and in the inconsistent form of the vowel sounds [ i ] and [ u ]. The lexical morphemes are mostly complex, as evidenced in the presence of noun, adjective, and verb prefixes. Except for a suffix –HAN (unahan – farther) and an infix –AD (sigurado – surely), Surigaonun adverbs are mostly in their root forms. On the other hand, Surigaonun grammatical morphemes reflect word formations through affixations and express relationships between and among words in the sentence or phrase. Thus, the Surigaonun morphological structure is revealed in the lyrical textuality of Surigaonun popular songs which then allows for a better understanding of the language. It is recommended that Surigaonun popular songs be included in the study of Surigaonun as a mother tongue and be taught in all schools where Surigaonun language is spoken. Further, Surigaonun teachers, academic researchers, contextualizers, and language reviewers may conduct a study on the etymology of Surigaonun words to determine authentic Surigaonun lexicon and orthography thereby helping in the preservation of the native language.*

**Keywords:** morphological structuration, lyrical textuality

## 1. INTRODUCTION

### Rationale of the Study

Language is at the heart of all things human; it is part of the social structure of our communities and is the vehicle for literature and communication. Language, therefore, is not just a part of us. Language defines us.

The Philippines is an archipelago that has 171 living languages, mostly minor, and only 11 are considered major languages (National Statistics Office) one of which is Surigaonun, the local language written and spoken in the province of Surigao del Norte, Dinagat Islands, and some parts of Agusan and Surigao del Sur.

Over the years, Surigaonun language has shared linguistic properties with its coastal neighbors in Bohol, Leyte, and Cebu which created an abundance of language variations, especially after 1960 when Surigao was divided into two provincial districts, Surigao del Norte and Surigao del Sur. This has necessitated the creation of a standardized Surigaonun language which can address the need for rules on uniformity in providing written symbols and which shall form the basis for judgment in language use [1].

Variations in the Surigaonun language have been observed to interfere with the need to identify and use authentic Surigaonun terminologies. These are seen in several occasions where the language is used in communication and in education. Under the K12 Program, for example, the contextualization of Surigaonun Mother Tongue Based – Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE) materials is confronted with some lexical and orthographic issues.

These issues are revealed in studies on Surigaonun language which show data on its language features observed in social media, in written and spoken discourse, and children's songs. This paper uses Surigaonun popular songs to identify features in the Surigaonun morphologic structure and complement what existing researches have so far revealed. These songs illustrate the language of Surigaonuns as depicted in their way of life, cultural pride, familial love, and environmental concern.

With these sociolinguistic consequences of the multilingual phenomena in the context of the rationale, this study is conceived of.

### Theoretical Background of the Study

This study argues that Surigaonun morphologic structuration of content and function words is revealed in the lyrical textuality of Surigaonun popular songs.

This argument is supported by the Linear Grammar Theory, which emphasizes that all regular languages are linear. According to Pollard [2] linear grammar (LG) for a fragment of a particular natural language (NL) recursively defines a set of ordered triples called signs, each of which is taken to represent one of the expressions of the NL. Some of these triples, called lexical entries, represent the (syntactic) words of the NL in question. The set of lexical entries or lexicon forms the base of a recursive definition that helps in the analysis of more complex expressions.

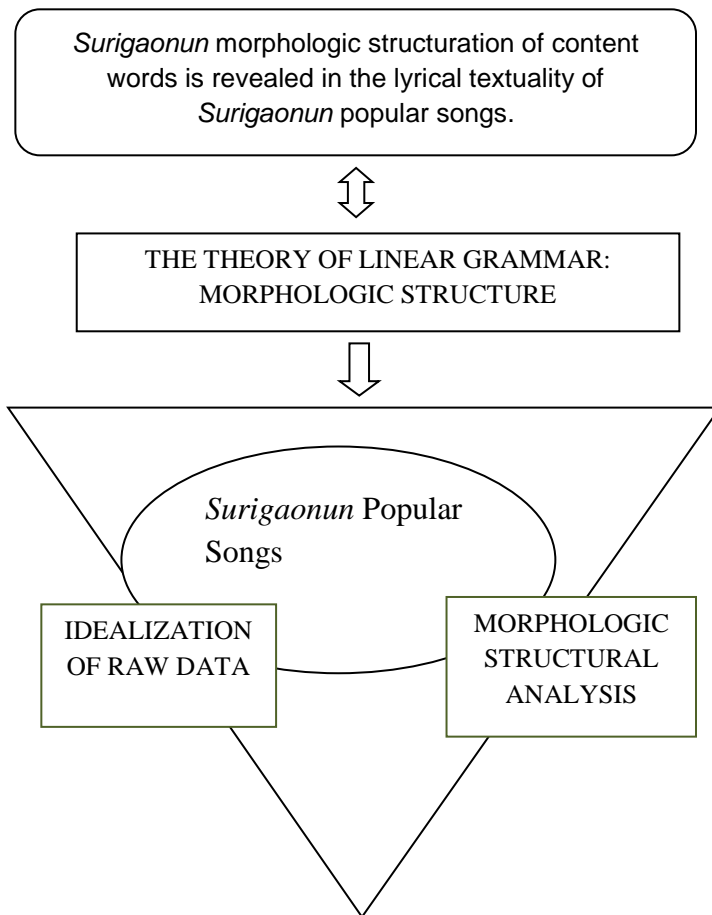


Figure 1. A Schematic Presentation of the Theoretical Background of the Study

Linear grammar (LG) signs have three components: phenogrammatical, tectogrammatical, and semantic components, each of which touches on the surface form, syntactic combinatory potential, and meaning, respectively [3]. These components are contained within a sentence of a language which, in the linguistic theory of linear grammar by Corder [4], is treated as a "string" of grammatical categories like beads in a necklace, or alternatively as a series of slots to be filled by words of the category appropriate to each slot."

The linearity in word structure is further illustrated by Parker and Riley's [5] word formulation or structure of words which are made up of meaningful units (morphemes) and can be lexical (meaningful themselves) or grammatical (relate one lexical morpheme with another). Free morphemes (roots) can stand alone as words while bound morphemes (affixes) can only be meaningful when attached to free morphemes [5]. This theory supports the present research on the idea that linearity in the word structure of a language can be analyzed and understood through its roots and affixes.

## 2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research uses structural analysis. It is the process of dividing words into parts to discover what an unknown word means. Word parts contribute to the overall meaning of a word. Using structural analysis means breaking down words into their basic parts such as the prefix, infix,

root, and suffix. Studying roots, prefixes, and suffixes lead to learning to break apart unfamiliar words in order to understand their overall meanings; understand how prefixes and suffixes can change a word's meaning and how much of our language is constructed; and increase vocabulary and reading comprehension (study.com).

### Sources of Data

The sources of data are the lyrics of six popular songs written by Zandro Urbiztondo ("*Surigao, Surigaonun*", "*Sangtuaryu*", "*Jari Nay Ak Ya Nay Labut ko Dim*"), by Martin Villar ("*Isla Siargao*", "*Onhon Ko Man*") and by Eddie Calumpag ("*Surigaonun, Nangaluja Na?*").

To capture the *Surigaonun* language as it is used in everyday life, the following considerations are used in choosing the *Surigaonun* popular songs: (1) must be written by a native of Surigao; (2) lyrics are in *Surigaonun* language; and (3) three songs must represent each of Surigao del Norte and Surigao del Sur region.

The songs used in the study are representative literature in the popular genre of the two regions of the Surigao Province – Surigao del Norte and Surigao del Sur – where the songwriters hail from. Urbiztondo is a native of Cantilan, Surigao del Sur whose songs depict the life and love of *Surigaonuns* and the message of which the general *Surigaonun* population can relate to. Villar and Calumpag, on the other hand, are songwriters from Surigao del Norte and are known for their songs about the typical *Surigaonun* way of life, the environment, and the people.

### The Speech Community of Surigaonun

*Surigaonun* is a local language in *Surigao del Norte and Surigao del Sur*, both multilingual communities with speakers having a high rate of bilingualism in Cebuano as shown in its linguistic properties and lexicon. According to McFarland (qtd in Dumanig) [6], there are no exact figures of the total number of *Surigaonun* speakers except in a 2002 census, which revealed 22.4% speakers of the total population in Caraga Region (1). A separate survey by Simons & Fennig (qtd in Liwanag) [1] reveals that there are 400,000 *Surigaonun* speakers as of 2009.

Also called *Jaun-Jaun, Waya-Waya* language, *Surigaonun* is spoken in the whole province of Surigao del Norte, Dinagat Islands, some parts of Agusan del Norte, especially in the towns near Mainit Lake, Agusan del Sur, and Davao Oriental. It is also spoken in some parts of Surigao del Sur mostly in the five northern municipalities of Carrascal, Cantilan, Madrid, Carmen, and Lanuza. Typologically, *Surigaonun* is classified as Austronesian, Malayo-Polynesian, Meso Philippines, Central Philippines, and Bisayan language [6].

### Data-generating Process

The process of generating the data comes in three phases:

**Phase One.** The idealization of Raw Data. This phase involves the processing of raw textualities from irregularities to their natural linguistic features: retrieval of ellipses, word-order inversions, and contractions. The retrieval of ellipses and contractions entails writing the original forms of words that are clipped or contracted; while in the word order inversions, sentences are rewritten following the Malayo-Polynesian whereby only the basic orders SVO, VSO, and VOS are observed.

**Phase Two.** Morphologic Structural Analysis. Lexical morphemes (content words N, V, ADJ, and ADV) are analyzed according to forms, roots, and affixes; and grammatical morphemes (function words- PRON, PREP, ART, and CONJ,) are analyzed according to their constituents and functions in the sentences.

Six Surigaonun popular songs are used as sources of data for this study and are chosen based on the following: (1) written by a native of Surigao; (2) lyrics are in *Surigaonun* language; and (3) represent each of *Surigao del Norte* and *Surigao del Sur* region.

### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### Idealization of Raw Data

Idealized data reveal inconsistencies in the phoneme-grapheme correspondence. The use of grapheme [Oo] for the phoneme [u] and grapheme [Ee] for the phoneme [i], is highly observable in the popular songs from both regions.

These inconsistencies indicate that there is an influx of native and foreign linguistic elements from the different influencing languages implying, therefore, that *Surigaonun* language has adapted and learned to adjust according to the needs brought about by modernization and standardization. To modernize, according to Yap [7] is to conform to modern taste, attitude, and standard. This goes to say that *Surigaonun* language with its Cebuano-Visayan / Malayo-Polynesian influence has evolved and has started to conform with modern standards. A cultural tradition illustrated in the word caliber (cassava), for example, cannot be considered erroneous due to the acculturation of local and foreign influences [7] in this case, the Spanish influence.

Geographically, Surigao del Norte areas are closer in proximity to the Cebuano-Bisayan regions than the Surigao del Sur thus, the more evident influence of the Cebuano language on *Surigaonun* language. The open seas of the entire province lie on the side of the Pacific Ocean, which serves as a gateway to the discovery and conquest of the country. Despite foreign influences, there is still a high sense of cultural belonging among *Surigaonuns* as expressed in their popular songs especially *Surigao*, *Surigaonun*, and *Isla Siargao*. The language and upbeat music used in these songs create a vivid and festive description of the *Surigaonun* culture and spirit.

The raw textualities of the *Surigaonun* popular songs are idealized in their linguistic features: phoneme-grapheme correspondence, retrieval of ellipses, contractions, and clippings, and rewriting of word order inversions. It can be concluded, therefore, that inconsistencies in the phoneme-grapheme correspondence and other linguistic features in *Surigaonun* can be traced to local and foreign influences brought about by the geographic position of the province. This finding is relevant and helpful in understanding further the *Surigaonun* language.

#### Morphologic Structural Analysis

The *Surigaonun* lexical and grammatical morphemes are according to the forms, roots, and affixes and according to its constituents and functions in the sentences, respectively. *Surigaonun* lexis is classified into Nouns, Verbs, Adjectives, and Adverbs and its content words are analyzed according to their forms, roots, and affixes.

Data reveal that most *Surigaonun* **NOUNS** are complex in form and are therefore affixed. Further classification of the lexical morphemes reveals an abundance of roots (free morphemes) which are either disyllabic – *trato* (sweetheart), *tuba* (coconut toddy), *bingwit* (fish hook), *baling* (fish net) or multisyllabic –, *babaji* (girl), *higaya* (friend), *takyubo* (clam), *barkada* (friends), *pantalan* (seaport). Meanwhile, affixes (bound morphemes) are composed of prefixes, infixes, and suffixes. Of these, seven are identified to be derivational morphemes which change one part of speech to another part. Other affixes do not change the category of words as nouns. The study of Parker and Riley on the linearity of word structure supports this finding as it stresses that the lexical structure of words are made up of meaningful units. There are nouns without morphemic affixations while others have affixes attached in the beginning, middle, and final part of the root words that change their form and meaning.

Further data reveal that *Surigaonun* **VERBS** are complex in form. That is, there are affixations that form part of the entire word structure. These affixations are mostly inflectional and indicate the tense of the verbs. Actions that are yet to happen or possibly will happen are indicated by the prefixes MA in *matungkad* (can be reached), *ma-utuk* (can be dived), MU- in *mupanaw* (will go), *mutangway* (will offer a drink), *muhamuk* (will become many), and MAG- in *magsinajaway* (will dance). A suffix –ON in *hagaron* (will invite) and –AN in *bantajan* (will watch over), *buhi-an* (will release), and *hikalimtan* (will forget) indicates future action. Past actions are indicated by prefixes NAG- in *nagluib* (cheated), NAN- in *nanhanap* (searched), NU- in *nutuyuy* (trapped), TAG- in *tagpili* (chosen). The prefix GI- in *gihimu* (done) and *gisaad* (promised) denotes past actions and illustrate the Cebuano-Visayan influence on the *Surigaonun* language. Almost all *Surigaonun* verbs used in this study have inflectional changes and morphemic affixations. This, too, is supported by the word-formation theory whereby the importance of root words is stressed to have an understanding of the entire word structure. Parker and Riley( further support this finding with their theory on the linearity of word structure. The different verb formations herein presented illustrate distinctly language in both the northern and southern *Surigao* provinces. It can be concluded that these multiple affixations serve as identifying marks of the uniqueness of the *Surigaonun* language.

*Surigaonun* **ADJECTIVES**, on the other hand, can be simple, compound or complex.. Among the most common prefixes are HA- in *hamabaw* (shallow); KA- in *kabibo* (fun), *kahibuyungan* (mysterious), *kalayum* (deep); *kasipugan* (ashamed of); MA- in *maabi-abihun* (cordial), *mahamuk* (plenteous), and *malisud* (difficult); and NANGA- in *nangaluja* (exhausted). Aside from the prefixes, suffixes are also attached such as: -AN in *kahibuyungan* (mysterious); -ON in *kasipugun* (shy); -HON in *maabi-abihun*; and -UNON in *mahigay-unon* (friendly). An infix in *Surigaonun* adjectives is seen in the word *gagmay*. The infix -G- denotes plurality in the word it modifies. For illustration purposes, other adjectives that make use of this infix include *dagku* (large), *lagju* (far), and *lagpad* (wide).

This finding is a reflection of the linearity of grammar as emphasized by Pollard whereby lexical entries such as the adjectives represent the words of the natural language in

*Surigaonun*. The set of lexical entries or lexicon forms the base of a recursive definition that helps in the analysis of more complex expressions.

**ADVERBS** in *Surigaonun* are mostly in their root forms except for two which have the affixes –AD- an infix added to *siguro* and a suffix –HAN added to an adjective *una* (first) and created new adverb cognates *sigurADo* (sure) and *unaHAN* (farther), respectively.

The theory of word formation and the data herein presented affirms the idea that words are formed through various ways of affixation. This emphasizes that the understanding of the morphemic structure of a language allows language learners and users to understand the *Surigaonun* language and culture.

#### **Surigaonun Grammatical Morphemes**

Identifying the grammatical morphemes is an important process in describing the morphology of a language [6]. *Surigaonun* function words are typical of grammatical morphemes and are analyzed according to their constituents and functions in the sentences.

The personal pronouns *kaw*, *imo*, *mo*, *ko*, *ako*, *dimo*, *dim*, *kamo*, *ijo*, and *ato* are used as noun substitutes and function either as subjects in the sentence, objects, or possessives. Two other types of pronouns identified in this analysis are the interrogative pronouns *ha-in* (where), *umay / uman* (what), *bagan-o man* (how much), and *uno man* (why) and the demonstrative pronouns *ini* (this) and *itun* (that). Two pronouns in close resemblance are *uno man* (why) and *uno may* (what). When clipped, *uno man* becomes *uman* while *uno may* becomes *umay*.

On the other hand, the *Surigaonun* preposition *SA* meaning in, on, at, or to is used to express the relationship between a noun or a pronoun and another word in the sentence or phrase like: *sa unahan*, *sa panginabuhi*, *sa imo*, *sa tanan oras*, and *sa iban*.

The article *AN*, in English *THE*, is evident in all the popular songs and is used to make nouns or pronouns more specific. It can also change adjectives like *gagmay* (small, plural) and verbs like *gisaad* (promised) to nouns: *AN mga gagmay* (the small ones) and *AN gisaad ko* (the promise I made). Conjunctions *SANAN* (and), *UG* (and) are used to coordinate while the conjunctions *KAY* (because), *KUN* (if), *AMU* (that is why), and *GALING* (but because) are used to subordinate statements.

It is revealed that *Surigaonun* grammatical morphemes reflect word formations through affixations which lead to an understanding of their structures. The different word formations and the lexicon used are also illustrative of the mixture of races living in the Surigao Province and the influences coming from its geographical neighbors. Our Austronesian brothers from the Visayas brought this influence [2] when they came and settled with the natives.

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

It is concluded that *Surigaonun* morphologic structuration of content words is revealed in the lyrical textuality of *Surigaonun* popular songs.

#### **5. RECOMMENDATIONS**

Since this paper focuses on the morphologic structuration of *Surigaonun* popular songs, it is recommended that: (1) a comparative study on morphologic structuration of other literary genres in *Surigaonun*, written and oral, be conducted by future researchers to determine the extent of linguistic influences and multilingualism in each of the regions of Surigao; (2) a study on the etymology of *Surigaonun* words be conducted to determine authentic *Surigaonun* lexicon and orthography thereby helping in the preservation of the native language; (3) a comparison of morpho-lexical processes between *Surigao del Norte* and *Surigao del Sur* be explored to see similarities and differences in their native language; and (4) *Surigaonun* popular songs be included in the study and use of the *Surigaonun* mother tongue in all schools where the language is spoken.

#### **6. REFERENCES**

- [1] Liwanag, Mariyel Hiyas. Community-based Descriptive Orthography of *Surigaonun* Language. 2017. April 24, 2018. <https://www.jce.ui.ac.id/download/article/91>
- [2] De la Cerna, Cristina. "Linear Descriptions of *Surigawnon* Linguistic Systems". PhD Thesis. University of San Jose Recoletos, 2015. Print.
- [3] Pollard, Carl. Proof-Theoretic Background for Linear Grammar. 2011. May 11, 2018. <<https://www.coli.uni.saarland.de/course/logicalgrammar/contents/>>
- [4] Corder, S. Introducing Applied Linguistics. Great Britain: Penguin, 2003.
- [5] Parker, Frank and Kathryn Riley. Linguistics for Non-Linguists. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 2004.
- [6] Dumanig, Francis P. Descriptive Analysis of the *Surigaonon* Language. 2015. April 5, 2018. <<https://rcube.ritsumeit.ac.jp/repo/repository/rcube/Francisco.pdf>>
- [7] Yap, Fe Aldave. A Look @ Global Filipino Orthography: Towards Modernization and Standardization. [larc.sdsu.edu/images/larc/Yap-A-LOOK-@-GLOBAL-FILIPINO-ORTHOGRAPHY.pdf](http://larc.sdsu.edu/images/larc/Yap-A-LOOK-@-GLOBAL-FILIPINO-ORTHOGRAPHY.pdf).