

The Laguna Copper-Plate Inscription: A Local Language-game Validation

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Abstract: Language is essential in human survivability hence the importance of evolution in its usage. As emphasized by Ludwig Wittgenstein, the meaning functions upon which the words are used. This article will examine some common Filipino words which have Sanskrit origin and although the words differ in letters but have the sameness of meanings. This is to attest to the viability of the Language-game of Wittgenstein that the words are recognized upon which the community of speakers properly integrate and express in their day-to-day usage. Specifically, I highlight the Laguna Copper-Plate Inscription (LCI) as the most valuable possibility of Language-game that exhibits a creation of new language usage in the community.

Keywords: *Language-game, Laguna Copper-Plate Inscription (LCI), Community, Old Tagalog, Old Javanese*

Introduction

This paper is an inquiry and validation of Ludwig Wittgenstein's important concept of Language-game. In the *Philosophical Investigations* (1958), he says that meaning is indeterminate; however, it can be learned by playing the relevant language-games. This method addresses this ambiguity via a reflective approach that engages others in understanding different examples, conventions, and modes of judgment. I highlight the local language acquisition of Sanskrit in this study. For him, to learn the meaning of an expression is to learn a linguistic system whose boundaries are not fixed and are always on the brink of change (PI 99).

LANGUAGE AND EXPRESSION

B.F. Skinner proposed the theory of language acquisition in utterances and responses is brought by environmental influence. The speaker's dispositions coordinated these so-called stimuli and responses. Moreover, the mental 'understanding' of others is trained to respond appropriately to the utterance of the receiver. The speaker necessarily controls the behavior of the observation and manipulates the physical environment. (Chomsky 1959, 1) The core of physical observation is brought by eliciting, discriminating, or reinforcing, and these help in the behavior for stimulus and response. To add a justification, for stimulus control a proper noun is given for example, "under the control of a specific person or thing" (the controlling stimulus), Chomsky considered Eisenhower and Moscow but was never stimulated by the corresponding objects. So, if the presence of the object is concrete, then there's a strong possibility in the stimulus control. According to Chomsky, Skinner

identifies the essential character of the problem of identification of a unit of verbal behavior, however, the satisfying answer is so "vague" and "subjective" that it does not give its explanation. To define, the unit of verbal behavior — the verbal operant — is a "class of responses of identifiable form functionally related to one or more controlling variables." As to what the Filipino community long ago used as lingua franca, it has become an essential part of community life.

Also, Chomsky highlights two general approaches to language acquisition. First, the empiricist structure of the purchase is of "peripheral processing mechanisms" an example of "quality space" like Quine, for him, there are analytical data-processing mechanisms or inductive principles, but a weaker "generalization" or "peripheral processing mechanism." This application of inductive analysis of experience can be viewed generally through the product of the nature of mind as empirical hypotheses. Moreover, second language acquisition is of the rationalist on mental processes. They hold that beyond the "peripheral processing mechanism," are innate ideas as well principles, that help determine the form of acquiring knowledge. According to Chomsky (1965, 48) stimulation is required for the activation of the innate mechanism to organize and restrict knowledge. Thus, for Chomsky, the form of language is too large for the schema of grammar since it will only be available upon appropriate experience, and once the language-forming is set, then it is fully operational. (1965, 51). Language is far superior to any human trait. It is natural born of the desire of speaking to humans. Now, Chomsky has far elaborated on the innate nature of language in desperate to defend it, and likely he says:

"To say that language is not innate is to say that there is no difference between my

granddaughter, a rock, and a rabbit. In other words, if you take a rock, a rabbit, and my granddaughter and put them in a community where people are talking English, they'll all learn English. If people believe that, then they believe that language is not innate. If they believe that there is a difference between my granddaughter, a rabbit, and a rock, then they believe that language is innate." (2000, 50)

The Universal Grammar hypothesis – the idea that human languages, is superficially diverse as they are, share some fundamental similarities, and that these are attributable to innate principles unique to language: that deep down, there is only one human language (Chomsky 1995, 131) To add, it is a system of principles, conditions, and rules that are elements or properties common to all human forms of languages. This is an example of many words which have the equivalent to Sanskrit today. There are four modes of language communication in the Upanishadic-Sanskrit as a form of language acquisition and usage: “para - mode of awareness/purport/import /*taatparya* - *pasyanti* –mode of verb or sense or mood/ *artha - madhyama* - mode of a sentence (*vaakya*) - and *vaikhari* –mode of utterance in sound form (*speech*)” (Ramabrahmam, 2012) this could be the form how the language develops into the community. The language acquisition in the community is a testament to evolution and language is uncoordinated related to “descent” and “similarities” from the “common ancestor.” Here is an example (Bisang, 35):

	Latin	Italian	Spanish	French	Rumanian
'one'	<i>ūnus</i>	<i>uno</i>	<i>un</i>	<i>un</i> [ō]	<i>un</i>
'two'	<i>duo</i>	<i>due</i>	<i>dos</i>	<i>deux</i> [dō]	<i>doi</i>
'three'	<i>trēs</i>	<i>tre</i>	<i>tres</i>	<i>trois</i> [tRwa]	<i>trei</i>
'fish'	<i>piscis</i>	<i>pesce</i>	<i>pez</i>	<i>poisson</i>	<i>pește</i>
'heart'	<i>cor</i>	<i>cuore</i>	<i>corazón</i>	<i>cœur</i>	(<i>înimă</i>)
'winter'	<i>hiberno-</i>	<i>inverno</i>	<i>invierno</i>	<i>hiver</i>	<i>iarnă</i>

(The Rumanian word for 'heart' comes from a different source: Lat. *anima* 'soul'. Cases like this, where one or more related languages exhibit a non-cognate word, are not unusual – or unexpected – given the fact that vocabulary, too, is subject to change.)

When a community of people uses words as the basis of communication for a particular purpose, they are engaged in a language-game, according to Ludwig Wittgenstein. In the natural language, there is a presence of language-games. It meant that language is part of human activity or a form of life. For Wittgenstein, for example, he made mentioned the

functions of language. Giving orders and obeying them; reporting an event, forming, and testing a hypothesis, making up a story, play-acting, guessing riddles, singing catches, making a joke, and telling it, solving a problem in arithmetic, translating from one language to another, asking, thanking, cursing, greeting, praying, lying, etc. (PI 23) The method of language-games, is reflective of social interactions and learning which is necessary for clarifying and understanding the others in the presence of social ambiguity thus in any language situation just like the early society. Understanding of language is not achieved using the separation from others and thinking in isolation. It is made using reflective communication in the habits shared within a society.

The Laguna Copperplate Inscription has obvious strong Indian cultural influence by the Srivijaya, as earliest in the 7th century. Wittgenstein, on the other hand, appeals to something like an object of comparison and subsequently describes something else using remarks on similarities and differences from the sample (PI 130). Hence, Wittgenstein emphasizes the importance of understanding differences by comparing and contrasting various contexts in the use of language. Here are some of the Philippine languages that are similar to Sanskrit in nature (Dokras, 2021, 15-16):

Tagalog		Sanskrit
budhi	"conscience"	bodhi
Bathala	"bhattara"	Shiva
dalita	"one who suffers"	dharita
dukha	"poverty"	dukkha
guro	"teacher"	guru
sampalataya	"faith"	samprataya
mukha	"face"	mukha
laho	"eclipse"	rahu
Kapampangan		Sanskrit
kalma	"fate"	karma
damla	"divine law"	dharma
mantala	"magic formulas"	mantra
upaya	"power"	upaya
lupa	"face"	rupa
sabla	"every"	sarva
lawu	"eclipse"	rahu
Galura	"giant eagle"	garuda
laksina	"south"	Dakshin
Cebuano		Sanskrit
budaya	"culture"	boddhi, "virtue" and dhaya, "power"
balita	"news"	varta
diwata	"goddess"	devata

By this, so language-games calls for active participation and engagement. It shared some form of

life and a sense of community in cases where the locals are characterized by different experiences and their ways of life. Like in the Philippines where different languages and dialects are used, the idea is merely to create an expression that can share common engagement and will reflect the local style. While each community has defined the expression that is reflected from another source. Language maybe is not directly from the source of the example given. It may have passed from different communities in which the source has been localized to create new usage and meaning. These influences of languages as manifested create new familiarity which the community adopts in a well-defined usage. A reflective experience as it became the source of meaning. It may not be similar in words, but the sense corresponds to the present context. The form of life follows from the changing of words as it adopts a new situation. So, why do words change, but the meaning is implicit? Because the utterance is likely to differ from time to time and the community maybe participate well in its creation. This community used it for its unique purpose.

ORIGIN AND EARLY FORMS OF LIFE

The early settlers of the Philippines came from different directions; it was suggested at least 22,000 years according to the archaeologist, represented by the discovery of the skull cap of what has now known as the Tabon caves of Palawan. This was followed by Negritos (Aeta, Ati, Dumagat) some 25,000 to 30,000 years ago who came by "land bridges." Then by the group of Austronesians for some 7,000 years ago and also include groups from Indochina and South China by boats.

This is to acknowledge us Filipinos the existence of an ancient development of our ancestors. We possessed a culture of our own that is comparable to other civilizations.

The form of life is evident in the economic, social, and political structures. However, it manifests evidently in the language. They produced technology and culture that are reflected in their natural environment, climate, and geography. Hence, Filipinos were civilized before the coming of the western people.

The migration of the Austronesian in our archipelago, according to the experts, is more equipped with the alphabet that has directly an Indian influence. They used already the syllabary or alphabet for their communication.

The economic life of the Filipinos is dependent on agriculture, it is the source of their sustenance. They have rice, coconut, sugar cane, cotton, banana, hemp, orange, and other fruit-bearing trees. The kaingin

system was introduced and as well as the tillage system. By burning and tilling this would make an excellent agricultural land. Besides, the local fishing, mining, and shipbuilding make good industries for the early Filipinos.

The social life of ancient Filipinos was divided into social classes. The nobles are composed of the chiefs, and their royal family members, the freemen who are considered the middle class who enjoys ordinary life by simply following the way of life of the community, and the dependents the lowest social status. They were a product of generations of slaves. These early communities were considered *barangay* and the basic unity of the government. It has 30 to 100 families, led by the chief, they had tribute or *buwis*. The chieftain can exercise executive, legislative, and judicial power. By this, the chieftain is the overall leader of the community. Since he made the laws, execute the law, and decide important matters about his role with the help of the elders.

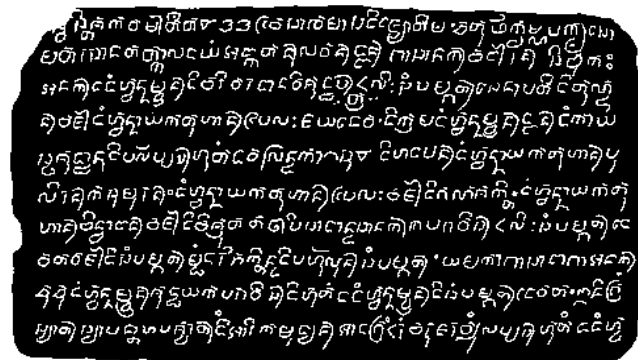
In the community, there was no formal school. However, education and the system of writing were crucial for the survival of the community. It was believed that were 16 different types of writing systems or "surat" in the Philippines before the Spanish colonialization. Mostly the writings were on the large leaves of plants and trees, and sometimes on barks of trees, bamboo tubes, and until the discovery of the Laguna Copper-Plate Inscriptions. The early literature of ancient Filipinos was classified into written and oral.

It is more interesting to note the historical relationships in the conservation of essential writing systems. Like the early oral traditions of the Tagalogs, they have the *sabi* (maxims), *bugtong* (riddles), *talindaw* (boat song), *tagumpay* (victory song), *uyayi* and *hele* (cradle song) *ihiman* (wedding song), *kumintang*, served as the form of life of the early Filipinos. On the other hand, in the written traditions; the Ifugao had the famous epics *Hudhud* and the *Alim*. For the epic of the Ilocanos, *Biag ni Lam-ang* (Life of Lam-ang), while the Bicolanos have the epic of *Handiong*. The Muslims produced epics: *Bantugan*, *Indarapata*, *Sulayman*, *Bidasari*, and *parang sabil*. These are a few famous Philippine literary histories. It reconstructs the form of life of which the Filipinos nevertheless have given primed to the literary idea.

This marks how the community survives as it expresses their thought or emotion. Any member of the community is a potential preserver and producer of literary development. For Wittgenstein, it is called the form of life, and it facilitated the transmission and even survival as it moved from one community to another or one generation to another. The transfer of traditions

like the language is a “form of life,” a literary agreement among the communities. They managed to interpret the importance of traditions by their way of living. It examined their literary transmission by constant practice and mastery. A literary interpretation has now come into an appreciation of the numerous traditions to designate the integration of common experience. Thus, the oral and written interpreter has the fundamental understanding to reproduce. By grasping its meaning, the transmission makes the expression complete.

The intention of the reproducer fulfills the intended meaning of the literary tradition. In general, it’s the community as a reproducer and preserver of it. By retaining the original “sounds,” “basic conceptual,” and “visual.”



A Philippine Document from 900 A.D. (baybayin.com) (last viewed on January 02, 2022)

The Laguna Copper-Plate Inscription (LCI) which was discovered in Lumbang River, Laguna, highlights the established pre-colonial text that is significant in the initial writing condition. Antoon Posma coined the term, and he declared that this inscription dated back to 822 or 900 A.D. This is one of a kind surviving inscription just mentioned by the experts of Paleography and Old Malayan. The content is about the acquittal of the person of a high office, together with the family, relatives, and descendants. Debt involves the amount of gold. This inscription is identified with the Kawi Script that was common in Indonesia about 750-925 A.D. and for about two hundred years period. This type of dedication is all spread in Southeast Asia and the entire Malayan archipelago, and basically, it has of Indian origin. The expression of the linguistic community.

Now, the language of LCI is almost technically Sanskrit and Old Javanese. However, its main language, according to Postma is Old Malay, which is closely related to Old Tagalog. Some words contain in the LCI, are composite of the Old and Modern Tagalog. Here are some (see Postma 190):

anak	(child)
dayang	(noblewoman)
hadapn	(in front)
hutang	(debt)
lap(p)as	(acquitted of debt)
ngaran	(name)
pam(a)gat	(Chief),
tuhan	(honorable person)

Translation of LCI

(1) Hail! In the Saka-year 822; the month of March-April; according to the astronomer: the fourth day of the dark half of the moon; is on (2) Monday. At that time, Lady Angkatan together with her relative, Bukah by name, (3) the child of His Honor Namwran, was given, as a special favor, a document of full acquittal, by the Chief and Commander² of Tundun (4) representing the Leader of Pailah, Jayade~aT.h~i s means that His Honor Namwran, through the Honorable Scribe⁴ (5) was cleared of a salary-related⁵ debt of 1 kati and 8 suwarna (weight of gold): in the presence of His Honor the Leader of Puliran, (6) Kasumuran; His Honor the Leader of Pailah, representing Ganasakti; (and) His Honor the Leader (7) of Binwangan, representing Bisruta. And, with his whole family, on orders of the Chief of Dewata (8), representing the Chief of Mdang, because of his loyalty as a subject (slave?)' of the Chief, therefore all the descendants (9) of his Honor Namwran have been cleared of the whole debt that His Honor owed the Chief of Dewata. This (document) is (issued) in case (10) there is someone, whosoever, sometime in the future, who will state that the debt is not yet acquitted of His Honor. . .9 (Postma, 187)

For Postma, Malayan is the language heritage of our exposure to the Indian culture. The local community of speakers adopted this according to their linguistic needs. It is the product of interpretation as soon they learn to simplify the primary form of language. Commerce and religion played a huge role in affixing language use. However, certain practices do not change like the astronomical, legal expressions, or others. It remains the original Sanskrit transcript which is very evident in the LCI. The reason is adopting purposely or not having difficulty in understanding. The central Philippine languages are almost similar to the Malayan vernacular in the boundary of the southern Philippines. A well-product of text and tradition within the community, as it read the text and arrives for a better understanding.

The validation that presents my thesis is the figure on the analysis of Language-game in the LCI.

To learn the meaning of an expression is to learn a linguistic system whose boundaries are not fixed and are always on the brink of change (PI 99). The adaptation and the development of the Sanskrit language by the Indonesian later on by our usage present in LCI. Hence, linguistic competence involves mastery of a technique (PI 199) for applying the relevant linguistic rule with certainty in a particular situation (PI 211-213). The method of language-games involves a drill in the different examples and actions associated with a concept, but this training is not meant to result in a mechanical application of rules. It aims to enable the speaker to instinctively apply the rule with flexibility while not viewing this flexibility as something contrary to the objective application of rules (PI 232). The rules are adapting in the new community as the words have evolved but retain some important traits like again the Astronomical expression. So, when Wittgenstein talks about dispelling confusion using playing language-games and acquiring knowledge of grammar, he is talking about acquiring a 'reflective mastery' shown by the competent user of language who can apply linguistic rules as a matter of course (PI 238) or personal judgment (PI 228). That is how; I understand when LCI is an excellent example of mastery, and the community passed it through their judgment. It's a development of one language into another adaptation as reflected in a community of speakers. However, the language presupposes a regular custom or practice (PI 198-199) with its normativity. Communication is also a social, hence public, act. But the LCI was an indication of the trade practice and ancient form of the international court of justice. It always makes room for the criteria of correctness outside the individual himself (PI 258).

Now, I presuppose two summative analyses in my article. Upon the discovery of the LCI, it is clear as it is one of the most important documents in the Philippines today. It establishes the link between the history of Malay and the Tagalog languages. In reference, the word pam(a)gat appeared five times in LCI, it refers to the different Chiefs in the Philippines in 10th Century A.D. Accordingly, the experts suggest that it was borrowed from the Old Javanese pam(a)gat, which is very common in the early times. First, this implies that Language-game is constructed socially to better construct the usage for communication. Skinner, in his theory of language about the utterances and responses, is brought by environmental influence. So, in the LCI, it can be verified that the utterances and responses help the speakers deliver the message as reflected in their environment. It adjusts to the languages available until such time it became the habit of the community. Emphasizing this new language,

however, can still be traced to the original utterance and responses.

Next, the possibility is the community borrowed its utterance and the responses to create the function of the words meaningfully. It develops a new characteristic upon which the speakers continue to function even in the absence of the first language use. The tradition and the social practices of the community do have a role in determining the general terms and usage.

Conclusion

The tradition has stood the test of time, and it encompasses all those customs and social practices that generate security and belongingness. This historical continuity is crucial to society. In the context of language, it established customs and traditions; however, people's needs, desires, and expectations differ, from time to time and from place to place. The meaning resides in the community. The purpose of the word is used in the language community. The words are connected with the natural expression of sensation and used in their place. The feeling is always present. It involves knowing what is logical or not. However, their Language-game of Wittgenstein differs technically from Chomsky. The latter subscribe to the inherent trait of humans. It only requires time to integrate the biological capacity in language acquisition fully. Moreover, this kind of language acquisition may be similar in terms of the adaptations and consider the functions of language in general.

Language-game is an interesting concept introduced by Wittgenstein. It shows the importance of the community of speakers relying on an old expression to recreate a new meaning. It builds on the community in their interpretation of thoughts. That's why the preservation of language is active, although, through time, changes have occurred, it remained attached to the original. This preservation of language like the LCI gives a natural function to each expression. The rules were not forsaken instead invented for a new purpose, which is reflective of the community. The grammar is preserved to help the speakers use it appropriately and practically. The language now is the total expression of the community. To put the process in context, it is worth mentioning that the community exposure to numerous conditions constructs concepts and learning.

I believe putting in context the grammatical structure help formulate expression. It involves intuition in describing the rhythm of language in general. In my observation, the Wittgenstein method is validated in terms of coordination of the language. The past is there in the present as it belongs to the nature of the community. Language then determines the thinking of the individuals at a particular time and the

grammatical side will predominate. This interpretation would completely require knowledge of the language. Although in the Philippine context we cannot deny our language has of Sanskrit origin it shows how the development of language changes in terms of usage. It can be broadly pointed to one source but evolve through time.

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