

Linguistic Analysis of Commercial Sex Workers' Language of Negotiation

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Abstract—Language has been used for many reasons, and one of which is for negotiation. Commercial sex workers have employed language that is distinct and rhetorical for negotiation purposes. Moral concern may be posed in the investigation of these workers' language of negotiation, but the promotion of sex commerce is not the aim of the study. The goal of this study is to appreciate how linguistic features contribute to a register used by a particular group of people, specifically, the commercial sex workers in Cebu, Philippines. In extracting the meaning of their language of negotiation through processing the morphology, semantics, functions, and rhetorical devices, this study offers a way of understanding this marginal and despised group in the Philippine context.

Index Terms—Commercial sex workers, connotation through images, functions of language, language of negotiation, linguistic analysis, morphologic analysis, rhetorical devices.

I. INTRODUCTION

The native Filipino language before the Spaniards came to the country in 1521 is of Malayo-polynesian and Arabic in origin. The earliest group of Indonesians traveled to the Philippines around 5,000 to 6,000 years ago and made another voyage around 1500 B.C. The similarities in the Filipino language and Bahasa Indonesia become proof the language acculturation. Moreover, the Malays have contributed to a huge percentage in the Philippine population [1]. When Spaniards came, there was a loaning of words from Spanish. Long period of contact with foreigners results into language borrowing. The Philippines has encountered various foreign colonizers in the period of history but no one beats the length of time the Spanish colonizers had come in contact with Filipinos. More than three hundred years, from 1500s to 1800s, the Spaniards had influenced the Filipinos in their beliefs, attitude, and culture. One aspect of culture of a group of people that the foreign colonizers have taken influence of is their language [2].

The Philippine language has evolved with the time. Technology has brought influences to the development of new vocabulary or lexicons among the Filipinos. Television personalities have made an impact to the rise of coined words [3]. The case of "borrowing" from the English language [4] and the emergence of "gay lingos" [5] have definitely introduced words of the modern age in the Philippines. Cebu, one of the popular cities of the Philippines has adapted to the trend of using new words that contribute to the richness of the

country's vocabulary as well as culture [6].

Cebu is one of the most in numbers of commercial sex workers in Asia [7]. According to Abedesco of the Visayan Forum Foundation, Cebu continues to be the target, supplier and shipment region for sex trafficking, where women workers are carried to be oriented before being sent off to other places [8]. This commerce has developed commercial sex workers' expressions in their negotiation processes. These expressions have functions and purposes for persuasion. It is said that an effective speaker employs different techniques and words that are appropriate in a specific context [9].

To understand the language of a group is to understand the kind of life that they are in [10]. This study shows the language features that have aided in the dealings of the commercial sex workers with their customers. Consequently, this study gives an insight on the implications of the words used in the commercial sex workers' negotiations.

II. OBJECTIVES

The goal of this research is to put into record and analyze linguistically the language of negotiation of the commercial sex workers in Cebu, Philippines.

Specifically, it processes the following: 1. the expressions of negotiation and their classification; 2. their morphology and semantics; 3. their functions; and 4. their rhetorical devices.

This research assumes that linguistic processes, language functions and rhetorical devices categorically facilitate the consummation of language of negotiation among commercial sex workers.

This research assumption is supported by Yule's English Word Formation Theory, Jakobson's Functions of Language, and Aristotle's Rhetorical Theory. Yule described the 'word formation processes' as the investigation of the steps on how new expressions evolve as a language. These developments expand the array of terms, thereby generating new lexicons [11]. Jakobson's *functions of language* proposition recognizes certain essentials for the facilitation of communication. These essentials are the following: the context, the addresser or the sender, the addressee or the receiver, the contact, the common code, and the message. Each factor is the focal point of a relation, or function that operates between the message and the factor. The functions are: referential, emotive, conative, phatic, poetic, and metalingual [12]. Rhetorical theory focuses on the techniques of using language effectively and persuasively in spoken form [13]. Rhetorical theory is originally developed by Aristotle which he defines as means of persuasion. Rhetoric then, is the

study of how audiences are affected by emotion and reason in the character of the speaker. Rhetoric evaluates a speech according to how effectively a speaker in a certain opinion or information to an audience is either one person or group of a certain situation.

III. LINGUISTIC RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A. Method Used

This research utilizes the qualitative research method in data-gathering and the structural analysis of conversations using the word formation processes, functions of language, and rhetoric analysis for interpreting data.

B. Sources of Verbal Data

The sources of verbal data come through referral, having twenty (20) commercial sex workers in Cebu City agree to have their conversations during negotiations with their customers recorded. Before conducting the study, a consent letter is kept confidentially under lock and keys.

C. Data-Gathering Procedure

This study includes three phases: (1) identifying and classifying the expressions of negotiation, (2) processing their morphology and semantics, (3) determining their functions, and (4) distinguishing their rhetorical devices.

Phase One. Identifying and classifying the expressions of negotiations. In identifying the expressions of negotiation, common terms that emerge in the twenty (20) conversations between the commercial sex workers and their customers are collated. They are classified based on the meaning and purpose in the conversations.

Phase Two. Processing the Morphology and Semantics. Expressions of negotiation are described linguistically in their word formation processes well as their semantics or meaning. Word formation can be through: affixation, compounding, symbolism (or morpheme internal change), suppletion, reduplication, acronymy, clipping (back clipping, fore clipping, middle clipping, complex clipping), blending, borrowing, back-formation, word coinage, functional shift, conversion, and derivation [14].

It is noteworthy to include the study of the morphological process of gay lingos. Most gay lingos include simple reversal of the letters/sounds within the word (otad for dato (rich), yohak for kahoy (tree), yamag for gamay (small)). Another morphological process in the formation of terminologies in gays' spoken discourse is clipping with affixation (kikiro from lalaki (guy) with the addition of "kiri") Moreover, word coinages from the connotation of images are also evident in gay lingos (Chaka which means ugly is from the popular Chaka doll in a Filipino horror movie) [15]. Semantic descriptions are providing meaning of the language, including its connotation through the images used.

Phase Three. Determining the Functions of Language. This phase involves determining the functions of language as defined by Jakobson: referential, expressive, conative, phatic, metalingual and poetic functions [16].

Phase Four: Distinguishing their Rhetorical Devices. Language of negotiation contains rhetoric. Rhetoric or the art

of using speech for persuasion uses rhetorical devices such as simile, metaphor, personification, hyperbole, irony, oxymoron, and euphemism [17]. This phase distinguishes the various rhetorical devices employed in the language of negotiation of the commercial sex workers.

IV. FINDINGS

The conversations during negotiations among commercial sex workers in Cebu are in print. However, to summarize and classify the expressions, Tables I-VI present these data.

TABLE I: EXPRESSIONS FOR INTRODUCTORY SIGNALS

Expressions	Description	Word Formation Process	Denotation/Literal Translation	Connotation/Contextual Meaning
<i>Pampa-init</i>	(pampa-) <i>Init</i> - "hot"	(Cebuano) Affixation	for a hot liquid (especially during breakfast)	To plead for customers to take the worker so the later can have a hot drink or coffee
<i>Pang-kape</i>	(pang-) <i>Kape</i> (coffee)	(Cebuano) Affixation	for coffee	(common drinks for breakfast among Cebuanos)
<i>Pang-panihapon</i>	(pang-) <i>panihapon</i> (dinner)	(Cebuano) Affixation	for dinner	To plead for customers to take the worker so the later can have dinner.
<i>Pang-tagay</i>	(pang-) <i>tagay</i> (a shot)	(Cebuano) Affixation	a shot; to drink beer	To plead for customers to take the worker so the later can have a beer
<i>Mo walk ka</i>	From the borrowed word 'walk' means to take a step	Borrowing	Would you "walk"?	To ask if one offers sexual service
<i>Mo go ka</i>	From the word 'go', meaning to proceed	Borrowing	Would you "go"?	To ask if one agrees with having sex
<i>Pa job ka</i>	(pa-) Job (short for "Blowjob" -ka)	Borrowing Fore Clipping	Would you want a "blowjob"?	To ask the customer if he would want "blowjob" (oral sex)
Fishing	Fish (+ing)	Borrowing Affixation Word Coinage (Connotation through images)		To find customers for sexual services, a resemblance of the act of "fishing".
Gora	from the root word <i>go</i> (+ra)	Borrowing Affixation		To "go" for sexual service

Expressions and their Classifications. Forty (46) expressions are revealed in the actual conversations of the twenty commercial sex workers in the negotiation process.

These expressions are categorized into: Introduction Signals, Commercial Sex Workers, Money Signals, Name Substitutions, Contraceptives, and Sexual Services.

Introduction signals are the expressions used in the beginning part in most of their conversations. The second category consists of expressions that refer to commercial sex workers. Under the “Money” category, these are the expressions to identify the cost of the service rendered. “Name substitutions” are words that are used for another word. Expressions for contraceptives and sexual activities are also identified during the negotiation process.

Introductory signals of commercial sex workers include appeals to customers so that the commercial sex workers have something to drink or eat. This means that they are desperate, and that they are willing to be paid at a cheap price. Other signals for introduction would include asking the customers using codes rather than directly asking them for sex.

TABLE II: EXPRESSIONS FOR COMMERCIAL SEX WORKERS

Expressions	Description	Word Formation Process	Denotation/ Literal Translation	Connotation / Contextual Meaning
Harbat		Word Coinage (Connotation through images)	a stolen good or property	commercial sex worker; a resemblance of a property
Maria Ozawa		Word Coinage (Connotation through images)	Japanese porn star named Maria Ozawa.	commercial sex worker with wide sexual experience
Virgin Mary		Word Coinage (Connotation through images)	Virgin Mary, the mother of Jesus	commercial sex worker with no sexual experience
Taki	Takirob is from the reversed word for "Borikat" meaning a sex worker or prostitute. Takirob is clipped into "taki"	Simple Reversal Back Clipping		commercial sex worker
Taxi horse	Taxi (from "taki") Taxi horse is a compound word from taxi and horse	Compounding Phonologic association (from the word, "taki")		commercial sex worker
Mangga	A clipped word for manggamit (user) (mangga+ gamit (use))	Back Clipping	From the word, "user"	commercial sex worker

Words have been formed to connote commercial sex workers. These words are used instead of the straightforward terms such as “commercial sex workers” or “prostitutes”. In the Philippines, prostitution is not legal; this is referred to in the “Anti-Prostitution Act” (Senate Bill No. 2341). The workers have to use codes to avoid being too candid.

TABLE III: EXPRESSIONS FOR MONEY SIGNALS

Expressions	Description	Word Formation Process	Denotation/ Literal Translation	Connotation/ Contextual Meaning
Tokyaw	Two thousand clipped into “to” and the word “pakyaw” (wholesale) clipped into “kyaw”. To and kyaw are blended to form <i>tokyaw</i>	Complex Clipping Blending Borrowing	Two thousand pesos (to-) wholesale (-kyaw)	To provide all kinds of sexual services for two thousand pesos.
Wantaw	“Wan” (from the English, ‘One’), “Taw” (from the English, ‘Thousand’, Clipped)	Borrowing Back Clipping	One thousand pesos (clipped to ‘Wantaw’)	One thousand pesos
Dadels	Da (clipped word of “datong”, meaning cash) added by a suffix “dels”	Back Clipping Affixation	Cash	Payment for sex
Two K (2K) or One K (1K)	2 <u>K</u> (which means thousand)	Borrowing	Two Thousand Pesos (2K) One Thousand Pesos (1K)	One thousand pesos (1K) or Two thousand pesos (2K) as payment for sex
Catching	Catch + suffix “ing” catch (sounds like “cash”)	Phonologic association (from the word “cash”) Borrowing Affixation	Cash	Cost for sexual service

Commercial sex workers have invented words that would mean ‘money’. There is an apparent need for payment for the commercial sex workers’ service. The invention of these money signals may reduce the implication that they have actually done sexual activities for money.

Expressions have been used by commercial sex workers to create alluring effects. The images of heaven and celestial objects have been employed to connote the pleasure of sexual exchanges.

The expressions for contraceptives are borrowed from the American terms “condom” and its slang word, “sock” [18]. The reversal of ‘condom’ (mondoc) shows the influence of gay lingo in the expressions of commercial sex workers.

Expressions for sexual activities are commonly borrowed from Americans. There are other word coinages that are formed based on the images they connote, such as “mangadyi” or “to pray” which would connote the act of doing oral sex.

The commercial sex workers’ language of negotiation has undergone the morphologic and semantic analyses as presented in the tables. Word formation processes, such as word coinage (connotation through images), affixation, borrowing, simple reversal, back clipping, fore clipping, complex clipping, acronymy, blending, and compounding are used.

TABLE IV: EXPRESSIONS AS NAME SUBSTITUTIONS

Expressions	Description	Word Formation Process	Denotation/ Literal Translation	Connotation/ Contextual Meaning
Cherry Pie		Word Coinage (Connotation through images)	A sweet delicious sweet fruit having variable color and a moderate red.	A virgin (a woman without sexual experience) 's vagina
Bitoon		Word Coinage (Connotation through image)	Star	A female sex organ. Since stars are delightful, the vagina resembles the signification of something lovely.
Hotdog		Word Coinage (Connotation through image) Borrowing		The penis or the male sex organ since the image of a hotdog resembles the image of a penis.
Moon		Word Coinage (Connotation through image) Borrowing		Pleasurable moment. The moon is the easiest celestial object to find in the night sky; so it connotes delightful experience.
Langit		Word Coinage (Connotation through image)	Heaven	Pleasurable moment. Heaven is a connotative for a place where everything is wonderful and every desire and need is met.
Yellow card			Health clearance certificate	A certificate that the commercial sex worker does not have any sexual illness, or is "safe"
Tip		Borrowing		Extra money given to a commercial sex worker for the exceptional service
Talib	A reversed word for "bilat" (vagina)	Simple Reversal	vagina	vagina or the female sex organ
QL	An acronym for Queens Land	Acronymy	Queens Land (a lodging house in Cebu)	QL (from Queens Land) is the name of a popular and affordable lodging house in Cebu.
lugar nga mabugnaw		Word Coinage (Connotation through image)	cold place	place to have sex
Rounds	usually associated with "boxing rounds"; rounds (a series of similar actions, events, or things)	Word Coinage (Connotation through image) Borrowing		Number of times the sexual activity is consumed.

TABLE V: EXPRESSIONS FOR CONTRACEPTIVES

Expressions	Description	Word Formation Process	Denotation/ Literal Translation	Meaning
Modnoc	A reversed word for condom	Simple Reversal Borrowing	condom	A kind of contraception specifically a condom inserted into a penis during sexual intercourse to prevent pregnancy and HIV.
Medyas	medyas (sock)	Word Coinage (Connotation through image)	sock (means a short stocking usually reaching to the calf or just above the ankle)	Condom. The image of the condom is like that of the sock.

TABLE VI: EXPRESSIONS FOR SEXUAL SERVICES

Expressions	Description	Word Formation Process	Denotation/ Literal Translation	Meaning
Skin to skin		Borrowing		No use of condom during sexual intercourse (because condoms may reduce the pleasure)
P.R.	Acronym for personal relation	Borrowing Acronym		To "escort" or accompany customers for social purposes
Blow Job/Job		Borrowing		The act of bobbing the male sex organ; oral sex
Mangadyi	(mang-) "adyi", from pangadyi (pray)	Word Coinage (Connotation through image) (Cebuano) Affixation	to pray	To do oral sex on the male customer, since the image of performing oral sex on men resembles praying: kneeling down while performing the ritual
Suyop		Word Coinage (Connotation through Image)	to suck	To do oral sex or "blowjob"
One night stand		Borrowing		A sexual intercourse that happens once.
Quicky	From the word "quick" means hurried or a hurried sex	Borrowing		A short and fast sexual intercourse.
Service		Borrowing		Sex service
Tira	A Visayan term for "shoot" which means to strike a missile, a bow or gun	Word Coinage (Connotation from image)	To shoot	Sex. The inserting of the penis into the female sex organ resembles that of "tira" or shooting

Magginamity	“Gamit” (use) prefix “mag+” infix -in- + suffix -ay-.	Cebuano (Affixation)	“To use each other”	Sexual intercourse
Take Home/Take Out		Borrowing		To take someone for sex
Tila	Clipped word of “tilap” (to lick)	Back Clipping	to lick	Licking of the sex organ
Tilaw		Word Coinage (connotation through image)	to taste	To experience sexual intercourse for the first time.

Functions of language. The functions of language are mostly metalingual and phatic. The metalingual function is the use of code to discuss or describe itself. It establishes mutual agreement on the code and provides an explanation to have a clearer interaction by the addressee [19]. Examples from the sentences derived from the conversations are: *Naa ko’y hotdog diri* (I have a hotdog here; hotdog – to codify the male sex organ); *Wala na’y uso Virgin Mary sir oy* (Virgin Mary is not the trend now, sir; Virgin Mary - to codify “Virgins” or those without sexual experience). Phatic function is employed with the channel aspect. It is a remark to greet and initiate informal conversations which is a key to unfasten, keep up, or end the exchange of words [20]. Some examples of this function are found in the conversations: “*Miga! Mo walk ka?*” (Girl friend! Would you “walk”?; to walk means to offer sex); “*Sir, Mo go ka?*” Sir, would you “go”?; to go means to proceed with the sex service).

Rhetorical devices. The rhetorical devices used among the commercial sex workers’ language of negotiation are mostly euphemism and metaphor. Euphemism is word to replace an offensive or unlikeable expression. Its etymology reveals that the prefix, “eu”, stands for ‘pleasant to hear’, the root, “pheme” indicates “to speak”, and the suffix “ism” denotes an ‘act or response’ [17]. An example of euphemism is in the following line: *Pwedi tika ma take out?* (*Can I have you as “take out”?*; this expression would ask for the sexual service of the commercial sex worker). Metaphor is an implied comparison without like, as, than, or seem [17]. Metaphor is used as a rhetorical device in the line: *Makabusog man kaha na’g siyam ka bitoon imu hotdog?* (Will your hotdog satisfy the hunger of nine stars?; hotdog is compared to the male sex organ, the stars are compared to the female sex organs).

V. CONCLUSION

The linguistic processes, language functions and rhetorical devices categorically facilitate the consummation of the language of negotiation among commercial sex workers. The formation of words and expressions through these processes, functions, and rhetorical style has made a distinct mark of the modern Filipino language.

The uniqueness of the Filipino language has now been established with the emergence of these new expressions. These expressions are influenced by the society that the Filipinos nowadays are living in. With the commercial sex

workers’ language of negotiation, it can be gleaned that the words have been influenced from the borrowing of the American English language. The evolution has come this far from the Bahasa language to the Spanish loaned words, and now, to the American English lexical as well as cultural influence.

This linguistic study on a language of a certain group of the Philippines must be imparted to those academics handling courses in linguistics and social studies. Further studies on the processes of new Filipino terms are recommended to support the artistry of the contemporary Filipinos.

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