



Derivational Morphology Features in Common Akeanon Dialects

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Abstract:

The Akeanon language reflects the rich cultural uniqueness of Aklan natives in Panay Island, Philippines. It is spoken in different variations known among the locals as dialects and named after the geographical location these are spoken - Akeanon Buruangganon in Buruanga, Akeanon Nabasnon in Nabas, and Akeanon Bukidnon in the upland villages of Libacao and Madalag. The dialect spoken in the capital town of Kalibo served as standard reference. Descriptive cross-sectional design was used to analyze the primary documentary evidence in establishing the morphology features, and the variations of popular Akeanon dialects, specifically in terms of word structure, order, and affixation. Results showed that Akeanon dialect expressions reflect the social and emotional characteristics of the natives – hospitable, welcoming, kind-hearted, respectful. As to structure, Akeanon statements were written or spoken in inverted order compared to their English equivalents. Changes in structure were observed on bound morphemes when used in other dialect variations. Reduplication was common among Akeanon base words; circumfix or confix was noted as the frequently used affix, and in some instances, affixes are dropped without affecting the meaning. Some Akeanon dialects have Tagalog origin while standard Akeanon words have substitutes in dialect variations.

1. INTRODUCTION

Languages are peculiar to the natives inhabiting the islands in Southeast Asian countries. Studies point out that the different languages in these islands are of Austronesian origin that is believed to have emanated from Taiwan (Klamer, 2019). The Malayo-Polynesian, which evolved from the Austronesian language, was used by descendants of seafarers who frequently travelled from Taiwan to the northernmost provinces of Batanes and Luzon in the Philippines (Chen et al., 2022; Hadji Abdul Racman et al., 2022). Ross (2005) has described that Batanic languages (sometimes called Bashiic or Ivatanic), the language spoken on the small islands of Batanes found between Taiwan and Luzon are related to Austronesian languages.

The language that Aklanons speak has been traced to be of Malayo-Polynesian origin and is found to be related to some other native tongues in the Philippines and a bit of Asia. With several conquests made by neighboring countries and the kind of culture they brought along, these influences would affect change in the language system, interpretations would vary, and subcultural dialects would emerge.

The province of Aklan is composed of 17 municipalities whose inhabitants speak Akeanon in different dialects. Aklanons from western and upland Aklan have distinct intonation patterns when compared with those who live in the eastern and lowland part of the province. One group of Aklanons is identified to have substituted phonemes that make them easily recognized as particular to the place. These types of variations are interestingly notable that a closer look into the characteristics of Akeanon dialects is worth establishing. Thus, this study aimed at finding out the derivational morphology of the Akeanon language, and establish the variations of common Akeanon dialects in terms of structure, word order, and affixation.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Morphology and Philippine languages

Morphology is the study of word structures, particularly about the smallest units of language known as morphemes. These morphemes can either be root words and affixes. It can either be about breaking apart words (the analytic side) or inflectional morphology; and the reassembling or construction of new base words (the synthetic side) or lexical word-formation. Sometimes, the latter is referred to as lexical morphology or derivational morphology (Nordquist, 2019).

Derivational morphology creates new lexemes or basic unit of meaning of a word by changing its syntax or by adding substantial or non-grammatical meaning to it. This is by way of affixation, reduplication, subtraction, or internal modification of words (Lieber, 2017). It often changes the core part of speech of a word and makes more radical changes in meaning. These processes are categorized by the part of speech change they engender (e.g., corrode-corrosion) (Cotterell et al., 2017). It is a means in many languages (including English) of converting or deriving a word of one syntactic category from one another, sometimes with a shift in meaning (Lardiere, 2006).

For Oz (2014), an awareness of morphology enables language teachers to help their learners understand how words enter a language, what they consist of, and how they are formed by combining prefixes, suffixes, and roots as morphology is the study of the internal structure of words and the rules governing the formation of words in a language.

During the annual conference on African linguistics, Benitez-Torres (2009) has identified three sets of valence-changing prefixes in the Tagdal: the causative prefix, the passive prefix and the reciprocal prefix. The causative prefix is attached before the verb root to indicate that the subject is either causing the action of the verb, or someone else performs the action. Passive prefix uses related suppletive forms derived from active verbs; it is used in syntactic construction to promote or place focus on the semantic undergoer or direct object. And, the use of both analytic and morphological constructions to form reciprocals. Aside from these constructions, two syntactic constructions emerge with the same function as the reciprocal prefix – a calque which copies a syntax and another from the original word. In his study about the derivational affixes in a multilingual practice in the Philippines involving Hokkien, Tagalog, and English called Lánnang-uè, Gonzales (2023) found that there are certain systematic morphological combinations of affixes and roots that are used frequently in Lánnang-uè while others are not. He established that older users tended not to follow the affix source language, length, and position condition of the system, and male users only tended not to follow the first condition. This led to the argument that derivational affixation system exhibits conventionalization, and that it emerged due to identity negotiation practices led by younger and female users.

Language identifies who the person is. It is a unique characteristic that reflects the culture where a person comes from and what representation he stands for. The Philippines being an archipelago is comprised of several languages. Eberhard, Simons, and Fennig (2019) cite that there are 185 individual languages in the Philippines where 183 are living and 2 are extinct. Of the living languages, 175 are indigenous and 8 are non-indigenous. They said that

of this number, 39 are institutional, 67 are indigenous, 38 are vigorous, 28 are in trouble, and 11 are dying. Despite being a language hotspot where linguistic diversity is high, there are big number of Philippines languages that are in high level of endangerment (Gallego et al., 2021).

Racoma (2014) accounts that there are around 120 to 175 languages in the Philippines depending on how these are classified. She explains that the official languages based on the current constitution are English and Filipino. Of the number, 13 languages have at least 1 million speakers. Some of these languages include Cebuano, Hiligaynon, Ilokano, Kapampangan, Kinaray-a, and Waray. She further said that most of the languages spoken were derived from Malayo-Polynesian roots; however, there are Filipinos who can speak Spanish, Arabic, and Chinese.

The Bisayan language as a subgroup of the Austronesian languages has a sound system that is representative of the Malayo-Polynesian languages (Canoy, 2023). The linguistic term Binisaya encompasses the language used in islands in the eastern, central, and western Visayas regions, including Panay composed of the provinces of Aklan, Antique, Capiz, and Iloilo. At an annual conference on Philippine studies, the term Bisaya or Binisaya was equaled to the Cebuano language and the lingua franca of the Visayas even if there are four other major languages in the region: Waray, Hiligaynon, Kinaray-a and Akeanon (Martinez-Juan, 2023). However, Zorc (1977) theorize that bisaya may be an Indic or an indigenous word which lost its original meaning as it has come to characterize the group as a whole and the region in which they dwell.

The Aklanon/Akeanon language. *Aklanon* is an understudied Central Philippine language (Wellstood, 2022). The World Library Foundation (2020) listed *Aklanon* in the World Heritage Encyclopedia as among the 18 regional languages in the Philippines. It is spoken by some 360,000 people in or near the province of Aklan on the northwestern portion of Panay, which is part of Western Visayas in the Philippines. Its unique feature among other Visayan languages is the voiced velar fricative or a close-mid back unrounded vowel [ɣ] sound occurring as part of diphthongs and traditionally written with the letter E such as in the name *Akeanon* (*Aklanon*). One identified dialect variation of *Akeanon*, the *Malaynon* dialect, is 93% lexically similar to *Akeanon* and retained the "l" sounds, which elsewhere are often pronounced as "r". It further stated that the *Ibayjanon* (*Ibajaynon*) dialect has shortened versions of *Aklanon* words (Mitshi, 2022). For Rentillo and Pototanon (2023), *Akeanon* features a velarized or guttural phoneme unique when compared to other Philippine languages, which is a reflex of the proto-Bisayan *l and *-d-. Initially, this was described as a voiced velar fricative [ɣ], which was later identified to be both a consonant of an onset and a semivowel of a coda. Lately, it was reaffirmed to be mainly a semivowel.

Akeanon is a distinctive language that reflects the rich cultural uniqueness of Aklan natives. It is a member of the Malayo-Polynesian language family. It is popularly spoken in Aklan, which is one of the provinces in Western Visayas, as *Akeanon*, *Aklanon* or *Inakeanon* (Ager, 2018) by about 460,000 people. This language is closely related to the Kinaray-a and Kuyunon languages which are also among the major languages in Panay Island.

As one of the 19 languages in the Philippines recognized by the Department of Education, it is considered a de facto language as a provincial identity in Aklan and Capiz provinces, with an intelligibility rate of 66% and a lexical similarity of 68% with Hiligaynon. Its literacy rates among Aklanons as an L1 and an L2 are both 70%, respectively (Eberhard, Simons & Fennig, 2019).

According to Deriada (2019), *Aklanon* (or *Akeanon*) was developed from Kinaray-a without Chinese acculturation. He said that the most peculiar aspect of the language is its exotic [l] sound. Normally, the words Aklan, ulo (head), balay (house), dalaga (young woman), etc. are sounded in *Akeanon* with the tip of the tongue touching the upper teeth as Akean, ueo, baeay, daeaga, etc. Some words have the normal [l] in *Akeanon* like bala (bullet), not baea, Kalibo (the capital town) not Kaeibo, towns of Balete, not Baeete, and Malinao, not Maeinao.

Deriada added that the folk explanation for this is that Datu Bangkaya, the Bornean who appropriated for his territory the present province of Aklan, had a speech defect as he had a short tongue, and he lisped. To appease their chief and to make him feel normal despite this speech defect, his followers imitated their chief's mangling of the [l] sound.

Akeanon consists of 21 phonemes. It has 17 consonants: p, t, k, b, d, g, m, n, ng, s, h, l, r, w, y, the glottal stop, and the distinct voiced velar fricative [ɣ] (traditionally spelled with the Latin (Ee). The five vowels are i, a, u, and the e and o for loanwords and common nouns.

In his study on dialectology of *Akeanon*, Rentillo (2018) found out that based on patterns that emerged, salient lexical deviation in form was particular in Malay while there was the absence of the voiced velar fricative [ɣ] which was found to be present in most varieties. In place [l] and [r] are present for Nabas, and a higher incidence of [r] is for Madalag. The presence of schwa [ə] in Madalag could also be noted concerning discourse-motivated prosodic qualities. Overall, a large area across central until eastern Aklan province constitutes a single isogloss exhibiting negligible lexical and phonological variations. Lately, according to Rentillo and Pototanon (2023), the phoneme described to be a velar approximant [ɰ] or as voiced velar fricative [ɣ] was tentatively labelled as the Distinct Akeanon Reflex or DAR. Based on the description of Zorc (1977, in Rentillo and Pototanon, 2023), DAR is a reflection of the proto-Bis*1 (e.g. *laŋaw > Raŋaw 'housefly', *balu > baRu 'widow', *katul > katuR 'itch') and intervocalic *-d- (e.g. *wada? > waRa? 'none, lose').

2.2. Theoretical framework

This study takes its reference from the viewpoint that the social interaction of individuals influences how they learn and improve the language they possess from birth. Vygotsky's sociolinguistic theory (in Lopez, 2011) emphasizes that through interpersonal interactions, a child learns language by himself. His constant exposure with other people creates an abstract in him which can help in the development of his logical reasoning. It leads to new forms of cognitive organization.

3. Methodology

Documentary and content analysis methods were used in this descriptive qualitative cross-sectional study. In conducting cross-sectional studies in linguistics, according to English Language and Linguistics Online [ELLO] (2019), data are usually collected at one point in time from a relatively large group of individuals or subjects. These data provide an overall picture of a particular aspect of the language system or how language is used.

Documentary analysis is a research technique that involves the gathering of information by examining existing documents and records; sometimes referred to as content analysis (Sevilla et al., 1994, in Gregorio, 2018). It essentially involves a thorough examination of certain documents, books, and other business or school records.

The *Akeanon* orthography written by Goyo and Tulio (2018) was utilized with permission as a primary reference in the study. This document included rules in grammar and a collection of popular *Akeanon* words derived from major dialects identified in the province. It classified *Akeanon* language into dialects as a) *standard Akeanon* (the dialect spoken by the majority of people living in the central town of Kalibo and its suburbs); b) *Buruanganon* in the town of Buruanga; c) *Nabasnon* in the town of Nabas; and *Bukidnon* in the towns of Madalag and Libacao. Ethical consideration through proper citation and acknowledgment of authors of similar documents was observed.

Key informant interviews with purposively selected native speakers were conducted to validate the findings. For triangulation purposes, initial findings were presented to language and social science teachers who are also engaged in language studies. All observations and comments on the findings were incorporated in establishing the results.

4. Results and Discussion

The uniqueness of the *Akeanon* language or simply *Akeanon*, is prevalent in casual conversations among the natives in Aklan. The *Akeanon* language sounds strange to those who hear it for the first time, and music to those who become familiar to it. But just like any other aboriginal languages, *Akeanon* has on its own a distinct morphology and structure which vary accordingly as it is spoken in different geographical locations within the province.

4.1 Derivational Morphology of *Akeanon* Language

The orthography of the *Akeanon* language written by Goyo and Castro (2018) enumerated common *Akeanon* words and their English equivalents. It captured dialect variations of *Akeanon* as spoken and written distinctly when compared to the language used in the central town of Kalibo – considered as the business capital of the province of Aklan, and its neighboring suburbs. These variations were and classified as *Akeanon Buruanganon*, *Nabasnon*, and *Bukidnon* as they are distinctly spoken and uttered specific to its geographic location. The list included popular greetings and groups of words that describe the human body, members of the family, their vocation, household items, and flora and fauna.

Akeanon words reflect the social characteristics of its people. Words of endearment and assurance, and welcome greetings are warm expressions of *Akeanon* being hospitable people. The way these words are spoken reflects how hospitable and respectful people in the community are. Among the number of *Akeanon* greetings are the popular wishes for a pleasant day ahead, as:

- (1) *Mayad-ayad nga agahon.* (Good morning.) [Standard]
Mayad-ayad nga hapon. (Good afternoon.) [Standard]
Mayad-ayad nga gabi-i. (Good evening.) [Standard]

Dialect variations in *Akeanon Buruanganon* and *Bukidnon* were noted as the same as the *standard Akeanon* but in *Nabasnon*, this is spoken as “Mayad nga agahon/hapon/gabi-i”. The World Library Foundation (2020) listed that *Malaynon* utters it as “Mayad nga gab-i” dropping the “i” from the root “gabi-i”.

Mayad is translated as “good” in English and used as an adjective. But looking at how it is commonly used in *standard Akeanon*, an additional –ayad is added, which functions as a suffix but may be construed as a contracted duplication or reduplication of mayad. As it can be, reduplication is forming new words by repeating the whole or part of the word to arrive at a meaning (Urbanczyk, 2017).

If mayad is repeated it becomes mayad-mayad, a reduplicant which is also an *Akeanon* word translated as “good-good” in English. However, the *Akeanon* word mayad-mayad has a different meaning in English as it means “skilled” or “expert”.

- (2) *Kamusta ka?* (How are you?) [Standard]
Kamusta ikaw? [Buruanganon]
Kamusta kaw? [Nabasnon]
Mauno kaw don? [Bukidnon]

The *Akeanon* greeting *Kamusta ka?* has differing referents of *ka*, *ikaw*, and *kaw* translated as “you”, which are personal pronouns in the nominative case. Note that the word “*ikaw*” in *Buruanganon* was the contracted “*ka*” in the *standard Akeanon* deleting the “*i*” at the beginning and “*w*” at the end of the word. In the *Nabasnon* dialect, “*ka*” became “*kaw*” adding “*w*” at the end of the word. The World Library Foundation (2020) entered the greeting

“Kamusta ka eon?” in *Malaynon* as “Musta ron” dropping the “ka” from the root “kamusta” and the change of “eon” to “ron”. This change highlights the distinctive difference of *Malaynon* dialect from the standard *Akeanon*.

4.2 Variations of Common *Akeanon* Dialects

Goyo and Tulio (2018) identified variations of *Akeanon* dialects as *standard Akeanon* (commonly spoken along with the towns within the outskirts of Kalibo), *Akeanon Buruangganon*, *Akeanon Nabasnon*, and *Akeanon Bukidnon* in the orthography they wrote. *Standard Akeanon* serves as the base dialect of the language. The next two dialects are those spoken in the northern part of the province while the last is used by the indigenous group in the upland part of southwestern Aklan. However, the World Library Foundation (2020) has identified distinct characteristics in some other *Akeanon* spoken in the northern towns of Malay and Ibajay that were identified as *Malaynon* and *Ibajaynon*, respectively. Notably, these dialects have common meanings but carry observable differences in structure, word order, and affixation.

4.2a. As to Structure. The dialect variations in the orthography written by Goyo and Tulio (2018) show how some variations of the *standard Akeanon* are expressed in the different geographical locations in the province where the speaker comes from. Table 1 shows some examples of variations of these dialects classified in categories as parts of the human body, members of the family, vocation, animals, and insects, personal belongings, and household items. Notice that the words described in the table are nouns.

Table 1. *Aklanon* Language Variations

A. Parts of the Human Body

Standard <i>Akeanon</i>	Dialect Variations			English
	<i>Buruangganon</i>	<i>Nabasnon</i>	<i>Bukidnon</i>	
alima	alima	alima	alismod/alismok	hand
baba	baba	baba	baba	mouth
dahi	dahi	dahi	dahi/agtang	forehead
ilong	ilong	irong	ilong/irong	nose
sag-ang	sulang	sag-ang/panaga	sag-ang/surang	chin

B. Members of the Family

Standard <i>Akeanon</i>	Dialect Variations			English
	<i>Buruangganon</i>	<i>Nabasnon</i>	<i>Bukidnon</i>	
asawa	asawa	asawa	asawa	spouse
bilas	bilas	bilas	biras	in-law
kamanghuran	kamanghudan	bunso	bunso	youngest
tatay	tatay	tatay	tatay	father
panugangan	panugangan	biyenan	ugangan	in-law

C. Vocation

Standard <i>Akeanon</i>	Dialect Variations			English
	<i>Buruangganon</i>	<i>Nabasnon</i>	<i>Bukidnon</i>	
manogdumaea	manogdumala	manogdumara	manogdumara	manager
manog-eaha	manoglaha	manograha	manogdaha	cook
mangingisda	mangingisda	mangingisda	manogpanura	fisherman
manog-ukit	manog-ukit	manog-ukit	manugkorte	sculptor

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manogbaligya	manogbaligya	manogbaligya	manogbaligya	vendor
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D. Animals, Insects

Standard <i>Akeanon</i>	Dialect Variations			English
	<i>Buruangganon</i>	<i>Nabason</i>	<i>Bukidnon</i>	
eanggam	ambo	langgam	angbo/ramgam	rat
kuring	kuding	kuring	kuding	cat
namok	lamok	lamok	namok	mosquito
eangaw	langaw	langaw	rangaw	fly

E. Personal Belongings / Household Items

Standard <i>Akeanon</i>	Dialect Variations			English
	<i>Buruangganon</i>	<i>Nabason</i>	<i>Bukidnon</i>	
antipara	antipara/salamin	antipara	antiyuhos	eyeglasses
bandihado	bandihado	bandihado	duwang	platter
eambong	lambong	lambong	naog/ rambong	dress
tabo	tabo/kabo	tabo	sandok/tabo	dipper

The *Akeanon* words have observable commonalities in terms of structure as expressed in different dialect variations as spoken by natives of Kalibo and its nearby municipalities, Buruanga, Nabas, and the *Akeanon Bukidnon*. Notable of these, however, was the use of different phonemes in some of these words. A study of central Philippine languages, particularly Tagalog and Cebuano, shows that the core segmental phonemes such as voiced and voiceless stops /p, b, t, d, k, g, ʔ/, lateral /l/, frill /r/, and some vowels are present (Bollas & Hernandez, 2013). Thus,

(1) “l” instead of “r”

“ilong” [Standard]	--	“irong” [Nabason/Bukidnon]
“manoglaha” [Buruangganon]	--	“manograha” [Nabason]
“manogdumala” [Buruangganon]	--	“manogdumara” [Nabason/Bukidnon]
“bilas” [Standard]	--	“biras” [Bukidnon]
“sulang” [Buruangganon]	--	“surang” [Bukidnon]

(2) “l” instead of “e”

“manogdumala” [Buruangganon]	--	“manogdumaea” [Standard]
“manoglaha” [Buruangganon]	--	“manog-eaha” [Standard]
“langaw” [Buruangganon]	--	“eangaw” [Standard]
“lambong” [Buruangganon]	--	“eambong” [Standard]

(3) “d” instead of “r”

“kamanghudan” [Buruangganon]	--	“kamanghuran” [Standard]
“kuding” [Buruangganon]	--	“kuring” [Standard]

A free morpheme became a bound morpheme after affixation. This resulted to word structure change in another dialect variation but had kept the meaning the same, as: “alima” [Standard] became “alismod/alismok” [Bukidnon]. As what Monaghan and Fletcher (2019)

believe, the sound of words is related to the meaning they denote and extends beyond the words' morphological properties.

Aside from the observations made, there were also *Akeanon* dialects that dropped an affix but retained its definition, as “panugangan” [Standard] to “ugangan” [Bukidnon]. This observation is consistent to the result presented by Gonzales (2023) wherein he found that almost all the suffixes applied to the *Aklanon* corpus were the same even if they have differences in pronunciation. He called this as morphophonemic change.

Based on the entries made by Goyo and Tulio (2018), it was observed that some dialects in the *Akeanon* language have Tagalog origin. Tagalog is the major language spoken by the majority in southern Luzon, particularly in Metro Manila, and has been either the first or second language to over 90% of the total population of the Philippines (Schachter & Reid, 2018). Some of these dialects are:

“kamanghuran”	--	“bunso” [Nabasnon/Bukidnon]
“panugangan”	--	“biyenán” [Nabasnon]

Some standard *Akeanon* popular words have substitutes in other language variations like:

“manog-ukit”	--	“manugkorte” [Bukidnon]
“mangingisda”	--	“manogpanura” [Bukidnon]
“sag-ang”	--	“sueang/surang” [Bukidnon]
“dahi”	--	“agtang” [Bukidnon]
“antipara”	--	“antiyuhos” [Bukidnon]
“bandihado”	--	“duwang” [Bukidnon]
“eanggam”	--	“ambo/angbo” [Buruangganon/Bukidnon]
“eambong”	--	“naog/bisti” [Bukidnon]
“tabo”	--	“sandok [Bukidnon]

4.2b. As to Word Order. The normal word order for an English sentence happens when the subject comes before the verb (S-V). In this pattern, the subject may be the person or the object acting, and the verb is the action done by the subject. In *Akeanon* statements, this sentence pattern is not addressed as the flow of speaking and writing the sentences comes naturally, thus,

Examples:

<u>Akeanon</u>		<u>English Translation</u>
Bendisyunan ka it Diyos.	-	God bless you.
V S		S V
Maagi anay ako.	-	May I pass?
V S		S V
Nakakaon ka eon?	-	Have you eaten?
V S		S V

Observably, the structure of *Akeanon* sentences when given their English equivalents are reversed. The dialect expressions start with verbs and the subjects are placed last while their English equivalents follow the S-V pattern. Despite the inversion or reversal in word order, the meaning of the statement is not lost. As stated by Dela Cruz and Zorc (1968), in *Akeanon*, word order strikes a non-native speaker as being quite loose or free; however, definite and standard patterns are in place that speakers and writers need to follow to have their expressions understandable, with sense, and convey they mean.

4.2c. As to Affixation. As a process, affixation is used to create new words by adding the most commonly used prefixes or suffixes. Affixes are elements added to a root or base word to have another meaning or change the lexical meaning of words (Ahmadovich, Tulkinjonovna & Shodiyevich, 2023). They may be placed before (prefix), after (suffix), within (infix) or at both ends (circumfix or confix) of the stem.

Akeanon words used in ordinary conversations have plenty of these affixes.

Examples:

- (1) Gapanaw eon kita. (We are leaving now.)
- (2) Maagi anay ako? (May I pass?)
- (3) Matakuran mo ro kaaslumon it iba? (Could you take the tartness of bilimbi?)

In Example 1, “Gapanaw” is an affixed form of the root word “panaw” which may either mean “to leave” (verb) or “trip” or “travel” (noun), as in “Siin ing panaw?” (Where is your travel?). As it is, the word “gapanaw” means “is leaving now” which functions as a progressive verb. It has a prefix “Ga-“ that changes its form from the noun “panaw” (travel/trip) to a verb.

Notice that this statement has a connotation to “goodbye”, although when translated to *Akeanon*, “goodbye” may mean “mayad-ayad nga pagpanaw” (good voyage).

Example 2 shows that the *Akeanon* verb “maagi” (to pass) was affixed with “ma-“ from its base “agi” (way) which is a noun. With the affixation of the prefix “ma”, the term now expresses the courteous attitude among Aklanons.

The third example is an interrogative statement highlighting the *Akeanon* words “matakuran” (to take) which is an infinitive, and “kaaslumon” (tartness), which is an adjective. “Matakuran” is an affixed word with the circumfixes “ma-“ and “-an” to the root word “takod” (to take). These circumfixes are bound morphemes which when added to the base give the latter a new meaning. Likewise, “kaaslumon” is another affixed word with “aslum” as the base and “ka-“ and “-on” as circumfixes.

All *Akeanon* affixes added to the base or root words were observed to be derivational, and mostly circumfixes or confixes, which means that both the prefix and the suffix could be found in a word. In the study by Mataram (2017), he was able to identify three types of derivational and inflectional affixes present in the Menu-Meni dialect in Tebao of Sasak language, namely, prefix, suffix, and confix.

The affixation of derivational morphemes to free morphemes have changed the structure and interpretation of the word. This affirms the finding made by Tariq et al. (2020) where he found out that, indeed, the attachment of derivational morpheme to a free morpheme carried another meaning and eventually its word classification.

4.3 Morphological Variety of Common Akeanon Dialects

The morphological variety of the *Akeanon* language expressed in several territorial or geographical dialects could be observed in these sample statements:

Example 1:

Standard	:	Bendisyunan ka it Diyos.
<i>Buruangganon</i>	:	Bendisyunan ka it Diyos.
<i>Nabasnon</i>	:	Bendisyunan kaw it Diyos.
<i>Bukidnon</i>	:	Bendisyunan ka it Diyos./ Karuoyan kaw gid lang it Ginuo.

It is observed in Example 1 that the statement in the *standard Akeanon* is retained in the *Akeanon Buruangganon* and *Akeanon Bukidnon*. However, there was a change in the personal objective pronoun “ka” to “kaw” in *Akeanon Nabasnon*. It was further noted that Goyo and Tulio (2018) had recorded another variety of expressing the same statement in the *Akeanon Bukidnon* to “Karuoyan kaw gid lang it Ginuo”, which implicitly carries similar intention as the other expressions. “Bendisyunan” means “to bless” and “karuoyan” means “to pity”.

Example 2:

Standard	:	Pasensya, owa ko nahungda.
<i>Buruangganon</i>	:	Pasensya, bukon it hungod.
<i>Nabasnon</i>	:	Pasensya ako, owa ko ginhungod.
<i>Bukidnon</i>	:	Pasensya, owa ko nahungda.

In the foregoing examples, the *Akeanon* dialect variations which are translated as “I’m sorry; I don’t mean it” have similarities as spoken by people from different geographical areas in Aklan. The distinctive feature which marked the difference, however, was noted on the words “owa” and “bukon” which have a negative connotation and can be translated in English as “none” or “not”. The same was observed in the affixed word “hungod”, “nahungda” and “ginhungod” which means “intention”, “intentional”, and “intentionally”.

Notice that all dialect variations were spoken and written in inverted sentence order where the predicate comes before the subject.

5. Conclusion

The language spoken by a particular group of natives in a certain geographical location reflects their cultural background. Despite the morphological patterns and structures that differed as expressed in the dialect variations, their underlying meanings remain the same. The *Akeanon* dialect variations as documented by Goyo and Tulio in 2018 presents examples of common statements and words spoken and written by Aklanons from different geographical locations in the province of Aklan classified as *standard Akeanon*, *Akeanon Buruangganon*, *Akeanon Nabasnon*, and *Akeanon Bukidnon*.

These *Akeanon* statements reflect the social characteristics of its people. Words of endearment and assurance are observed in the way these are placed and spoken, and welcome greetings are candid and warm expressions of *Akeanon* being hospitable people.

There were commonalities observed among dialect variations in *Akeanon*, with very few differences in morphological structure in terms of affixation, word order, and variety in the choice of words.

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Although distinctions were noted in the words used, the intended meaning of these terms is implicitly conveyed when used in statements.

There were also observations of the infrequent use of reduplicants and connotations in *Akeanon* statements and dialects. This seem to imply that the language and its variation continue to be dynamic and evolving.

Since the *Akeanon* language and dialect variations are representative of the rich culture of the people in the province of Aklan, its preservation should be sustained considering the fast-paced conquest of modern technology, and the paradigm shift and transformation of traditional learning to digital platforms. The continued influx of modern communication in the community and the migration of the natives and tourists may lead to the decay and eventual extinction of the native tongue.

The implementation of the Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE) system in the Philippines must be strengthened and institutionalized to preserve the waning popularity of the native tongue. The contextualization of its learning and instructional materials, including the complementary resources needs to be well supported not only by the Department of Education but also by the local and national government agencies.

National government in charge on the preservation and promotion of the local culture, such as the national commissions on culture and arts, history, education, tourism, in partnership with their local counterparts in the local government and nongovernment organizations, must join hands in coming up with a sustainable program towards the protection and advancement of the local language and dialects.

The native *Aklanons* must continue using the language of their birth at home to encourage the younger generation to give value to it, and the practice of using it in all local communications and opportunities may be advanced to protect their identity and pride.

Finally, a thorough and more comprehensive study on the *Akeanon* language and its dialects is strongly recommended to expand the limited information and narrow the knowledge gap about this cultural concern.

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