

Language and Desire in Hiligaynon¹

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(Abstract)

The paper examines three dictionaries and a grammar book with lexical entries in Hiligaynon. It proceeds from the premise that words, or sets of related words are windows to the “inner life” of a society (Sapir 1921; Matore 1953). In particular, it will analyze these dictionaries in terms of lexicon related to gender. Initial findings show a paucity of terms on explicit and sensitive aspects of gender. However, certain key words connected to gender do cut across dictionaries while some “lexical witnesses”² register changes across time. On the bases of these lexical data, some tentative generalizations shall be made on attitudes towards sex and different ways to contain and negotiate desire.

Listed below are the dictionaries to be used in the study; they are arranged chronologically.

De Mentrida, Alonso, OSA. *Vocabulario de la Lengua Bisaya, Hiligueina y Haraya De La Isla De Panay Y Sugbu Y Para Las Demas Islas*. Manila, 1637; Valladolid, 2004.

_____. *Arte De La Lengua Bisaya-Hiligayna De La Isla De Panay*. Corregido y Aumentada Por El M.R.P. Jose Aparicio, 1894.

Kaufmann, Rev. J.,M.H.M. *Visayan-English Dictionary* (Kapulungan Binisaya-Ininglis). Iloilo: La Editorial, n.d. (ca. 1920).

Alcantara, Ruby G. *Diksyunaryong Hiligaynon-Filipino*. Diliman, Lungsod ng Quezon: Sentro ng Wikang Filipino, 1997.

When I was doing my dissertation research on translating in Hiligaynon in the early nineties, I was intrigued by the taxonomy of sins delineated in a confession manual in Hiligaynon (Perez 1884). Of particular relevance to this paper are the entries under the fourth commandment: “Thou shalt honor thy father and thy mother.” The husband is asked, for instance, if he has seen to it that his wife has followed God’s wishes; he is also

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² Desmet, *et al.*, define “lexical witnesses” as the symbol of change in society,” i.e., the entry of the word “coke” in French lexicon sometime in 1770 signaled the birth of capitalism. But might not “lexical witness” be used to words and concepts that have endured through the years? It is in this sense that I appropriate the term.

asked if he has allowed his wife to talk for a long while with another man or to be away from their home for some extended time. The woman, on the other hand, is asked if she has respected her husband at all times, or if she has followed his commands and decisions especially with regard to their children and their servants. Also interesting is the section on the sixth commandment. This details the thoughts, speech, gestures, and activities considered indecent, e.g. dancing, singing and keeping copies of indecent songs, sketching indecent figures. Such injunctions were likely universal in the Spanish period since literature was a panoply of religious discourse—novenas, hymns/carols, bibles, books of conduct, etc. But might the dictionaries, since they are supposed to be strictly denotative and expected to be objective—have been spared? Would the sharp gender dichotomy between man and woman be shown? Is there space for other gender identities? Has the vocabulary of desire been edited out? These are contentious questions. The battle between the “idealist” and the “socio-historical” views of language could exist even at the lexical level, but an examination of gender-related entries in three Hiligaynon dictionaries could yield some results. Terms on sexual identity, the body, and desire shall be chosen. These would be consistent with currents in gender scholarship which critique a phallogocentric culture and suggest resistance against the “Law of the Father” as Lacan would say (Jones 1985:86-101).

DIFFERENTIATING GENDERS

The study did yield some unexpected revelations. For one, it appears that the borders of a dichotomous framing are not clearly drawn. Basic terms distinguish female from male, i.e., babaye from lalaque. However, a number of entries, mostly derivatives from these basic words (except for “bayug” and “bilatun”), acknowledge other gender identities. Mentrída includes the following entries, for instance:

1. babainun: amujerado (effeminate)
2. bayugun: hombre afeminado (effeminate)
3. nagababaje: representar mujer, vestido como mujer, hacienda los oficios de mujer
4. nanhimabaje: llamar a otro mujer; en los pescados abiertos por el lomo la parte que lleva la esquina del lomo se llama lalaque, la otra
5. nanhimayug: llamar bayug a alguno (to call on an effeminate)
6. nagalalaje: andar vestida de hombre; o representar hombre la mujer
7. lalaquinun nga babaje: hembra amachada, ora sea mujer, or animal
8. bilatun nga lalaque: *dicitur* de hermafrodito, como botoan nga babaje, de la mujer hermafrodita

In Kauffman, there are the following entries. However, the derogatory attitude towards this gender preference or leanings seep through the examples using the words.

1. babayen-on. Effeminate, womanish, feminine in a depreciative sense. Ang mga lalaki nga babayen-on sang batasan talamayon. Effeminate men are contemptible.

2. binabaye. Effeminate, female-like especially applied to a cock with the habits of hens.

Moreover, while gender diversity is acknowledged, the terms for male and female and their preoccupations, are greatly elaborated. This is facilitated by affixation and reduplication which are the preferred ways by which Hiligaynon (and other Philippine languages) form words. Thus, the word derivations from the basic terms of “babaye” and “lalaque.” entries from Mentrída and Kauffmann.

Mentrída’s Dictionary: Terms for Female and Male

Female

1. babaye.p.p.: hembra, mujer, generalmente;
2. cababayian: el colectivo
3. namabaye; nagapamababaye;
4. naquibabaye: dares a mujeres; maquibabaye: dado a mujeres;
5. nagababaye: representar mujer, vestido como mujer, hacienda los oficios de mujer;
6. nanhimabaye: llamar a otro mujer; en los pescados abiertos por el lomo la parte que lleva la esquina del lomo se llama lalaque, la otra babaye;
7. babainun: amujerado³;
8. cababayinan: hermana o hermanos entre hermanos; calalaquinan, hermano o hermanas entre hermanas; tibabaye: con las locuciones siguientes estara claro:
9. Tibabaye sila: son marido y mujer, o maridos con sus mujeres. Bisan maalung sarang quita magsacay, con di quita tibabaye: aunque hubiera olas, nos pudieramos embarcar si no fuéramos embarcar si no fuéramos con mujeres, sino nosotros solos. Tibabaye sila: todos son mujeres. Tibabaye siya gihapon: siempre es esta soltera o viuda; las mismas locuciones se usan con tilalaque.

Male

1. lalaque. p.p.: macho, *latine mas*;
2. nagalalaque: andar vestida de hombre; o representar hombre la mujer;
3. maquilalaqui nga babaye: mujer dada ahombres. Masigcalalaqui sila nga naca sara: pecar un lalaque co otro., son someticos;
4. calalaquinan: pariente varon; y si es mujer cababayenan; lalaque, f. 2: hacer tamales esquinados;
5. lalaquing buhat: viudo; babayeng buhat: viuda;
6. lalaquinun nga babaye: hembra amachada, ora sea mujer, or animal.

But as the following listing from Kauffman’s dictionary shows, gender-specific words are also formed independently from these roots, some of which show a.) age-differentiation, e.g., for females, *akay*, *babaknit*, *dalaga*, *gining*, *inday*, *lin-ay* and for males, *lay-aw*,

³ effeminate

olitao, soltero; b.) Closeness of relationship e.g. for females, *baine and babay* and for males, *akid, atid, idol*; and c.) social status, e.g. *asawa* (generally for female spouse) and *bana* (for male spouse)

Kauffmann's Dictionary: Terms for Male and Female

FEMALE

1. akay. (B) Darling. A term of endearment used towards small girls.
2. asawa Wife, spouse, a married woman whose husband is alive.
3. babae. Woman, female
4. babaknit. Dim. of babae, but also applied to girls, especially in contempt. *Nalagyo ang babaknit sa tapos na niya mapanghaboy ang mga hampangan sang iya mga kaupud.* The naughty girl ran off after throwing away the toys of her companions.
5. babay. (B) Used only of, or amongst females: Friend, playmate, constant companion, bosom friend, intimate; to be friends or constant companions. *Nagababay or nagababayanay sila.* They are very intimate or constantly together. (The relative term for males is *akid, atid, idol*).
6. babaye. Woman, female. *Ido nga babaye.* A bitch. *Karnero nga babaye.* Ewe. *Kabayong nga babaye.* Mare. *Ang mga babaye mapigaw.* Women are weak. *Daw babaye sia.* He is like a woman, i.e. fickle, unmanly, etc.
7. babayen-on. Effeminate, womanish, feminine in a depreciative sense. *Ang mga lalaki nga babayen-on sang batasan talamayon.* Effeminate men are contemptible.
8. babayhana. Woman, female (familiar or even contemptuous).
9. baine. A friend, companion, intimate (among females; cf. *babay id*). The correlative term for males is *idol, akid, atid.* *Kahirup, kadapig*
10. binabaye. effeminate, female-like especially applied to a cock with the habits of hens.
11. dalaga. Kadalagahan
12. inday. Darling girl, sweetheart, dear child, little dear, little girl
13. gining. Young lady, maid, girl, lass, single woman. Miss. (cf. *ginang, ginuo*)
14. lin-ay. Young, youthful, tender, soft, gentle; a young lady, girl, maiden of tender years.
15. oloasawa. (H). Concubine, mistress, paramour (cf. *ala-asawa, arasawa*)
16. soltera. Single woman
17. puta. Harlot, strumpet, whore, prostitute. Cf. *bigaon, alpot, patotot, hiwalan—flirt/coquette, patotot, bighalan*

MALE

1. akid. "Pal" chum, comrade, friend, companion.
2. atid. "Pal," friend, chum, comrade, friend, companion.
3. abuelo. Grandfather.
4. babaylan. Sorcerer, wizard, magician, one versed in superstitious practices.
Also used a verb. Ginbabaylan sangbabaylan ang masakit nga bata. The sorcerer practiced his art or performed his enchantments over the sick child.
5. bana. Husband; a married man.
6. inamay. Fatherly, paternal.
7. idol. Chum, pal, male friend, companion
8. lalaki. Man, male: lover, paramour, correspondent.
9. Magpakalalaki ka. Be a man.
Be brave. Act the man. Be manly.
10. lay-aw. Bachelor
11. laki. Man, male, masculine
12. kerido. Beloved, sweetheart.
13. olitao. A young man; a single or unmarried man.
14. soltero. Single man

EMBODYING LEXICOGRAPHY

The dictionaries were also examined on the basis of lexical items on body parts related to sexual reproduction and desire. Have these been edited out as was done in religious literature or even in published folklore such as corridos? The findings show that terms for intimate body parts have not been excluded from both the Mentrída and Kauffmann dictionaries, as the list below shows. In fact, the terms for male hermaphrodite is "bilatun" and the term for the illicit activities of a womanizer is "nanhimilat," both of which have been quite graphically derived from "bilat" the female organ; the term for female hermaphrodite "babaye nga botoan" is derived from "boto," which is the term for male organ; the term for castrate is "hiboto." Interestingly, however, the meanings of some terms in Mentrída's are given in Latin: the meaning of the term "boto," is *membrum virile, etiam in brutis* (there is a carry-over of this in the Kauffmann entry; that of "bilat," is *veranda faemine*; "buyu," is *veranda in faeminis parvulis*—the lexicographers hiding in the "objective" cloak of scientific names. The examples using the terms also tend to be on the safe side as seen, for instance, in the sentences below illustrating "titi" meaning "breasts." One of the most obscene curses in Visayan is safely skirted in an entry under "bilat": "decir buyayaos *nominando veranda.*" The meaning of the word "quinatao" is not Latinized, but its root "tao" is actually explained in terms of the birth process (*pagtao*), thus a biological phenomenon. (*kinatao* in Kauffmann): se llaman las partes verandas de la mujer o hombre, aunque mas las del hombre.

Mentrida's Dictionary: Terms for Body Parts

1. boto. __*membrum virile, etiam in brutis*; botoan: *que tiene miembro viril*; babaye nga botoan: mujer hermafrodita, que tiene sexo viril; hiboto: capar
1. butang: parte, miembro, capitulo, articulo...*Item*, los actoso pasiones del anima se dicen asi: Cabtang. L. cabtang sa calag ang pagsubu, ang pagcaharluc, ang paghimaya, ang pagbuut, ang pagdumur
2. bilat. __u.a., *veranda faemine*: bilatan. L. bilatun nga lalaque: *dicitur* de hermafrodito, como botoan nga babaye, de la mujer hermafrodita; nanhimilat: decir buyayaos *nominando veranda*
3. hita. ingle
4. itlog.l. etlog: turma de hombre o animal, *id est*, lagay.
5. buyu—*veranda in faeminis parvulis*. Taboni and buyo mo: dicen a las ninas; en los hiligaynos de las grandes lo dicen tambien
6. quinatao: se llaman las partes verandas de la mujer o hombre, aunque mas las del hombre
7. soso. p.a.: teta, generalmente; sosohan: cosa tetuda, que tiene tetas, o que las tiene grandes
8. soso. u.a.: caracolillos de la mar a modo de teta; manoso; cogellos

Kauffmann's Dictionary: Terms for Body Parts

1. bilat. Vulva; the genitals of a woman. Cf. pokak, poklo, putay, puyo
2. buto. Membrum virile. cf. pisot. pitoy.
3. kinatao/kinatawo. The nature of man; congenital, genitals, sexual organs
4. hita. The groin.
5. itlog. Egg; testicle; to lay eggs.
6. pitoy. See buto.
7. putay. See bilat
8. soso. The female breast, paps; to suck the breast; pasoso—give or offer the breast.” Bulahan ang tian nga nagdala sa imo, ka gang mga doghan nga ginsosan. “Blessed is the womb that bore thee and the paps that gave thee suck.
9. titi. Mammary gland, teat, nipple dug. To suck the breast. Ang bata nagatiti. The baby is sucking the breast. Ambot kung diin pa niya tition ang dako nga pilak nga ginakinahanglan niya.
10. ulutngan. Teat, nipple, pap, dug
11. utung. To be prominent, stand forth, be elevated or higher than the surroundings, to jut out, project, said of any small elevations or projections, as a tumour, wart, pimple, etc.

ENGENDERING DESIRE

Both dictionaries include entries on desire. The same observations made in the previous section on “body parts” can be made. In Mentrída’s, one meaning of “biga,” is given as *Dicunt esse ardorem libidinis ad coendum*. That of “cohit”...*Item, in faeminis, extrahere digito semen in cuitu receptum*. One notes, however, that the illustration that follows does not dovetail with the meaning explained.: “Dimo icohit yanang taliuis sa dalung gan: no limpies con eso puntiagudo la oreja.” For “haplus,” part of the entry is in Latin: “refregar trayendo la mano biandamente; halagando a persona o a animal. *Item, refregar entre la mano cosa larga, etiam genitale ut commoueatur ad pollutionem*. “Higugma” which means to love is illustrated in the following way: *vide hagugma, amar a Dios y a los hombres*.

However, what cannot be ignored is the great cultural elaboration of endearment, especially in Kauffmann’s dictionary, thus my decision to include this section in the paper. It is thus necessary in Hilgaynon culture to redefine desire to include softer, gentler emotions such as affection and fondness, etc. The usage of this vocabulary need not cast us among the lustful who are eternally buffeted by whirlwinds in the second circle of Dante’s *Inferno*. Moreover, the semantic range of certain lexis relating to desire is an index of or the key to attitudes or predispositions associated with the culture of the Hilgaynons.⁴ The word “palangga,” meaning “to love” or “to consider dear” generates a number of words such as follows: “ga,” “angga,” “palanggingging,” “ginggging.” Likewise, the Kauffmann dictionary, in particular, lists gender and age-specific terms of endearment.

Mentrída’s Dictionary: Terms Related to Desire

1. biga__p.a. et pagcabiga sa lauas: *Dicunt esse ardorem libidinis ad coendum*; poco usado es, pero los compuesto, bien usados, *unde*, bigaun: puta, ruffian; namiga. l. nagapamiga: putear or rufianear f.3: llamar bigaun, *id est*, puta o ruffian: cabigaunan: es plural.
2. cohit. P.a. Reg. 9.: limpiar raspando como Job sus llagas o los oidos con paletilla...*Item, in faeminis, extrahere digito semen in cuitu receptum*. Dimo icohit yanang taliuis sa dalung gan: no limpies con eso puntiagudo la oreja. gugma
3. haloc. d.: oler llegando las narices o besar, y lo ordinario lo toman por besar. F.3., sincopado. Harcan mo ang camut sang padre
4. hapohap.p.a.f.2: sobar⁵ el cuerpo o parte del trayendo la mano y apretandola

⁴ See, for example, Anna Wierzbicka’s study on keywords in English, Russian, Polish, German, and Japanese.

⁵ 1. fam To trash; 2. vulg. (*manosear*) to fondle, finger, paw. 3. (*molesta*) to pester. Fr. Vox Harrap’s *Diccionario Manual*. Primera Edicion, Barcelona: Biblograf, Febrero, 1991. From hereon, all meanings of Spanish words shall come from this source.

- blandamente poe el cuerpo, brazos, piernas como hacienda papachos,⁶ o hacer papachos; ; *unde*, el cosicosa; ginhapohap ang quilir; gintumban ang tinay: de la escalera
5. haplus.p.a. hosohoso. P.p.f.2: refregar trayendo la mano biandamente; halagando a persona o a animal. *Item, refregar entre la mano cosa larga, etiam genitale ut commoueat ad pollutionem.*
 6. higugma: *vide* hagugma, amar a Dios y a los hombres. F.2
 7. hoblas. p.a. nagahoblas: desnudarse, andar o estar desnudo de la cintura arriba; holohoblas.
 8. hobo. p.a. cosadesnuda, en cueros, si no es que se especifique que parte del cuerpo esta desnuda; nagahobo: desnudar asi a otro, en cueros, o alguno parte del cuerpo. f2.:la ropa.
 9. hocas., nagahocas. p.a.:desnudar, como quitarlas medias el lamong. F.2.:la ropa
 10. palanggi.piedras cornelinas; panga comi: Consuelo.

Kauffmann's Dictionary: Terms Related to Desire

1. abraso. Embrace; hug
2. ayod. A very obscene expression denoting the act of copulation
3. ayodayod. Freq. of ayod; also a kind of insect.
4. bika. To straddle, spread the legs apart when sitting, standing, lying.
5. biga.Harlotry, whoredom
6. diwal. To loll, put out--, hang out—the tongue.
7. hakus.Embrace; hug
8. halok. Kiss, buss.
9. hapo.Pant
10. hiwal.To loll or hang out the tongue; to flirt, to be a coquette, Nagahiwal ang dila sang ido, kay ginahapo sang dalagan.
11. hublas.Naked, bare, undressed.
12. itot. See iyot.
13. iyot. A very obscene term expressive of the act of copulation
14. pisot. See buto.

Kauffmann's Dictionary: Terms of Endearment

1. akid. "Pal, chum," comrade, friend, companion.
2. atid. "Pal," friend, chum, mate, constant companion
3. gingging. A darling (female).
4. iba-iba. (B). Dim. and Freq. of iba. Also: Friend, chum, pal, playmate. Iba-iba ko siya. He is my chum.: mate, concubine, paramour, mistress, correspondent.
5. idol. Chum, pal, male friend, companion.
6. inday. Darling girl,sweetheart, dear child, little dear, little girl.
7. inday. The vocative of inday. Darling, dear, my sweet, honey.

⁶ *nm Mex* caress, pat.

8. nena. (Sp. nena). A girl infant, darling, bay, girl (as a term of endearment). Also a darling.
9. nene. (Sp. nene). A boy infant, darling, baby, boy (as a term of endearment); also a darling baby girl.
10. nening. Term of endearment for young girls.
11. nonoy. A term of endearment for a darling boy.
12. palangga. Favorite, darling.
13. pungpung. Darling.
14. toto. A little boy, darling boy, small male child, infant-boy, baby-boy.
15. toto. The vocative of toto.

IMPLICATIONS

In a trail blazing study of Tagalog translation in the Spanish period, Vicente Rafael (1988) shows the ways that the ladinos had actually subverted the new, dominant culture in the translation of Tagalog literature into Spanish. The preceding description and analysis of lexical items related to gender and desire in the Mentrída and Kauffmann dictionaries demonstrate another patch of resistance in a semantic field which colonial cultures re-drew. The credits to the making of *diccionarios* and the *artes* on the eight major languages produced in the Philippines in the Spanish era and the early American period were given to the missionaries and thus, native concepts were inscribed within their system of literacy.⁷ As Ong (1982: 8) notes: “Writing gives a grapholect power far exceeding that of any purely oral dialect.” But the real authors were really the ladinos, natives from the Philippine who were the informants, translators, or even better, consultants of the missionaries.

It is significant to note that Mentrída had earlier published the *Arte de la lengua bisaia, hiliguayna de la isla de Panay* (1618); thus, the actual collection and inscriptions of the lexical items appearing in the *diccionario* published in 1637 were actually done much earlier (Garcia-Medall: 2004, 10), or within 50 years of Spanish colonization. Although it may go against the grain of anti-essentialist views, we could surmise that the vocabulary of gender, body, and desire came from the living, spoken language of the native speakers of Hiligaynon. Interestingly, most entries survive about 300 years later in Kauffmann’s dictionary, which is also based mainly on spoken Hiligaynon, judging from the acknowledgements that Kauffmann makes to three named Hiligaynon speakers--an American parish priest (for the English portion) and “all the teachers of Igaras, Iloilo Parochial School,” as well as with his preoccupation with accents and other indicators of oral dialects. Such “lexical witnesses”⁸ are evidence that the dichotomies of gender

⁷ For a contemporary example, please see Peter Muhlsausler’s “‘Reducing’ Pacific languages to writing,” Eds. John E. Joseph and Talbot J. Taylor. *Ideologies of Language*. London and New York: Routledge, 1990, 189-20..

⁸ Desmet, *et al.*, in *Ideologies* define “lexical witnesses” as the symbol of change in society,” i.e., the entry of the word “coke” in French lexicon sometime in 1770 signaled the birth of capitalism. But might not “lexical witness” be used to words and concepts that have endured through the years? It is in this sense that I appropriate the term.

identities and roles were made natural only in a symbolic order imposed by the clerico state.

Taking from Sapir, Matore writes that words, or sets of related words, are crucial to the study of the “inner life” of societies in a specific period. A cross-linguistic study of this vocabulary within the Philippines could give empirical boost for moves to site gender studies within our cultural matrix. Moreover, the concept of frequency of usage could be added to cultural elaboration and keywords as indicators of core values of a culture. Here is where computers and concordances can be put to use as in Gamboa-Alcantara’s monolingual dictionary (1997), but that would be another phase of the study.

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