Influence of Hiligaynon and Cebuano-Visayan in the English-Speaking Proficiency of College Students

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Abstract:- This study was conducted to determine the dialectal influence of Hiligaynon and Cebuano-Visayan in the speaking proficiency of the college students. This study gives information on the English proficiency level of college students in Cawayan and Balud and how their pronunciation is influenced by Hiligaynon and Cebuano-Visayan language and the proposed activity to enhance the English-speaking proficiency. The respondents were the college students of Balud Municipal College and **DEBESMSCAT-** Cawayan Campus. Quantitative research method and random sampling were employed, simple frequency count and percentage were used. Fifty-two point six percent of the college students who are speakers of Hiligaynon and Cebuano-Visayan are proficient in terms of pronunciation based on the written pronunciation test and 43.3% are highly proficient in terms of pronunciation based on the oral reading exercise. The sound [ou] and $[\theta]$ are the most mispronounced sound based on the written and oral pronunciation test. The 2-Hour Pro-Fun Drill is proposed to address the mispronunciation of the least mastered sounds and to enhance the English-speaking proficiency of the college students.

Implementation of a school policy that will require students to use English in speaking is recommended, make the school an English-speaking zone. Also, teachers who are handling subjects with English as medium of instruction may strictly observe the use of English language. Give students opportunities to speak and provide activities that will enhance their English-speaking skills which include pronunciation.

Keywords:- *Cebuano-Visayan, Hiligaynon, Pronunciation, Speaking Proficiency*

I. INTRODUCTION

According to Murray Goldenberg a retired EAL Instructor and IIELTS/IDP Examiner, as cited by Baeta, Galvan, Solomo, Zamudio, Haber & Osea (2012), proficiency in English is usually defined by a combination of skills: reading, writing, listening and speaking. These are the skills a person should be competent of to be able to deal with the demand of the society, the demand of internalization. English happened to be the language of global communication. Globalization made English language a very important ingredient of a successful individual, an important tool widely use all over the world. To actually broaden once world, open oneself to great job opportunities and connect with diverse people of different nationalities, English proficiency is a must.

Filipinos are non-native speakers of English; they are a multilingual race that consider English language as their second language. Filipino language is consist of several dialects being spoken in the different regions of the country and the combination of the vernacular and international language become habitual among them. This combination of any dialect and international language in communication results to what is called code switching and the sounds of the vernacular sometimes influence the utterance of English language which results to unusual or different pronunciations of English words. The combination of English and dialect is a common phenomenon among Filipinos. In Jacoby's Psycholinguistic theory, this combination of language should not be encouraged in the second language classroom because it can heighten the use of non-target forms producing deviant linguistic patterns. This production of deviant linguistic patterns among nonnative speakers increases the need to be proficient in the use of English. Today, educators are faced with the challenge of addressing the needs of the growing number of students whose primary language is not English (Gibbons, 2003 as cited by Vizconde (2006). There is the necessity for the learners to gain proficiency in English while mastering other skills and content in other subject areas, Vizconde(2006).

Language proficiency is one of the country's strengths that helped in the increase of the economy and made the Philippines the top destination, surpassing India in 2012. According to Andrew King, country director of IDP Education Pty. Ltd. Philippines, Malaysians had an average overall score of 6.71, leading among countries in Asia in overall English proficiency. Philippines was second to Malaysia with 6.69; third was Indonesia with 5.99; fourth was India with 5.79; and Thailand fifth with 5.71. Also, foreign learners are encouraged to study English in the country because aside from the reason that education is affordable it has also quality programs offered in English as Second Language.

However, it was acknowledged in the roundtable discussion organized by the British council, key stakeholders from the government, academe, private, and non-government sectors, that even if the Philippines is doing fine on terms of English competency, concerns on how much of a competitive advantage it still is for the country were raised. The stakeholders agreed that the country needs to step up efforts in improving that teaching and learning of English, developing it as a vital skill of the workforce. This is an initiative that could potentially strengthen the Philippines' distinct advantage in this part of the world, particularly with the upcoming ASEAN economic integration (Cabigon, 2016).

There is an economic competition in the globalised context among countries in the world. Employers in the global market has its qualifications, employers need people with enough experience, skill and other qualifications that are accepted and recognized internationally. But high proficiency in speaking English is the principal prerequisite qualification. These other qualifications will be less recognized if people does not have this proficiency in English. Obviously, English is the number one language all over the world. It is not only for the employment but also for the students who wish to have their higher studies in other country where English is the native language.

As observed today, the English language proficiency in the Philippines, especially in speaking is weakening.

"...various studies reveal that the quality of education in the Philippines is continuously declining. This notion is based on the results of achievement tests and board examinations. Not only the elementary and secondary graduates are affected but also the college graduates. The Professional Regulatory Commission (PRC) reports that passers of board examinations in all fields of endeavor continue to go down. One of the important causes for this phenomenon is the low academic performance in the elementary and secondary levels. This academic performance of the students can be attributed to their proficiency in the English language" This is based on the study of Racca, Robelle Millie Ann B. et al on English Language Proficiency and Academic Performance of Philippine Science High School Students.

Thus, this study is conducted to determine the Influence of Hiligaynon and Cebuano-Visayan in the English-speaking proficiency of the college students and to propose activities that can enhance their English-speaking proficiency.

This study aimed to determine the influence of Hiligaynon and Cebuano-Visayan in the English-Speaking Proficiency of the College Students, specifically:

1. To know what is the English-speaking proficiency of college students in Cawayan and Balud in terms of pronunciation and how Hiligaynon and Cebuano-Visayan language influence it.

2. To propose an enhancement activity for the English-speaking proficiency of these college students.

II. METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study employed quantitative and qualitative approach. Quantitative as it determined the English-speaking proficiency of the college students. Quantitative research focuses on gathering numerical data and generalizing it across groups of people or to explain a particular phenomenon. It is qualitative research at the same time as it describes the influence of two different languages in English language pronunciation.

Data Gathering Procedure and Instrument

Written pronunciation test was conducted to the ninetyfive college students of Balud and Cawayan, forty-three from Balud and fifty-two from Cawayan. Oral reading exercises were conducted to the ninety college students from Balud Municipal College and DEBESMSCAT- Cawayan Campus, thirty-eight from Balud and fity-two from Cawayan. The tasks were conducted to the respondents individually and were recorded. In the first task which was the written pronunciation this test was adapted from Antimon test. (http://www.antimon.com/how/test-pronunciation/test.php) this is used to test pronunciation. The respondents answered these questions: Are *son* and *sun* pronounced the same way? (yes or no) Does *basic* have an s or z sound? (s or z) Does *rule* rhyme with fool? (yes or no) Are where and were pronounced the same way? Does *low* rhyme with *throw*? (yes or no) Does of have an f sound or v sound? (f or v) Are roll and role pronounced the same way? (yes or no) Does road rhyme with broad? (yes or no) Does food rhyme with good? (yes or no) Is any pronounced like penny or nanny? (penny or nanny). Fter the written test was the oral reading exercise, there were five (5) sentences and each respondent was asked to read the following sentences orally, the sentences were composed of words with basic vowel and consonant sounds that are commonly mispronounced. Those are the sounds [e], [I], [i], [u], [U], [o], [ey] [f], [v], and voiceless [th]. These sounds were selected to be the focus of pronunciation test during oral reading exercise because according to Pachina, Elizabeth in her article Pronunciation Problems of Students in the Philippines, Filipino speakers have what we call Filipino accent, one of the most striking errors among Filipino students is the mix up of several consonants and vowels. For example is the substitution of /p/ for /f/, the /b/ and /v/, /i/ and /e/, especially if these sounds occur close together. Another sound that Filipino students struggle to utter is the /th/ sound which they often substitute with either /t/ or a /d/. Since the respondents of the study were Filipino learners and are nonnative speakers of English language, this became the basis of the instrument for oral reading exercise.

The oral reading exercises of the respondents were recorded through voice recorder and were transcribed.

After the retrieval of the written test and the recorded oral reading exercise, the researcher tabulated and analyzed the data, counted the correct answers in the written test and transcribed the recorded oral reading and tallied the errors in pronunciation. The data gathered was organized. The researcher used voice recorder to identify errors manually. Elkhair Muhammad Idriss Hassan used recording test in his study about Pronunciation Problems: A Case Study of English Language Students. According to him, samples of pronunciation can be repeated as many times as he/she needs and this will enable him/her to identify errors. She added that many of the researchers in the previous studies have depended on recordings as a tool of collecting their data e.g. (Ma; Lin, 1994) used audio recordings to investigate to what extent adult native speakers of Mandarine Chinese learning English as a second language could pronounce five front vowels of English and which vowels were most difficult. Recordings were also used by Atwel (2001) in his project ISLE (Interactive Spoken English Education), the project collected a sample of audio recordings of German and Italian learners of English reading aloud selected samples of English text and dialogue to train the speech recognition and to correct pronunciation errors. The researcher made an assessment of the recorded oral reading.

➤ Statistical Tools

Percentage and Rank Order. These statistical tools were used in interpreting the scores and answers obtained by the respondents in the oral reading and written pronunciation tests. Slovin's formula is used to calculate the sample size (n) given the population size (N) and a margin of error (e)

It's a random sampling technique formula to estimate sampling size

It is computed as n = N / (1+Ne2)

Whereas: n = no. of samples n = total population e = error margin / margin of error

To get the English speaking proficiency, this scale was used in the written pronunciation test: of the 10 items, 9-10 correct answers is exemplary, 7-8 is highly proficient, 5-6 is proficient, 3-4 is less proficient and 0-2 is nit proficient. In the oral reading, of the 30 words in the oral pronunciation test, 25-30 correct pronunciation is exemplary, 19-24 is highly proficient, 13-18 is proficient, 7-12 is less proficient, 0-6 is not proficient. This scale was adapted from Racca, Robelle Millie Ann B. and Ronald Candy S. Lasaten, Ronald Candy S.(2016) in their study which they divided the score into 5 ranges to identify the English Language Proficiency.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

English Speaking Proficiency of College Students in Terms of Pronunciation and how Hiligaynon and Cebuano-Visayan Influence it

One of the concerns of this study is to determine and describe the English-speaking proficiency in terms of pronunciation of the college students based on the written pronunciation test and oral reading exercise which tested the students' pronunciation of some vowel and consonant sounds. The data showing the level of proficiency are presented in Table 2 and 3.

Table 1a presents the English-speaking proficiency of the college students based on the written pronunciation test. Showing the data of the college students from both schools separately and the overall data of these college students.

Table 1a Distribution of Students' Level of English-Speaking Proficiency in terms of Pronunciation based on Written Pronunciation

Range of Scores	Level of English-Speaking Proficiency	Balud Municipal College		DEBESMSCAT Cawayan Campus		Overall	
		f	%	f	%	f	%
9-10	Exemplary	0	0	1	1.9	1	1.1
7-8	Highly Proficient	7	16.3	9	17.3	16	16.8
5-6	Proficient	24	55.8	26	50	50	52.6
3-4	Less Proficient	8	18.6	16	30.8	24	25.3
0-2	Not Proficient	4	9.3	0	0	4	4.2
Total		43	100	52	100	95	100

The table reveals that 52.6% which means majority of the students, gained the proficient level based on the written pronunciation test with scores ranging from five to six; 25.3% of these students are from Balud Municipal College and 27.4% are from DEBESMSCAT- Cawayan Campus. Meanwhile, 25.3% obtained the less proficient level, 8.4% of these students are from BMC and 16.8% are from DCC. 16.8% students attained the highly proficient level, 7.4% of these students are from BMC and 9.5% are from DCC. 4.2% belong to the not proficient level, these students are from BMC. Only 1.1% got the exemplary level, this student is from DCC.

Table 1b presents the least mastered sound during the written pronunciation test. Showing the data of the college students from both schools separately and the overall data.

Sound	ound Balud Municipal College (43 respondents)		DEBESMSCAT Cawayan Campus (52 respondents)		Overall (95 respondents)	
	f	%	F			%
s[ʌ]n	25	58.1	27	52	52	54.7
ba[s]ic	34	79.1	43	82.7	77	81.1
r[u]l	32	74.4	39	75	71	74.7
wh[εə]r	26	60.5	35	67.3	61	64.2
l[ou]	27	62.8	44	84.6	71	74.7
o[f]	20	46.5	24	46.2	44	46.3
r[ou]l	19	44.2	30	57.7	49	51.6
r[ou]d	2	4.7	2	3.8	4	4.2
f[u:]d	7	16.3	2	3.8	9	9.5
p[e]n	25	58.1	13	25	38	40

Table 1b Numbers of Correct Pronunciation of Consonant and Vowel Sounds

The table indicates that the most mistaken sound is the [ou] in the word "road" and the sound [u:] in the word "food". The students pronounced the word "road" same with the pronunciation of the word "broad"- which sound [ɔ]. The word "food" is pronounced the same way as "good"-which sounds [u]. It seems that they also based on the spelling of the words because they pronounced it the same way if the two different words have the same vowels

Table 2a presents the English-speaking proficiency of the college students based on the oral reading exercise. Showing the data of the college students from both schools separately and the overall data.

Table 2a Distribution of Students' Level of English-Speaking Proficiency in terms of Pronunciation based on Oral Reading Exercise

Range of Scores	Level of English-Speaking Proficiency	Balud Municipal College		DEBESMSCAT Cawayan Campus		Overall	
		f	%	f	%	f	%
25-30	Exemplary	11	28.9	10	19.2	21	23.3
19-24	Highly Proficient	12	31.6	27	52	39	43.3
13-18	Proficient	7	18.4	13	25	20	22.2
7-12	Less Proficient	8	21.1	1	1.9	9	10
0-6	Not Proficient	0	0	1	1.9	1	1.2
Total		38	100	52	100	90	100

It can be deduced from the table that majority of the students (43.3%) gained the highly proficient level in the oral reading with scores ranging from nineteen to twenty-four. 13.3 of these students are from Balud Municipal College and 30% are from DEBESMSCAT- Cawayan Campus. Meanwhile, 23.3% (12.2% from BMC and 11.1% from DCC) obtained the exemplary level, 22.2% (7.8% from BMC and 14.4% from DCC) attained the average level of proficiency, 10% (8.9% from BMC and 1.1% from DCC) gained the less proficient level and 1.1% (from DCC belong) to the not proficient level.

Table 2b presents the least mastered sound during the oral reading exercise. Showing the data of the college students from both schools separately and the overall data of these college students.

Table 20 Errors in Tronunciation during the Oral Reading Exercise								
Vowel and Consonant Sounds	Balud Munic	cipal College	DEBESMSCAT- Cawayan Campus		Overall			
	f	%	f	%	f	%		
[æ]	21	55.3	21	40.4	42	46.7		
[e]	13	34.2	17	32.7	30	33.3		
[i:]	10	26.3	25	48.1	35	38.9		
[i]	1	2.6	4	7.7	5	5.5		

Table 2b Errors in Pronunciation during the Oral Reading Exercise

[u:]	15	39.5	25	48.1	40	44.4
[u]	13	34.2	12	23.1	25	27.8
[ou]	12	31.6	30	57.7	42	46.7
[ei]	6	16	7	13.5	13	14.4
[f]	2	5.3	2	3.8	4	4.4
[v]	14	36.8	19	36.5	33	36.7
[θ]	20	52.6	23	44.2	43	47.8

Table 2b shows the errors made during the oral reading exercise. For the college students of Balud, [æ] in the word 'man' have the highest number of error (55.3%) in the vowel sounds and [θ] in the word 'think' have the highest number of error (52.6%) in the consonants sounds. For the lowest number of errors, vowels sound [i] in the word 'kick' have 5.5% and consonant sound [f] in the word 'first' have 4.4%.

For the college students of Cawayan, vowel sound [ou] in the word 'road' have the highest number of errors which is 57.7% and consonant sound [θ] in the word 'think' have the highest number of errors which is 44.2%. For the lowest number of errors, [i] in the word 'kick' for vowels sounds and [f] in the word 'first' for consonant sounds are least mispronounced.

In the overall, the voiceless /th/ or $[\theta]$ is the most mispronounced consonant sound and [ou] and [α] are the most mispronounced vowel sounds. Meanwhile, [i] and [f] are the least mispronounced.

The results indicate that 52.6% of the college students are proficient in terms of pronunciation based on the written pronunciation test, 25.3% of them are less proficient, 16.8 are highly proficient, 4.2% are not proficient and there is 1.1% who is exemplary. Meanwhile, based on the oral reading exercise, only 43.3% of the college students are highly proficient in English speaking in terms of pronunciation. 23.3% of them are exemplary, 22.2% are proficient, the 10% belong to less proficient and there is 1.2% that is not proficient.

The least mastered sound based on the written pronunciation test are the [ou] in the word "road" and the sound [u:] in the word "food", while in the oral reading exercise, the least mastered sounds are [æ] in the word 'man' and $[\theta]$ in the word 'think'.

The influence of Hiligaynon and Cebuano-Visayan is evident in the pronunciation of some students who are native speakers of the said languages. The sound of the voiceless /th/ or [θ] in the word 'think' does not exist in both languages, the students are not used or exposed in this sound that is why they pronounce it with /t/, like 'tink' for think and 'tot' for thought. The vowel sounds [ou] and [æ] are also not common in both Hiligaynon and Cebuano-Visayan language, the vowel sounds of the said languages are more on short 'u' in the word book and [a] in the word rat. That is why they pronounced 'the word road into 'rud' and man (m[æ]n) into m[a]n. Wordsworth (2019) stated that errors made in pronunciation are due to the difference in the sound system and the word symbols between the mother tongue and English.

The least mastered sound based on the written pronunciation test are the [ou] in the word "road" and the sound [u:] in the word "food", while in the oral reading exercise, the least mastered sounds are [æ] in the word 'man' and $[\theta]$ in the word 'think'.

Boonkit (2009) in his study entitled Enhancing the Development of Speaking Skills for Non-native Speakers of English found out the strengths and weaknesses of speaking performance of non-native speakers, weaknesses were found in pronunciation and grammatical structure but the errors found in pronunciation are in word stress and not in vowel and consonant sounds. This shows why majority of the college students are highly proficient when it comes to pronunciation of the consonant and vowel sounds. One of the theoretical perspectives in language acquisition which is the socialization theory is link in this. This theory views that language development is facilitated by corrective feedbacks and this corrective feedback includes correction in pronunciation. It emphasizes that an individual expands his vocabulary through hearing others speak. This means that if an individual is exposed to the correct use of the language, he or she will acquire the same correctness. Another theory that will give light to the result is the skill theory which emphasizes the importance of cognitive learning and practice and the theory of communicative competence by Hymes (1972) discussed in the theoretical framework. These imply that college students from Balud and Cawayan are in the environment of school where in the use of English language occurs which they can hear and learn from it, they are surrounded by people who give corrective feedback about the use of the language including pronunciation. These people include teachers, administrators, staff and other students. According to these college students, they use English language during recitations, when answering the teachers' questions, and during reporting. These are opportunities to not just learn the language but also used it. These exposure to English language helped these college students in their English-speaking proficiency in terms of pronunciation. This further implies that the students' pronunciation of the vowel and consonant sounds is not influenced by their mother tongue because of their exposure to the use of it. Thus, the students still have to be more exposed to the use of English language in oral exercises to maintain the level of proficiency and to even move up to the exemplary level. The percentage of the college students who belong to the less proficient and not proficient level should not be disregarded. They should be provided with activities that will cater their weakness in pronunciation.

Proposed activities to Enhance the English-Speaking Proficiency of the College Students

Another concern of these study is to be able to suggest activities that can enhance the English-speaking proficiency of the college students.

The result indicates that the college students who are speakers of Hiligaynon and Cebuano-Visayan, have errors in the pronunciation of these consonants and vowel sounds. Highest mistake is the pronunciation of $[\theta]$. This agrees to Elizabeth Pachina's article, Pronunciation Problems of Students in the Philippines, one of the sound that Filipino students struggle to utter is the /th/ sound which they often substitute with either /t/ or /d/. Istigomah (2019) in her study An Analysis of Pronunciation Errors of English Consonants Sounds produced by English Department Students, also found out that $[\theta]$ is one of the consonant sounds that is commonly mispronounced, it is pronounced by most as /t/. This implies that college students are not aware of the correct pronunciation of this sound when speaking. This further implies that they need more chance to hear and utter this sound for them to be able to get used to it and be aware of the sound.

The proposed activities to enhance the least mastered sound and the English proficiency of the college students is entitled "Pro-Fun Drill". This activity is adapted from Kenneth Beare in his article about How to Teach Pronunciation. The name of the activity is changed and the activities are modified and contextualized.

➤ "Pro – Fun Drill"

The Pro – Fun Drill is a 2-hour activity that will occur thrice every week. The participants of this FunDrill are all the college students. The time for this activity is scheduled that all will be available for two hours without class obstruction. This is called Fun Drill because the pronunciation will be taught and practice through games, having fun while learning. This weekly activity is to be implemented to give students more exposure and practice in English pronunciation to enhance their speaking proficiency and to be aware of the sounds of English that they least mastered. The following are the activities to be done during the Pro-Fun Drill:

➤ Level 1- Say the Word

Words consisting the sounds they have to learn for the day is presented on the board. The class will be divided into groups depending on the class size. Each group will be asked to read what is on the board in chorus. When mispronunciation is detected, the other group will earn points. This game will push every group member to pronounce the word correctly to win the game. Cooperative learning will occur by tutoring one another how to pronounce the words correctly.

► Level 2- Read and Rhyme

In this game, student will be asked to come up with words that rhyme with others presented on cards. This game will enhance vocabulary and pronunciation.

Level 3- IPA Symbol Card Game

This card game helps students learn phonetic symbols. Words will be presented and they are going to identify what symbol is appropriate to the sound present in each word. Cards are included on the site that can be printed and use in class.

Level 4- Tongue Twisters

Classic English tongue twisters to help students focus on some of the more challenging phonemes.

The researcher also adapted a video from the internet that will surely help in this problem of pronunciation of this consonant sound. The video provides a background of the sound and gives instruction how to produce the sound through illustration of the speech organs. After the illustration of how the sound is produced, there are words with the voiceless "th", the voice in the video read the words to demonstrate clearly how these words are to be read with the voiceless "th". One part of the video is that individual words will appear and the viewer of listener will read the words which is recorded by the system to assess if the pronunciation of the sound / θ / as in "think"- American English Pronunciation. It can be accessed by opening this link https://youtu.be/qC016GQZtM4.

IV. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the study, it is concluded that in terms of pronunciation, 52.6% of the college students are proficient based on the written pronunciation test and 43.3% are highly proficient based on the oral reading exercise. Among the consonant and vowel sounds, the most mispronounced sounds are [ou] and $[\theta]$. The influence of Hiligaynon and Cebuano-Visayan is evident in the English pronunciation of some students who are native speakers of the said languages because there are consonants sounds and vowel sounds that do not exist in Hiligaynon and Cebuano-Visayan. Errors are made in pronunciation because of the difference in the sound system and the word symbols between the mother tongue and English. The "Pro-Fun drill" may be proposed to address the mispronunciation of the least mastered sounds and to enhance the English-speaking proficiency of the college students in terms of pronunciation.

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