

Tausug and Butuanon: their Lexical Relationships and Implications on their Historical Relationships (An Abstract)

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Specifically, the study was aimed at determining: (1) the ethno-historical profile of the Tausug and the Butuanon; (2) the lexical links between Tausug and Butuanon; (3) the socio-economic, cultural, historical and political profile of the Tausug and the Butuanon existing during the pre-Spanish time; and (4) the archeological evidences that support the lexical links between the Tausug and Butuanon languages.

The study was conducted in two areas of Mindanao and Sulu: Jolo, Sulu for the Tausug language, and Butuan for the Butuanon language. The data consisted of the Swadesh 200-word list; the selected, categorized, and modified 245 core vocabulary taken from the 318 SIL

word list; and some transcripts of the informants' answers to the interview question's.

Methodology

The descriptive method was employed in this study. In gathering the data, the researcher interviewed six Tausug informants and three Butuanon informants. A cassette recorder was used to record the informants' answers to the interview questions. The researcher also read books relevant to the topic, and went to the different libraries and universities in Manila, Butuan, Cagayan de Oro City, Dumaguete, Jolo and Zamboanga City.

To evaluate the data and to determine the probable cognates and non-cognates, Gudchinsky's (1956) "inspection" method was used. Also, Zorc's (1977) formula was used as a guide in evaluating the text messages and in determining the mutual intelligibility of the Tausug and Butuanon languages.

Data Collection Techniques

This study is mainly qualitative and partly quantitative research. As such the data was collected using the following techniques: collection, translation, transcription, and identification of the probable cognates and the probable non-cognates based on the Swadesh 200-word list and the 245 core vocabulary; evaluation of the text messages and presentation of the analyzed significant statements of the informants of both languages.

Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations

In the light of the results of the analysis of the probable and the non-cognates based on the Swadesh 200-word list; the selected, categorized and modified 245 core vocabulary; and the evaluation of the text messages of the informants, the following findings were disclosed:

1. Tausug is the trade language and the lingua franca of the people residing on Jolo, Sulu. On the other hand, Sebuano is the trade language and the lingua franca of the people in Butuan. Butuanon is used only in some barrios.

2. The data for the lexical links revealed the following findings:

Tausug and Butuanon data: The Swadesh 200-word list revealed 170 or 85% probable cognates and 30 or 15% non-cognates. The 245 core vocabulary revealed the following: “terms relating to time” and “numerals” showed 100% probable cognates; “names of tools” got 90%, “flora and fauna”, 85.71%; “food and culinary terms”, 83.33%; “body parts”, 80.76%; “nouns”, 80%; “actions”, 75%; “trade and commerce”, 66.66%; “kinship terms”, 66.66%; foods/vegetables/meats, 65.85%; “abstract words”, 54.54%. The overall result revealed 189 or 77.14% probable cognates and 56 or 22.85% non-cognates.

Tausug-Sebuano data: The Swadesh 200-word list revealed 112 or 56% probable cognates and 88 or 44% non-cognates. The 245 core vocabulary revealed the following: “numeral terms” obtained 100% probable cognates; followed by “nouns”, 85.71%; “food and culinary terms”, 72.22%, “actions”, 62.5%; “pronouns”, 57.38%; “body parts”, 53.84%; “foods/vegetables/meats”, 53.65%; “flora and fauna”, 52.38%; “names of tools, implements, and devices”, 50%; “kinship terms”, 48.48%; “terms relating to time”, 40%; “trade and commerce”, 33.33%; and “abstract words”, 18.18%. The overall result revealed 136 or 55.51% probable cognates and 109 or 44.48% non-cognates.

The Butuanon and Sebuano data: The Swadesh 200-word list showed 134 or 67% probable cognates and 66 or 33% non-cognates. The 245 core vocabulary list revealed that: “numeral terms” obtained 100%, the highest probable cognates; “food and culinary terms”, 88.88%; “foods/vegetables and meats”, 87.80%; “abstract words”, 81.81%; “body parts”, 73.07%; “flora and fauna” and “trade and commerce”, 66.66%; “kinship terms”, 63.63% “pronouns”, 57.14%; “names of tools, implements and devices”, 55%; and the lowest is “terms relating to time”, 40%. The total number of probable cognates is 177 or 72.24%

non-cognates is 68 or 27.75%.

3. The result of the selected vocabulary of the Tausug and Sama languages, revealed 144 or 67.92% probable cognates and 68 or 32.07% non-cognates.

4. The tape recorded data presented to the informants for their evaluation revealed the following results; they understood the message “with ease,” but in some cases “with little difficulty” and some instances “with great difficulty.” Based on Zorc’s formula, these two languages can be considered mutually intelligible.

5. The socio-economic way of life of the Tausug during the pre-Spanish time was basically primitive. However, with the advent of Islam, changes were introduced. After the conversion of the natives to Islam, their way of life was already governed by the islamic principle as mandated in the “Holy Qur’an.”

Farming and fishing were and still are the means of livelihood of the people in the community; however, at present, the presence of big fishing boats with modern equipment affect their income. Due to the fertility of the soil and the absence of industrial plants in the vicinity, the area is primarily an agricultural land.

6. The Tausug material culture is marked by the “ukkil” design which is usually placed in their houses, furniture, weapons, and jewelry. Moreover, their costumes vary according the nature of the occasion. During special and formal occasions, women used the “badju masigpit or makipot” with matching embroidered and expensive ‘patadjong’, highlighted by expensive jewelry. Their attire is reflective of their social standing in the community.

The cultural practices observed before and now are as follows:

1. *Pag-gunting* (equivalent to the baptism of the Christian); 2) *pag-islam* (circumcision); *pagduwaa bulan* (a ritual); *pagkaja*; and 4) *ungsod* (bridal price).

7. The historical links between the Tausug and the Butuanon are manifested in maritime trade that existed in the Philippine Islands prior to the Spanish conquest. Trade and commerce included selling of both foodstuffs and slaves in and out of the country.

Moreover, the presence of maritime vessels coming from Borneo and other foreign countries implies the existence of trade and commerce between the Philippine Islands and other countries. Obviously, the trade transaction during those times was primarily done by means of sea transportation.

Relative to the origin of the word "Tausug," Tausug informants contend that the meaning of "Tausug" is "people of the market" or "bazaar". Kadil (1979) further confirms the informants' statements and emphasizes that the word 'Tausug' does not mean 'people of the current', but is rather derived from the Arabic "suq" which means 'market.' Sulu was the center and the meeting place of traders coming from other countries like Malaysia, Borneo, Indonesia and Moluccas. Later, "Tausug" applies to the people living in Sulu.

On the other hand, the Butuan informants pointed out that the Tausug come from Butuan. Their bases are the historical statements of Combes (Blair & Robertson: *The Philippine Islands 1493-1898*), and the presence of plants like the 'hadlayati' and the "balunoh" which are not native to Butuan and are believed to have come from other areas like Sulu or Borneo. Warren (1985) has pointed out that the Tausug and the language are intrusive into Sulu.

Contrary to the contention of the Butuanon informants and Chronicler Combes, Tausug informants Bangahan and Tahil believed otherwise. Bautista (1981) pointed out that during the early time, Caraga (Butuan), Davao, Palawan, Surigao and other neighboring areas were under the political control of the Sulu sultanate.

Anyway, whether it is Butuanon bound for Jolo or vice versa is not very important. What is significant is in the past there existed trade relations between the Philippines and other countries like Malaysia,

Borneo, Indonesia, and Moluccas. Furthermore, based on proximity theory (Borneo is nearer to Jolo than it is to Butuan), these traders probably passed by Sulu and considered Sulu as their meeting place before proceeding to Butuan.

8. The archeological diggings of the *balanghay* fossils in Butuan City which are believed to have been used in trade and commerce during the early times are proofs of the existing trade between Butuanons and their neighboring areas. Moreover, the discovery of the tremendous Chinese ceramics common to both places possibly accounts for the early relationships between the two places: Jolo and Butuan City. These archeological finds in both areas are evidences that may support the claim that in the early times trade transactions existed between these two places. Furthermore, these people who traveled from one place to another necessarily brought with them their own language.

There are other significant discoveries in Butuan that may support the lexical links between these two places. These are the discovery of glass containers, Chinese British colonial coins, iron vessels, firearms, brass containers, ornaments and chest fittings.

Conclusions

In view of the results of the analysis of the probable and probable non-cognates of the Swadesh 200-word list, the selected, categorized and modified 245 core vocabulary, the following conclusions were drawn:

The changes that took place in Jolo were brought about by the advent of Christian missionaries and the establishment of schools. Moreover, the breakdown of the peace and order situation contributed to the out-migration of the Joloanos to other places on Mindanao, specifically Zamboanga. Despite the changes, the Tausug language did not change for it stood firm against all these circumstances. It remained dominant and arrogant; it was and is the lingua franca of the Joloanos. A deeper look at this language gives the impression that it is an amalgamation of the different languages such as Malay, Indonesia,

English, Spanish, Visayan, Butuanon and many more. This is an indication that there were people who came to Sulu, stayed in the place and probably influenced the native language. Thus it could be implied that Tausug could be a Creole language. This assumption, however, needs further investigation.

The study strongly suggests that among the Bisayan languages, Butuanon comes closest to Tausug as indicated by the results of the analysis of the two languages. The factors that contributed to the lexical similarities of these two languages are the two-way migration, trade and commerce, intermarriages, and conquests. These lexical similarities and Zorc's mutual intelligibility test prove that the two languages are mutually intelligible.

Furthermore, the lexical similarities of Tausug and Butuanon languages point to the same view advocated by Spoehr (1973) who notes that:

On the basis of present knowledge, the Tausug language is most likely related to the southern Visayan on the north coast of Mindanao (Conklin, 1955; Chretien, 1963). The similarity of Tausug to the Visayan languages has been noted by observers as far back as the 18th century (Dalrymple, 1808; Hunt, 1837; Belcher, 1848; Baranera, 1899; Orosa, 1923). Keifer (1969) further notes that Tausug does not exhibit significant dialectical variation. This leads to the conclusion that Tausug is an intrusive language in Sulu.

Moreover, there are similar cultural concepts between Tausug and Butuanon. For example, the Butuanon concept of "sipug," is also "sipug" in Tausug. However, unlike the Butuanon concept of instilling in the minds of the youth the virtue of morality, the Tausug concept of "sipug" goes deeper: It connotes grave shame which can sometimes lead to "parang sabil" or juromentado."

Another significant cultural influence common to both Tausug and Butuanon comes from Indian Culture, which has affected the people's world view. Some examples of these words are *guro* (teacher), *budhi*

(conscience), *Bathala* (god), *diwata* (worship), etc. Among these words, *budhi* (conscience) is well believed in and adhered to by the Tausugs.

More significantly, the results of the analysis of the 85% probable cognates of the Swadesh 200-word list, the 74.79% probable cognates of the core vocabulary and the evaluation of the text messages strongly suggest the lexical relationships of the Tausug and the Butuanon languages. Moreover, the findings of the studies of Zorc (1977), Pallesen (1985), Gallman (1997), Warren (1985), Rodil (1994) and other writers strongly support the lexical relationships of the Tausug and Butuanon languages. In the light of these findings, the researcher firmly believed that trade and commerce, two-way migration, intermarriages and conquests are the basic factors that link the Tausug and the Butuanon languages.

Implications

Considering the opposing views of the Tausug and the Butuanon informants, the question of the possible migration route of the Tausug and Butuanon is a very sensitive issue to tackle.

However, the Tausug informants pointed out that “Tausug” is the result of the native language of the Buranun (believed to be the natives of Jolo) and was influenced by the Muslim missionaries coming from Malaysia, China, Indonesia and Brunei. As such, Arabic words, Malay words and Chinese, among others, could have possibly converged into the Tausug language.

Bautista (1981) elaborated the extensive political control of the Sultan of Sulu which was considered not only a kingdom but also a vast empire. He further contended that the rulers of these areas have probably come from Jolo.

On the other hand, the Butuanon informants contended that the Tausugs are from Butuan as evidenced by the similarity of the Tausug language with other Central Philippine languages (Zorc: 1977). This is

supported by Warren (1985) who stated that the Tausug and the language are intrusive into Sulu. Moreover, Combes (Blair & Robertson: *The Philippine Islands*, 1493-1898) pointed out that no less than the King of Jolo admitted that he was a Butuanon.

With all these opposing views, perhaps, it is significant to consider that the main task of the study is to find out the possible links of the lexical similarities of these languages. The results of this study, therefore, indicate that early trade really existed between Sulu and Butuan. Perhaps, it is worth noting that from the 9th to the 13th centuries, Butuan was at the height of its economic power. It was natural for people in the neighboring areas to trade with Butuan. The existence of the trade relations probably paved the way for migration, intermarriages and conquest which further enhanced the coming together of different people and possible language contact.

In view of all these contentions and evidences, the researcher has come up with the following hypothesis: that trade and commerce, two-way migration, trading, and conquests are the factors that serve as the lexical links of the Tausug and Butuanon languages.

Recommendations

In view of the findings and conclusions of the study, the researcher recommended that:

1. A comparative study on the syntax and semantics of Tausug, Butuanon and Sebuano languages be undertaken to resolve the issues that a lexical analysis cannot handle.
2. An analysis of some cultural beliefs and practices common to Tausug and Butuanon be done.
3. A reconstruction of the Proto-Tausug or Proto-Butuanon languages be done.

and the 4. A study which will focus on the etymology of some significant terms like “Tausug,” “Parang,” “Patikul,” and some names of other municipalities be conducted to show the origin of these words which were probably coined by foreigners who had invaded the place.

5. Tausug language is perceived as an amalgamation of different languages such as Malay, Chinese, English, Sanskrit, and others. For these reasons, there is a need to conduct a study which will answer the question, “Is Tausug a Creole language?”

6. In view of the impressive findings of the Swadesh 200-word list and the 245 core vocabulary which revealed 85% and 77.14% probable and probable non-cognates, respectively, it is imperative to conduct a study which will determine which of the two languages is the mother language.