Morphosyntax Variations of the *Surigaonon* Language
in North-eastern, *Mindanao*, Philippines

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Bio-profile:

Lesley Karen B. Penera's 17-year career in higher education commenced in 2002 and the publication of Philippine English: An Exploratory Mixed-Methods Inquiry on Digital Immigrants and Digital Natives' Variety in the Scopus-indexed, The Asian EFL Journal and Syntactic Analysis Preference: How Filipinos Do with Globally-Ambiguous Sentences in the International Forum Journal is her latest achievement.

Abstract

Anchored on Labov's notion that some linguistic features may exhibit variants among speakers of the same language within the same community as well as on Parker and Riley's language variation theory, this inquiry which employs a qualitative-content [manifest] analysis assumes that *Surigaonon* exhibits some linguistic variations hence the identification of its lexical and syntactic variants, determination of the morphological processes revealed by the variants, and documentation of the rules of morphological unit combinations established by the morphological processes. This inquiry is propelled by the belief that intermarriages and employment among others have steered *Suriganonons* to encounters with people who speak other languages thus speak some of these languages themselves in formal circumstances resulting into the "adoption and use of non-*Surigaonon* terms" [and structures] and "nativizing" them. Data were sourced from published studies, *Surigaonon* dictionary and handbook, as well as recorded responses from *Surigaonons* obtained by adapting Labov's "rapid and anonymous observations" technique. Findings prove that *Surigaonon* exhibits some linguistic variations which reveal a number of morphological processes establishing several rules of morphological unit combinations. Although some are distinctively native *Surigaonon* alternatives, many are evidently results of the identified morphological processes which include [among others] lexical borrowing, affixation including

circumfixation, alternation, clipping, compounding, metathesis, and stylistic syntactic variation through contraction, exclusion, and single morpheme equivalents. Moreover, despite following rules in word formations with majority of the lexical and syntactic variants, *Surigaonons* speak other alternatives that imply language innovation without apprehension of any deviation from established universal convention. Some display nonconformity which might also be the rationale for many of the complex word formations in the same collection despite prior described and established patterns.

Keywords: *Surigaonon*, language variation, lexical borrowing, circumfixation, metathesis, exclusion

Introduction

Growing interest in the study of language variation is becoming evident in current linguistics. It has even been revealed that its inclusion has already gone beyond being a mere "footnote in linguistic description" (Holyk, p. 17) which may have been driven by Labov, Cedergren, and Sankoff's notion that variation is intrinsic in the system of a language.

This, therefore, does not make *Surigaonon* which is the *Surigaonons*' functional daily mode of expression an exception in the study of language variation. In 2009, W. Hall indicates *Surigaonon* speakers from *Surigao Del Norte* along with speakers in north *Agusan Del Norte* and north of *Surigao Del Sur* provinces at 400,000 (Lewis, Simons, & Fennig, 2015) and in 2015, Dumanig made it known that this Philippine regional language is spoken by 95% of the people in the province of *Surigao Del Norte*.

Although in casual conversations, the *Surigaonons* speak their *Surigaonon* language, *Surigaonon* speakers in *Surigao* City and the neighboring towns in *Surigao Del Norte* can swiftly shift to *Cebuano-Visayan* (Lewis et al., 2015) when the situation requires as in a politician when interviewed by the media or a school principal when presiding over a meeting with members of the Parents and Teachers Association (PTA). Apart from shifting to *Cebuano-Visayan*, *Surigaonon* speakers have the propensity to use English or *Tagalog* when speaking in other formal gatherings (Penera, 2017).

Intermarriages, employment, trade and industry, education, and tourism have steered native *Suriganons* to encounters with people who speak the aforementioned languages (Penera, 2017)

and others who speak Boholano and *Waray* (Dumanig, 2015) resulting into the "adoption and use of some non-*Surigaonon* terms" as well as structures and "nativizing" them (Penera, 2017, p. 3).

All these along with scant published scholarship on *Surigaonon* language which focused on the exploration of some of its aspects except its existing variants have compelled this scholar to uncover [thru qualitative-content analysis at the manifest level] existing *Surigaonon* variations by specifically identifying lexical and syntactic variants evident in the language, ascertaining the morphological processes undergone by these variants, and determining the rules of morphological unit combinations established by the morphological processes. Doing such [this author believes] may not only help lay the groundwork for future scholars whose investigations might be anchored on Biber's notion that "change is to be found in variation" (Holyk, 2018, p. 18) but it could also lend them some "potential diagnostic points for future linguistic change" (Sankoff, Labov & Kroch as cited in Holyk, p. 18) in future scholarship on *Surigaonon* language and language change [among others]. Most importantly, this inquiry's findings may also have a facilitative function in levelling the field for *Surigaonon* Mother Tongue Based-Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE) curriculum developers and setting off the development of contextualized and localized instructional materials (Penera, 2017) to offer a better alternative for the *Cebuano-Visayan* sounding instructional materials currently being utilized for pre-schoolers in *Surigao* City. Such could become this inquiry's findings' direction since despite the statement that the Department of Education's (DepEd's) MTB-MLE is currently using 19 languages which include *Surigaonon* to facilitate students' grasp of rudimentary concepts (Manabat, 2018), Cruz's (2015, p. 1) assertion that the employment of MTB-MLE in classrooms where teachers have to contend with either insufficient or incompatible instructional materials which is still "found wanting" is positively confirmed by the utilization of *Cebuano-Visayan* sounding instructional materials for *Surigaonon* pre-schoolers as evidenced by a learning material of this scholar's nephew. This certainly creates the need and makes it imperative to make instructional materials in their native tongue available for these learners and determining variations evident in *Surigaonon* may prove vital.

Review of Literature

This inquiry is anchored on William Labov's theory of language variation and change as well as Parker and Riley's theory of language variation.

Although conventional theorists have the propensity to de-emphasize the significance of variation and to regard it as an inconsequential phenomenon, its existence has not been disputed (Gordon, 2014).

Labov who established the field branded as "variationist sociolinguistics" (as cited in Gordon, 2014) upholds the existence of linguistic variation in a speech community where linguistic features may exhibit variants among speakers of the same language within the same community (Penera, 2017). This adheres to the field's fundamental principle that variation is intrinsic to language and that the manner in which it is articulated (and penned) varies among individuals, just as how it varies across contexts that confront the same individual.

The existence of language variation is evidently and prominently demonstrated in Labov's research which reveals that linguistic variation is widespread and remarkably structured. These variations, according to him, are typical as well as essential in order for language to function (Gordon, 2014).

Underpinning Labov's theory, Parker and Riley's (2005) language variation is the study of the features of a language that differ systematically when different groups of speakers of the same language are compared or when the language features of the same speaker in different situations are compared.

This theory examines three types of variation existing within a language: 1) it explores regional varieties of a language as in the use of pail in Northern United States and bucket in the south (Parker & Riley, 2005) both meaning a large container used to carry water; 2) it scrutinizes social varieties of the same language as in the use of 'I ain't sorry' by someone from a lower socioeconomic status and someone who says 'I am not sorry' (Parker & Riley, 2005); and 3) it investigates the stylistic varieties of one language, as in how one writes 'thank you for your consideration' when penning an application letter, but informally says 'thanks for your time' to mean the same thing (Parker & Riley, 2005). Such examples certainly suggest that language variation [depending on its impelling cause] manifests regionally, socially, and stylistically influenced variants (Parker & Riley, 2005).

Fromkin, Rodman, and Hyams (2014) reveal that despite speaking the same language, that is English - Bostonians, New Yorkers, Texans, the African-Americans in Chicago, and the Hispanics in Albuquerque all demonstrate variation in speech. Reflecting the same phenomenon, *Surigaonons* who evidently speak the same *Surigaonon* language which is [to borrow Belahsen &

Ouahmiche's (2017, p. 25) label] the "functional daily mode of expression in casual conversations," appear to exhibit variations in speech because they can swiftly shift to *Cebuano-Visayan* (Lewis et al., 2015) and have the predisposition to use English or *Tagalog* when the situation requires (Penera, 2017).

Moreover, these *Surigaonons'* encounters [with individuals who speak other Philippine regional languages] that have been driven by factors such as intermarriages, employment, trade and industry, education, and tourism, resulted into the "adoption and use of some non-*Surigaonon* terms" [as well as structures] and "nativizing" them (Penera, 2017, p. 3).

This can certainly be substantiated by Parker and Riley's (2005) notion of regional variation exhibiting mainly lexical variants such as the ones found in Dumanig's (2015) Descriptive Analysis of the *Surigaonon* Language where the lexical variant *latajan* which in this scholar's vocabulary is *latayan* for wooden foot bridge tendered part of the initial data.

Correspondingly, Liwanag's (2017) paper which revealed five *Surigaonon* orthographic issues afforded this inquiry some of its preliminary data when it presented two lexical varieties for face [*wayung* and *nawung* although this scholar also refers to it as *kawaynganan*]. Her examples also included *huy-ab*, *hoy-ab*, *huyab* meaning 'yawn' which could also be variants of *hujab* (Liwanag, 2017).

Finally, Dela Cerna's (2017) paper that focused on *Surigaonon* segmental phonemes offered the last set of this inquiry's earliest data for in this paper, the *Surigaonon* word for 'donations' or 'charity' is *ayuda* which is in this scholar's vocabulary would be *hinabang*; *matukudan* meaning 'to build' would be *matukuran*; *haman* or *hain* both meaning 'where' could be *hain man*; and *'ya* meaning 'none' could also be *waya* in this scholar's native tongue.

These lexical variations could be rationalized by morphological processes of deletion, alternation, metathesis (Dumanig, 2015) and [among others] borrowing. The last, according to Fromkin et al. (2014), arises when multilingual speakers frequently interact with each other.

In the same study by Dela Cerna (2017), the Surigaonon sentence, *Umay imu trabahu*? (What is your job?), for instance, which can be rendered *Uno may imu trabahu*? by another *Surigaonon*, as well as *Bisan kun dili kita musugut*, *waya may atu mahimu* (Even if we disagree, we can do nothing) which may become *Bisan kun dili 'ta musugut, way atu mahimu* or *Musugut 'ta o dili, way atu mahimu* could be substantiated by social and stylistic variations' mainly manifesting morphological and syntactic variants (Parker & Riley, 2005) [among others]. The

same may also be supported by Parker and Riley's stylistic morphological variation thru contractions [a word reduction phenomenon (Fromkin et al, 2014) such as] and clipped forms. Both of which are generally linked with informal registers (Parker & Riley, 2005). Others in the examples may likewise be supported by Labov's [copula] element deletion which could further knowledge on any language's "linguistic structure" (as cited in Adger & Trousdale, 2007, p. 274) as well as structure reduction (Zanuttini, 2014) as in Edelstein's (2014) Alternative Embedded Passive (AEP) example, 'The cat needs fed' as a syntactic variant of its longer version, 'The cat needed to be fed'.

All these have set the groundwork for this inquiry that focuses on the identification of lexical and syntactic variants in *Surigaonon* through which the identification of morphological processes in the language is built upon which in turn becomes the basis for establishing the *Surigaonon* rules of morphological unit combinations [eg. noun+-atic→systematic] (Fromkin et al., 2014). Such rules of morphological unit combinations are conventions on how morphemes combine with other morphemes to create new words. These morphemes could be single sounds as in a- in amoral, a single syllable such as child, a two-syllable word as in childish, three-syllables like crocodile, or a four-syllable word as in accelerate (Fromkin et al., 2014).

This inquiry takes into account all the aspects presented.

Methodology

This inquiry employs a qualitative-content [manifest] analysis which is deductive in design.

Content analysis, Downe-Wambolt says, is a research method that offers methodical and impartial approaches in formulating legitimate inferences based on "verbal, visual, or written data to describe and quantify a specific phenomenon" (as cited in Bengtsson, 2016, p. 9) and can be employed inductively or deductively (Bengtsson, 2016).

This inquiry's qualitative-content [manifest] analysis is a combination of qualitative data collection and data quantification. Qualitative data is collected from a variety of "qualitative sources" (Nassaji, 2015, p. 130) to ensure a "more comprehensive view of the phenomenon" (Sargeant, 2012, p. 2) whereas data quantification, when merged with the qualitative attribute according to Berg and Morgan (as cited in Bengtsson, 2016) would render the extent of the phenomenon investigated more evident. This data quantification is carried out by employing

McEnery and Wilson's (2001) corpus linguistics frequency count. An arithmetical count of classified items in a specific scheme is performed thereby giving numerical values to collected *Surigaonon* lexical and syntactic variants which include those obtained by adapting Labov's "rapid and anonymous observations" technique thru which sales clerks from high-end stores and bargain-basements were asked 'where the female shoes were' to elicit variations in /r/ thru answers like "…the fourth floor" (as cited in Feagin, 2002, p. 34). In this inquiry's modified version, native *Surigaonons* were asked questions like 'How do you express *what did you just say* in *Surigaonon*?' to elicit variants like *unoy imu laung* and its single morpheme equivalent, *ha*.

Deductive reasoning design which requires the creation of a coding list before the process of analysing commences (Bengtsson, 2016) is adopted in this study for according to Catanzaro (as cited in Bengtsson, 2016, p. 12), "it is much easier to obtain high reliability with code lists generated deductively rather than inductively." These codes are used in the templates utilized in carrying out this inquiry's three phases.

Presenting data in words thereby rendering the feasibility of results interpretation, this qualitative-content analysis that is deductive in design is carried out at the manifest level since the linguistic presentation and the subsequent description of the sourced data are not only based on this inquiry's focus but also on the informants' own words which are utilized in the description of what is "visible and obvious in the text" (Berg; Catanzaro; and Downe-Wambolt as cited in Bengtsson, 2016, p. 10) to justify the description of the *Surigaonon* language variation phenomenon.

Preliminary data [28 *Surigaonon* variants for 13 items] were sourced from three published studies on *Surigaonon* language. A considerable number of variants were also collected from a 2017 dissertation as well as the recorded responses of native *Surigaonons* [who are residents of the city] that belong to the following groups: 1) senior citizens (60-above), 2) professionals and non-professionals (25-59), and 3) tertiary students (aged 19-24). The bulk of this inquiry's data, however, is obtained from Fredesuendo Ong's *Surigaonon* Dictionary published in 2015 as well as his *Surigaonon* Words and Expressions handbook which was published in 2004.

This inquiry is carried out in three phases: phase 1 entails the collection of *Surigaonon* lexical and syntactic variants, phase 2 involves the identification of morphological processes, and phase 3 necessitates the determination of the rules of morphological unit combination.

Results and Discussion

Collected Surigaonon Language Variants

The *Surigaonon* language variants collection is classified into a compendium of lexical variants and an inventory of syntactic alternatives.

Table 1 presents the arithmetical count of the collected *Surigaonon* lexical variants.

Table 1. *Surigaonon* **Lexical Variants Collection**

Grammatical Class	*Surigaonon* Words	Variants
Nouns	307	400
Verbs	253	410
Adjectives	150	240
Adverbs	9	15
TOTAL	**719**	**1,065**

Findings reveal that a total of 1,065 lexical variants were recorded for a combination 719 *Surigaonon* nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs. Majority of these lexical variants were collected from Ong's (2015) *Surigaonon* Dictionary as well as his 2004 *Surigaonon* Words and Expressions handbook.

Four hundred (400) variants were recorded for 307 *Surigaonon* nouns which include [among others] *latajan* for *latayan* [wooden foot bridge] (Dumanig, 2015), *nawung* for *wayung* [face] in Liwanag's (2017) paper although this scholar sometimes refers to it as *kawaynganan*, *baji* for *babaji* [woman/girl/female], and *ampalaya* as well as *paliya* for *amarguso* [bitter gourd].

Two hundred fifty three (253) verbs listed 410 variants comprising [among others] *dungagi* for *dugangi* [add], *huy-ab* for *hujab* [yawn], *mangilu* for *manguli* [wash/wipe anus after excretion], and *haja* for *tuwaw* [cry] – the former of the last pair is typical of *Surigaonons* from *Siargao* whereas the latter is distinct of *Surigaonons* in the city.

One hundred fifty (150) adjectives reveal 240 variations including [among others] *tim-as* for *pid-as* [ashen], *nagsiniki* for *nakasiki* [barefoot], *ngaguy* for *habul* [blunt], *lingap* for *danghag* [clumsy], as well as *gahi* and *tig-a* for *magahi* [hard].

Lastly, 15 variants were collected for the only nine (9) adverbs found to have alternatives which include [among others] *bitaw* for *balitaw* [indeed], *suod* for *apiki* [near], *panagsa*, *usahay*, and *isahay* for *panyagsa* [sometimes], *pagkatapus* for *pagkahuman* [afterwards], and *ngadtu* for *didtu* [there].

Table 2 reveals the number of *Surigaonon* syntactic variants collected in this inquiry.

Table 2. *Surigaonon* **Syntactic Variants Collection**

Sentence	*Surigaonon*	Variants
Declarative	16	33
Imperative	13	23
Interrogative	13	22
TOTAL	**42**	**78**

Table 2 shows a total of 78 syntactic variants for a combination of 42 *Surigaonon* declarative, imperative, and interrogative sentences.

Thirty-three (33) variations were collected for all sixteen 16 declarative sentences like *Waya ako kahibayu* [I don't know] with variants, *Ya ko kabayu* and *Inday*. The latter which also means 'I don't know' is the single morpheme equivalent of the first two *Surigaonon* declarative sentences. The variants, *Igu ra dimu* for *Kaigu ra dimu* [Serves you right], and *Maskin tagkapuy sija, nutrabahu gihapun* for *Maski na tagkapuy sija, nutrabahu gihapun* [He's tired but he went to work regardless] also make up the rest of the 33 syntactic variants [among others] for the *Surigaonon* declarative sentences.

Thirteen (13) imperative sentences revealed 23 alternatives consisting [among others] *Sudlaya imu buhok*, or its one-word counterpart *Panudlay* for *Sudlaja imu buhok* [Comb your hair],

Pagdali for *Pagdali ditun* [Hurry up]; the single-word equivalent *Janay* for *Huyat anay* both meaning 'Wait;' as well as *Labang* for *Tabuk* meaning 'Get to the other side of the road.'

Finally, all 13 *Surigaonon* interrogative sentences listed a total of 22 variants which include [among others] the single-syllable equivalent with its rising intonation, *Ha* as the corresponding item for *Unoy imu laung* or 'What did you just say?' or the question, *Uno 'tun* for *Uno itun* meaning 'What is that?'; *Unoy imu gusto* and *Umay imu gusto* for *Uno may imu gusto* [What do you want?] as well as *Haman kaw naghuya* for *Hain man kaw naghuya* [Where do you live?].

In a nutshell, the lexical and syntactic variants collection suggests the existence of linguistic variation in *Surigaonon* which could only mean that it is at a stage [early or otherwise] of language change. Such language change, Fromkin et al. (2014) revealed, becomes evident through the addition of words that are readily apparent. Additionally, Biber believes that "change is to be found in variation" (as cited in Holyk, p. 18) while Labov confirms that variation in language can in time lead to language change (cited in Penera, 2017) which can already be observed as it occurs – a discovery, Belahsen and Ouahmiche (2017) reveal, that commenced with empirical variation studies.

The collection further suggests that it renders the language richer lexically and syntacticly bestowing *Surigaonons* a range of expressions especially when language variation does not only embody an individuals' self-expression but it is also an evidence of their societal communication engagements (Crystal as cited in Madeja et al., 2017) picking up bits and pieces from various speakers and eventually adopting and nativizing them thereby adding more into their own language lexicon while enriching their language repertoire.

Identified Morphological Processes

The identified morphological processes are categorized as ones revealed by the *Surigaonon* lexical variants and ones undergone by the syntactic alternatives.

Table 3 shows the morphological processes that the collected *Surigaonon* lexical variants underwent.

Table 3. *Surigaonon* **Lexical Variants' Morphological Processes**

Morphological Processes	Lexical Items
Alternation	205
Inflected Variant	158
Deletion	135
Clipping	89
Borrowing	83
Affixation	49
Metathesis	32
Circumfixation	26
Reduplication	3
Reduplicated Variant	4
Compounding	1
Blending	1
[Variant Morphemes]	[279]
TOTAL	**1,065**

Although 279 are branded as variant morphemes – many of which are distinctively native *Surigaonon* alternatives, majority of the 1,065 collected lexical variants of the combined 719 *Surigaonon* nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs underwent 12 morphological processes – three of which [deletion, alternation, and metathesis] have already been identified by Dumanig (2015).

Two hundred five (205) underwent **alternation** which according to Dumanig (2015) is substituting /l/ with /y/ and /y/ with /j/ based on a more established *Cebuano-Visayan*. The former occurs when /l/ is in between vowels as in *wayu* from *walu* [eight], *hayad* from *halad* [offering], and *bayun* from *balun* [victual] among others; whereas the latter occurs when /y/ is in between two vowels like *hajup* for *hayup* [animal], *dapajun* for *dapayun* [slap], *hayhajan* for *hayhayan* [clothesline], and *latajan* for *latayan* [wooden foot bridge] among other items. Phonetic alternation in *Surigaonon*, however, is much complex than what has been described. *Butakay* from *butakal* [boar], for instance, as well as *langjaw* from *langyaw* [immigrant] underwent the same alternation even when /l/ and /y/ are not in between vowels.

Moreover, items like *banhud-binhud* [cramp], *dilamita-dinamita* [dynamite], *idu-iru* [dog], *salapati-kalapati* [dove], *kuyo-kuko* [fingernail/toenail], *purgas-pulgas* [flea], *kuptanan-kaptanan* [handle], *pagsugot-pagtugot* [permission], *agas-awas* [water flow], *salipdan-salimdan*

[barricade], and *ingkibun-ingkitun* [bite] among others make up some of the 205 lexical items under this morphological process yet apparently they are not alternations between /l/ to /y/ or /y/ to /j/. *Surigaonon* alternation even includes double phonetic substitution in single-word variants as in *kubu*t from *kibit* [pinch], in single-word reduplication as in *imudmud* for *imusmus* [shove down], and in hyphenated reduplication as in *kisi-kisi* for *kiwi-kiwi* [jiggle] suggesting thus that alternation in *Surigaonon* is not always as straightforward as has been previously described.

One hundred fifty-eight (158) of the 1,065 *Surigaonon* lexical alternatives are categorized as **inflected variants**. According to Fromkin et al (2014), inflection is a morphological process employed for a variety of purposes from the –s inflected English verbs suggesting third person singular agreement to the inflected Finnish nouns conveying "temporary state of being" as well as the "strong negative intention" of the Japanese inflected verbs. The *Surigaonon* inflected variants [which are labelled such for they literally are alternative morphemes that have been inflected] come as nouns, verbs, and adjectives. Inflected noun variants include *tinunto* for *binuang* [mischief], *kalooy* for *puangod* [mercy], *ag-agan* for *sayaan* [sieve], and *tunghaan* for *iskuylahan* [school] among others. *Bijaan* for *panawan* [abandon], *samukon* for *buysitun* [bother], *bilangun* for *ihapun* [count], as well as *lupogun* and *lantun* for *apasun* [chase] are just few of the examples of inflected verb variants. Lastly, the inflected adjective variants include [among others] *kaya-kinamaguyangan* [eldest] and *datu-sapian-kwartahan* [rich].

One hundred and thirty-five (135) of the collected *Surigaonon* lexical variants underwent **deletion** which, as Dumanig (2015) revealed, can be observed in *Surigaonon* through the roots' final vowel omission after the suffixation of **-han**, **-an**, **-i**, and **-ha**. Although seven words in this study's collection are suffixed with **-han**, not a single one underwent deletion but other variants afforded this inquiry the addition of the suffixes **-un**, **-hun**, **-a**, **-anan**, and **-anun/-onun** to the identified pattern of a root's final vowel deletion after suffixation. The variants that illustrate this morphological process include [among others] *tugot+an→tugotan→tugtan* [to allow], *huya+anan→huyaanan→huy-anan* [house], *saka+a→sakaa→sak-a* [to climb], and *huut+i→huuti→hut-i* [to tighten].

This final vowel deletion of the root pattern also applies after the circumfixation of **ka-anan**, **ka-un**, **kina-an**, **na-an**, **hi-an**, **ma-an**, **ka-an**, **pa-un**, **pa-hun**, **ha-an**, and **in-han** [among others]. *Ka+wayung+anan→kawayunganan→kawaynganan* [face] and

ka+isug+an→kaisugan→kaisgan [scold] are just some of the variants that model deletion applied to some words after root circumfixation of the aforenamed circumfixes.

Deletion, however, does not only occur after suffixation and circumfixation of a root as it is also employed in words wherein a phoneme is omitted like *asidu* from *aksidu* [acid], *agik-ik* from *hagikhik* [chuckle], *dyaga* from *dayaga* [bachelorette], *yabi* from *lyabi* [key], *sala* for *salas* [living room], *kilat* for *kidlat* [lightning], *kugan* from *kugang* [scab], and *sumat* for *sukmat* [reproach]. Others delete the infixation as in *gamus* from *ginamus* [salted, aged tiny fish] and *paksiw* from *pinaksiw* [dish made out of fish cooked in vinegar, salt, garlic, ginger, and oil] whereas a few simply drop part of the affixation like *tagpasubraan* [where the phoneme /h/ is dropped] from *tagpasubrahan* [added more].

Clipping is another morphological process that 89 of the 1,065 collected *Surigaonon* lexical variants underwent. Resulting from a "grapho-phonemic reduction of a word," clipping, Adeniyi defines, is a "pseudo-lexical unit" which still bears the "semantic and paradigmatic relationship with the full form of the word" (as cited in Unubi & Yusuf, 2017, p. 437). *Surigaonon* lexical variants formed out of this morphological process include, [among others] *bujog* from *bubujog* [bee], *baji* from *babaji* [girl/female/woman], *kuyo* from *kuyotuy* [shrink], and *saktu* from *iksaktu* [accurate]. This is supported by Fromkin et al.'s (2014) account of clipping as the process of truncating longer words into shorter ones by "leaving out one or more syllables" (p. 355). Such could be carried out by dropping a word's affixation or a part of it. Examples for the former include *bahin* from *kabahinan* [allotment], *iban* from *kaiban* [companion], *lasang* from *kalasangan* [forest], *lipa* from *malipa* [filthy], and *lampara* from *lamparahan* [gas lamp]. Models for dropping part of the affixation include *ihawan* from *ihawanan* [abattoir], *higdaan* from *higdaanan* [bed], *hugasan* from *hugasanan* [lavatory], and *galingan* from *galinganan* [mill]. All of which were taken from Ong's *Surigaonon* Dictionary.

Borrowing, which Fromkin et al. (2014) claim as a vital fount of new words, makes up 83 of the total *Surigaonon* lexical variant collection. Borrowing, they say, occurs when speakers of a language add into their own lexicon a word from another language like the *Surigaonon* lexical variants *adurno* [adornment] and *bintana* [window] from Spanish, *trak* [truck] and *imbargu* [sequestration] from English [the latter is of Spanish origin], *ampalaya* [bitter gourd] and *sitaw* [string beans] from *Tagalog*, as well as *tapulan* [lazy] and *sihag* [see-through] from *Cebuano-Visayan*. This morphological process is corroborated by Dela Cerna's (2017) findings that lexical

borrowing is evident in *Surigaonon* due to the consistent language contact among speakers of different languages or among multilingual speakers (Formkin et al., 2014) within a community. Such morphological process which brought about a considerable number of *Surigaonon* lexical variants in the collection is amplified by population mobility [which may distort if not eliminate dialect features] (Parker & Riley, 2005) that led *Surigaonons* to encounters with individuals who speak other languages. These encounters are either brought about or compounded by intermarriages, employment, trade and industry, education, and tourism in the city thereby bringing some of these individuals' vocabulary into the *Surigaonon* lexicon through the "adoption and use of some non-*Surigaonon* terms" and "nativizing" them (Penera, 2017, p. 3) thereby contributing in part to the existence of *Surigaonon* lexical variation.

Forty-nine (49) of the 1,065 collected lexical variants are categorized as products of **affixation** which is a process of word-formation carried out through the addition of affixes that give the word additional "lexical and grammatical information" (Igaab & Kareem, 2018, p. 92). In this study, however, *Surigaonon* lexical variants that underwent affixation indicate the same word but affixed differently as in *trangkahi* for *itrangka* [lock]. Other examples include *baliha* for *ibali* [reverse], *itipun* for *tipunun* [assemble], and *ikiling* for *kilingun* [tilt] incuding *pang-utoray* for *ig-utoray* [clipper] both meaning the same thing despite different affixation – a morphological process regarded as the most common among the languages of the world (Fromkin et al., 2014).

Metathesis which is another morphological process first identified by Dumanig (2015) is evident in *Surigaonon* when a word's phonemic sequence is reordered following the phonemic reordering process of *Cebuano-Visayan* that deletes the final vowel of the root after suffixation before carrying out phonemic transpositions. Some of the identified *Surigaonon* lexical variants do follow this pattern just as how Dumanig described it in his paper. Examples include word formations such as *atup+an→atupan→atpan→aptan* [to put a roof] and *balus+an→balusan→balsan→baslan* [to retaliate].

A number of *Surigaonon* lexical variants under this morphological process, however, employ deletion that is not of the root's final vowel. Deletion before metathesis for these variants varies from omission of the initial consonant sound as in *tagai* from *hatagi* [to give] or *aya* from *laay* [boring], to a medial consonant sound deletion like *aguyo* from *aguroy* [moan in pain] and deletion of a medial vowel sound as in *kyaling* from *kalaying* [rust]. Nonetheless, many have simply undergone two phonemic transpositions without undergoing any deletion as in *kawajan*

from *kajawan* [bamboo], *dungagan* from *dugangan* [add], *supaun* from *usapun* [chew], *landug* from *danlug* [slippery], *hutdun* from *hudtun* [consume], *mulangtud* from *mulungtad* [lasting], *mangilu* from *manguli* [wash/wipe anus after excretion] and *isbug* from *sibug* [move]. This certainly suggests that word-formation through this process as a source for some of *Surigaonon* lexical variants could be as complex alternation.

Circumfixation is a morphological process in which both prefix and suffix jointly called a circumfix or discontinuous morpheme is attached around a root word – the first half of which is affixed before the root and the second half after it thereby expressing a single sense (Unubi & Yusuf, 2017). This morphological process provided another source for and created 26 *Surigaonon* lexical variants for several *Surigaonon* words. *Igtahalay* and *pantahalay* for instance are variants for *pantahal* [shapener], *intignawan* for *tagtignaw* [cold], *katuyogun* for *tagtuyog* [drowsy], *kinaulahian* for *pinakaulahi* [hindmost], *kailadman* for *pinakailayum* [innermost], and *kinamanghuran* for *pinakamanghud* [youngest] among others suggesting thus that circumfixation is employed by *Surigaonons* to convey the exact same denotation thereby in part contributing to the existence of *Surigaonon* lexical variants.

Reduplication which Madeja et al. (2017) define as the repetition of the root or part of the root that may or may not result into a meaning change registered only three (3) *Surigaonon* lexical variants. This is a far cry from the rich and diverse reduplication evident in *Surigaonon*. This nevertheless suggests that such morphological process accounts for a portion in the existence of *Surigaonon* lexical variants as exemplified by masuki-suki for masuki [rebel], *ija-ija* for *ijahay* [sectionalism], and *bikangkang* for *bikang* [spread legs]; whereas *Usik-usik* for *kanam-kanam* [squander] and *utro-utro* for *isab-isab* [flighty] can only be categorized as **reduplicated variants**.

The last two *Surigaonon* lexical variants of the 1,065 in the collection each represented the last two morphological processes: compounding and blending. Despite the singular representation made by *may sakit* for *masakitun* [sick], this collection actually includes several other **compounds** like *dili makit-an*, *dili kit-an*, and *dili makita* for *dili hikit-an* [invisible] as well as *way kwarta* for *wayay kwarta* [penniless] and *daku karajaw* for *grabi kadaku* [huge] but they could not be categorized as lexical variants made out of compounding since the expressions for which they were created as variants are already compounds.

As to **blending**, although Fromkin et al. (2014) explained that it is comparable to compounds as blends result from a combination of two words with different senses as in 'smog'

from 'smoke' + 'fog' or Lewis Carrol's 'chortle' from 'chuckle' + 'snort' and children's blends like 'crocogator' from 'crocodile' + 'alligator,' the last entry in the *Surigaonon* lexical variants collection could only be regarded as *Surigaonons*' playful innovation combining the *Surigaonon* term *utin* [penis] with the *Tagalogs*' *titi* [meaning the same] resulting into the blend and *Surigaonon* lexical variant, *titin* – certainly a digression from the conventional blending of two words with different senses – but a blend nonetheless. This certainly illustrates that the human language faculty is astronomically innovative and that this ingenuity "extends to ways in which words may be altered and created" (Fromkin et al., 2014).

Finally, the 279 *Surigaonon* lexical alternatives labelled as **variant morphemes** include [among others] *tak-ang*, *sun-ad*, *tugna*, and *luto* for *digamu* [cook], *lagas* for *tiguyang* [senior citizen], *pipi*, *pirit*, and *bisung* for *bilat* [vagina], *baba*, *abid*, and *ijut* for *kijud* [sexual intercourse], as well as *tulilu*, *pay-ung*, and *lipung* for *alimpapajug* [dizziness] - each is obtained from Ong's *Surigaonon* Dictionary. Many of these morphemes which make up the greatest number in the *Surigaonon* lexical variants collection are particularly native alternatives.

Table 4 specifies the morphological processes undergone by the *Surigaonon* syntactic variants.

Table 4. *Surigaonon* **Syntactic Variants' Morphological Processes**

Morphological Processes	Items
Contraction	25
Exclusion	16
[Single Morph Equivalents]	[4]
TOTAL	**4**

Although clipping, deletion, alternation, affixation, inflected variants, and variant morphemes are still represented in the collected *Surigaonon* syntactic alternatives, Table 4 displays only the morphological processes that are syntactically relevant in this inquiry.

Contraction registered the most in the collection of *Surigaonon* syntactic variants with 25 alternatives. Contraction, according to Parker and Riley (2005), is one of the features most commonly associated with more informal stylistic registers like *I'm* for *I* am, *you're* for *you* are, and *he'll* for *he will*. Informal – that is exactly what these syntactic variants are since the language

is the *Surigaonons'* "functional daily mode of expression in casual conversations" (Belahsen *&* Ouahmiche, 2017, p. 25).

Contractions in the collection include [among others] the following samples:

Surigaonon: <u>Hai</u>n <u>man</u> kaw naghuya?

Variant: **Haman kaw naghuya?**

Gloss: Where do you live?

Surigaonon: <u>Uno may</u> imu gusto?

Variant: **Umay imu gusto?**

Gloss: What do you want?

Surigaonon: <u>Sin-u</u> <u>man</u> an mama ni Cassie?

Variant: **Siman an mama ni Cassie?**

Gloss: Who is Cassie's mother?

Surigaonon: Namahaw sija nan <u>isa</u> <u>ka</u> hungit.

Variant: **Namahaw sija nan iska hungit.**

Gloss: He just had a spoonful of breakfast.

Surigaonon: <u>Uno may</u> imu gusto?

Variant: **Unoy imu gusto?**

Gloss: What do you want?

Surigaonon: <u>Pila may</u> imu idad?

Variant: **Pilay imu idad?**

Gloss: How old are you?

Surigaonon: <u>Maski</u> <u>na</u> tagkapuy sija, nutrabahu gihapun.

Variant: **Maskin tagkapuy sija, nutrabahu gihapun.**

Gloss: He's/She's tired but went to work regardless.

Surigaonon: <u>*Taya*</u> <u>*na*</u>.

Variant: **Tyana**

Gloss: Let's go.

Contractions in the first six examples are straightforward. In the first three, contractions are carried out by attaching the second of the two combining words with the first after dropping the phoneme/s in the second half of the first word as in <u>*hain*</u> <u>*man*</u> to *haman* [where], <u>*uno*</u> <u>*may*</u> to *umay* [what], and <u>*sin-u*</u> <u>*man*</u> to *siman* [who]. This is shared with <u>*isa*</u> <u>*ka*</u> to *iska* [a or one] in *namahaw ra sija nan iska ka hungit* [He/She just had a spoonful for breakfast]. Whereas the fifth and the sixth pairs illustrate contraction that is much like the English I'm and you're – attaching only the second word's last phoneme to the first word. In like manner, *Surigaonon* attaches the combining second word's last phoneme at the end of the first word as in <u>*uno*</u> <u>*may*</u> to *unoy* [what] and <u>*pila*</u> <u>*may*</u> to *pilay* in *pilay imu idad* [How old are you?]. And finally, the last two pairs are a deviation from these two identified patterns for although <u>*maski*</u> <u>*na*</u> to *maskin* drops part of the second word, it is not the last phoneme that is attached with the first and although <u>*taya*</u> <u>*na*</u> to *tyana* [Let's go] drops part of the first of the combining words, what is dropped is not the second syllable but part of the first.

These contractions along with clipping and deletion manifest both stylistic syntactic variation and speech style suitable for informal registers hence they certainly do not reflect "careless speech" (Parker & Riley, 2005, p. 167).

Exclusion listed 16 *Surigaonon* syntactic variants. This process is revealed in the variants, S*ilum kuno sija mularga* and *Mularga kuno sija silum* from the lengthy *Laung nija silum kuno sija mularga* [He/She said, he/she will leave tomorrow] excluding the expressions *laung nija* in both syntactic variants thereby suggesting that Surigaonons have the propensity to discard "semantically redundant" and "grammatically omissible" (Rohdenburg & Schluter as cited in Callies, 2013, p. 255) syntactic items. The *Surigaonon* words *Laung nija* have been excluded in the variants *Mularga kuno sija silum* and *Silum kuno sija mularga* since the expression *kuno* is a counterpart of *Tagalog's* particle *daw* whose variant is *raw*. Both roughly translate into 'it is said' or 'he/she/somebody said' as in *Aalis ka raw* meaning 'You're leaving (I'm told)' ("daw"). *Kuno* has the equivalent function hence it fills the gap that results from the exclusion of *Laung nija* which means the same thing: 'he/she/somebody said' creating what Rohdenburg and Schluter call a "trend towards grammatical economy" (as cited in Callies, 2013, p. 255).

Lastly, **single morph** [for morpheme] **equivalents** are used as variants for some *Surigaonon* syntactic constructions. Single morph equivalents like *janay* for *huyat anay* [wait], *panudlay* for *sudlaja imu buhok* [Comb your hair], *inday* for *waya ako kahibayu* [I don't now], and the widespread, monosyllabic [with raised intonation] *ha* operating as a variant for *Unoy imu laung* [What did you just say].

This revelation of the morphological processes undergone by the *Surigaonon* lexical and syntactic variants certainly implies that *Surigaonons* have a rich resource of words and are innovative when it comes to language. Although a considerable number of variants have undergone reduction through some morphological processes such as deletion, clipping, contraction, and exclusion, this does not translate into *Surigaonons* being lazy and careless in speech [Parker & Riley, 2005]. It instead implies these *Surigaonons'* innovativeness in language thereby allowing them to adapt in any speech situation while in the process enriching the *Surigaonon* language with the existence of its linguistic variations which could be viewed by leading variationists as evidence of [either the beginning or on-going] language change.

Established Rules of Morphological Unit Combinations

Many of the verbs in the *Surigaonon* lexical variants collection are formed by the suffixes **-an**, **-ha**, **-i**, **-un**, **-hun,** and **-a**. Although several do not entail a final vowel deletion of the root as some suffixations are straightforward like *huyat+-an→huyatan* [await], some words make it compulsory as exemplified by *hagas+-an→hagasan→hagsan* [to whisper]. This is supported by Dumanig's (2015) final vowel deletion of the root word after suffixation of the first three of the aforementioned suffixes. Others undergo alternation by replacing the phoneme /y/ with /j/ when the former is the root's last phoneme like *likay+an→likayan→likajan* [to evade] (Dumanig, 2015). Nevertheless, all three are based on the same elementary rule of morphological unit combination, **Verb + -an → Verb**.

Moreover, while several are clear-cut suffixations resulting into nouns such as [among others] *isturya+-hanay→isturyahanay* [conversation] adhering to the rule, **Verb + -hanay →Noun** and *sumbag+-ay→sumbagay* [fistfight] based on the **Verb + -ay → Noun** rule, a number undergo final vowel deletion [like most verbs] as in *hilabut+-anun→hilabutanun→hilabtanun* [meddler] and *kupot+-anan→kupotanan→kuptanan* [handle]. Others undergo optional suffix reduction as in *higda+-anan→higdaanan→higdaan* [bed] and *agi+hanan→agihanan→agihan*

[walkway]; whereas the rest go through phonemic substitution/change as in *sugid+anun→sugidanun→sugilanun* [tale], phonemic addition and alternation like *ilis+an→ilisan→ilisdan→alisdan* [replace], or phonemic transposition such as *supa+un→supaun→usapun* [to chew].

Circumfixation [like suffixation] maybe simple like *kina-+maguyang+-an→kinamaguyangan* [eldest] and *pa-+abut+un→paabutun* [await], but many involve final vowel deletion of the root after circumfixation such as *Ka-+wayung+-anan→kawayunganan→kawaynganan* [face], *kina-+mubo+-an→kinamuboan→kinamub-an* [shortest], and *na-+sakup+-an→nasakupan→nasakpan* [caught]; whereas others undergo alternation as in *tag-+laay+-an→taglaayan→taglaajan* [bored] and *ka-+kahuy+-an→kakahuyan→kakahujan* [grove]. One evidently showed optional circumfix reduction [or OCreduc] as in *pang-+bisbis+ay→pangbisbisay→pangbisbis* [watering can] along with all the other complex circumfixations involving [among others] phoneme modification/change [*ta+kilid+un→takilidun→takilirun* for tilt], phoneme reduplication [*ma+luoy+un→maluoyun→maluloy-un* for compassionate], phoneme addition [*na+pasangil+an→napasangilan→napasanginlan* for blamed], and phoneme assimilation [*mang+barang+ay→mangbarangay →mamarangay* for sorcerer].

Straighforward prefixation of ***i-*** [*i+trangka→itrangka* or lock], ***tag-*** [*tag+sira→tagsira* or closed], ***nang-*** [*nang+isug→nangisug* or got angry], **nu-** [*nu+inum→*nuinum or drank], ***na-*** [*na+ligu→naligu* for bathed or bathing], ***mang-*** [*mang+uyab→manguyab* or court a lady], ***mag-*** [*mag+tabaku→magtabaku* or smoke], and ***mu-*** [*mu+hagas→muhagas* or will whisper] which [among others] indicate aspect also contributed to the verbs' long list in the *Surigaonon* lexical variants collection. Others, however, involve deletion like *mang+kumpra→mangkumpra→mangumpra* [will shop] and assimilation as in *mamuyak* from *mang+buyak→*m*angbuyak→*m*ambuyak* [will bloom] suggesting plurality since *mubuyak* [will bloom] is its singular counterpart. Several of the adjectives as well resulted from the clear-cut prefixation of ***ma-*** [*makuti*/intricate], ***ha-*** [*halaju*/far], ***kaha-*** [*kahalaju*/far], ***ka-*** [*kalaju*/far], and ***pinaka-*** [*pinakabata*/youngest] whereas *may*, *wayay*/*way*, *grabi*, and *dili* form either phrasal verbs or adjectives through compounding.

Finally, word formations requiring a glottal stop in between a consonant and a vowel sound is carried out though hyphenation as the word *sig-ab* [burp], the result of a final vowel deletion as

in *kalaj-un* [distance], the outcome of alternation as in *hujab/huy-ab* [yawn], and the upshot of reduplication as in *tili-tili* [drizzle].

These established rules of morphological unit combinations categorically reveal how some *Surigaonon* words are formed. This likewise suggests that *Surigaonons* do follow rules in word formations even with lexical and syntactic variants. Nevertheless, some alternatives like the only one that resembles a blend [*titin* meaning 'penis' from the *Tagalogs' titi* and the *Surigaonons' utin* both meaning 'penis'], imply that *Surigaonons* engage in language innovation without apprehension of any deviation from established universal convention. This might find some backing from Labov who said that "the history of our leaders of linguistic change is a history of nonconformity" (as cited in Hazen, 2011, p. 32). This nonconformity [which is certainly exhibited in the *Surigaonon* lexical variants collection's only blend] might also be the rationale for many of the complex word formations in the same collection despite prior described and established straightforward patterns.

In its entirety, these findings prove that *Surigaonon* exhibits some linguistic variations which reveal a number of morphological processes establishing several rules of morphological unit combinations. Although some of the identified linguistic variants such as *kawaynganan* for *wayung* (face), *bangku* for *ingkuran* (chair), *sayud* and *kayus* for *kabu* (fetch some water) are distinctively native *Surigaonon* alternatives, many are evidently results of the identified morphological processes which include [among others] lexical borrowing, affixation including circumfixation, alternation, clipping, compounding, metathesis, and stylistic syntactic variation through contraction, exclusion, and single morpheme equivalents.

These findings suggest that while *Surigaonon's* only role as a language is being the natives' functional daily mode of expression used among family members at home, among friends at hang-outs, among workmates during breaks etc., when this study's findings get adopted by curriculum developers thus fulfilling its facilitative function in levelling the field and setting off the development of MTB-MLE instructional materials, *Surigaonon* linguistic variation may no longer be restricted in casual conversations nor the language itself be labelled as a mere mode of expression for daily functions. It may eventually find its way and become part of instruction in the MTB-MLE classrooms thereby further suggesting its inclusion in the young ones' first language acquisition thus making them native speakers of *Surigaonon* that is characterized by its lexical and syntactic variations. Such adoption in instructional material development which translates into its

inclusion in the children's first language acquisition could impact not only the preservation of this particular regional language but may also be valuable in sorting out "variation-related challenges that confront language policy makers" (Bulusan, 2019, p. 231). This may correspondingly prove vital especially to those who advocate for local culture integration in language material design and language assessment formulation (Labiste, 2019).

Such findings may likewise lay the groundwork for future scholars whose investigations might be anchored on Biber's notion that "change is to be found in variation" (Holyk, p. 18) and could lend these future scholars some "potential diagnostic points for future linguistic change" (Sankoff, Labov & Kroch as cited in Holyk, p. 18) in *Surigaonon* and other potential scholarship on language, and language change among others.

Conclusion

The foregoing findings prove that *Surigaonon* exhibits some linguistic variations which reveal a number of morphological processes establishing several rules of morphological unit combinations that are either straightforward or complex. Although some are distinctively native *Surigaonon* alternatives, many are evidently results of the identified morphological processes. Moreover, despite following rules in word formations with majority of the lexical and syntactic variants, *Surigaonons* speak other alternatives that imply language innovation without apprehension of any deviation from established universal convention. Some display nonconformity which might also be the rationale for many of the complex word formations in the same collection despite prior described and established straightforward patterns.

Pedagogical Implications

In view of the findings and conclusion drawn, it is recommended:

1. that habitual use of the alternatives existing in the *Surigaonon* linguistic variation collection be ensured to guarantee its preservation through the younger generation's first language acquisition;

2. that the identified morphological processes undergone by *Surigaonon* linguistic variants be utilized by MTB-MLE curriculum developers in instructional material development for the Mother Tongue instruction; and

3. that the inclusion of the *Surigaonon* rules of morpohological unit combinations as foundation in word formation language instruction be considered in MTB-MLE classrooms.

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