

DEICTIC PRONOUNS IN PHILIPPINE LANGUAGES  
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A few years ago I was asked to teach a course on comparative Philippine grammar at De la Salle University. At that time a number of books of stories in several Philippine languages with Tagalog translations had recently been published. Naively I thought it should be very straightforward to ask the students to use these translations, starting with the most frequent words and grammatical structures in Tagalog, to find the corresponding words and constructions in the other languages.

How wrong I was! The comparisons turned out to be extremely complex – and therefore interesting. With these translations and a set of New Testament translations, I began a comparison of the major grammatical features in these languages. The present paper presents a comparison of the deictic, or demonstrative, pronouns.

I am of course aware of the objections to using translated materials, especially materials dealing with such un-Philippine and un-modern matters as the New Testament does. On the other hand, these translations provide a substantial body of comparative evidence otherwise unavailable. And provide a number of insights not attained from monolingual analysis.

This and similar studies also raise questions about the appropriateness of any kind of static synchronic linguistic model in accounting for the degree of variation within a group of closely related languages and the rapidity of language change represented by that variation.

The languages included in this study are Tagalog, Bikol, Sebuano, Hiligaynon, Kapampangan, Pangasinan, and Ilokano. Diachronically there is a major boundary between the first four languages (Central or Southern Philippine languages) and the last three (Northern Philippine languages). Also the first four languages are more closely related, thus more similar, to one another, than the last three.

The forms are given as they appeared in the texts, with no indication of accents or glottal stops.

Deictic pronouns in Tagalog. Deictic pronouns are generally divided into three sets expressing nearness to the speaker (**ito**), nearness to the addressee (**iyán**), and remoteness from either (**iyón**). These pronouns also occur with high frequency within texts, where there is no concrete spatial reference. There is an additional form (**ire**), variously described as denoting actual physical contact with the speaker, or as denoting nearness to both speaker and addressee, as opposed to a more general meaning for **ito**. **Ire** does not occur with high frequency in modern Tagalog. In *A Frequency Count of Pilipino* I found 5 occurrences of **ire** as opposed to 5577 for **ito**. In the Tagalog New Testament translation it does not occur at all. It appears that to the extent that **ire** is used by some speakers it has more of a stylistic effect than a clear distinction in meaning.

Each pronoun has three forms expressing different cases. The forms just cited (**ito**, **iyán**, **iyón**) can be called the nominative case, primarily expressing the grammatical subject of a sentence. A second set of forms (**nito**, **niyan**, and **niyon** or **noon**) can be called genitive. Parallel to the genitive article **ng**, these forms have a number of functions, including ‘possessor’, ‘actor complement’, and ‘object complement’. For example:

bahay nito 'the house of this one'  
 ginawa nito 'done by this one'  
 ang bumili nito 'the one who bought this one'

Between **niyon** and **noon**, noon is used primarily with temporal reference, as discussed below, **niyon** with the ordinary meaning. (The genitive form **nire** did not occur in either *A Frequency Count* or the Tagalog translation.)

The oblique forms (**dito**, **diyan**, **doon**) are primarily used to express place or destination: 'there; to there; etc.' They also express 'to this, of this, etc.' as in the following expressions:

sinabi dito 'said to this one'  
 dahil dito 'because of this'  
 tungkol dito 'about this'

The form **dine** (corresponding to **ire**) occurred 7 times in *A Frequency Count*, as opposed to 2350 for **dito**. It occurred 11 times in the Tagalog translation (**dito** 242), usually in a context in which Paul was in one city, writing to people in another city, thus clearly designating near the speaker, not near the addressee.

Tagalog deictic pronouns are summarized in the following table.

ito	iyon	niyon
nito	niyan	niyon/noon
dito	diyan	doon

Tagalog deictic extensions. A number of Tagalog words or forms are derived from the deictic pronouns. The forms **narito**, **nariyan**, and **naroon**, consisting of **na-** plus the oblique pronouns, express 'be here' and 'be there'. Related forms are **nasa** 'be at' and **nasaan** 'be where?'

**Ganito** 'like this,' **ganyan** 'like that', and **ganoon** or **gayon** 'like that' are abbreviations of **gaya** 'like' plus the genitive deictic form. With other nominal expressions the full form is used: **gaya ng**, **gaya ni**, **gaya ko**, etc.

In Tagalog the primary verb of movement is **pumunta** 'go', not related to the deictic pronouns. However there are secondary derived forms, such **pumarito** 'come here', **pumariyan** and **pumaroon** 'go there': **puma-** plus the oblique deictic forms.

The Tagalog deictic derivations or extensions are summarized in the following table.

narito	nariyan	naroon
ganito	ganyan	ganoon/gayon
pumunta (pumarito)	(pumariyan)	(pumaroon)

Nominative deictics in other languages. The nominative deictics in the other six languages are summarized in the following table.

TAG	ito	iyon	niyon
BIK	ini	iyon	idto/ito
HIL	ini	ina	yadto/amo
SEB	kini	kana	kadto/mao

KAP	iti/ini/deti/deni	yan/den	ita/deta
PANG	saya/aya/saraya	satan/itan/saratan	saman/iman/saraman
ILO	daytoy/dagitoy	dayta/dagita	daydiay/dagidiay

Aside from the variation in forms, I note the following differences in categorization: Mintz has **ito** for the third form in Bikol.

Hiligaynon and Sebuano have an additional form (**H amo, S mao**) which seems to be an all-purpose deictic which can stand alone to express deixis (emphasis) without spatial reference, or can collocate with the other deictics (**amo ini, mao kini**, etc.).

Sebuano has an additional form **kiri** (cited by Wolff and Zorc), designating near the speaker but not the addressee, as opposed to the more general meaning of **kini**. This form did not occur in the Sebuano New Testament translation.

Kapampangan presents a very confusing picture. First, with regard to **iti** and **ini**, Mirikitani says:

**Iti** refers to 'this' which is closer to the hearer and **ini** 'this' which is closer to the speaker.

In reference to area, **-ti** appears to denote a general area, while **-ni**, a specific area.

Davidson and Pineda cite **iti** as 'closest' and **ini** and 'near us'. Both **iti** and **ini** have high frequency in the Kapampangan translation, with no clear distinction of reference.

With regard to **yan** and **ita**, we get opposite descriptions. Mirikitani says:

... **iyán** designates somethings close to the listener; and **ita** designates something away from both the speaker and the listener.

Davidson and Pineda have **ita** as 'near you' and **iyán** as 'far'. Once again the distinction, if it exists, is not clear from the occurrences in the New Testament translation.

Kapampangan, and the other Northern languages have plural deictic forms (in each case, the last form shown in the table above).

In the Pangasinan translation, the deictic pronouns each had three forms in the singular. One form with **sa-** (**saya, satan, saman**); one with **i-** or **a-** (**aya, itan, iman**); and one with no prefix (**ya, tan, man**). Benton's book does not include the **i-** forms. Again, in the translation there is no obvious difference between the **sa-** and **i-** forms. The plural forms had only **sara-** (**saraya, saratan, saraman**).

Ilokano has also the form **daydi**, apparently a shortening of **daydiay**.

Genitive deictics in other languages. The genitive forms are summarized in the following table.

TAG	nito	niyan	niyon/noon
BIK	kaini	kaiyan	kaidto/kaito
HIL	sini	sina	sadto
SEB	niini	niana	niadto
KAP	niti	nian	nita
PANG	na saya	na satan	na saman
ILO	daytoy/dagitoy	dayta/dagita	daydiay/dagidiay

This is a fairly well behaved set. We note the following differences:

Sebuano **niiri** (corresponding to **kiri**) did not occur in the translation.

The form **nini** (corresponding to **ini**) did not occur in the Kapampangan translation; **nian** occurred only twice. Kapampangan does not have plural genitive forms. In Kapampangan case marking (nominative and genitive) is shown primarily by the (redundant) personal pronouns. The nominative forms **ya** 'he, she' and **la** 'they' and the genitive forms **na** and **da** generally appear in a sentence even when there is a corresponding nominal phrase. Thus, for example, **dareti**, which may look like a genitive form, is actually a composite of **da**, the third person plural personal pronoun, and **deti**, the nominative plural deictic pronoun.

Pangasinan does not have distinctive genitive forms. The deictic pronouns are handled like nouns and take the genitive article **na** (corresponding to **ng** in Tagalog). This applies also to the plural forms.

As with personal and common nouns, Ilokano does not distinguish nominative from genitive forms.

Oblique deictics in other languages. The oblique forms in the seven languages are shown in the following table.

TAG	dito	diyan	doon
BIK	digdi	diyan	duman
HIL	diri	dira	didto
SEB	diri/dinhi/ari/anhi	diha/anha	didto/adto
KAP	kaniti/kanini/ kareti/kareni/keti/keni	karin/karen/ken	kanita/kareta/keta
PANG	ed saya/dia	ed satan/ditan	ed saman/diman
ILO	iti daytoy/ kadagitoy/ditoy	iti dayta/ kadagita/dita	iti daydiay/ kadagidiay/sadiay/idiay

This set is rather less regular formally than the genitive set; yet the connections are obvious. The following differences are noted:

In the Sebuano translation, both **diri** (nearest, or near speaker only) and **dinhi** (near us, or near speaker and addressee) occurred with high frequency. Sebuano also distinguishes the **a-** set from the **di-** set, in that the **a-** set has future or unreal reference. The **a-** set can also express movement in the given direction (**adto** '(will go) there').

Pangasinan and Ilokano distinguish 'to this' from 'here', etc. In Pangasinan **ed** (corresponding to Tagalog **sa**) plus the nominative form 'to this, etc.' In Ilokano **iti** (Tagalog **sa**) plus the nominative singular form; in the plural a distinctive set with **ka-**. For 'there' the Ilokano translation had two forms **sadiay** (not mentioned by Lapid and Sibayan) and **idiay**.

Kapampangan also has a double set of forms (**kaniti/keti**, etc.), but the boundary between the two seems not so clear. The 'to this' set has plural forms (**kareti**, etc.).

Presence forms in other languages. The forms corresponding to the **na-** forms ('be at ...') in Tagalog are summarized in the following table.

TAG	narito	nariyan	naroon
BIK	uya/anion	yaon	idtoon/itoon
HIL	yari	yara	yadto
SEB	ania	anaa	atua

KAP	atyu/atilu keti/keni	atyu/atilu ken	atyu/atilu keta
PANG	wala dia/wadya/nia	wala ditan/wadtan	wala diman/wadman
ILO	adda ditoy/adtoy	adda dita	adda sadiay/idiay

The forms shown for Bikol are the ones which occurred in the translation. Mintz has **anion** and **itoon**; these give us a more regular derivation.

The Hiligaynon and Sebuano forms are clearly derived from the oblique forms (**diri**, etc.)

The Pangasinan and Ilokano forms contain an existential (P **wala** = I **adda** = Tagalog **mayroon**) plus the oblique forms. Kapampangan behaves similarly, but with some morphophonemic adjustment. Singular **atyu** consists of **atin** (Tagalog **mayroon**) plus -**yu** in place of the third person singular pronoun **ya**. **Atilu** is **atin** plus -**lu** in place of the third person plural pronoun **la**. We are reminded that the negative form in Tagalog (as in the other Central languages) is **wala** (the negative existential).

Similarity forms in the other languages. The forms corresponding to the **ga-** forms ('like ...') in Tagalog are summarized in the following table.

TAG	ganito	ganyan	ganoon/gayon
BIK	arog/siring kaini	arog/siring kaiyan	arog/siring kaidto
HIL	subong sini	subong sina	subong sadto
SEB	sama/ingon niini	sama/ingon niana	sama/ingon niadto
KAP	anti kaniti/kanini/ antimo/makanyan	anti karin/antimo/ makanyan	anti kanita/antimo/ makanyan
PANG	onya/singa saya/ sirin	onya/singa satan/ sirin	onya/singa saman/ sirin
ILO	kastoy	kasta	kasta

In Bikol, Hiligaynon, and Sebuano the corresponding expressions are phrases consisting of a word meaning 'like' plus the genitive deictic form. Also B **siring**, H **subong**, and S **ingon** can stand alone to express 'like that'. Kapampangan has **anti** 'like' plus an oblique deictic; alternatively words such as **antimo** and **makanyan**, which stand alone to express 'like that'. In Pangasinan **onya** or **singa** 'like' plus a nominative deictic; alternatively **sirin** 'like that'.

Only Ilokano has corresponding derived forms **kastoy** and **kasta**; the third member of the set (\*kasdiay) seems to be missing. **Kas** also stands alone as a conjunction and can attract the enclitic pronouns.

Derived verbs of movement in other languages. The primary verbs of movement in the seven languages are summarized in the following table.

TAG	pumunta		
BIK	magdigdi	magdiyan	magduman
HIL	magkari	magkadto	magkadto
SEB	moanhi	moanha	moadto
KAP	munta/mako		
PANG	onla		

ILO	mapan/in/umay
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Bikol, Hiligaynon, and Sebuano have verbs derived from the oblique deictics as the most general expression of movement. We note the following peculiarities.

We did not observe a form **magkara** in Hiligaynon. Phrases such as **magkadto dira** did occur in the translation.

The Sebuano **a-** forms lose their future sense in verbs of motion. Thus we have real tense forms such as **miadto** 'went'.

The Northern languages do not have such derivations, at least not as the most general expression of motion.

Time expressions. As mentioned above noon, one of the genitive deictic forms in Tagalog, is used primarily to express past time, either as an adverb ('at that time') or a conjunction ('when ...'). The corresponding terms in the other languages are shown in the following table.

TAG	noon
BIK	kaidto
HIL	sadto
SEB	niadto
KAP	kanita
PANG	nen/nen saman/ed saman
ILO	idi

Bikol, Hiligaynon, and Sebuano follow the Tagalog pattern in using the 'far' genitive deictic to express past time. The corresponding Kapampangan form is the 'far' oblique deictic. Pangasinan uses nen, the genitive article for personal names (corresponding to Tagalog ni); the stand-alone adverb is a phrase, consisting of nen or ed (Tagalog sa) plus saman, the 'far' nominative deictic. Ilokano has a distinct form **idi**, not directly related to the deictics.

Alternatives to Deictics. In working with translations, we are always looking for one-to-one correspondences. I use the phrase 'one-to-one' in two ways. In one sense, for a given sentence, or piece of text, we are looking for one word or phrase in one language that uniquely corresponds to a given word or phrase in another language. In another sense, we are looking for a similar correspondence which can be found in a large number, or most, sentences, thus constituting a gloss or cross-language definition.

When we begin looking at translations, we are immediately made aware of the fact that such one-to-one correspondences, in one or both sentences, are frequently unavailable. In the case of the deictics, we note the following types of divergence:

Different Pronoun. There are many cases where, for example, where Language A uses the 'far' deictic, but Language B uses the 'near me' or 'near you' deictic. In other cases the situation is reversed: Language A has 'near' corresponding to 'far' in Language B.

Different Case. Different languages may use different focus configurations to express the same idea, with the result that the 'case' of the deictics will be different. To some extent this may be systematic. For example, Hiligaynon and Sebuano exhibit a greater preference for actor focus than Tagalog and some of the other languages.

Personal Pronouns. It is quite common in Philippine languages to use a deictic pronoun in place of a personal pronoun, for example in Tagalog **ito** 'this' instead of **siya** 'he, she.' Depending on the choice, perhaps mood, of the respective translators, we can have a deictic pronoun in one language corresponding to a personal pronoun in another language.

Noun Phrase. In a given situation, one translator may feel that a deictic pronoun is sufficient to express the reference; another translator may feel the need to be more explicit and use a noun phrase instead of the deictic.

Absence of the Deictic. In some situations, the deictic may be considered to be completely redundant and can be eliminated. For example **sinabi niya ito**: 'he said this:' versus **sinabi niya**: 'he said:'. Or **itong lalaki** 'this man' versus **ang lalaki** 'the man'.

In other situations the given proposition may be paraphrased, completely eliminating the deictic reference.

Interlingual versus Intralingual choices. These differences have just been discussed as choices in the context of translation. But they strongly suggest that the same type of choices are available and/or required in the context of composition within a single language. It has been said that every text is a translation, that is a translation from a non-verbal situation or idea into a linguistic text.

It is further suggested that each of these various choices constitutes a channel for linguistic change, leading to the kind of diversity of form and categorization discussed in this paper.

The further question is: what kind of linguistic model could describe the process whereby, in a given situation, a given set of words, including deictics, and a given structure would be chosen, rather than alternative choices. I personally cannot accept any kind of computational model, or sequence of binary choices, which produces a unique solution in every situation. I would prefer a system based on mental associations, in which a given situation would stimulate various responses in the form of linguistic expressions. For example, both **ito** and **iyon** could be stimulated, but from the sum effects of linguistic and non-linguistic stimuli, the response for **ito** would be stronger in one case and for **iyon** in other cases. This is an idea which I hope to develop in the future.

Primary corpus:

English: United Bible Societies, Good News Bible (Glasgow 1994: Caledonian International Book Manufacturing Ltd)

Tagalog: Philippine Bible Society, Mabuting Balita Para sa Ating Panahon New (Testament) (Manila 1973: Philippine Bible Society)

Bikol: Philippine Bible Society, Marahay na Bareta sa Satuyang Panahon (Manila 1992: Philippine Bible Society)

Hiligaynon: Manuel Degoma, Fr. Jose S. Aripio, SSP, Biblia sang Katilingban sang mga Kristiano (Quezon City 2002: Claretian Publications)

Sebuano: Philippine Bible Society, Maayong Balita Alang Kanimong (New Testament) (Manila 1973: Philippine Bible Society)

Kapampangan: Philippine Bible Society, Ing Mayap a Balita Biblia (Manila 1994: Philippine Bible Society)

Pangasinan: Philippine Bible Society, Maung a Balita para sayan Panaon Tayo (Manila 1983: Philippine Bible Society)

Ilokano: Philippine Bible Society, Naimbag a Damag iti Agdama a Panawen (New Testament) (Manila 1973: Philippine Bible Society)

Additional corpus:

Dulaang Cebuano, isinalin sa Filipino ni Don Pagusara (Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1997)

Dulaang Hiligaynon, isinatipon ni Rosario Cruz Lucero, isinalin nina Ricardo Oebanda, Jr. at Rosario Cruz Lucero (Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1996)

Maikling Kuwentong Kapampangan at Pangasinan, isinatipon at isinalin nina Lourdes H. Vidal at Ma. Crisanta S. Nelmda (Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1996)

Sarswelang Pangasinan, isinatipon ni Priscelina P. Legasto, isinalin nina Ma. Crisanta S. Nelmda at Erlinda Andaya (Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1996)

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Zorc, R. David, Cebuano Newspaper Reader (Kensington, Md 1987: Dunwoody Press)



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