

Jokla and Jugels: A Comparative Analysis of the Construction of Popular and Hiligaynon Gay Words

Rhoderick V. Nuncio

De la Salle University

Generoso B. Pamittan, Jr.

Far Eastern University

David R. Corpuz

Mapua University

Edgar V. Ortinez

University of Antique

Abstract

Gay language has been a constant topic in gay studies, discussions of which range from the ways gay words and expressions are coined through collocation and code-mixing to how gay native speakers use gay language as a means to subvert and resist patriarchy and homophobia. This paper contributes to gay studies by explaining the different methods of gay language construction through phonological resemblance, mutation, appropriation, and association. The analysis focuses on Hiligaynon gay language vis-à-vis existing related studies on “popular” gay language based on Filipino and English. A total of 116 popular and Hiligaynon gay words are compared and analyzed. This paper discusses their similarities, differences, and patterns of construction and definition. The study aims to further the understanding and appreciation of gay languages as they evolve over the years through linguistic innovations such as wordplay, reflexivity, and contextuality.

Keywords: gay language, popular gay words, Hiligaynon gay words, language construction

Introduction

This comparative study on the construction and definition of popular and Hiligaynon gay languages was part of a scholarly project in our graduate course on Technology and Teaching (TechnoTeach). The aim of the course was to come up with an online dictionary that would be inclusive of all local and sectoral languages, particularly gay language. For this paper, 58 popular and 58 Hiligaynon words were selected for analysis and discussion. Popular gay words were derived from two sources: Louie Cano's *Baklese Pinoy Pop Queer Dictionary*, which has been updated according to present-day usage, and day-to-day conversations in Filipino and Philippine English with popular and commonly spoken gay words. This study aims to contribute to academic discourse on popular gay language and to the equally colorful gay language derived from Hiligaynon. It will trace how selected popular and Hiligaynon gay words are constructed, explicate their meanings, and determine the similarities and differences in their patterns of construction. The method of comparison starts with finding the equivalent of popular gay words in Hiligaynon gay language. The researchers purposively selected these words for their popularity among Filipino and English speakers in the Philippines. A Hiligaynon native speaker translated these popular gay words within the context of language usage and communication among gay people who speak their regional gay language in the island of Panay, which includes the provinces of Capiz, Aklan, Antique, and Iloilo. Hiligaynon or Ilonggo is spoken in Iloilo and Capiz, while Kinaray-a is spoken in Antique.¹ Thus, in this paper, the use of Hiligaynon and Ilonggo, referring to both the people and the language, is interchangeable, and Kinaray-a as a language is mentioned for equivalence or reference. Finally, in the tables below, the researchers marked with an asterisk Hiligaynon words that have no semblance or equivalence in spelling and sound with popular gay words. This means that the words originated locally (in Hiligaynon) and are context/culture-bound; only local gay speakers can understand the words. What is unique about this study is the descriptive exploration of Hiligaynon gay language as it tracks the language's evolution within its locality vis-à-vis popular gayspeak. Framed within the local context of Hiligaynon, the analysis examines the affiliations with and/or divergences of the language from mainstream gay lingo.

Swardspeak, *gay lingo*, *gayspeak*, *baklese*, *bekimon*, and *beki language* all refer to the same language spoken by Filipino gay men. These names are evidence of the fast evolving nature and even ephemeral quality of gay language. Gay language construction is a creative and inventive process that works by playing with familiar words and by alluding to popular and formal names of persons, things, events, and the like. Gayspeak continuously reinvents and thus redefines these words due to the popular usage of gayspeak in media—including social media—and in

other “current” discourses that stir the interest of the gay community. Languages “are used creatively to actively construct particular identities and social positions” (Cameron & Kullick 102). Filipinos today are constantly exposed to gay language and its creative inventions as they are often used in mainstream Philippine media. Tabloid headlines in gay lingo have become conventional. Known gay personalities in show business, such as Vice Ganda, Chocoleit^(*), Wacky Kiray, Allan K, Pooh, Boobay, and even female comedians such as Ai-ai Delas Alas and Ethel Booba, have been instrumental in popularizing gay language through mass and new media.

In fact, gay language is no longer exclusively used by gay men. It is not uncommon for women and heterosexual men to use words such as *kaloka*, *keri*, *charot*, *bongga*, *tsika*, *churva*, *chever*, *jowa*, *feelingero/a*, and *harot* in ordinary conversation. One can no longer question a man’s sexuality simply because he uses such words with gusto. Gay language can also be heard in formal settings—inside the classroom, during a meeting, and even during the homily of a Catholic mass. The Internet, likewise, provides a dynamic space for sharing definitions of popular Filipino gay words. These are some of the many ways by which gay language has become popular.

Despite the seemingly fleeting nature of its lexicon, in part attributed to its “present appeal,” some words in gay language have endured the test of time and have become part of mainstream vocabulary. Included now in the *UP Diksiyonaryong Filipino* are the words *bongga* (of positively surprising quality) (Almario 188), *tsika* (an unserious conversation or comment) (1279), and *tsugi* (a pejorative word used to dismiss something unpleasant) (1280). In fact, *tsugi* and *tsika* are among the first words to be included in the *Sawikaan: Salita ng Taon* (Word of the Year) in 2004, along with *canvass* and *ukay-ukay*. A project by the Filipinas Institute of Translation, Inc. (FIT), *Sawikaan* was established in 2004 and has consistently identified new Filipino words since. In Eilene Antoinette Narvaez’s critical discourse analysis of the first decade of *Sawikaan*, she states that five percent of the 86 words entered into the competition² were derived from gay language (186). Aside from *tsugi* and *tsika*, other examples are *gandara* (*Sawikaan* 2005), which refers to fair-skinned Asian beauty, *karir* (*Sawikaan* 2006), a word redefined to pertain to a gay man’s love or sex life, and *Korkor* (*Sawikaan* 2010) or the migration of South Koreans to study in the Philippines. Elevating words that originated from gay language to the academic sphere strengthens the role of gay language in the intellectualization of the Filipino language.

Review of Related Literature

This review has two parts: the first part explains the premise of the paper, or the connection between language and sexuality, which leads to a closer look at the

phenomenon of gay language in the Philippines, and the second part discusses related studies on Philippine gay languages. While available studies on Philippine gay language can be considered metropolitan-centric and glosses over regional variations of gay language (Casabal 80), tracing these pivotal studies is helpful as it builds a body of knowledge on gay language construction.

Language and Sexual Identity. Deborah Cameron and Don Kulick's *Language and Sexuality* devotes a chapter to Western gay and lesbian language and problematizes the distinction of a language based on homosexual identity. As early as the 1920s, when homosexuality was still pathologized, there had already been efforts to interpret gay lingo as "a kind of secret code that homosexuals used to communicate their deviant sexuality to others who might be receptive to it" (Cameron and Kulick 77). From thereon, gay language has been viewed from the 1970s to the mid-1990s as the language spoken by an oppressed minority and was reframed again from the mid-1990s to the present as a language that reflects homosexual (queer) identity. Important here is the shift from looking at identities as a source of language to understanding "identities that are materialized through language" (78).

Cameron and Kulick ask what makes a language *gay*. When homosexuality was still considered a medical condition,³ the assumption that gay lingo was a code suggested that all homosexuals know gay lingo. Stanley Penelope challenged this: "there was no homogenous homosexual subculture that shared a common language. Knowledge of homosexual slang varied according to whether the respondent lived in an urban center or a rural town" (qtd. in Cameron and Kulick 85). When homosexuality was no longer viewed as pathological⁴ but as a marginalized identity, the totalizing view that all gays know gay language was considered invalid. Cameron and Kulick then directed their attention to what they call "the voice," or a distinctive way of speaking among gay men, which they also eventually debunked because "not all gay men have 'the voice' and not everyone who has 'the voice' is gay" (90). This only shows that queer or gay language cannot be essentialized and that the documentation of how this language arises in specific local settings is imperative and relevant.

In contrast, Judith Butler's *Gender Trouble* describes language as performative, challenging the notion that there is a language "naturally" connected to a particular type of sexuality. In this view, how language is constructed and identified as "gay" is the point of inquiry. For Cameron and Kulick, however, it is not necessary to label languages as "gay" or "lesbian" because language is fluid and can be spoken by anyone. Philippine gay language, for example, has gained popular attention and is now used by the general public. However, one cannot

discount the “gayness” of Philippine gay language—or how certain words that eventually entered popular and mainstream culture were coined by the Filipino gay community. As such, language, whether interspersed with a form of sexuality, is a structure, a construction. This debate is punctuated in *Philippine Gay Culture* by J. Neil Garcia who historicizes and explains the term *bakla*. In his book, Garcia shows how gay language intersects with the discourse and praxis of *bakla* as a performative identity in Philippine culture and society.

Tracing Philippine Gay Language. Murphy Red’s essay “Gayspeak in the Nineties” raises four important points that have resurfaced in recent studies on gay language. First, Red argues that gayspeak was constructed as a necessary “shield” against the discrimination that male homosexuals experience from the patriarchal and homophobic culture they live in (41). Through gayspeak, gay people can conceal what they mean through wordplay as they converse in public, sometimes consciously or unconsciously alienating people outside their communication circle. In this sense, gay language has a subversive value. Second, gayspeak provides a way for male homosexuals to enter and have a presence in mass media, particularly television. Red refers to this as the “faggotification of television” (42). Third, he asserts that gayspeak is a creative use of language and does not conform to any type of structure, although its supposed “lack of a structure” has been challenged repeatedly (42). Fourth, gayspeak is both time- and culture-bound (42-43). The popularity of gay words depends on the latest trends, and although gayspeak may sound universal among gay men, variations are noticeable in different localities. This last point is the least explored aspect of gay language and is currently addressed by this study.

The view that the formation and reconstruction of gay language is a kind of “secret code” remains a trend in gay language research. In “The Cultural Idioms of Filipino Transvestism,” Rolando Tolentino examines “proper speak,” an idiolect in Philippine gay language that uses proper nouns, usually of famous names and places, to denote something completely different (176). Among Tolentino’s examples are “Lucrecia Kasilag,” which means “crazy” in gay language, and “Dakota, Harrison,” which means “big penis.” Proper speak renders the original proper noun arbitrary and opens it to new signification by stripping off its original signified and changing the way it is spoken. While Lucrecia Kasilag is a National Artist for Music, in gayspeak, as noted by Tolentino, the first two syllables of “Lucrecia Kasilag” resemble the sound of the word “luka-luka” or the Filipino word for “crazy”; yet, it should be noted here that this usage in no way suggests that the national artist Lucrecia Kasilag was in fact insane (176).

Another example is “Dakota, Harrison,” this time a term with sexual connotations (Tolentino 177). The first two syllables of “Dakota, Harrison,” a popular place in Manila, sound like the Hiligaynon word “dako” which means “huge.” Nowadays the word “Harrison” is dropped because “Dakota” says it all. Although there is no reference to the penis in the original “dako,” its sexual innuendo may be attributed to the inventiveness of gay language. In this case, it is important to have knowledge of and familiarity with the cultural contexts of gay language to understand what the term means. Other popular examples that illustrate proper speak in gay language include “Bill Clinton” (payment), “Ella May Saison” (horny), “Leah Navarro” (borrow), “Gina Alajar” (gin, alcoholic drink), “Rica Peralejo” (rich), and “Portugal” (takes too much time). In proper speak, “critique of the materialization of culture is invoked, giving proper names a common function. It also provides an equivalence of cultures, elevating the popular and downsizing high culture” (Tolentino 176).

Martin Manalansan’s book *Global Divas: Filipino Gay Men in the Diaspora* includes the chapter “Speaking in Transit: Queer Language and Translated Lives,” which examines the use of *swardspeak* and how this form of language has enabled the *baklas* who migrated to New York to perform their identities, form a community, and reclaim a space in a foreign land. Manalansan attributes the rapidly changing quality of *swardspeak* to its function as a code. “Changes are therefore seen to keep up the exclusivity and maintain the communal aspect of this linguistic practice” (50). While unifying a marginalized community may be considered the ideal end goal of gay language, it is not always achieved. In his study of gay lingo in the 1990s, Raul Casantusan Navarro notes that gay men have varying viewpoints about the language. Some treat it as a joke while others highlight its power in violating societal dictates on what is proper and improper (299-300). Navarro also points out that the gay language spoken by society’s upper class is different from that spoken by the middle and lower social classes, which further stratifies its usage (301).

Finally, in “*Kaloka, Keri Bongga: Pakahulugan ng Gay Language sa mga Piling Pelikula ni Vice Ganda*,” Generoso Pamittan, Jr. et al. explore the media’s role in embedding gay language in popular consciousness. The paper examines the structure of gay language as it is used in such films and how it reflects the empowerment and/or oppression of the *bakla* in Philippine society. Pamittan et al. further point out that language becomes a powerful means for expanding the presence of gay culture through Vice Ganda’s portrayal of different queer characters (101).

Structuring the Queerness of Philippine Gay Language

While Red argues that the creativity inherent in gayspeak allows it to elude structure, succeeding studies show that gay language does have discernable methods of construction. These methods, outlined below, will be used as categories in analyzing popular and Hiligaynon gay language. In comparing these languages, words or terms with the same meaning will be the object of analysis.

Through phonological resemblance, gay words are derived or constructed based on the similarity in speech sounds of syllables. For example, the syllable “ric-” in Rica Paralejo (name of a local Filipina actress), sounds like the word *rich*, hence the name Rica Paralejo means “rich” or “moneyed” in popular gay language. Norberto Casabal, in his article “Gay Language: Defying the Structural Limits of English Gay Language in the Philippines,” illustrates how “...words, names and expressions are given meaning in gayspeak (gay language) based on their phonetics” (82), which is also similar to Tolentino’s concept of proper speak.

Appropriation, on the other hand, is a process of construction that borrows words from foreign and regional languages and terms from popular culture. Elvira Estravo et al. in *Mga Salitang Homosekswal: Isang Pagsusuri* use the terms *panghihiram* (borrowing) at *paghahalu-halo* (combination) to describe this process (59, 71). For example, the gay word *ukani*, which means “money,” comes from the word *okane*, the Japanese word for money; the gay term *ohms*, which means “man,” is borrowed from the foreign word *homme*, or masculine. It should be noted, however, that the spelling changes in the process of “localizing” the (foreign) word.

In association, the meaning of gay words come from the qualities and characteristics of or facts about the figure, place, event, etc. to which one alludes. For example, Bella Flores is a Filipino actress who became famous for portraying villains; hence, the gay term Bella Flores is used to refer to a person with a bad temper. Another example is *Portuguesa*, which means lesbian; it alludes to the capital city of Portugal, Lisbon, which sounds similar to the word lesbian (Chiong, et al.; Tolentino 177). In this example, the word *Portuguesa* falls under association, but deciphering its meaning requires an understanding of phonological resemblance.

Gay language also involves neologism, or the coining of new words; it is also the use of a word or the name of a thing, a popular person or a place and giving it an implicit and/or contextual meaning. Estravo et al. refer to this as *neolohismo* (neologism) or *paglikha* (creation) (xii). An example is the word *chaka*, which has existed for the longest time and is used to mean that something or someone is “ugly”; it has evolved to *Chaka Khan*.

Meanwhile, mutation occurs by cutting, modifying, altering or replacing the syllables or letters of the original word, then putting affixes or new letters to play with sound and create variation. For example, *vaklush*, *badesh*, *jokla*, *tukling* are mutations of the word *bakla* (gay), a term which arguably has a derogatory connotation; in this case, mutations are done to make the word sound euphemistic or less offensive (Baytan, qtd. in Casabal 76).

Finally, gay language also employs word combination and acronyms by playing with words, combining seemingly unrelated terms and newly-coined words, creating new acronyms, and giving acronyms new meanings. An example of a word combination is *gigierang palaka* (wily frog), which is used to refer to a deceitful person. The coined term *gigiera*, which means “coy,” is combined with the word *palaka* (frog) which refers to a pretentious person. “GL Card,” on the other hand, uses both word combination and acronyms; GL is an acronym for *Ganda Lang* (mere beauty), while the word “card” suggests a kind of privilege similar to that of owning a credit card. “GL card” is used to refer to someone who obtains something by using his or her charm.

A Note on Interchangeable Parts of Speech

Gay language in the Philippines does not necessarily follow the rules of standard English or Filipino grammar. Reflexivity, for example, is the interchangeability of the functions of nouns, adjectives, and verbs in a sentence (Casabal 99).

An example of reflexivity is found in the sentence “*Ang jowa niya ay mangga*” (Her boyfriend is a user), *mangga* (literally means mango), which is short for the Filipino word *manggagamit*, is a noun also used as a noun. But consider this example: “*Jumojowa* (engaging in a relationship) *siya ng mangga* (with a user)”; *jowa* here is used as a verb. Another example is “*Ang baho ng kanyang Halle Berry*” (His halitosis stinks). The proper noun “Halle” sounds like “hali,” which, in this case, is short for “halitosis.” Although the term *Halle Berry* functions as a noun, it is given a different meaning—halitosis—in the sentence.

In this paper, gay words are grouped according to three parts of speech—nouns, adjectives, and verbs. As previously mentioned, the method of construction involved in popular and Hiligaynon gay words with the same meaning will be analyzed for the purpose of determining how these Hiligaynon and popular gay words find equivalence or correspondence and construct meaning.

Table 1. Popular and Hiligaynon Gay Word Equivalents (Nouns/Pronouns)

Popular Gay Words	Method of Construction and Meaning	Hiligaynon Gay Equivalent	Method of Construction and Meaning
AFAM - foreigner	Use of Acronym Short for “a foreigner assigned in Manila”; refers to expatriates	porenger	Appropriation Localized word for <i>foreigner</i> .
Aida - AIDS	Phonological Resemblance, Association <i>Aida</i> sounds like <i>AIDS</i> . <i>Aida</i> is a common Filipino female name most likely popularized by a local Filipino song “Si Aida, Si Lorna, si Fe” sung by Marco Sison.	Aida Uy Kimpang	Appropriation, Phonological Resemblance, Association <i>Aida</i> sounds like <i>AIDS</i> . Middle and last name of a known Mayor in Antique were combined to make it appear as a person.
aishiteru - ice	Appropriation, Phonological Resemblance Borrowed from Japanese words which mean “I love you”; <i>aish</i> sounds like <i>ice</i> .	jelo	Mutation <i>Yelo</i> is the Filipino word for ice; the letter <i>y</i> was replaced with <i>j</i> to play with sounds.
akich - me	Mutation <i>Ako</i> is the Filipino word for “me”; letter <i>o</i> was dropped and replaced with “-ich.”	aketch	Mutation <i>Ako</i> is the Filipino word for “me”; letter <i>o</i> was dropped and replaced with “-etch.”
ala-una - one hundred (pesos)	Mutation <i>Ala-una</i> in Filipino means “one o’clock;” the term was given another meaning to refer to amount of money.	wans kiam	Appropriation, Word Combination <i>Wans</i> is borrowed from the English word <i>one</i> ; spelled as it is pronounced in Filipino; <i>Wans</i> was combined with <i>kiam</i> .
aleli - helper	Mutation Comes from the root word <i>alalay</i> , which means helper; the first syllable “al” was taken then “leli” was added to play with sounds.	jimaw*	Mutation Letter <i>j</i> was added to the word <i>imaw</i> to play with sound. <i>Imaw</i> is Kinaray-a which means companion; Ilonggo equivalent of <i>imaw</i> is <i>upod</i> . Both Kinaray-a and Ilonggo belong to Hiligaynon language.

Popular Gay Words	Method of Construction and Meaning	Hiligaynon Gay Equivalent	Method of Construction and Meaning
balur - house	Phonological Resemblance, Mutation Borrowed from a regional language, <i>balay</i> means house; “bal” was taken then “ur” was added to play with sounds.	balaybang	Mutation Comes from Hiligaynon <i>balay</i> which means house; “bang” was added to the original word.
bayola - gay	Appropriation, Mutation Borrowed from a Cebuano word <i>bayot</i> which means “gay”; “bay” was retained then combined with “ola” to play with sounds.	jugels*	Mutation Comes from Hiligaynon <i>agi</i> then altered to “jugels” to create a code.
bentilador - twenty pesos	Phonological Resemblance <i>Bentilador</i> actually means electric fan but was given another meaning; “benti” sounds like “viente” which means twenty.	twentiskiam	Appropriation, Word Combination <i>Twenti</i> is a localized version of <i>twenty</i> combined with a coined term “skiam.”
Bill Clinton - charge	Appropriation, Phonological Resemblance, Association <i>Bill</i> actually means charge; the surname of former US President “Clinton” was added to create a code.	payola	Appropriation, Mutation Comes from the English word <i>pay</i> or short for payment; “-ola” was added to the root word.
bisekleta - bisexual	Phonological Resemblance <i>Bisekleta</i> means bicycle. “Bisek” has a phonological resemblance with “bisex.”	Silay City*	Appropriation, Phonological Resemblance Silay City is an area in Negros, Philippines. <i>Sila</i> has a phonological resemblance with <i>silahis</i> which means “bisexual.”
Bolivia - pubic hair	Appropriation, Phonological Resemblance <i>Bulbol</i> is the Filipino term for pubic hair; second syllable “bol” is the first syllable of <i>Bolivia</i> , hence the name of the country was given another meaning.	jabot*	Mutation <i>Sabot</i> is Hiligaynon term for pubic hair; letter <i>s</i> was replaced with <i>j</i> .
birangkong - beer	Phonological resemblance, Mutation The first syllable “bir” sounds like <i>beer</i> ; “-rangkong” was added to play with sounds.	berlos*	Phonological Resemblance, Mutation The first syllable “bir” sounds like <i>beer</i> ; “-los” was added to play with sounds.

Popular Gay Words	Method of Construction and Meaning	Hiligaynon Gay Equivalent	Method of Construction and Meaning
Bonnie Tyler - ringworm	Appropriation, Phonological Resemblance <i>Bonnie</i> sounds like the Filipino word <i>buni</i> which means ringworm; <i>Tyler</i> was combined to make it seem to refer to the foreign music artist.	bunels	Mutation From the word <i>Buni</i> ; letter <i>i</i> was dropped and “-els” was added to play with sound.
bortawan - body	Mutation From the Filipino word <i>katawan</i> which means “body”; first syllable “ka” was changed to “bor.”	bodiya	Appropriation, Mutation From word <i>body</i> which was altered to <i>bodiya</i> .
braderette - brother	Phonological Resemblance, Mutation <i>Brader</i> sounds like <i>brother</i> ; “-ette” was added to play with sound.	Brother Louie	Appropriation, Word Combination Borrowed the English word <i>brother</i> ; the name <i>Louie</i> was combined to make it seem to refer to the title of the song “Brother Louie.”
briefanji - briefs	Appropriation, Mutation Borrowed from <i>briefs</i> ; letter <i>s</i> was dropped and “-anji” was added to play with sounds.	brief case	Appropriation, Word Combination From the root word <i>briefs</i> ; letter <i>s</i> was dropped, then combined with word <i>case</i> to hide the real meaning, “underwear.”
bubey - a woman’s breast	Phonological Resemblance, Mutation First syllable “bub” sounds like <i>boob</i> ; “-ey” was added to play with sounds.	titiskwang*	Mutation From Hiligaynon <i>titi</i> meaning “breast”; “-skwang” was added to play with sounds.
bugalu - pimp	Mutation From the root word <i>bugaw</i> which means “a pimp”; letter <i>w</i> was dropped and changed with “-lu.”	bugawels	Mutation From the root word <i>bugaw</i> meaning “a pimp”; “-wels” was added to the root word.
busawa - wife/ husband	Mutation From the word “ <i>asawa</i> which means “husband” or “wife”; “a” was changed to “bu.”	sawasi	Mutation <i>Sawa</i> means wife in Kinaray-a; <i>wife</i> is termed <i>asawa</i> in Ilonggo. - si was added to “sawa”

Popular Gay Words	Method of Construction and Meaning	Hiligaynon Gay Equivalent	Method of Construction and Meaning
Chanda - stomach	Phonological resemblance <i>Chanda</i> is a common female name; sometimes termed as <i>Chanda Romero</i> , a name of a Filipino local actress. “Chan” sounds like <i>tiyan</i> which means “stomach.”	busongbels*	Mutation <i>Busong</i> means stomach in Kinaray-a; “-bels” was added to the word.
hanash - comment	Neologism <i>Hanash</i> is a coined term to refer to “comment.”	ma spyuk	Mutation <i>Spyuk</i> is a colloquial Hiligaynon word meaning “speak”; “-ma” was added to “spyuk.”
Jaguar - guard	Phonological Resemblance, Association “Guar” sounds like <i>guard</i> or the first syllable of the Filipino word <i>gwar-diya</i> which means “guard.”	guard on duty	Appropriation From the English word <i>guard</i> combined with <i>on duty</i> .
jowa - boyfriend or girlfriend	Mutation <i>Jowa</i> is a mutation of <i>shota</i> or <i>short</i> for <i>short time</i> , which is a colloquial term for boyfriend or girlfriend.	labsalu	Appropriation, Mutation <i>Lab</i> is a localized term for “love”; “-salu” was added to play with sound.
Julanis Morisette - rain	Appropriation, Phonological Resemblance, Mutation From the name of music artist Alanis Morissete; <i>Alanis</i> was changed to <i>Julanis</i> to sound like <i>ulan</i> which means “rain.”	Rene Salud	Appropriation; Phonological Resemblance Rene Salud is a known Filipino fashion designer; “Ren” sounds like rain.
junakis - son/ daughter	Mutation From the word <i>anak</i> which means “son”/ “daughter”; first syllable “a-” was changed to “ju-” then “-kis” was added as a third syllable.	junakis	Mutation From the word <i>anak</i> which means “son”/ “daughter”; first syllable “a-” was changed to “ju-” then “-kis” was added as a third syllable.
mimay - housemaid	Mutation From the word <i>tsimay</i> which means “housemaid”; “tsi” was changed to “mi” and “-may” was retained.	Maid in Heaven	Appropriation, Word Combination Borrowed English words; the word <i>maid</i> was combined with <i>in heaven</i> to seemingly refer to local TV series <i>Maid in Heaven</i> .

Popular Gay Words	Method of Construction and Meaning	Hiligaynon Gay Equivalent	Method of Construction and Meaning
pamasu - fare	Mutation From the word <i>pamasahe</i> which means “fare”; the word was cut to <i>pamasu</i> .	pleteserts*	Mutation From the Hiligaynon word <i>plete</i> which means “fare”; the coined sound “-erts” was added to play with sounds.
Sheryl Cruz - share/ contribute	Appropriation, Phonological Resemblance Sheryl Cruz is a local Filipina actress; “Sher” sounds like “share.”	amotea	Mutation From the Hiligaynon word <i>amot</i> which means “to contribute”; “-ea” was added to play with sounds.
shondomelya - condom	Phonological Resemblance, Mutation “Shondom” sounds like “condom”; “-melya” was added to play with sounds.	condominium	Appropriation, Phonological Resemblance The first two syllables of the word <i>condominium</i> is similar to <i>condom</i> ; the term <i>condominium</i> is used to make it less obvious.
Sunshine Cruz - sun, sunrise	Appropriation, Phonological Resemblance Sunshine Cruz is a local Filipina actress. “Sun” was derived from the first name <i>Sunshine</i> .	jadlaw*	Mutation From the Hiligaynon <i>adlaw</i> which means sun; <i>j</i> was added to play with sounds.

*Hiligaynon gay words that are context-specific and culture-bound

Table 2. Popular and Hiligaynon Gay Word Equivalents (Adjectives)

Popular Gay Words	Method of Construction and Meaning	Hiligaynon Gay Equivalent	Method of Construction and Meaning
Abu - abusive	Phonological Resemblance, Association “Abu” is from the first two syllables of the word <i>abusado/ abusive</i> . The word can be associated with Abu Sayaf.	opurnistea	Mutation From the word <i>oportunista</i> meaning “opportunist”; “-ea” was added to play with sounds.
adiktus - addict	Appropriation, Mutation From the localized word <i>adik</i> which means “addict”; “-tus” was added to play with sounds.	judiktos	Appropriation, Mutation From the localized word <i>adik</i> which means “addict”; <i>adik</i> was mutated to <i>judiktos</i> .

Popular Gay Words	Method of Construction and Meaning	Hiligaynon Gay Equivalent	Method of Construction and Meaning
Agot Isidro - bored	Appropriation, Phonological Resemblance "Agot" resembles the sound of <i>bagot</i> which means bored; Agot Isidro is a local Filipina actress.	takels*	Mutation From Hiligaynon <i>tak-an</i> which means bored; "-an" was replaced with "-els."
Artemio Marquez - hard to please	Appropriation, Phonological Resemblance <i>Arte</i> sounds like <i>maarte</i> which means "hard to please" or "choosy"; Artemio Marquez is a Filipino movie writer, director, producer.	arts and sciences	Phonological Resemblance <i>Arts</i> sounds like <i>arte</i> which is short for <i>maarte</i> .
bondi - flirty; easy-to-get	Mutation "Bondi" is an alteration of <i>landi</i> , short for <i>malandi</i> which means "flirty."	katleya*	Mutation From the word <i>kat-ul</i> , Hiligaynon for <i>itchy</i> . The word was cut to "Kat" then "-leya" was added to it.
borap - delicious	Mutation A modification of <i>sa-rap</i> which means "delicious."	shumit*	Mutation An alteration of Hiligaynon <i>namit</i> which means "delicious."
borkot/ shokot - afraid	Mutation A modification of <i>takot</i> which means "afraid."	jadluk*	Mutation An alteration of Hiligaynon <i>hadluk</i> which means "afraid."
chakabels/ chapter - ugly	Mutation Modifications of the coined gay language <i>chaka</i> which means "ugly."	Chaps/ chapter	Mutation Modifications of the coined gay language <i>chaka</i> which means "ugly."
Dakota Fanning - big; large	Phonological Resemblance, Appropriation <i>Dako</i> is a regional word for "big"; Dakota Fanning is a Hollywood actress.	Dakak Beach Resort	Appropriation, Phonological Resemblance "Dak-ak" sounds like <i>daku</i> which is a Hiligaynon word for "big." Dakak Beach Resort is a world-renowned tourist destination. Dakak also resembles the sound of "the cock," referring to penis.
Dilemma Gang - dark	Phonological resemblance <i>Dilem-ma</i> sounds like the word <i>dilim</i> which means "dark."	dulumea*	Mutation From the Hiligaynon word <i>dulum</i> which means "dark"; "-ea" was added to the word.

Popular Gay Words	Method of Construction and Meaning	Hiligaynon Gay Equivalent	Method of Construction and Meaning
Doris Bigornia - frustrated	Phonological Resemblance; Appropriation Name of a local TV journalist. <i>Bigo-rnia</i> sounds like <i>bigo</i> which means “frustrated.”	paslawwels*	Mutation From the Hiligaynon <i>paslaw</i> which means “frustration”; “-wels” was added to play with sound.
Pagoda Wave Lotion - tired; exhausted	Phonological Resemblance, Appropriation Pagoda Wave Lotion is a beauty product. <i>Pagoda</i> resembles the sound of <i>pagod</i> which means “tired.”	kapoybels*	Mutation From Hiligaynon <i>kapoy</i> which means “tired”; “-bels” was added to alter the word.
Mahogany Films - unpleasant/ awful smell	Phonological Resemblance, Appropriation Mahogany Films was a local film production outfit; “Maho” sounds like <i>baho</i> , a Filipino word which means “awful smell.”	shuho*	Mutation Alteration of the Hiligaynon word <i>baho</i> which means “foul smell.”
Morayta	Phonological Resemblance “Mora” resembles the sound of <i>mura</i> which means “cheap.”	baratilya*	Mutation Modification of Hiligaynon <i>barato</i> which means “cheap.”
Wrangler - old	Phonological Resemblance, Appropriation, Association Wrangler is an international brand. “Wrang” resembles the sound of <i>gurang</i> a regional word meaning “old.” It can be associated as well to mean an old brand of jeans.	guramea*	Mutation An alteration of the Hiligaynon word <i>gurang</i> which means “old.”
Tom Jones - hungry	Phonological Resemblance, Appropriation Tom Jones is a music legend. “Tom” sounds like <i>gutom</i> , which means “hungry.”	gutomea*	Mutation Modification of the Hiligaynon <i>gutom</i> , which means “hungry.”
warla - war freak; brave	Mutation From the word <i>war</i> ; “-la” was added to play with sounds.	jisugsu*	Mutation Modification of the Hiligaynon <i>isug</i> , which means “brave.”

*Hiligaynon gay words that are context-specific and culture-bound

Table 3. Popular and Hiligaynon Gay Word Equivalents (Verbs)

Popular Gay Words	Method of Construction and Meaning	Hiligaynon Gay Equivalent	Method of Construction and Meaning
bailamos - buy	Appropriation, Phonological Resemblance <i>Bailamos</i> is a Spanish word and a title of a song. "Bai" resembles the sound of "buy."	baysalo	Appropriation, Mutation <i>Bay</i> is a localized form of the English word <i>buy</i> ; "-salo" was added to play with sound.
bonla - pawn	Mutation Alteration of the word <i>sangla</i> which means "to pawn."	prendaerts*	Mutation Modification of Hiligaynon word <i>prenda</i> which means "to pawn."
Boogie Wonderland - beat; flog	Appropriation, Phonological Resemblance Boogie Wonderland is a title of a song. "Boog" resembles the sound of <i>bogbog</i> which means "to beat."	jumbagers*	Mutation From the Hiligaynon word <i>sumbag</i> which means "to punch"; letter <i>s</i> was changed to <i>j</i> ; "-ers" was added to modify the word.
borlog - sleep	Mutation From the word <i>tulog</i> which means "to sleep"; "tu" was changed to "bor" to alter the word.	sleeping pills	Appropriation Borrowed from English; the term implies "sleep" rather than the noun <i>sleeping pill</i> .
bottom - anal sex	Appropriation Informal term for "buttocks"; the term implies anal sex.	Bolivia*	Phonological Resemblance "Boli" sounds like Hiligaynon's <i>buli</i> , which means "butt"; it also implies anal sex.
bukayo - reveal; expose	Mutation Alteration of the word <i>buking</i> which means "to expose."	nowanggels	Appropriation, Mutation Derived from the word <i>know</i> and was modified by dropping <i>k</i> and adding "-angles."
choreo - plan	Appropriation Short for <i>choreography</i> which implies to plan.	leche flan	Phonological Resemblance, Appropriation A famous dessert; <i>flan</i> sounds like <i>plan</i> .
Escape from Alcatraz - leave	Appropriation, Neologism <i>Escape from Alcatraz</i> is a title of a movie. <i>Escape</i> means "to sneak away," hence the term implies "to leave."	iskierda	Mutation Modification of <i>eskierd</i> , a colloquial Hiligaynon word meaning "to leave."

Popular Gay Words	Method of Construction and Meaning	Hiligaynon Gay Equivalent	Method of Construction and Meaning
feelchiniti - like; want	Appropriation, Mutation Modification of the word <i>feel</i> . To feel implies that someone wants another or something; someone wants to do something.	typesalu	Appropriation, Mutation Modification of the word <i>type</i> . <i>Type</i> implies that someone wants another or something; someone wants to do something.
getlak/ getching - get	Mutation “-lak” or “-ching” is added to “get” to play with the word.	harbey*	Mutation Modification of the Hiligaynon word <i>harbat</i> , which means “to get something without asking permission.”
gora/ gorabels - proceed; go	Mutation Alteration of <i>go</i> ; “-ra/rabels” is added to play with the word.	iskierda	Mutation Modification of <i>eskierd</i> , a colloquial Hiligaynon word meaning “to leave.”
imbey/ imbudo - irritate; annoy	Mutation Shortcut and modification of the word <i>imbiyerna</i> which means “irritation.”	imbudo	Mutation Shortcut and modification of the word <i>imbiyerna</i> which means “irritation.”
Julie Yap-Daza - arrest	Appropriation, Phonological Resemblance Julie Yap-Daza was a local Filipino TV personality; <i>Julie</i> resembles the sound of <i>huli</i> which means “to arrest.”	dakupels	Mutation Alteration of Hiligaynon <i>dakup</i> which means “to arrest.”
krayola - cry	Phonological Resemblance The first syllable “kray” sounds like <i>cry</i> .	krayola	Phonological Resemblance The first syllable “kray” sounds like <i>cry</i> .
lala/ lafang/ lapuk/ - eat	Phonological Resemblance The first syllable “la” is the same with the first syllable of the word <i>la-mon</i> which means “to eat voraciously.”	lapis	Phonological Resemblance The first syllable “la” is the same with the first syllable of the word <i>la-mon</i> which means “to eat voraciously.”
matudnila/ matud - steal	Appropriation, Mutation Modification of the regional colloquial word <i>mating</i> which means “to get something without asking permission.”	matinngero/ matingera*	Mutation Modification of the colloquial Hiligaynon <i>mating</i> which means “to get something without asking permission”; the terms <i>matinngero</i> / <i>matinggera</i> refer to those who do the act of stealing.

Popular Gay Words	Method of Construction and Meaning	Hiligaynon Gay Equivalent	Method of Construction and Meaning
rampa - stroll; wander	Appropriation <i>Rampa</i> or “to ramp” means “to walk on a catwalk”; hence rampa implies walking or wandering.	lagawbels*	Mutation Modification of Hiligaynon word <i>lagaw</i> , which means “to stroll.”
sightchina - observe; see; look	Appropriation, Mutation Modification of the word <i>sight</i> which means manage “to see or observe.”	luksaerts	Appropriation, Mutation “Luk” sounds like <i>look</i> which means “to direct one’s gaze toward someone or something”; “-saerts” was added to play with sound.
tegi/ tegibels - kill; die	Mutation Modification of the slang word <i>tsugi</i> , which means “kill” or “dead.”	dedo car	Phonological Resemblance, Mutation The slang term <i>dedo</i> resembles the sound of <i>dead</i> ; “-car” was added to modify the term.

*Hiligaynon gay words that are context-specific and culture-bound

Patterns in Construction and Definition of Popular and Hiligaynon Gay Language

Considering that popular and Hiligaynon gayspeak have their own particular contexts, significant differences are evident with regard to words or terms borrowed (appropriation), words or terms that served as bases of phonetic similarities (phonological resemblance), root words or syllables that were altered or modified to construct a gay word (mutation), and associations made with events, personalities or facts (association).

The frequency count in Figure 1, which is not a generalization but merely serves the purpose of this study, shows that mutation, appropriation, and phonological resemblance are the most commonly used methods of construction in both popular and Hiligaynon gay language.

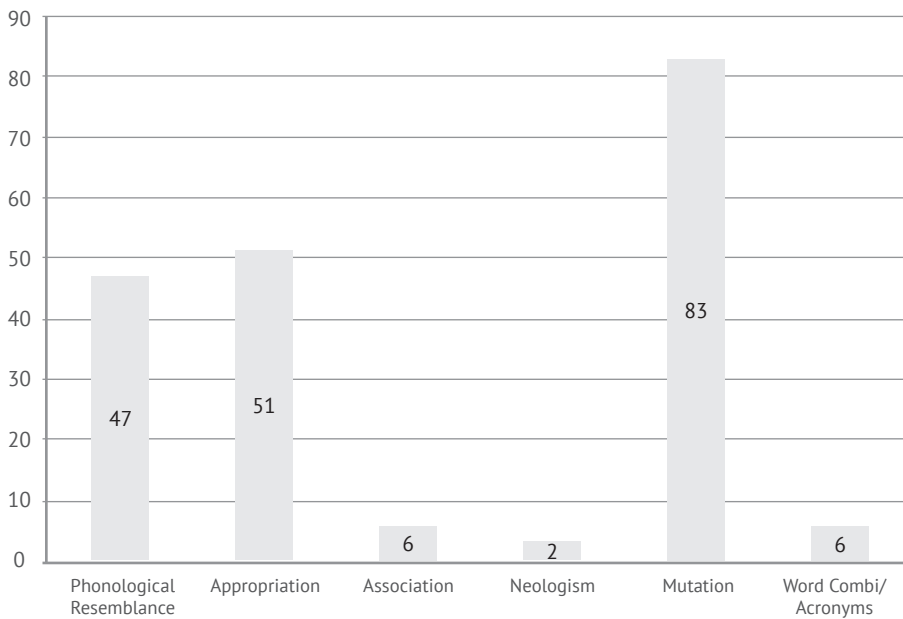


Fig. 1. Frequency count of popular and Hiligaynon gay words.

Table 4, meanwhile, shows the frequency count of each method of construction in each language. Compared to popular gay language, Hiligaynon gay language is replete with words coined through mutation. The former shows frequent use of mutation, phonological resemblance, and appropriation. Association and neologism have the lowest occurrence in both languages, perhaps because words coined through these methods require more context and knowledge in order to be deciphered, even by gay men; *Portugesa*, for example, requires knowledge in geography. This is unlike the use of phonological resemblance, which occurs frequently, mainly because decoding words coined through this process depends only on knowledge of pop culture and an ear for detecting phonetic similarity among various terms in Filipino and/or English.⁵

The table also shows that neologism is the method of construction with the least number of occurrences. Although gay lingo is creative and inventive, as several methods of construction illustrate, the use of neologism may have been affected by the viral influence of popular gay words derived from other commonly used methods of construction.

Table 4. Comparative Frequencies of Popular and Hiligaynon Gay Words

Methods	Popular	Hiligaynon	Total
Phonological Resemblance	33	14	47
Appropriation	29	22	51
Association	5	1	6
Neologism	2	0	2
Mutation	34	49	83
Word Combi/ Acronyms	1	5	6

When it comes to appropriation, popular gay language builds its vocabulary from names of local and international personalities and titles of movies and songs that are considered part of popular culture: names of local personalities such as Sheryl Cruz, Sunshine Cruz, Mahalia Mendez, Julie Yap-Daza, Artemio Marquez, Agot Isidro, and Doris Bigornia have name recall in both Philippine movie and television industries. Local brands such as Duty Free (name of a shop), Pagoda Wave Lotion (beauty product), and Mahogany Films (production outfit) have been appropriated as part of the lexicon. Popular gay language has also borrowed the names of international celebrities, such as Tom Jones, Bonnie Tyler, Dakota Fanning, Bill Clinton, and Alanis (appropriated as Julanis) Morissette; titles of songs, “Bailamos” and “Boogie Wonderland”; the movie title *Escape from Alcatraz*; and the international brand Wrangler. Even foreign language words are included, such as *aishiteru* (Japanese for “I love you”), *bailamos* (Spanish for “let’s dance”), and *jaguar* (species of a large cat similar to a panther). Similarly, words from regional languages, such as *jutay* (small), *balay* (house), *bayot* (gay), and *gurang* (old) have also become part of the vocabulary of popular gay language as *Duty Free*, *balur*, *bayola*, *Wrangler*, and *matud*.

In Hiligaynon gay language, English words have also been appropriated. Some were modified and combined to form part of the regionalized gay vocabulary. Examples of these are: *porenger* from *foreigner*; *wans* in *wans kiam* from *one hundred*; *twenty* in *twenty skiam* from *twenty pesos*; *pay* in *payola* from *payment*; *body* in *bodiya*, *brief case* from *underwear*; *guard on duty* from *security guard*; *lab* in *labsalu* or *boyfriend/ girlfriend* from *love*; *condominium* from *condom*; *arts and sciences* from *hard to please*; *sleeping pills* from *sleep*; *leche flan* from *plan*; and *type* in *typesalu* from *want* or *like*. Pop culture has also served as a resource for Hiligaynon gay language, evident in terms such as Dakak Beach Resort (big), an internationally known tourist spot in the Philippines; “Brother Louie” (brother), a song title; Rene Salud, famous local fashion designer; *Maid in Heaven* (maid), the title of a local TV series; and Silay City (bisexual), a city in the province of Negros Occidental.

Evidently, while there are a number of popular gay words that were constructed based on the similarities of their syllabic sounds with their intended meanings, a number of appropriated popular gay vocabularies were constructed on the basis of phonological resemblance. Examples of popular gay vocabularies that were constructed through appropriation and phonological resemblance include: *aishiteru* (ice), *Bill Clinton* (bill or charge), *Bolivia* (pubic hair), *Bonnie Tyler* (ringworm), *Jaguar* (guard), *Sheryl Cruz* (share), *Sunshine Cruz* (sun), *Agot Isidro* (bored), *Artemio Marquez* (hard to please), *Bailamos* (buy) and *Boogie Wonderland* (beat). Popular gay words which were coined based only on phonological resemblance include: *Aida* (AIDS), *bisekleta* (bisexual), *Chanda* (stomach), *abu* (someone who takes advantage), *dilemma gang* (dark), *krayola* (cry), and *lala/lafang* (eat). Meanwhile, few Hiligaynon gay words were coined through appropriation and/or phonological resemblance: *Aida Uy Kimpang* (AIDS), *Silay City* (bisexual), *Dakak Beach Resort* (big), *Mahalia Donesta* (big), *leche flan* (plan), *condominium* (condom), *krayola* (cry) and *lapis* (eat).

Tables 1 to 3 also show that many popular and Hiligaynon gay words were coined through mutation. While Hiligaynon gayspeak usually culls and modifies words from its own regional language, popular gay language derives and alters Filipino words, slang, and, at times, words from regional languages. The following suggest that mutation seems to be the most common method in the construction of both popular and Hiligaynon gay languages. Hiligaynon gay words that are direct mutations of the language include: *jelo* (ice), *aketch* (me), *bunels* (ringworm), *bodiya* (body), *labsalu* (love), *junakis* (son/daughter), *judiktos* (addict), *Bugawels* (pimp), *jimaw* (helper), *balaybang* (house), *jugels* (gay), *jabot* (pubic hair), *titikswang* (breast), *sawasi* (wife), *busongbels* (stomach), *ma spyuk* (comment), *pleteserts* (fare), *amotea* (share/contribute), *jadlaw* (sun), *opurnistea* (opportunist), *takels* (bored), *katleya* (flirt), *shumit* (delicious), *jadluk* (afraid), *dulumea* (dark), *paslawwels* (frustrated), *kapoybels* (tired), *shuho* (stinky), *baratilya* (cheap), *gurumea* (old), *jisugsu* (brave), *preanderts* (pawn), *jumbagers* (beat), *eskierda* (leave), *harbey* (get), *imbudo* (irritate), *dakupels* (arrest), *matinggero* (steal), and *lagawbels* (stroll).

In addition, popular gay words that were coined through appropriation and/or mutation include: *akich* (me), *aleli* (heper), *balur* (house), *bayola* (gay), *birangkong* (beer), *bortawan* (body), *braderette* (brother), *briefanji* (briefs), *bubey* (boobs), *bugalu* (pimp), *busawa* (wife), *jowa* (boyfriend/girlfriend), *julanis* (rain), *junakis* (son/daughter), *mimay* (housemaid), *pamasu* (fare), *shondomelya* (condom), *adiktus* (addict), *bondi* (flirt), *borap* (delicious), *borkot/shokot* (afraid), *chakabels* (ugly), *warla* (warfreak/brave), *bonla* (pawn), *borlog* (sleep), *bukayo* (expose), *feelchiniti* (like/want), *getlak/getching* (get), *gora/gorabels* (go), *imbey/imbudo* (irritate), *matudnila* (steal), *sightchina* (see/observe), and *tegi/tegibels* (die).

These examples show that very few words were constructed using acronyms, word combination, neologism or association. Nonetheless, one cannot conclude that these methods are rarely employed, considering the limited sample in the matrices above. The only popular gay word constructed using an acronym is AFAM or A Foreigner Assigned in Manila. *Hanash* (comment) is a neologism, while *chakabels* and *chaps* (ugly) are mutations of the coined term *chaka*. Finally, “sleeping pills” (sleep) and “guard on duty” (guard) are word combinations.

In contrast, there are words that are exactly the same in spelling and meaning in popular and Hiligaynon gayspeak; these words were also coined using the same method of construction. These words are *junakis* (son/daughter), *chapter* (ugly), and *imbudo* (irritate). An exception is the word *Bolivia*, which exists in the vocabularies of the two languages, albeit with different meanings. In popular gay language, *Bolivia* means pubic hair, while in Hiligaynon gay language, it means anal sex; the word was constructed through phonological resemblance.

Conclusion

The methods of construction in popular and Hiligaynon gay language that were compared in this paper show the various ways through which gay men creatively use their language. Queerness and reflexivity make gay language—popular or regional—elusive and therefore serve as a code or cipher among gay speakers who use it for several reasons. However, popular personalities in show business and media continue to play a crucial role in spreading the culture that gay language embodies, which makes it less elusive as it enters the discourses of the public sphere, cultural industries, and the academe.

The constructive and contrastive power of Philippine gay languages lie in their ability to be playful and reflexive as well as in their context-bound and ephemeral qualities. In particular, Philippine gay languages are dependent on phonemes (unit of sounds) and graphemes (letters, syllables of words) of existing “standard” languages—in this case Filipino, English, and regional languages. Methods of construction such as phonological resemblance, mutation, appropriation, and word combination all exhibit wordplay or playing with the sound and pronunciation of certain words. The analysis shows that speakers of both popular and Hiligaynon gay language resort to mutation, phonological resemblance, and appropriation when constructing new words. Dropping or adding letters, syllables, and affixes allow variation in inflection and swirling pronunciation thus making it difficult for non-speakers of gay language to grasp meanings. For instance, in Hiligaynon gayspeak, “-bels” and “-erts” are usually added as the last syllables of words. Reflexivity, on the other hand, is the interchangeability of parts of speech, wherein nouns function

as verbs (as in *jowa* and *jumojowa*), adjectives function as nouns (as in *chorva* and *kachorvahan*), and verbs function as adjectives (as in *i-chaka Khan* and *chap/chaka*). Reflexivity also works through defamiliarization via erasing or destabilizing “parts of speech.” Who would think that Boogie Wonderland (noun) could mean “to beat up” or “to punch” (verb) in gay parlance?

All languages are truly context- and culture-bound, which sometimes lends to its unintelligibility to non-speakers. In the case of Hiligaynon gay language, the nuances of local words can only be understood within their local context. Unless one speaks Hiligaynon, it would be difficult to understand the following words, even among gay men who are fluent in popular gay lingo:

1. Prendaerts (verb) – a modification of the Hiligaynon word *prenda*, which means “to pawn.”
2. Shuho (adjective) – an alteration of the Hiligaynon word *baho*, which means “foul smell.”
3. Kapoybells (adjective) – from the Hiligaynon word *kapoy*, which means “tired”; “bells” was added to alter the word.
4. Pleteserts (noun) – from the Hiligaynon word *plete*, which means “fare”; the coined sound –erts was added as wordplay.
5. Shumit (adjective) – from the Kinaray-a word *namit*, which means delicious; the syllable “-mit” was retained and the prefix “shu-” was added as wordplay.

The types of gay languages analyzed here reflect the culture, experiences, and geographical location of their speakers.

Additionally, pop culture gives gay language an ephemeral quality. Show business personalities come and go, fads fade, and brands become less popular over time. The meanings of gay words constantly change, depending on what is trending locally and/or internationally. Thus, words in gay language that were influenced by popular culture eventually go out of use. Though it is possible for these words to retain their relevance in the present generation, their context might require some explanation. In contrast, the usage of words derived from local languages may become transgenerational. However, there are words so intricately structured that these remain exclusive for the gay community to understand. Perhaps, the most remarkable characteristic of Filipino gay language is its “freedom from the rules and dictates of society” (Suguitan 1).

The regionality of gayspeak shows how “people display identity, in terms of ascribed membership of social categories” (Benwell and Stokoe 69). It attests to the connection between identity construction and identity expression. Moreover, the regionality of gayspeak highlights the dialectical relationship between discourse and identity (Benwell and Stokoe 5) and language and identity (Cameron and Kulick 78). In linguistic terms, gayspeak is contingent upon several modes of language constructions. Thus, it is clear that the *bakla* language is a “national moment of Philippine gay culture” (Garcia 81). It is creatively embedded in the dominant languages in the country, Filipino and English. This has been triumphantly argued by J. Neil Garcia’s in “Philippine Gay Culture: An Update and a Postcolonial Autocritique,” where he surveys gay culture from the 1990s to the 2000s in mainstream media and entertainment, literature, national politics, and LGBT movements. However, gayspeak does not exist merely as a national or mainstream phenomenon. While published studies have seriously examined Philippine gay language, the authors contend that there have been little efforts to study gay languages derived from local languages, or from languages spoken outside Metro Manila and other Filipino-speaking cities and provinces. Gay identity politics and the proactive LGBT movement over the years have asserted the presence of local gay lingo and local gay identities. This development is not really in conflict with Garcia’s notion of a national moment of gay culture; instead, it should be seen as a movement that contributes to the growing local discourse of gayspeak nationwide. As such, we may surmise that although Hiligaynon gayspeak is the focus of this study, a multitude of linguistic conventions and practices exist in various regional languages across the Philippines. Indeed, this study recommends that scholars also look into how Cebuano, Bicol, Ilocano, or Kapampangan gay lingo thrive and strive to make a difference in their local and linguistic contexts. There could be as many varieties of gay languages as there are regional languages. If we define and theorize gayness as a national discourse, it follows that it must be inclusive and encompassing as well of all other local variations of gayspeak. This initial study of popular and Hiligaynon gay languages offers a glimpse of the richness of gay language and its value as a subject of scholarly research. This study hopes that more scholars find interest in the study of regional gay languages, apart from that which is mainstream and popular.

Notes

1. According to Alicia Magos: “On the southeastern part of the island of Panay, in the province of Iloilo, about 2/3 of Iloilo’s 46 towns speak Kinaray-a. But on the northeastern coastal towns, after Iloilo City, with the exception of Leganes where pockets of households speak either Kinaray-a or Hiligaynon, the latter is spoken... Capiz on the eastern part of Panay also speaks Hiligaynon except for some slight difference in inflection compared to Ilonggo speakers in Iloilo. The towns of Ivisan and Sapián of Capiz which are already near Aklan speak Ilonggo with some mixed Aklananon words” (par. 17).
2. The article “Ang Sawikaan at ang Pagbabanyuhay ng Wikang Filipino: Ilang Tala Ukol sa Ugnayan ng Wika at Kulturang Popular sa Kasalukuyan” by Wennielyn Fajilan and Rachele Joy Rodriguez details the process behind Sawikaan, a competition founded by the Filipino Institute of Translation (FIT), which aims to recognize Filipino words that are prominent in the national discourse of the current period. Aside from FIT, Sawikaan is also sponsored by various groups and agencies including the Blas Ople Foundation, Anvil Publishing, Department of Education, Commission of Higher Education, UP Sentrong Wikang Filipino, UP College of Arts and Letters, and the National Commission on the Culture and the Arts (Fajilan and Rodriguez 81). To be part of Sawikaan words can be: (1) newly constructed; (2) borrowed from foreign languages; (3) derived from local languages; (4) “old” with new meanings; or (5) “dead” but were used again (Fajilan and Rodriguez 81). A proponent has to submit a paper defending why the suggested word deserves to be recognized as the *Salita ng Taon* (“Word of the Year”).
3. In 1968, according to Burton, homosexuality was listed in the Diagnostic Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders-II (DSM), which is an American classification of mental disorder. This was responsible for the further pathologization of homosexuality and led to more violent discrimination against homosexuals.
4. According to Burton, the American Psychological Association declassified homosexuality in 1973 as a “sexual orientation disturbance.” It was not until 1987 that homosexuality was completely removed from DSM.
5. Also to be noted is that gay language is also class-bound, which means gays in middle and higher social strata have the freedom and the creativity as well to create their own gay words.

Works Cited

- Almario, Virgilio, editor. *UP Diksiyaryong Filipino: Binagong Edisyon*. Anvil Publishing, 2010.
- Benedicto, Bobby. "The Haunting of Gay Manila: Global Space-Time and the Spectre of Kabaklaan." *GLQ: A Journal of Gay and Lesbian Studies*, vol. 14, nos. 2-3, 2008, pp. 317-38.
- Bethan, Benwell, and Elizabeth Stokoe. *Discourse and Identity*. Edinburgh UP, 2006.
- Burton, Neel. "When Homosexuality Stopped Being a Mental Disorder." *Psychology Today*, 18 Sept. 2015, www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/hidden-and-seeking/201509/when-homosexuality-stopped-being-mental-disorder.
- Butler, Judith. *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. Routledge, 1990.
- Cameron, Deborah, and Don Kulick. *Language and Sexuality*. Cambridge UP, 2003.
- Cano, Louie. *Baklese Pinoy Pop Queer Dictionary*. Milflores Publishing, 2008.
- Casabal, Norberto. "Gay Language: Defying the Structural Limits of English Language in the Philippines." *Kritika Kultura*, vol. 11, 2008, pp. 74-101.
- Chiong, Darwin, et al. "Badafinitions: The Hottest Words in Gay Lingo." *Spot.ph*, 28 Apr. 2009, www.spot.ph/newsfeatures/13926/badafinitions.
- Estravo, Elvira, et al. *Mga Salitang Homosekswal: Isang Pagsusuri*. Komisyon sa Wikang Filipino, 2004.
- Fajilan, Wennielyn, and Rachele Joy Rodriguez. "Ang Sawikaan at ang Pagbabanyuhay ng Wikang Filipino: Ilang Tala Ukol sa Ugnayan ng Wika at Kulturang Popular sa Kasalukuyan." *Dalumat E-journal*, vol. 2, no 2, 2011, pp. 80-92.
- Garcia, J. Neil. *Philippine Gay Culture: Binabae to Bakla, Silahis to MSM*. 2nd ed., U of the Philippines P, 2008.
- . "Philippine Gay Culture: An Update and a Postcolonial Autocritique." *The Postcolonial Perverse: Critiques of Contemporary Philippine Culture*, vol. 2, U of the Philippines P, 2014.
- Hernandez, Jesus Federico. "Pasok sa Banga: Ang mga Sosyolek bilang Batis ng mga Salita sa Filipino." *Sawikaan 2010: Pambansang Kumperensiya sa Salita ng Taon, 29-30 July 2010*, UP Diliman. Conference Presentation.
- Magos, Alicia. "Kinaray-a, Hiligaynon, Ilonggo and Aklanon Speaking People." *NCCA*. ncca.gov.ph/about-ncca-3/subcommissions/subcommission-on-cultural-communities-and-traditional-arts-sccta/central-cultural-communities/kinaray-a-hiligaynon-ilonggo-and-aklanon-speaking-people.
- Manalansan, Martin. *Global Divas: Filipino Gay Men in the Diaspora*. Ateneo de Manila UP, 2006.
- Narvaez, Eilene Antoinette. *Sawikaan: Isang Dekada ng Pagpili ng Salita ng Taon*. Komisyon sa Wikang Filipino, 2015.
- Navarro, Raul C. "Gay Lingo: Pagsusuri ng 'Lenggwahe' sa Dekada Nobenta." *Kritikal na Espasyo ng Kulturang Popular*, edited by Rolando Tolentino and Gary C. Devilles, Ateneo de Manila UP, 2015, pp. 296-326.
- Pamittan, Generoso, et al. "Kaloka, Keri, Bongga: Pakahulugan at Pahiwatig ng Gay Language Sa mga Piling Pelikula ni Vice Ganda." *Plaridel*, vol. 14, no. 1, 2017, pp. 95-124.

- Red, Murphy. "Gayspeak in the Nineties (For 21)." *Ladlad 2: An Anthology of Philippine Gay Writing*, edited by J. Neil Garcia and Danton Remoto, Anvil Publishing, 1996, pp. 40-48.
- Suguitan, Cynthia Grace. "A Semantic Look at Feminine Sex and Gender Terms in Philippine Gay Linggo." *Sexualities, Genders and Rights in Asia: 1st International Conference of Asian Queer Studies*. Bangkok, Thailand, 5-7 July 2005. AsiaPacifiQueer Network, Mahidol University; Australian National University. openresearch-repository.anu.edu.au/handle/1885/8681
- Tolentino, Rolando. "The Cultural Idioms of Filipino Transvestism." *(Re)Making Society: The Politics of Language, Discourse and Identity in the Philippines*, edited by T. Ruanni F. Tupas, University of the Philippines Press, 2007, pp. 169-88.

Rhoderick V. Nuncio (rhoderick.nuncio@dlsu.edu.ph) is currently the Dean of the College of Liberal Arts at De La Salle University-Manila. He is also a Research Fellow and a Full Professor of Philippine Studies at Departamento ng Filipino, DLSU. He has published works on ICT for education and development, new media & popular culture, Filipino theory, literary criticism, and philosophy. He has done several projects and advocacy programs on ICT for education and development. He handles TechnoTeach courses in his department's graduate program. He was a graduate fellow of the Sephis South-South Exchange Programme's Cultural Studies Workshop in 2004 in Bangalore, India; a visiting researcher at the Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, Mahidol University in 2014; a recipient of the Sumitomo Foundation Grant on Japan-Related Research Project in 2015-2017 and a writing fellow at the 54th UP National Writers Workshop in 2015. He completed his MA and PhD in Philippine Studies at the University of the Philippines-Diliman and his AB Philosophy and Human Resource Development at San Beda College.

Generoso B. Pamittan, Jr. (gpamittan@feu.edu.ph) teaches as regular faculty in the Department of Communication at Far Eastern University where he is currently the Assistant Vice President for Academic Services. He is also a board member (Secretary) of the Philippine Association of Communication Educators (PACE). He obtained his PhD in Philippine Studies—Language, Culture, and Media at the De La Salle University—Manila and his MA in (Broadcast) Communication from the University of the Philippines, Diliman. His research interests include gender and identity, media, communication, and culture.

David R. Corpuz (drcorpuz@mapua.edu.ph) is the Head of the AB Digital Film program of School of Media Studies, Mapua University. He recently completed the degree PhD Philippine Studies—Language, Culture, Media from De La Salle University (DLSU)-Manila and has an MA Media Studies (Film) from University of the Philippines-Diliman. David is a three-time finalist of the Cinemalaya Independent Film Festival (2014, 2016, 2022) with films selected in international film festivals, including the Singapore International Film Festival and exground filmfest in Wiesbaden, Germany, and recognized by local award giving bodies, Gawad Urian, FAMAS, and PMPC Star Awards. In 2017, he was selected to attend the Fantastic Film School at the 21st Bucheon International Fantastic Film Festival in South Korea. He has also taught at DLSU, Far Eastern University, and Lyceum of the Philippines University.

Edgar V. Ortinez (edgarortinez@yahoo.com) is a graduate of Doctor of Philosophy in Philippine Studies at De La Salle University–Manila. He is currently the Associate Dean of the College of Teacher Education at the University of Antique.