

FLEUR DE LING: TULANE UNIVERSITY WORKING PAPERS

VOLUME 4

NUMBER 1

2019

EDITORIAL INFORMATION

EDITORS

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OLANIKE ORIE

FLEUR DE LING: TULANE UNIVERSITY WORKING PAPERS

Volume IV: Language Use in Post-Colonial & Transnational Contexts

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THE RESPELLING OF LOANWORDS IN THE BANTAYANON ORTHOGRAPHY, WITH A RESPONSE TO LEO JAMES ENGLISH ON THE MATTER

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1 Introduction

The Bantayanon language (ISO 639-3: BFX) is the native language spoken on and around Bantayan Island in the Philippines by its 144,116 inhabitants (Philippine Statistics Authority, 2015). Current work—the object of my upcoming dissertation—is to provide the first formal documentation and description of the Bantayanon language, to archive the collected data and analysis for posterity and future use, to provide a significant corpus of data that may be used by other researchers, to provide a framework by which Bantayanon may continue to be documented and analyzed by future researchers and/or by the community itself, and to provide a basis for the development of Elementary-level pedagogical materials in Bantayanon. Participants in the project include a wide swath of the Bantayanon community, but the questions I address herein have primarily been considered by a committee of current and retired educators representing many of the various *barangays* ([ba.'raŋ.gai] ‘neighborhood’) of the municipality of Bantayan.¹

Unfortunately, there is to date no written historical primary data on Bantayanon from which we can draw as we work to document the language. Inevitably, the process of documentation includes the necessity to systematize, or otherwise standardize, an orthography, and this paper discusses one issue we have encountered as we work to do so: the problem of the respelling of loanwords, with which Bantayanon is replete. As is the case for most Philippine languages, the majority of loanwords in Bantayanon historically are from Spanish, but today loans from English are understandably ubiquitous and pervasive. This paper presents the arguments we considered, both for and against, on the question of the respelling of loanwords and discusses our reasoning behind why we have chosen to respell the vast majority of them. It begins with a presentation of the arguments of the famed lexicographer Leo James English for his preference to not respell, together with what I trust is a reasoned response to those arguments. It continues with a discussion

¹There are three municipalities that compose the Bantayan island group: Bantayan, Santa Fe, and Madridejos (or Lawis). All are involved to some extent in the project, but the teachers from Bantayan are the primary ones currently considering questions of orthographic conventions, as they are preparing pedagogical materials for the elementary schools in their own town.

of selected linguistic arguments *against* respelling certain words and ends with a treatment of why we opted generally *for* respelling.

2 Leo James English on the Respelling of Loanwords in Tagalog

Leo James English (LJE)² (1907-1997) was an Australian member of the Redemptorists who spent more than a half-century of service in the Philippines and to the Tagalog language. Walking into the dictionary section of any National Book Store in the Philippines, one will find the most prominently displayed are multiple copies of his two monumental bilingual dictionaries: English-Tagalog and Tagalog-English. It would be impossible to overstate the enduring value of the size, scope, and quality of the scholarship he has bequeathed future generations of Tagalog and English scholars in the Philippines. Indeed, it is to his dictionaries that I defer when necessary on all things Tagalog.

In the front matter to his *Tagalog – English Dictionary* (1986), LJE states that, although he “certainly did not and still [does] not want to become involved in disputes or polemics about the national language itself”, he “cannot help but express” his opinion that English loanwords should be spelled “as they are in English”. He proceeds to offer both aesthetic and historical—not linguistic—arguments to buttress his assertion. I do not disagree with him that there are reasons to maintain English spellings *in some cases*, but I disagree with his premise that all words should maintain their English spellings, as well as in his particular arguments against respelling in general. In this section, I shall present and respond to his arguments, for they are representative of those that agree with his position, and will finish with a further explanation of why I believe LJE took the position I oppose herein.

2.1 Argument 1: English didn’t respell French loanwords.

When English writers and speakers in the past borrowed words from other languages, especially from French, the spelling, and generally the pronunciation also, of the borrowed terms or loan words were *invariably* retained. (*emphasis mine*)

To support this argument, LJE presents a list of 140 words that he claims were borrowed from French without altering the spelling. As a speaker of French for over four decades, with a Bachelor’s and a Master’s degree in French and linguistic knowledge of the processes of borrowing, looking over this *very small* and *cherry-picked* list, I disagree with his assertion and find his representative list unpersuasive.

My first point here is that, when English borrowed from French, it did *not* incorporate exact forms of the French words in either spelling or meaning. As Rutgers University English professor Jack Lynch (2009) points out,

There were still more sources of confusion as English continued to import new words from foreign languages. While the pronunciations were often changed to suit English habits, the spellings were *usually* left intact—even though the relationship between sound and spelling in other languages was different. (*emphasis mine*)

²In order to avoid confusion with his name and the English language, I will henceforth refer to this author as LJE.

Although it is true that English *usually* adopted French spellings, it is categorically not accurate to say that it did so *invariably*. Consider FRE *fleur* > ENG *flower*, and other examples to be discussed below. Further complicating this point is the fact that, at the time when most of the words on LJE's list were borrowed, there had not been a push for language standardization in terms of dialect or orthography either in France or in England.

Also, LJE's 140-word list is replete with words that underwent semantic shifts in borrowing to denote slightly different, but related, concepts in the language where English already had a word. The classic examples are the French words *porc*, *boeuf*, and *mouton* that today in English are *pork*, *beef*, and *mutton*.³ LJE's list includes French words like *beau*, *belle*, *cafe* [sic], *chaperon*, *chef*, *corps*, *crayon*, *entree* [sic], *matinee* [sic], *parole*, *reconnaissance*, *souvenir*, *toilette*, among others, whose precise semantics cannot be said to have been borrowed along with their spellings. Therefore, in cases such as these, English borrowed not only the spellings but nuances in meaning as well.

Additionally, English historically borrowed some words multiple times, as in the cases of ENG *flower* and *flour*, or *chef* and *chief* (from FRE *chef*). Consider Merriam-Webster on this etymology:

Given that so many fancy food terms come from French—think of *sous vide*, *chiffonade*, *crudités*, and even *à la carte* and the term *haute cuisine* itself—another surprise is that *chef* by itself has no specific connection to food or cooking at all: it's the French spelling of the word that gave us *chief*, meaning “boss” or “leader.” The “skilled cook” meaning of *chef* is an abbreviated form of *chef de cuisine*, meaning “kitchen head” or “kitchen chief.” Like some other words that have come to English from French, *chef* was borrowed twice; the first time it became *chief* with a general meaning of “leader,” and then, some five centuries later in the 1800s, it was borrowed again with the more specific meaning. Typically, these more recent borrowings retain French spellings. *Chef* itself meant “head” in Old French, and comes from the Latin word for “head,” *caput*. (*emphasis original*)

So, we have the French words *chef* ‘boss, leader’ and *chef de cuisine* ‘boss, leader of the kitchen staff’⁴, where *de cuisine* only specifies what type of *chef*, i.e. the one in the kitchen. What we see here is that 1) the first time *chef* was borrowed, it maintained its meaning but was respelled and borrowed as *chief*, 2) the English word *chef* is actually a truncation of the French term *chef de cuisine* (it being unnecessary to carry over *de cuisine* into English, as that specification was implied by the resulting semantic difference between *chief* and *chef* in English), and consequently 3) the English word *chef* does not have the same meaning as the French word *chef*.

What LJE fails to take into account are the various motivations behind linguistic borrowing, i.e. primarily *need* and *prestige* (Campbell, 1999) and the methods by which borrowing occurs. Just because one language adopts a word from another does not mean that it does so with a one-to-one correspondence in meaning. *Need* as a motivation for borrowing does not mean simply that one language needs a term for a concept for which another language has an appropriate term and

³Note that neither spelling nor pronunciation have been maintained, and that in English the terms refer solely to a food product, not the animal from which the food originates.

⁴See Larousse's second definition of *cuisine*, “Personnel travaillant dans la cuisine d'un restaurant, d'un hôtel” (Personnel working in the kitchen of a restaurant or hotel) and its definition of *chef de cuisine* “personne dirigeant la cuisine et la brigade” (person directing/managing the kitchen and the kitchen team).

then just adopts that word with the same semantic boundaries. True, the most basic examples of borrowing exhibit this: e.g. *mamba* from Zulu or Swahili, *banana* from Wolof. However, to say that these most basic examples are representative of the processes of borrowing as a whole greatly oversimplifies the phenomenon. Historical linguistics is replete with examples of words borrowed to express a related but slightly more contextualized meaning for concepts for which the adopting language already had a term. Examples include (definitions based on Merriam-Webster):

- (1) English *gumbo* ‘a Louisiana soup thickened with okra pods or filé and containing meat or seafoods and usually vegetables’
from Kimbundu *gumbo* for ‘okra’
- (2) English *cenote* ‘a deep sinkhole in limestone with a pool at the bottom that is found especially in Yucatán’
from Yucatec Maya *dzonot* or *ts’onot* meaning ‘well’
- (3) English *bayou* ‘any of various usually marshy or sluggish bodies of water’ (primary use in Louisiana)
from early Choctaw *bayuk* for ‘creek, river’

My second point is that, considering that the vast majority of French borrowings into English occurred as a result of the Norman Conquest in 1066 and during the subsequent half-century occupation by the French. The orthographic standardization of English did not take place until much later; one cannot even look to the likes and times of Chaucer (died 1400) or even Shakespeare (1564-1616)—much less during the Norman occupation—to find systematic and consistent spellings of words. The standardization of English spellings did not even occur until after the printing press (consider William Caxton and the arrival of the press in England in the 1470s) and a concerted effort by many to finally standardize English spelling conventions (Lynch, 2009).

Finally, the assertion by LJE that English tended to adopt the pronunciation as well is not supported by history. Even today, although they can manage the /ʒ/ of *rouge*, my students in the French classroom have a difficult time pronouncing the /ʀ/ in words like *rare*, *triste*, and *chèvre*, distinguishing between the vowels of *le*, *leur* and *cœur* or between those of *sou* and *su*, not to mention the words with the nasals *an/en*, *on* and *in*. Additionally, as Lynch points out, there are 23 sound symbols available in our alphabet to represent an English language which has more than 40 phonemes. We have a phoneme inventory greater than our available sound-symbols; Philippine languages do not.

2.2 2.2 Argument 2: Respelling produces unacceptable new wordforms.

In a country such as the Philippines, where a very large percentage of the population knows English, and where so very many students, teachers and professionals are bilingual, it is all the more important to retain the English spelling of borrowed words. Such a policy would avoid many outrageous concoctions of massacred English words to be found in newspapers and textbooks alike such as *tsampan* for champagne, *tineydyer* for teenager, *kuki* for cookie, *adik* for addict, *aysing* for icing, *alerdyi* for allergy, *bakwit* for evacuate; and you find *bakser* for boxer, *baksin* for vaccine! What confusion! Other atrocities are *dyip* for jeep and *dyipni* for jeepney.

The use of loaded words like “outrageous concoctions” and “atrocities” of “massacred” words unmasks an elitist and classist attitude prominent among many of the academics and professionals to which LJE refers and can be likened to what Zorc (1995) calls the “puristic attitude that developed via the polarization of local versus national language issues” that led to the “native lexicographer[s]’ refus[al] to include widely-used Tagalog words in their studies”. Not only is this argument based purely on aesthetic reasoning and sentiments, it is inaccurate from a linguistic standpoint.

First, it should be pointed out that two processes of remodeling are present in the examples he gives: *adaptation* and *accommodation* (Campbell, 1999; McFarland, 2004). It is easier to argue for the retention of spellings that represent accommodated sound patterns and processes, but it is much more specious to argue for the retention of spellings that do not represent the actual adapted pronunciation of the word in the Philippine language. Consider the vowel in *kuki* or the missing final /t/ in *adik*, or the replacing of the /v/ in *baksin*. Surely, *bakwit* would not have even been recognizable had he not told us it meant ‘evacuate’.

Second, as pointed out above, words are not always borrowed with the same semantics they carry in the donor language. In Bantayanon a *traysikol* is not a ‘tricycle’; an *intiryur* refers only to the ‘interior’, i.e. the ‘innertube’, of a tire; a *sinamun* refers uniquely to a type of ‘cinnamon roll’ which isn’t really equivalent to the sweet pastry an American would think of, and the *spagiti* made by the loving hands of Bantayanon mothers is very sweet and substitutes slices of hotdog wieners for the ground beef Americans would include in their decidedly unsweet ‘spaghetti’.

LJE’s argument here is purely aesthetic and leaves one to wonder whether he is more interested in describing a Philippine language or in forcing that language to conform to a more “suitable” language like English. Indeed, it seems much more prescriptively than descriptively motivated on his part, an attempt to impose the *bon usage* of the academic and professional *bourgeoisie* onto the Tagalog language and, by extension, the uneducated masses of unsophisticated Filipinos. With this attitude so prevalent among the academic and political elites, it is no wonder that the speakers of minority languages feel, as Eslao-Alix (2014) says, “awkward about” their languages. And it is equally ironic—or perhaps just consistent—that while these elite academics pay *courtsie* to the *bon usage* of the Anglophones, they likewise impose Tagalog, by way of “Filipino”, onto the remaining three quarters of the rest of the Philippines. It is no wonder that such language attitudes at the highest levels of academia that inform language policy in the Philippines contribute mightily to the attrition of minority languages across the archipelago.

2.3 Argument 3: Respellings are difficult to recognize at first glance.

The reason why I chose to object to most, if not all, of the phonetic spellings of English loan words in Tagalog is because of the difficulty of knowing at first, or even at second or third glance, what these words are supposed to mean.

It was only after my manuscript had been typeset and the ‘originals’ photographed and the ‘flats’ made that I found out that certain reputable authorities as well as many ordinary teachers and students were quite opposed to the phonetic spelling of borrowed English terms. Many people complained to me that the phonetic spelling of many borrowed English words rendered the meaning unintelligible at first glance or reading and even if the meaning could be grasped, the phonetic spelling of English

‘borrowings’ was leading to confusion in the minds of the students so that they were oftentimes not sure as to what was the correct spelling of many English words.

This argument could only obtain under the preconception that Tagalog can only be correctly written in light of correct English. Again, the academic elitists are the culprits here. Who owns Tagalog? the elitists? the language planners in Manila? the academics? And why is this question only considered valid from their perspective? What about the *dyipni* driver in Manila who doesn’t speak English? Are these respelled words “unintelligible” to him? It seems to me that, if indeed extra effort is required to “grasp” the meanings of these respellings (which is dubious), then it should be the very academics and educated English speakers who should be asked to give it.

This notion stems from a language policy that elevates English to a superior role to a certain extent over Filipino, but to a much greater extent over the minority languages of the Philippines. The vast majority of speakers in the provinces are not fluent English speakers, just as Osborne (2018) points out: “...the real situation on the ground in the Philippines reveals a radical heterogeneity in competencies in English across the archipelago, a point made more apparent in the sometimes stark differences in speakers from urban or provincial environments as well as along the lines of class and race.” To be frank, the vast majority of so-called English speakers in Metro Manila speak a Philippinized version of English at best, and it is only those of the academic and political elite whose English proficiencies belie their Filipino heritage. The implication in LJE’s argument here is that it is more important to be a good English speaker than it is to be a good Tagalog speaker. It is, in this view, more important that the *dyipni* driver be able to understand the English wordform *evacuate* than it is for the college professor to be able to effortlessly understand the Tagalog wordform *bakwit*.

2.4 Additional Comments on LJE’s Arguments

If the three arguments by LJE that I presented above are true and valid, then why does he not apply the same standard to the myriad (and probably more plentiful) number of words in Tagalog that have Spanish origins? A cursory glance through LJE’s dictionary revealed that respelled Spanish loanwords such as *Diyós* (SPA ‘Dios’), *busina* (SPA ‘bocina’), *depekto* (SPA ‘defecto’), *multó/múlto* (SPA ‘muerto’), and *tuwalya* (SPA ‘toalla’) are found throughout. The best explanation—for he fails to address this question—is that the educated and academics that he is appealing to usually recognize the English loanwords in Tagalog, much as they would have recognized the Spanish loanwords more than a century ago. It appears that the academics and language policy planners in the Philippines today have a tendency to be deferential at best and subservient at worst to the demands that English has made on the Philippine culture and mindset, initially by the Americans but often today by their own hands, a reverence that Spanish lost early in the last century.

Next, LJE fails to consider among his arguments that languages do not “borrow” or “loan” words in the strictest sense of these terms, although we continue to use these terms to describe the phenomenon. It is more accurate to say that they “adopt” words only after submitting them to either *adaptation* or *accommodation*—phonologically, morphologically, semantically—forcing them to conform to the rules governing the adopting language. Even the term “adopt” is not precisely accurate, considering the words first must undergo these alterations. The best way to describe the process is to say that one way languages coin words is to base those new words on already existing words in languages they come in contact with, resulting in new words that are unique to the recipient languages. This process is just as legitimate as any other process by which a language

coins words. The words *allô*, *agnostique*, *bifteck*, and *plastique* are no less French because they come from English (*L'Académie Française* notwithstanding)⁵ than the words *arbre*, *formidable* or *misérable*. Likewise, the word *dyip* is no less Tagalog because it comes from English than the words *maganda*, *pogi* or *araw*. One corollary to this principle is that, in truth, no word has ever just appeared out of thin air;⁶ all words have a source. Those sources and methods of coinage are varied and often complex, but all words have origins. Another corollary to this principle is that all languages borrow from other languages; there is not a language in the history of mankind that is completely unique and has not inherited its lexicon and directly borrowed words from other languages to supplement that lexicon when necessary.

Finally, LJE's insistence that loanwords from English in Tagalog should retain their spellings completely defeats the very purpose of the bilingual dictionary he has so eloquently produced and which is displayed prominently in every National Book Store in the Philippines. Why would one need to include the wordform *vaccine* in a bilingual English-Tagalog dictionary if the gloss in the other language would simply be *vaccine*? If one were to respond that there may be a semantic shift present, then they have argued my very point above. It seems much more profitable for the dictionary user—be they a native Tagalog or English speaker or learner—to be able to find ENG *vaccine* alongside TAG *baksin*, whichever of the two their starting point may be. How many entries in LJE's dictionary would therefore be inaccessible to a *dyipni* driver who doesn't know a word's English spelling (which itself over the centuries has become widely misrepresentative of the actual English pronunciation itself of today) and who must rely on his own intuition of how he pronounces the word in order to locate it in the dictionary!

To restate another argument from above, the English lexicon is the composite sum of its words, despite their origin, just as the Tagalog lexicon is the composite sum of its words, again despite their origin. LJE's argument suggests that the Tagalog lexicon, instead, is the composite sum of its native words and any English word it didn't have a word for in its lexicon. Indeed, in this sense, "borrow" is a most apt term.

2.5 A defense of LJE's position

In writing this section about LJE's stated position on the respelling of loanwords in his dictionary, I have been apprehensive about the tone I have taken in my own dissent. I fear that I have been overly stringent in my critique of the position of such a reputed scholar, so I want here to place LJE's arguments in their appropriate context. In doing so, we can possibly better understand—if not agree with—his preference against respelling.

We strive in academia to be as objective as possible in the positions we take and the viewpoints we hold, but it can be difficult to disassociate ourselves entirely from certain paradigms that bound our thinking on certain issues. We are creatures of our times, and our views tend to reveal our biases in favor of our values and objectives; dispassion, even in academia, is illusory. LJE lived and wrote in the Philippines during a time in which language questions such as these were politically charged

⁵Ironically for LJE, the *Académie* takes a very different approach to the adoption of loanwords into French. Although in practice their influence on current usage among the French people is debatable, the *Académie* expends a great deal of effort transforming loanwords and terms into something more phonologically, morphologically, and/or orthographically "French".

⁶I recognize that some linguists today are studying the use of sound symbolism and onomatopoeia in the coining of words, but this process plays no role in the current discussion.

and culturally conditioned, and these questions have had reverberations across the diverse linguistic spectrum of the nation. Indeed, the language policies hammered out in the 20th century Philippines have had repercussions that have persisted into the 21st. To better understand the context of LJE's position, we must consider primarily the *milieu* in which he wrote and the *audience* whom he likely had in mind when formulating his position.

There is one point I would like to make before continuing, however. I want to be careful not to make this discussion personal, for one can't speak to another's motivations, but instead to present the following as a contextualization of the arguments themselves, for they are not unique to LJE.

Recently, in presenting a linguistic and anthropological analysis of the term 'nosebleed' in Philippine⁷ discourse, Dana Osborne (2018) provides a background of the roles foreign languages have played historically in the Philippines, and the contextualization she provides is applicable to this discussion as well. Key points from her presentation include:

It was the proliferation of education-for-all during the American Period from 1898–1946 that set the stage for the role of education, and most particularly the English language, in creating sentiments of nationhood and a unified citizenry spurred on by longstanding structures of power that ultimately benefitted the mestizo elite. In addition, the apparent linguistic and demographic heterogeneity of populations across the island array served to underscore the widely-held belief that national independence and modernity rested in linguistic unification (Anderson, 1998; Constantino, 1966; Gonzalez, 1998; Gonzalez and Bautista, 1981)⁸, consequently lessening of the value of indigenous and minority languages spoken across the archipelago as little more than impediments to modernity. Such logics helped to secure the position of English in the formulation of a “modern,” “democratic” and “progressive” Philippines and set the stage for English's central position in projects of nation-building.

She goes on to cite Woolard (1992) and Woolard and Schieffelin (1994)⁹, who

have written that the emergence of English-centric ideologies in various contexts are driven by long standing philosophical traditions that are over time transferred into the underlying *raison d'être* for the apparent “value” of English across heterogeneous linguistic landscapes, (*emphasis hers*)

⁷Osborne's setting is northern Luzon, where Ilocano is the *lingua franca*, but in my experience and estimation, her assessments are valid in the Visayas as well.

⁸I was unable to locate precisely the versions of the references she cites, so I present them here in her format:

Anderson, B., 1998. *The Specter of Comparisons: Nationalism, Southeast Asia, and the World*. Verso, New York.

Constantino, R., 1966. *The Miseducation of the Filipino*. Foundation for Nationalist Studies. Ateneo.

Gonzalez, A.B., 1998. The language planning situation in the Philippines. *J. Multiling. Multicultural Dev.* 5 (6), 487–525.

Gonzalez, A.B., Bautista, M.L.S., 1981. *Aspects of Language Planning and Development in the Philippines*. Linguistic Society of the Philippines, Manila.

⁹Woolard, K.A., 1992. Language ideology: issues and approaches. *Pragmatics* 2 (3), 235–249.

Woolard, K.A., Schieffelin, B.B., 1994. Language ideology. *Annu. Rev. Anthropol.* 23, 55–82.

and Pennycook (1994) who writes:

English was constructed in very particular ways to serve very particular cultural political goals. Those who spoke the refined version of the language were considered to be rational, moral, civilized and capable of abstract thought, while those who spoke the vulgar version were allegedly irrational, controlled by emotion, materialist and unable to transcend the immediate concern of the present.

Finally, she goes on to point out how English “firmly located social advancement and modernity”, how languages are hierarchical, and how “the cultural politics of English also help to locate the primary role of the language in terms of concepts of rationality, morality and civility” in the Philippine linguistic landscape.

So, if LJE held affections for the sentiments Osborne describes, it is easy to see how he would argue that the respelling of English-origin words “would avoid many outrageous concoctions of massacred English words to be found in newspapers and textbooks”. But newspapers and textbooks are quite different in their usefulness in language studies. Newspapers should be providing source material for lexicographers; textbooks are often the platforms on which language prescriptivists pronounce their decrees.

Which brings me to the second aspect of the linguistic *milieu* in which LJE wrote: a readily-available writing tradition that had already developed in the cultural interplay between Tagalog and English. When Wolff (1972a,b), an invited contributor to this volume, and Wolfenden (1971), two linguists whose work most closely relates to mine in the Visayas, set about writing their linguistic descriptions of Cebuano and Hiligaynon,¹⁰ they turned for source material to newspapers and journals and magazines, i.e. language in use and produced by native speakers. Bantayanon does not have that luxury, but Tagalog did and had for a while. I will come back to this question later, but suffice it here to say that it is no wonder then that LJE’s first inclination was to spell the Tagalog words *as he was witnessing them being written* in actual use by Tagalog speakers and that it was only after pushback from “certain reputable authorities as well as many ordinary teachers and students” that he reconsidered.

The third aspect of the *milieu* is the different domains of use of the languages in question and their hierarchy of prestige, so to speak. When I first arrived in the Philippines, I encountered what I would often describe later as “linguistic overload”. There were so many languages coming at me seemingly all at once that I never knew (outside of English) what language I was hearing or reading. Only with time was I able to develop a sense of which languages were which, and the boundaries often ran according to certain domains of language use. McFarland (2004) describes many of these domains as such:

What we do see is a division of the country, and especially Manila, into linguistic spheres: such as an English sphere as opposed a Tagalog sphere. English is the language of business, the hotels, the shopping malls. Tagalog is the language of small talk (gossip), the wet market, small businesses. English-speaking people take airplanes and ride in cars. Tagalog-speakers (we should say those who cannot speak English)

¹⁰*Ilonggo* is the autonym for the language referred to academically as *Hiligaynon*. It is the language spoken on Panay (whose primary city is Iloilo) and on Negros Occidental (primary city, Bacolod). Henceforth, I will refer to the language as *Ilonggo*.

take boats and jeepneys. English is still the dominant language of education; if you can't cope with English you won't get far in school. On television, English news shows are not much different from CNN or BBC; Tagalog news tends to focus on sensational news of murders and scandals. Even the content is different. Mainstream newspapers are English, again much like English newspapers in other countries. Tagalog newspapers are tabloids, also with emphasis on the sensational.

In light of this, it is not difficult to see why those who believe like LJE would prioritize English spellings over actual Tagalog usage. If, as Osborne points out along the same lines, language ideologies have assigned English and Tagalog different tasks, i.e. “English for government and science and Tagalog/Filipino for communicating national values”, then it becomes apparent that English would be considered prestigious, while Tagalog would be considered plebeian.

With the descriptions of the linguistic *milieu* provided above by Osborne and McFarland, who can we assume were LJE's target *audience*? In his own words, it seems to be those “certain reputable authorities as well as many ordinary teachers and students” who pushed back against his spelling of Tagalog loanwords *in Tagalog*. He doesn't seem to have in mind the jeepney drivers, or the housewives, or the fishmongers. He seems to be focused instead on the academics and the elites, with providing the “rational, moral, [and] civilized” with a version of Tagalog without the impurities of Tagalog.

For Bantayanon, we have taken the opposite approach, born out of a different motivating bias: to express Bantayanon on its own terms, to espouse like Hymes (1985) the “functional equality of all languages”. We assert that Bantayanon words, despite their provenance, belong to Bantayanon. We hope to foster on the Bantayan islands a love and appreciation for, and tools to express, the unique Bantayanon language, which, hopefully, will result in the reversing of language attrition on the islands and the flourishing of Bantayanon in additional literary and quotidian domains. Spelling words in Bantayanon as they are produced by Bantayanons is only one aspect of that endeavor, but it is an important one. In the following sections, I will discuss the various arguments for and against respelling and present our arguments for why we have chosen to respell most—but not all—English loanwords in Bantayanon.

3 Linguistic Arguments against Respelling

With the ubiquitous nature of English in the Philippines—and the often fluid domains of use—it is possible to argue that *some* words should retain their English spellings when writing in Bantayanon.

3.1 Argument 1: Certain phonotactics are present only in some loanwords.

Sometimes a word from one language is used in another language while maintaining certain original phones which are not normally present in the adopting language. Take for example the voiced post-alveolar fricative /ʒ/ in the French word *rouge* ‘red’. English uses this word in the domain of facial cosmetics, and we see it in the name of the capital city of Louisiana, Baton Rouge. In the former, it is pronounced with the original /ʒ/, which is not normally a phoneme of English, but which only requires the English speaker to voice the voiceless counterpart /ʃ/, which does exist in English. In the latter, two pronunciations are attested by Louisianans: the original /ʒ/ and the adapted /ʒ/ (what Campbell calls *phoneme substitution*).

Usually in the Philippines, in cases such as these, we see phoneme substitution, the primary examples of which are /f/ > /p/ and /v/ > /b/, e.g. *poreber* for ENG *forever* or *baka* for SPA *vaca*. Another example is BTY *istambay* ‘loitering’ for ENG *standby* (with an accompanying semantic shift). However, in some rare cases, we do see the retention of phones from the donor language: consider the word for a frozen, blended treat, ENG *shake*. Bantayanons use this word and pronounce it quite closely to how it is pronounced in English, but /ʃ/ and /eɪ/ are not Bantayanon phones¹¹ and do not have representations in the Bantayanon orthography. It is difficult therefore to spell this word in Bantayanon, and, since most people already recognize the word as is, it seems most economical to spell it in Bantayanon as it is spelled in English.

3.2 Argument 2: Etymologies can be preserved in original spellings.

A famous example of an English word whose pronunciation has changed significantly over the centuries, but whose spelling has not changed accordingly, is the word *knight*. If this word were coined today, it would probably be spelled *nite*. Yet, by maintaining the spelling despite the gradual losses and shifts of phones in the word, English has maintained a record of its original pronunciation, as well as of subsequent changes. Additionally, spelling the word with a *k* also maintains a distinction in writing between it and the word *night*. Etymological origins, be they diachronic changes in a language or more synchronic adoptions from other languages, can be maintained and preserved for future generations, with the added benefit of maintaining the accessibility of past texts for readers in the future.

One possible example of this in Bantayanon would be the word *lobat* ‘low battery’. It would be difficult to trace the precise etymological origins of this word, but consider the following. First, this word was probably not a borrowing directly from English. Judging by the era in which it first appeared in the Philippines, when cell phones were first introduced in Manila, it was probably coined in Manila (a reduction of a polysyllabic word to a bisyllabic one), making it a Tagalog innovation that later spread, along with the cell phones themselves, to Bantayanon, either by way of Cebuano or of mass media. Maintaining this word in Bantayanon as *lobat* instead of *lubat* would have two advantages: 1) it would prevent further obscuration of the original meaning of ‘low battery’ and 2) it would be an acceptable spelling both for those who maintain the pronunciation /lo.bat/ in their speech as well as for those who have subsequently adapted their pronunciation to /lu.bat/.

3.3 Argument 3: Some words are already well-known in their English forms.

Although Bantayanon does not have a standard orthography or a literary tradition *per se* that could inform the process of standardization—as did English and French and Tagalog and Cebuano and Hiligaynon when their lexicographers were tasked with doing so—it would be incorrect to argue that Bantayanon has never been written. On the contrary, Bantayanon is written all the time in personal communication, especially today with the advent of the internet. However, Bantayanon is very rarely written in public. In public, we see the use of English, Tagalog, and Cebuano. The domains of each is another topic, but let’s consider English here. Almost every mass-produced

¹¹Although, for many /ʃ/ may be an allophone of /sj/ or /sʃ/ in rapid speech, as in the word BTY *sya* ‘he, she’ or BTY *syum* ‘a small black ant’. This is not, however, unique to Bantayanon.

product that is sold across the country has labelling in English. At this very moment, I am looking at a package of the common pre-mixed 3-in-one instant coffee (combining coffee, creamer, and sugar all in one convenient mixture). The front reads this way:

Buy **2** Sachets Get **1 FREE**

Premium Coffee Blend

TOP Café

Brown Delight

✓ Caramelly

✓ Rich

Complete Coffee Mix with Brown Sugar

The back of the packaging tells us that “the perfect coffee experience starts from the aroma” and provides preparation instructions and nutritional information, all in English. We also see that this product was manufactured in Indonesia and imported into the Philippines, and even has a neologism, “caramelly”, which is typical of linguistic “creativity” in the Philippines.¹²

It is obviously more economical and efficient for companies selling products nationwide to use English on their packaging and in their promotions. We see *water* on bottles, never *tubig*. We see *soap*, never *sabun*. Now, to be accurate, these words are English words written in English. There are equivalents in Bantayanon that should be used when writing in Bantayanon, but many words are only ever seen in English and have no apparent equivalent in Bantayanon. We will have to take these words on a case by case basis, ensuring that there is indeed no semantic equivalent in Bantayanon, but off the top of my head, I can think of *drive-thru*, *load* (for phones), *brewed coffee* and *3-in-one*, and even the neologism *unlirice* ‘unlimited rice’.

This argument closely resembles LJE’s third argument above, and, to be fair, he has a point in this respect. However, my argument here is different. I am not talking about any difficulty in recognizing English words in Bantayanon or in the possibility that the “phonetic spelling of many borrowed English words [may render] the meaning unintelligible” or that students may be confused “as to what was the correct spelling of many English words”. Instead, I am pointing out that there are some words of English origin that 1) belong uniquely to English domains of use, 2) do not have Bantayanon equivalents, and 3) are ubiquitous in writing across the Philippine archipelago. They therefore are *already* and *only* recognized spelled as such.

4 The Bantayanon orthography

Before entering into the discussion on why we chose to spell Bantayanon words according to the Bantayanon orthographic principles we established, it is in order first to present those orthographic principles. After reviewing the literature on the issue (in which I go into further detail in my dissertation), we decided on the following principles: simply put, the Bantayanon orthography must be PRECISE, ACCEPTABLE, UNIQUE, GENERAL, LEARNABLE, and TYPABLE.

¹²In Philippine English, “funny English words” such as *caramelly*, or *passers* (of an exam), or *waiters* (family and friends in a hospital waiting room), or *comfort room* (restroom) still belong to the domain of English—albeit “Fil-English”—use and so do not fit into our discussion of the respelling of English-origin words adopted into Bantayanon.

PRECISE: Whenever possible, there should be one-to-one mapping of grapheme to phoneme.

ACCEPTABLE: Orthographic decisions should be made in consideration of what the Bantayanon community will actually use in practice.

UNIQUE: Whenever possible, without sacrificing important other principles, the orthography should seek uniqueness where Bantayanon itself is unique.

GENERAL: The orthography should seek to minimize, without sacrificing accuracy, the variation found in the three primary dialects of Bantayanon. In other words, the orthography should “work” for all three dialects.

LEARNABLE: The orthography should be easy to teach, easy to learn, easy to use, and easily understood by other Filipinos.

TYPABLE: The symbols of the orthography should be easy to produce on computer keyboards and handheld devices.

There are only 16 native consonantal phones in Bantayanon: /b/, /d/, /g/, /h/, /k/, /l/, /m/, /n/, /ŋ/, /p/, /r/, /s/, /t/, /w/, /y/, /ʔ/ and 3 vocalic phonemes: /a/, /i/, /u/. Generally, the graphemes map to their equivalents in the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA), as is typical in the Philippines. Those that don't are the velar nasal (/ŋ/ written ng), the flap (/r/ written r), and the glottal stop (/ʔ/ written either – or `).¹³ Stress is contrastive but unmarked in the orthography. Proper names are left as spelled.

Despite the influence of the existence of /e/ and /o/ in the standard Filipino orthography, which has influenced both current usage among Bantayanons as well as current pedagogical materials in Cebuano,¹⁴ we chose to follow Wolff (1972a,b) in this matter and only use the three vowels *a* /a/, *i* /i/, and *u* /u/.¹⁵ As he points out (personal communication), there is no contrast between /u/ and /o/, nor between /i/ and /e/; the letters *e* and *o* are used to represent lowered allophones of the phonemes /i/ and /u/, respectively. Even if /e/ and /o/ exist in Bantayanon (which has not been demonstrated), they would exist only conditioned environmentally and would therefore be allophonic at best. Therefore, it is more accurate to write Bantayanon with only three vowels.

Bantayanon has strayed from the current conventions of Cebuano (and other languages) in one primary area: the marking of all word-medial and word-final glottals. This is a result of a change in progress in Bantayanon that, in many dialects (primarily of the town centers), has lost intervocalic /h/ or /l/, resulting in a long vowel. In (4) we see that vowel length and final glottal are both contrastive.

¹³Final glottal is still an open question as of this writing. Along with stress, which by convention is indicated by an acute accent (´), it is currently being written with a grave accent (`) over the vowel preceding it, e.g. bágà [ˈba.gaʔ] ‘lungs’. Note also that when they occur together, a circumflex (ˆ) is used, e.g. isdâ [is.ˈdaʔ] ‘fish’. Because the glottal, however, is an individual segment (and not a quality of the preceding vowel), we are considering marking final glottals with an apostrophe (’), but this is itself problematic. A final decision has not been made.

¹⁴Since Bantayan is located in the Province of Cebu, the only elementary-level educational materials currently available are in Cebuano, but this will fortunately change as we develop materials in Bantayanon.

¹⁵In a closely related language, Hiligaynon, Uy-Griño (2005) uses all 5 vowels in her dictionary, due to /e/ and /o/ having become phonemic in Hiligaynon.

- (4) a. *waa* [wa:] ‘to get lost’
 b. *wà* [waʔ] ‘none’
 c. *wa* [wa] ‘left (side)’

In the conventions of the hegemonic languages of the Philippines, there is no indication of intervocalic glottal, as it can be assumed. Therefore, BTY *aguma-a* ‘short-bodied mackerel’ would traditionally be written *agumaa*. But Bantayanon needed a mechanism to indicate contrastive long vowels and we opted for the double vowel and for marking all intervocalic vowels, to avoid confusion.

- (5) *alimpuu* [a.lim.'pu:] < *alimpuhu* [a.lim.'pu.hu] ‘crown of head where hair forms a whirl’
 (6) *uu* [u:] < *uhu* ['u.hu] ‘head’
 (7) a. *daan* [da:n] ‘road’ < *dahan* ['da.han]
 b. *da-an* [da.ʔan] ‘old’

This is not a complete representation of all the questions involved in the orthography, but it will suffice for our present purposes.

5 Why we chose to respell most loawords in Bantayanon

One of the primary motivating factors for the attrition of minority languages among younger speakers in the Philippines is a perceived unsuitability of their languages in assisting them to participate in a global economy that prioritizes other hegemonic languages such as, in our case, Cebuano, Tagalog, and English. This is particularly poignant in terms of opportunities for gainful employment, which may be only available off the island. We do not eschew this reality. However, the fallacy here is in thinking that some hegemonic language can be promoted and learned only at the expense of one’s mother tongue. We in Louisiana learned the hard way of the inevitable consequences of this way of thinking. Indeed, since the “English only” policies in Louisiana public education—that not only required English in schools but also punished the use of French, a partial cause of language attitudes that stigmatized French and hastened its attrition—research has shown that it is not an either/or proposition. Moreover, children who grow up bilingual have been shown to often perform better in school (after an initial period of lagging behind) than their monolingual counterparts.

Our decision to spell adopted words in Bantayanon according to the Bantayanon orthographic system must be understood in light of our priorities in embarking on such a project: to promote literacy and pride in the language, thereby hopefully slowing its attrition in the short term, and providing tools and fertile ground for future use of the language in expanded domains. This section describes why we felt that the respelling of adopted words furthers those priorities. Here I present, in light of these arguments, our reasons for choosing to spell Bantayanon words, despite their provenance, using Bantayanon orthographic principles and in accordance with the phonological, morphological, and semantic rules that govern Bantayanon.

Lobel (upcoming) and Allen (dissertation upcoming) provide data from historical documents and linguistic comparative analysis to argue that modern Bantayanon is based on the grammatical substratum of an old Waray dialect which was overtaken by migrations of speakers of other languages, with the result being a heavily borrowed lexicon. The data and analysis will show that

what most believe to be Ilonggo in Bantayanon is actually from the dialect of Waray spoken by a group of people who migrated across from Leyte to northern Cebu (i.e., in the area of the Bantayan islands), some of whom later migrated across to eastern Panay, where that same Warayan dialect mixed with Kinaray-a and became what we know today as Ilonggo. The language of the Bantayan islands is hence based on what that Warayan dialect was before it got mixed with the native peoples of Panay and became “Ilonggo”. It was later overwhelmed with Cebuano vocabulary and morphology, a further stage in its development, but that pre-Ilonggo Warayan substratum remains, and not all of it can still be found in modern Ilonggo.

Linguists have long considered Bantayanon a unique language among its relatives, all classified at the uppermost levels as *Austronesian*, *Malayo-Polynesian*, *Philippine*, *Greater Central Philippine*, *Central Philippine*. Based on his own research, but drawing on previous classifications, Zorc (1977) classifies Bantayanon further as *Bisayan*, *Central*, *Peripheral*. In its 10th edition, when it first began listing dialect names, the Ethnologue listed Bantayanon as a dialect of Hiligaynon. Later, in the late 2000s, after a formal investigation of Bantayanon, both with Zorc and with native speakers, and after having the proposal approved “by a panel of both SIL linguists and outside linguists at SIL-Philippines in July 2009”, Lobel and Hall (2009) concluded that it is indeed a unique language and petitioned the Ethnologue to list it as such and to assign it its own ISO code. Their arguments that its having been listed as a dialect of Ilonggo was “an unsupported error” were the following:

- It is not mutually intelligible with Ilonggo.
- Its speakers do not consider themselves or their language to be Ilonggo.
- Ilonggos in turn do not consider it to be Ilonggo.
- No published works have argued that it is a dialect of Ilonggo.

The Ethnologue removed it accordingly and assigned to it the ISO 639-3 code BFX. After having been listed in the 10th through the 16th editions as a dialect of Ilonggo, the change was made in the 17th edition (2014).

This is no small point, especially when it comes to language attitudes and perceptions among the Bantayanon people. Bantayanons clearly distinguish their language from the language spoken on the mainland of Cebu, a view reciprocated by the Cebuanos themselves. Attempts by local speakers to define the Bantayanon language linguistically yield various results. Many Bantayanons generally, but incorrectly, consider their language to be a *dialect* of another more hegemonic language,¹⁶ or as a “mixture” of one or more other languages. Many perceive it to be a dialect inferior to what they consider a “pure” form of Cebuano. Others describe it as simply a mixture of two or more of the surrounding languages, Ilonggo (Hiligaynon), Masbatenyo, Waray-Waray, and Cebuano. For these reasons, and because the meanings of the terms *language* and *dialect* in the Philippines are highly influenced by social and political factors and do not correspond to their accepted academic definitions,¹⁷ local perceptions of the Bantayanon language are varied, ranging from an uncouth form of an otherwise “pure Cebuano”, to a mixture of Ilonggo and Cebuano (and often Waray-Waray), to a dialect of Tagalog, which it is clearly not.

¹⁶This is typical of the Philippines and hardly unique to Bantayan.

¹⁷Note that Filipinos typically, but incorrectly, refer to any language other than the national or regional languages as *dialects*. It would be more accurate to refer to them as *minority languages*. Bantayanon, a minority language, in turn has its own regional dialects: Binantayanun (Bantayan), Linawisanun (Madrirdejos), and Sinantapihanun (Santa Fe). It can also be said to have dialects that vary between the rural areas and town centers.

Although the language is still being transmitted intergenerationally, it is also losing ground to Cebuano in the process. Older members of the community lament the speech patterns and language attrition of the younger generation. The “purest” forms are said to exist today only among the elderly and among those who inhabit the more isolated islets. The vitality status of Bantayanon is threatened additionally by a Mother-Tongue Based Education (MTBE) policy in the early grades that uses Cebuano instead of Bantayanon for the curriculum, i.e. the pedagogical materials and the language of instruction (LOI) are in Cebuano. Current policy in the Philippines dictates that the “mother tongue” may be used as the LOI for grades 1-3.¹⁸ Bantayanon is not used for two reasons. First, it is often wrongly assumed, because the Bantayan islands are part of Cebu, that the mother tongue of any Bantayan is *ipso facto* Cebuano, the recognized regional language. Also, although current policy allows for the use of local languages as the LOI in the early grades, pedagogical materials in Bantayanon are non-existent. There are no available primary school books in Bantayanon, so the books used are in Cebuano, both because they are the only ones available and because it is assumed that Cebuano is indeed the “mother tongue” of any Bantayanon. The implicit message, therefore, to a child using a Cebuano textbook to learn to read and write in his/her “mother tongue” is 1) that Bantayanon is not a *real* or *unique* language and 2) that it has no educational or economic value to the student. The corollary to that message therefore is that the children would be better off and better prepared for life if they were to learn and use Cebuano! The practical effect of this is that the students are not learning Bantayanon formally and its value is not being reinforced. This is a major—if not the primary—factor in the attrition of Bantayanon among younger speakers.

It is thus incumbent upon the Bantayanon community who seek to stem the tide of hegemonic language encroachment and reverse the erosion of the Bantayanon language among the youth to, first, clearly distinguish Bantayanon as a unique and valuable language among its Bisayan sister languages, rather than a dialect of one or a hodgepodge of several. And, if the threat to Bantayanon from Cebuano is real, how much more the threat from English!

Consider for a moment one example of the ingenuity and creativity of language. Bantayanon has adopted the word *traysikul* from ENG *tricycle*, which is a vehicle for public transportation which adds a side-car to a motorcycle. But many of these vehicles are not propelled by motorcycles but by bicycles that drivers must manually pedal. It is grueling and exhausting work. Bantayanon has the word *sikad* for ‘pedal’, which is strikingly similar to the *-sikul* in *traysikul*. Poof! a ready-made word for the pedaled version of the vehicle: *traysikad*! This productivity must be predicated on the fact that *traysikul* is a Bantayanon, and not an English, word.

Remember also, as I already discussed, adopted words do not always carry the same meaning as their counterparts in the donor language. Consider the above example: a BTY *traysikul* is not an ENG *tricycle*. And oh the irony when you consider that an English speaker on Bantayan would have to adopt the new word *traysikad* into his English vocabulary! Other examples would be BTY *istambay* ‘loitering’ (< ENG *stand by*), BTY *intiryur* ‘innertube’ (< ENG *interior*), BTY *limunsitu* ‘calamondin’ (< SPA *limoncito*), and BTY *publasyun* ‘town center’ (< SPA *población*), all words which have only a partial correspondence semantically with their counterparts.

My argument in this section is this: 1) Bantayanon must first be considered a unique and valuable language in order to begin to turn the tide of language encroachment and 2) the words

¹⁸for all subjects except Filipino and English. Also, instruction in Filipino and English is resumed from grade 4 onward.

of Bantayanon belong to Bantayanon, despite whatever their provenance may actually be. The Bantayanon words *bakasyun* ‘vacation’ and *gustu* ‘want, like’ (< SPA *gusto*), are in no way “outrageous concoctions of massacred English [or Spanish] words”. They are Bantayanon words in their own right, and they must be treated that way.

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