



A Comparative Language Study between Filipino and Mandarin Languages

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Abstract: The current research comprehensively carries out a comparative study between Filipino and Mandarin languages. Specifically, it has a specific focus on the comparative analysis of the syntactic aspect of the two languages. Methods including qualitative analysis, comparative analysis as well as literature synthesis were employed to facilitate to carry out the current research. Upon showing the similarities between the two languages of Filipino and Mandarin languages, the results also reflected a great number of differences in terms of the syntactic aspect between the two languages. In view of that, the current research ultimately wrapped up itself with certain enlightenment for all the language educators with respect to their language instruction in the future as well as all the language researchers in terms of their follow-up language instructional practices and language comparative studies.

Keywords: A comparative language study; Comparative linguistics; Filipino language; Mandarin language; Theory of Comparative Analysis (CA).

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1. INTRODUCTION

With the increasing globalization of business, it has become essential for companies to communicate effectively with their clients and partners who speak different languages. As Mandarin is the most spoken language in the world, learning it can be highly beneficial for businesses. Meanwhile, Filipino is spoken by over 100 million people and is the official language of the Philippines, which is a growing economy in Southeast Asia. Comparing these two languages can help businesses learn the nuances of each language and improve their communication skills with potential partners and customers.

While at the same time, the language and culture of a country are deeply intertwined, and understanding both is crucial for building strong relationships. Filipino and Mandarin cultures are vastly different, with distinct customs, traditions, and beliefs. By comparing the two languages, learners can

gain insight into the values and beliefs of each culture, and how these can affect communication. This can help in avoiding cultural misunderstandings and building stronger relationships.

Besides, the Philippines and China are both popular tourist destinations, attracting millions of visitors each year. For tourists, knowing the local language can make a significant difference in their travel experience. For instance, learning Mandarin can be helpful in China, especially in communicating with locals, ordering food, and navigating around the city. On the other hand, learning Filipino can make traveling to the Philippines more enjoyable, with the ability to communicate with locals and understand local customs and traditions.

Specially, in today's globalized world, learning a foreign language has become increasingly important, not only for communication but also for

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cognitive development. Mandarin and Filipino are two widely spoken languages with a rich history and culture. Learning these languages can help students develop critical thinking skills, cultural awareness, and a deeper understanding of the world. By comparing these two languages, students can gain a deeper appreciation of each language's unique features and gain a broader perspective on language and culture.

In view of this, it is of great significance to conduct a comprehensive comparative study of the official languages of the Philippines and China, namely Filipino and Mandarin languages. After all, the comparative study of Filipino and Mandarin languages, to a large extent, has added more references or standards or referenced materials to the follow-up language research by the linguists and scholars from these two countries.

From a practical point of view, the comparative study of Filipino and Mandarin languages, on the one hand, will help the majority of language educators to better carry out their language teaching practice, especially when it comes to a professional language comparison within their language teaching and practice (Subgo, 2008).

On the other hand, with the deepening of Sino-Philippine relations, the exchanges between China and the Philippines are also increasing, which to another large extent also promotes the frequent application of Filipino and Mandarin languages in the process of language translation as well as language conversion. This is also of great positive significance to those linguists and translation scholars who are from the two countries and who focus on the comparative studies between Filipino and Mandarin languages.

2. Material and Methods

In light of the material and methods employed in the current research, since this is about a comparative study between Filipino and Mandarin languages, the author will focus on analyzing the similarities as well as the differences between the two languages in terms of the syntactic aspect specifically. Therefore, three analytical research methods including method of qualitative analysis and method of comparative analysis are employed to carry out the current research.

2.1 A qualitative analysis

At the beginning of the current research, the first research method used by the author is the method of qualitative analysis. With regard to language studies, this might be the most useful research method that most researchers will use when

they need a series of materials and data that cannot be reached in some way.

The method of qualitative analysis is a research method that involves examining data, such as texts, images, or audio recordings, to understand the meanings and patterns that emerge from the data. From data collection to data organization and finally to data interpretation, the method of qualitative analysis mainly involves gathering the data through various means such as interviews, focus groups, observation, or document analysis. Once the data is collected, it is organized in a way that makes it easier to analyze. This may involve transcribing interviews, creating codes, or categorizing the data. After the data has been organized and analyzed, the researcher interprets the findings to gain a deeper understanding of the phenomenon being studied. This may involve developing a theory or conceptual framework to explain the findings.

Overall, the method of qualitative analysis is a flexible and iterative process that requires the researcher to be open to unexpected findings and to adapt their approach as they learn more about the data.

2.2 A comparative analysis

The comparative analysis method is also adopted for the current research. On the one hand, this method can comprehensively sort out some necessary information in terms of the basics of the two languages respectively. The related information, together with other selected materials of the two languages are compared with each other with regard to the syntactic aspect of the two languages, so as to have a deeper understanding of the similarities as well as the differences of the two languages of Filipino and Mandarin languages.

The use of comparative analysis method is more conducive for the author of this research to accurately analyze the comparative study between Filipino and Mandarin languages. Specially, with the help of science and technology and multimedia, the comparison between the two languages will also incorporate new elements of language education, thus promoting the development of language comparison in turn, and at the same time allowing language comparison to ultimately display a new face towards the entire language world (Ye & Xu, 2010).

At the same time, the author reads further and analyzes through a qualitative means in order to discover the related theories of language comparison and language learning more realistically and rationally, and extract the view that language comparison and language learning are closely integrated, and then draw up the enlightening

linguistic significance of language comparison and language learning. By synthesizing a large number of relevant documents and data, the author strives to demonstrate that the analytical processes and conclusions are as comprehensive and objective as possible.

Besides, the current research also draws on relevant contents from other disciplines such as language philosophy and language sociology, and adopts interdisciplinary research methods, etc., which will definitely help to fully understand the relationship between language comparison and language learning, so as to consolidate the comparative study between Filipino and Mandarin languages.

Undoubtedly, the above two analytical research methods, which include method of qualitative analysis and method of comparative analysis, will lay a solid theoretical and methodological foundation for the current research and the writing of the research paper. It will also provide a necessary as well as an important premise for the further writing of the findings and discussions which will be shown in the following section.

3. Theories

In the first section, the author will introduce the theory of comparative analysis, which is the theoretical foundation of the current research. And then, in the following parts, the author will briefly review the historical development of the languages of Filipino and Mandarin languages, which is aimed at paving the way for the further comparative study between the two languages in the section of findings and discussions.

3.1 Theory of comparative analysis (CA)

The theory of comparative analysis is the most important theoretical basis of the current research. Basically, the theory refers to a sort of method of identifying potential errors by comparing the similarities and differences between different languages, such as a first language and a second language (Cai, 2017; Feng, 2017). Of course, in this research, as the theoretical basis, the theory of comparative analysis is mainly used to compare the two different languages of Filipino and Mandarin languages in a targeted manner.

The theory of comparative analysis came into being in the 1950s, and its founder was Charles Carpenter Fries. In the eyes of Fries, he believes that the most important thing in language learning is the phonetic leadership (Fries, 1945). Language learners should try their best to imitate the voices and intonations of the native speakers and form certain habits. Appropriate teaching materials will help

language learners achieve this goal. Therefore, in the book *Teaching and Learning English as a Foreign Language* published in 1945, he has proposed that the most effective teaching material is the teaching material compiled on the basis of scientific description and careful comparison between the target language and the learner's native language (Fries, 1945).

Thus, based on a full understanding and utilization of the theory of comparative analysis, it is helpful to compare two different languages, and at the same time, it also makes language researchers realize how to finally compare and distinguish between what must be learned and what is not necessarily learned in the second language learning environment. While at the same time, the process of comparative analysis includes four steps. First, the comparative analysis process makes a detailed description of the target language and the learner's first language as a basis for comparison. Second, the process of comparative analysis selects certain linguistic items or structures with comparative significance between the two languages. It then compares the selected language items or structures between the two languages to discover the similarities and differences between them. Finally, the process makes predictions about possible difficulties and mistakes that language learners might have during their learning processes.

3.1.1 Brief description of historical development of Filipino language

Filipino, the national language of the Philippines, was issued by Executive Order No. 134 in 1937 by the first self-government president, Manuel Quezon, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the 1935 Constitution of the Philippine government (Ye, 2010). As the national language, it was originally converted from Tagalog, which was popular in the areas of the capital, Manila. Therefore, the Philippine national language was first called the "National Language", commonly known as "Tagalog" (Wu & Shi, 2017).

The Philippines consists of more than 7,000 islands, with more than 70 ethnic groups and more than 170 languages. The Philippines is a multi-ethnic, multilingual and multicultural republic. The current constitution of the Philippines stipulates that Filipino is the national language and is the official language along with English (Dolan, 1991).

3.1.2 Brief description of historical development of Mandarin language

Mandarin, also known as Mandarin Chinese, is the official language of the People's Republic of China. Mandarin is also another name for "Modern Standard Chinese", which is based on the

standardized pronunciation of Peking (capital of China) dialect (Mandarin Academy, 2010). At the same time, Mandarin is also a lingua franca with “Northern Mandarin” as its basic dialect and the typical “Modern Vernacular” as its grammatical standard.

Since Mandarin is another name for “Modern Standard Chinese”, just like every country has its own common language, it includes the official language of China and the regional language of the capital, Peking (Huang & Liao, 2017). Therefore, for example, regardless of the multilingual countries such as the United States, Russia, India and the Philippines, the standardized language of every country is implemented to facilitate people’s extensive communication (Zhao, 1980).

As one of the working languages of the United Nations, Mandarin has become an important bridge for cultural exchanges between China and other foreign countries as well as the language of choice for foreigners to learn Chinese (Dong, 1995; Liu, 2008). So far in China, say, as of 2015, 70% of China’s population has the ability to use Mandarin, although there are still about 400 million people who are limited to one-way communication.

According to China’s *National Project of Common Language Popularization*, by the end of 2022, the national common language will be basically popularized nationwide. Specifically, the penetration rate of Mandarin across the country will be over 80% on average (Zhang, 2005).

In view of this, it is quite clear that Filipino and Mandarin languages are two very different languages that come from distinct linguistic families, with Filipino belonging to the Austronesian language family and Mandarin belonging to the Sino-Tibetan language family. Despite these differences, both languages are spoken by millions of people around the world, making them important languages to study and compare.

On the one hand, one reason to compare Filipino and Mandarin is to better understand the unique grammatical structures and features of each language. Filipino, for example, has a rich system of verbal affixes that can change the tense, aspect, and mood of a verb. Mandarin, on the other hand, has a complex system of tones that can differentiate between words that would otherwise be homophones. By studying these differences, linguists and language learners can gain a deeper appreciation of the complexity and diversity of human language.

On the other hand, to compare Filipino and Mandarin is to explore the cultural and historical

connections between the Philippines and China. The Philippines has a long history of trade and cultural exchange with China, and this has led to the adoption of many Chinese loanwords in the Filipino language. Similarly, Mandarin has had a significant influence on the languages and cultures of many countries in Southeast Asia, including the Philippines. By examining the linguistic and cultural connections between these two regions, researchers can gain insights into the complex interactions that have shaped their shared histories.

Nevertheless, comparing Filipino and Mandarin can help language learners develop a deeper appreciation of the similarities and differences between different languages and cultures. This can be especially valuable for people who are interested in learning multiple languages or who work in fields that require cross-cultural communication. By studying these two languages side by side, learners can gain a more nuanced understanding of the ways in which language reflects and shapes our understanding of the world around us.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This section deals with the results and discussions of the current research, which mainly focuses on the syntactic comparison between the Filipino and Mandarin languages, including particularly the analysis of the sentence structures and sentence grammar of the two languages.

4.1 Syntactic comparison between Filipino and Mandarin languages in terms of sentence structures

The syntactic comparison between Filipino and Mandarin languages has somehow a close relationship with the morphological comparison between Filipino and Mandarin languages. In terms of the syntax comparison, the comparison between Filipino and Mandarin languages fully reflects the differences in sentence structures between the two languages (Payne, 2007).

Regarding the differences, they are mainly reflected in the following three aspects, including the word order of the syntax, the negation of the whole sentence by the syntax, and whether the sentence structure can be modified by adverbs.

As one of the three distinctive features between Filipino and Mandarin languages in terms of the syntactic comparison, the negation of the whole sentence by the syntax between Filipino and Mandarin languages seems to be the most obvious syntactic illustration and manifestation between these two languages, see Table 4.1 and Table 4.2 below.

Table 4.1 Syntactic comparison of negative sentences between Filipino and Mandarin languages I

He is a middle school students./He is not a middle school student.	
In Filipino	Isa siyang middle school student.
	(Negation) Hindi siya isang middle school student.
In Mandarin	他是一个中学生。
	(Negation) 他不是一个中学生。
	Tā shì zhōngxuéshēng. Tā bùshì zhōngxuéshēng.
He is a middle school student. He is not a middle school student.	

Table 4.2: Syntactic comparison of negative sentences between Filipino and Mandarin languages II

My mother is a teacher./My mother is not a teacher.	
In Filipino	Guro ang in ako.
	(Negation) Hindi guro ang in ako.
In Mandarin	我的妈妈是教师。
	(Negation) 我的妈妈不是教师。
	Wǒ de māmā shì jiàoshī. Wǒ de māmā bùshì jiàoshī.
My mother is a teacher. My mother is not a teacher.	

Based on the above two tables, it is obviously noted that, in Mandarin, the linguistic fact that the negative form of a sentence requires the help of the word “是(shì), meaning ‘is’” is an important issue in the debate on whether the usage of noun predicate in a sentence is an independent sentence type in the grammar circle. This is not the same as the negation rule of syntactic structure in the language of Filipino.

The weird thing is that, in modern times, regarding the study of Mandarin, there are two current academic views on the usage of noun predicate in a certain sentential context. One believes that nouns or noun phrases can directly act as predicates and are an independent syntactic structure. On the contrary, it is believed that nouns or noun phrases cannot act as predicates, and noun predicate sentences are just the omission of the “是(shì), meaning ‘is’” clause, rather than an independent syntactic structure.

4.2 Syntactic comparison between Filipino and Mandarin languages in terms of sentence grammar

Each language has its philosophical and structural grammar. A syntactic comparison between Filipino and Mandarin languages aims to explore the internal structure of words in language and the rules of word formation as well, which is an important part of linguistic research. Besides paying attention to the sentence structure of the two languages, another important point is the structural grammar of the sentences. Therefore, a syntactic comparison is also closely related to the sentence grammar (Fortes, 2002).

In the process of comparison, one of the distinctive features between Filipino and Mandarin languages in terms of the morphological aspect is that, Filipino has a different usage of noun predicate from that of Mandarin. This is also one of the obvious and important manifestations between the languages of Filipino and Mandarin, see Table 4.3 and Table 4.4 below.

Table 4.3: Syntactic comparison of noun predicate between Filipino and Mandarin languages I

I am Filipino.	
In Filipino	Pilipino ako.
	Filipino me.
In Mandarin	我是菲律宾人。
	Wǒ shì fēilǚbīn rén.
	I am Filipino.
	Ako ay Pilipino.

Table 4.4: Syntactic comparison of noun predicate between Filipino and Mandarin languages II

His salary is 14,000 pesos.	
In Filipino	Labing-apat na libong piso ang kanyang suweldo.
	Fourteen thousand pesos his salary.
In Mandarin	他的工资是一万四千比索。
	Tā de gōngzī shì yīwànsiqiān bǐsuǒ.
	His salary is fourteen thousand pesos.
	Kanyang suweldo ay labing-apat na libong piso.

It should be noted that the noun predicate sentences in Mandarin are not unique sentence patterns in modern Mandarin. In other words, in Mandarin, the situation where the noun component is directly used as a predicate to express judgment without using a connective has also appeared in the language of Filipino.

Therefore, the situation that the noun components can directly act as the predicates of the judgment sentence can be regarded as a universal linguistic phenomenon of all human languages (Fortes, 2002). This also shows that, to a certain extent, the commonality and difference of noun predicate sentences in different languages is definitely a problem that has a typological significance in the process of language comparison.

Excluding what has been mainly discussed above, the syntactic comparison between the languages of Filipino and Mandarin might also include other aspects such as the utilization of adjectives, the formation of a question, etc.

For example, in the language of Filipino, adjectives usually come before the noun they modify, while in Mandarin, they come after the noun. Say, the phrase "blue shirt" would be translated as "asul na damit" in Filipino (adjective + noun) and "蓝色的衬衫" (lán sè de chèn shān) in Mandarin (noun + adjective).

While at the same time, in the language of Filipino, questions are formed by adding the word "ba" at the end of a sentence, while in Mandarin, questions are formed by adding the word "吗" (ma) at the end of a sentence. Say, the sentence "You are going to the mall" would be translated as "Pupunta ka sa mall" in Filipino and "你去商场吗" (Nǐ qù shāngchǎng ma) in the language of Mandarin.

5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This last section of the current research talks about its conclusion and recommendations. Based on the comparative study between Filipino and Mandarin languages in the above sections, the researcher tries to entail the relationship between language comparison and language learning within the field of language studies. Besides, with the help of the findings and discussions mentioned in section four, an enlightening linguistic significance is also introduced to strengthen the current comparative study between the languages of Filipino and Mandarin.

5.1 From language comparison to language learning

The modern world mainly includes two main cultural systems, which are eastern culture and

western culture, thus forming two main language thinking modes including the eastern thinking mode and the western thinking mode (Wang, 1993). Due to different kinds of geographical environments, historical backgrounds, political systems, religious beliefs, social structures, economic systems, national characters and philosophical thoughts, etc., the eastern and western language thinking methods have their own different characteristics (Fairclough, 2006).

As a matter of fact, this requires the majority of linguists and scholars to adapt as soon as possible to the transformation from a language research concept based on language comparison to an actual language research model oriented by language learning (Fortes, 2002).

In view of what is mentioned above, Filipino and Mandarin languages from different language families thus share phonological, morphological and syntactic similarities and differences. This is actually deeply rooted in the influence of different major cultural systems.

Specifically, due to the deep-rooted influence of eastern culture, the Chinese language expression is more inclined to holistic language thinking, together with image-based language thinking, and subject-based language thinking (Wang, 1993). On the contrary, the Filipino language influenced by western culture is more inclined to analytical language thinking, together with abstract language thinking and object-based language thinking. This is actually a reflection of the transition from language comparison to language learning as well as the interrelationship between them.

In that sense, it is basically known that from language comparison to language learning, the holistic language thinking and analytical language thinking are one of the most important differences between the eastern and the western ways of thinking. It is under such influence of these two different ways of thinking in languages that ultimately there are corresponding differences between the languages of Filipino and Mandarin languages.

The reflection of the holistic language thinking and the analytical language thinking ostensibly helps linguists and scholars understand the factors that shape the two language forms in Filipino and Mandarin languages. In fact, invisibly, this strengthens and deepens their in-depth understanding of the two languages and increases the efficiency of their further comparative studies on the two languages.

Thus, on this basis, it also cultivates the abilities of the linguists and scholars to comprehensively discover different language comparative methods as well as apply different language research methods in their language instructional practice and language studies.

5.2 An enlightening linguistic significance

The enlightening linguistic significance goes to a discussion of the interaction and interconnection between critical thinking and language comparison. Through the comparative study of Filipino and Mandarin languages, it is clear that the critical thinking style controls the ways that language comparison act, which is the internal mechanism of language comparison.

What has to be noted is that, with the help of the syntactic comparison between Filipino and Mandarin languages, it is worth summarizing that language comparison is a vehicle for critical thinking, which conveys and reflects the content of thinking. At the same time, language comparison also influences the various styles of critical thinking.

Therefore, in this current research, from an enlightening perspective of linguistics, by comparing the similarities and differences between Filipino and Mandarin languages, especially in the aspects of phonology, morphology and syntax of the two languages, the comparative study is of great enlightenment and significance.

Linguistically, such a comparative study of Filipino and Mandarin languages will further discover the internal reasons that constitute the linguistic thinking modes of these two languages, which is also of great enlightening importance to language learners as well as language researchers.

At the same time, this can help linguists and scholars recognize more clearly that, initially, the holistic linguistic thinking and the analytical linguistic thinking (Canagarajah, 2006), as the manifestation of the two main language thinking ways of the Filipino and Chinese people, are deeply embodied in many aspects of the languages of Filipino and Mandarin languages.

In addition, for most language educators, this will motivate them to be more active in learning and comparing the different language thinking modes and different cultural expressions of Filipino and Mandarin languages (Fortes, 2002). Only in this way can they have sufficient sensitivity to the language comparison between Filipino and Mandarin languages, and then conduct corresponding comparative design and in-depth research on specific

language points, whether it is about phonology, morphology, or syntax.

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7. Ethical Approval

The research participants were initially given a brief description of the purpose and aims of the research. The current researcher then discussed the steps of the data collection to the participants explicitly and accurately. The participants were also given an opportunity to ask questions, and all questions were answered correctly and dealt with properly before a consent form was obtained from the participants. All participants were given a copy of the informed consent as well as a cover letter reassuring the privacy, anonymity, and confidentiality of the data gathered.

8. Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The current researcher truly declares no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, the authorship, and/or the publication of the current study.

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