A reexamination of the functions and classification of Hiligaynon and Tagalog numerals

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ABSTRACT

This study revisits the functions of numerals in Tagalog and Hiligaynon, challenging the conventional classification of numerals as adjectives. Through an analysis of different linguistic data drawn from actual native speakers and written text, it was observed that numerals in both languages primarily serve to express quantity, a function distinguishable from the descriptive role of canonical adjectives. Additionally, Tagalog and Hiligaynon numerals demonstrate syntactic behaviors that diverge from adjectives, particularly their absence in certain constructions, such as comparative constructions. The research also underscores the expanded semantic roles of numerals, such as *isa* in Tagalog and Hiligaynon, encompassing functions beyond mere quantification, including those related to unity, exclusivity, and singular action. These findings suggest that numerals operate within a distinct grammatical paradigm, warranting their categorization as a separate word class in both Tagalog and Hiligaynon.

INTRODUCTION

In the field of linguistic research, words are traditionally categorized based on criteria such as function and formal structure. According to Velupillai (2012), in all the world's languages, words can be classified into two main groups: open and closed word classes. Closed word classes consist of functional elements that serve grammatical roles, such as prepositions (e.g., *of*, *with*), conjunctions (e.g., *although*, *because*), pronouns (e.g., *it*, *we*), and determiners (e.g., *each*, *these*). These classes are considered closed because they are resistant to the introduction of new members, and their structure remains relatively stable over time. In contrast, open word classes are commonly lexical classes, also known as lexical categories or content words. These are characterized by their capacity to incorporate new members through processes such as derivation, borrowing, and other mechanisms of lexical expansion. For instance, nouns (e.g., *blockchain*, *hashtag*), verbs (e.g., *to stream*, *to crowdsource*), adjectives (e.g., *sustainable*, *algorithmic*), and adverbs (e.g., *virtually*, *globally*) exemplify open word classes, as they are dynamic and adapt to reflect societal, technological, and cultural changes. Languages typically have these four aforementioned open word classes. The following list provides a description of each of the mentioned open word classes:

Table 1. Four open word classes according to Velupillai (2012)

Word Class	Description
Noun	Refers to objects, people, and places. This word class also includes abstract concepts, such as emotions, ideas, and more.
Verb	Refers to actions, processes, and states.
Adjective	Typically refers to qualities, such as color, size, shape, and others.
Adverb	Generally describes other categories, except nouns.

A somewhat similar typification of words can be surmised in most studies describing Philippine languages (e.g., Constantino, 1965; Igno & Perez, 2018; Or, 2018).

It can be noted that in the abovementioned categorizations, numerals cannot be found. In classic studies of Philippine languages, numerals are commonly subsumed under the category of adjectives (e.g., Santos, 1939/2018; Schachter & Otanes, 1972) primarily due to their capacity to modify nouns. This classification is

also employed in the formal teaching of languages in schools. However, upon closer examination of the actual usage of numerals, significant differences between numerals and canonical adjectives become apparent.

The primary objective of the present study is to conduct a reexamination of Hiligaynon and Tagalog numerals in order to present a more nuanced analysis of their functions and form and to ascertain whether they can be classified as adjectives.

1.1. Methodology

To accomplish the objectives of the study, previous analyses of Tagalog and Hiligaynon numerals were revisited. Subsequently, descriptions of Tagalog and Hiligaynon numerals were made based on their various functions and forms, drawing primarily from news articles and short stories written in Tagalog and Hiligaynon. Additionally, three native Tagalog speakers from Balagtas, Bulacan, and three native Hiligaynon speakers from Talisay City, Negros Occidental, served as language consultants for this research.

The illustrative sentences for Tagalog included in this paper were sourced from the Leipzig Corpora Collection (Tagalog) and contributions from the Tagalog language consultants. For Hiligaynon, the sentences were obtained from Bombo Radyo Iloilo's news articles, Ma. Cecilia Locsin Nava's "Mga Sugilanon sang Negros," and input from the Hiligaynon language consultants.

1.2. Limitations of the Study

The main goal of this research is to reexamine the classification of numerals in Hiligaynon and Tagalog and provide a more detailed description of the various functions of these numerals. Consequently, other related topics such as the names of numerals, the origins of the numerals used, and the methods of counting were not covered. More in-depth discussions on these subjects can be found in the works of Constantino (1996) and Potet (1992).

PREVIOUS ANALYSES OF NUMERALS IN HILIGAYNON AND TAGALOG

Numerals play a fundamental role in language and are often discussed in works describing language grammar. One of the earliest comprehensive analyses of numerals in Philippine languages can be found in Blake's (1907) examination of the numerals used in various languages, including Tagalog, Bisayan (Cebuano, Hiligaynon, and Samaro-Leytean), Bikol, Pampangan, Pangasinan, Ilokano, Igorot (Nabaloi and Bontok), Ibanag, Batan, Maguindanao, Sulu, Bagobo, Kalamian, Samal, Manobo, Tagakaulo, Bilan, and Atas. Blake (ibid., pp. 199-200) categorized the numerals in these languages into six types: (1) cardinals – answering the question 'how many?'; (2) ordinals – answering the question 'which in order?'; (3) fractions – answering the question 'which part?'; (4) distributives – answering questions like 'how many at a time?' and 'how many each?'; (5) adverbs – answering the questions 'how often?' and 'at what time?'; and (6) restrictives – where the idea of 'only' is added to other numerals.

In a prior account from 1906, Blake noted that in most Philippine languages, when the indefinite article is not explicitly indicated by the nature of the construction, it is expressed by the numeral *isa* 'one'. Unlike numerals from *dalawa* 'two' upwards, isa appears to be derived from pronominal particles. However, this numeral is not inflected but expresses its case through an inflected word placed before it.

Santos' work (1939/2018) provides a fundamental analysis of numerals in Filipino.[1] Santos categorized numerals as adjectives and observed that numeral adjectives can be either definite or indefinite. The seven types of definite numeral adjectives are as follows: cardinal (*pátakaran*), ordinal (*pánunuran*), fractional (*pabahagi*), monetary (*pahalagá*), collective (*palansák*), ordinal with intervals (*patakdâ*), and temporal (*pamanahón*).

Similarly, Schachter and Otanes (1972) categorized numerals as adjectives. They noted that, like English, Tagalog distinguishes between cardinal numbers (i.e., numbers used in counting or expressing quantity, such as *isa*, *dalawa*, etc.) and ordinal numbers (i.e., numbers used in expressing order or rank, such as *una*, *pangalawa*, etc.). They identified various semantic contexts in which numbers are used, including addresses, dates, grade levels, measurements (e.g., age, money, percentage, length, time, volume, weight, and standard quantity), page numbers, and clock time. Besides cardinal and ordinal numbers, Schachter and Otanes identified

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[1] In the current study, the present grammars of Tagalog and Filipino are treated as one and the same.

other types of numerical expressions, such as distributive numerals, restrictive numerals, grouping numerals, indefinite numerals, and frequentative numerals (pp. 200-214).

A comprehensive analysis of the use of numerals in Filipino is also presented in Malicsi's (2013) work. While the primary focus of the first chapter of his book was not on numeral usage, Malicsi provided an insightful discussion on the function of numerals as predicates. According to Malicsi, numerals could be considered predicates, following the principle that an element in a sentence must first appear in its most basic construction, and they only became part of a noun phrase after undergoing the process of attribution (pp. 20-21).

In contrast to Tagalog, there is a notable paucity of studies investigating or addressing numerals in Hiligaynon. Some contributions in this area include research conducted by Motus (1971) and Wolfenden (1971).

Motus' (1971) work primarily served as a guide to learning the Hiligaynon language, covering fundamental lessons such as greetings, verb conjugation, and question formation. Although Motus did not dedicate a section specifically to numerals, she briefly addressed how to ask about quantities.

Wolfenden (1971), in his work, did not thoroughly discuss numerals in Hiligaynon either. He only mentioned them in his discussion of bases and provided a brief explanation of what he termed count phrases. Wolfenden classified count phrases as noun phrases, noting that they only appeared with numerals in the initial slot, followed by words representing countable objects in the post-particle slot.

It is evident from these literature on numerals in Tagalog and Hiligaynon that most analyses focus on basic categorizations rather than exploring the full range of their functions. While early works such as those by Blake (1906, 1907), Santos (1939/2018), and Schachter and Otanes (1972) provide foundational classifications, they largely treated numerals as an extension of adjectives, without fully addressing the complexities that distinguish numerals from other word classes. The relative scarcity of detailed studies on Hiligaynon, on the other hand, further highlights the need for a more nuanced approach.

FUNCTIONS OF HILIGAYNON AND TAGALOG NUMERALS

In her work detailing the practice and principles of writing a comprehensive description of a grammar, Aikhenvald (2015) proposes that the essential criteria for establishing word classes are the morphological structure and grammatical categories—whether they are obligatory or optional—that apply to each word class, and the syntactic functions of a member of this class. Therefore, in the following subsections, in addition to focusing on the functions of the numerals in Hiligaynon and Tagalog, their morphological structures are also discussed.

3.1. Cardinality

Numerals are most commonly described in terms of their role in quantifying or expressing amounts. In both Hiligaynon (HIL) and Tagalog (TGL), numerals primarily function as quantifiers, allowing speakers to indicate quantities or measure time, actions, or objects. This role can be observed in the following examples:

(1) *nag-suka*   *sang*   *maka-p<al>atay*   *nga*   *kalayo*   *sa*   *iya*   ***pito***   *ka*   *baba*   (HIL)

REAL.ITR-spew   GEN   IRR.ITR-<HAB>dead   LKR   fire   OBL   3SG.GEN   seven   NUM.LKR   mouth

'(The bakunawa) spewed deadly fire from its seven mouths.'

(2) *d<um>ating*   *at*   *l<um>ipas*   *ang*   ***anim***   *na*   *linggo*   (TGL)

<REAL.ITR>arrive   CONJ   <REAL.ITR>pass   NOM   six   LKR   week

'Six weeks came and passed.'

In both examples, numerals in their unaffixed forms serve the fundamental function of quantifying nouns, thereby demonstrating their typical use in expressing measurable concepts. In sentence (1), the numeral *pito* 'seven' acts as a quantifier for *baba* 'mouths', indicating the number of mouths from which the creature spews fire. Meanwhile, in sentence (2) the numeral *anim* 'six' functions as a quantifier specifying the number of weeks.

The numerals in both of the provided sentences function as quantifiers, yet they rely on distinct particles to link them to the nouns they modify. While seemingly simple, these linking particles offer insight into the structural differences between Tagalog and Hiligaynon.

The linker *na* in sentence (2) is used in *anim na linggo* to connect the numeral to the noun. In Tagalog, *na* (and its allomorphs =*ng* or =*g*) is a versatile linker not limited to numerals; it also connects other modifiers

to their respective nouns. For example, in the phrase *malaking bahay* 'big house', *=ng* functions in a similar way to link *malaki* 'big' to *bahay* 'house'. This highlights the flexibility of Tagalog's system of linkers, where *na*, *=ng*, and *=g* serve as multi-purpose grammatical tools across different word classes.

In contrast, Hiligaynon employs the particle *ka* in numeral constructions, as seen in *pito ka baba*. Unlike Tagalog's *na*, *ka* is highly specialized and appears in numeral contexts exclusively. It does not serve a broader function in linking adjectives or other types of modifiers.

3.2. Ordinality

The expression of order or sequence among entities and events often involves the use of numerals. In Tagalog, two affixes are employed to form ordinal numerals: *paN-* and *ika-*. According to Malicsi (2013), the affix *ika-* is used to form numerals that indicate position in a sequence.

(3)	***ika-(ta)tlo***	*ko*	*na=ng*		*liham*	*sa*	*iyo*	*ito*		(TGL)
	ORD-three	1SG.GEN	PRT.already=LKR		letter	OBL	2SG.GEN	PROX.DEM.NOM		

'This is already my third letter to you.'

Meanwhile, the affix *paN-* is used to form numerals that denote rank or hierarchical position within a system of valuation.

(4)	*k<in>a~kanta*		*ng*	***pang-(d)alawa=ng***	*pangulo*	*ang*	*kanta*	*niya*	(TGL)
	<REAL.TR>REDUP~sing		GEN	ORD-second=LKR	president	ABS	song	3SG.GEN	

'The vice president is singing his/her song.'

In the example above, the term *pangalawang pangulo* does not imply that the individual singing his/her song is the second president. Instead, *pangalawang pangulo* denotes the position of 'vice president,' which is directly subordinate to that of the president.

The affixes *ika-* and *paN-* are also used in the formation of ordinal numerals in the Hiligaynon language, demonstrating a shared linguistic feature across these two Philippine languages:

(5)	*ini*		*na*		*ang*	***ika-duha***	*nga*	*tuig*	*nga*	*sirado*	*ang*	*mga*	*patyo*	(HIL)
	PROX.DEM.NOM		PRT.already		NOM	ORD-second	LKR	year	LKR	closed	NOM	PL	cemetery	

'This is the second year that the cemeteries are closed.'

(6)	***paN-apat***	*ini*		*sa*	*anom*	*ka*		*mga*	*mag utod*	(HIL)
	ORD-four	PROX.DEM.NOM		OBL	six	NUM.LKR		PL	RECIP<PL>sibling	

'This is the fourth of six siblings.'

The prefixes *ika-* and *paN-* in both Tagalog and Hiligaynon exemplify a structural parallelism in the expression of ordinal relations within these languages. The prefix *ika-* serves to emphasize progression in a temporal or ordinal context, as illustrated by examples that denote the passage of time, such as *ikalawang taon* 'second year'. Conversely, *paN-* functions more broadly to indicate relational rank or position within a set, as demonstrated in sentence (6). However, it is important to note that, in certain contexts, native speakers of the two languages may use the *ika-*form and *pan-*form interchangeably.

3.3. Distributivity

In both Tagalog and Hiligaynon, numerals function not only as tools for counting and establishing ordinal sequences but also as mechanisms for expressing distributive functions—specifically, the allocation of quantities among units or individuals. Distributive numerals address questions such as "How many at a time?" or "How many for each?"

In Tagalog, the prefix *tig-* is employed to construct distributive numerals. This prefix signifies that quantities are equitably distributed among a designated group of recipients. For instance, in the illustrative example below, *tig-isa* denotes that there is one copy of each of the two books referenced.

(7)

i-s<in>ingit	niya	ang	**tig-isa=ng**	kopya	ng	dalawa=ng	libro=ng	ito	(TGL)
TR-<REAL>insert	3SG.GEN	NOM	DISTR-one=LKR	copy	GEN	two=LKR	book=LKR	PROX.DEM.NOM	

'He inserted one copy of each of these two books'

Santos (1939/2018) identified two additional affixes used in forming distributive numerals. The prefix *ka-* is used to convey the concept of partitioning specific portions from a whole, while the affix *maN-* functions similar to the affix *tig-*. Although these affixes can still be found in literary texts and dictionaries, they have largely diminished in everyday usage. Consequently, contemporary speakers tend to favor their English counterparts in routine discourse.

Meanwhile, in Hiligaynon, the prefix *tag-* serves a function analogous to that of the prefix *tig-* in Tagalog. The example provided below illustrates the application of the distributive prefix *tag-* in Hiligaynon. The word *tag-10* translates to 'ten each', while *tag-walo* means 'eight each'.

(8)

ini	ka-angay	na	lang	sang	mga	kaso	nga	**tag-10**	ukon
PROX.DEM.NOM	STEM1-according	PRT.already	PRT.only	GEN	PL	case	LKR	DISTR-10	CONJ

tag-walo	sa	isa	ka	balay	ang	naga-positibo	sa	COVID-19	(HIL)
DISTR-eight	OBL	one	NUM.LKR	house	NOM	REAL.ITR-positive	OBL	COVID-19	

'This is now based only on cases where ten or eight individuals tested positive for COVID-19 in a single household.'

In his 1971 analysis, Wolfenden asserted that the prefixes *tig-* and *tag-* are interchangeable, both conveying the meanings of 'characterized by' and 'season of'. He further observed that contemporary younger generations frequently interchange these prefixes in usage.

3.4. Valuation

There exists a significant similarity between the functions of valuation numerals and distributive numerals in Tagalog. The primary distinction of valuation numerals is that they are used to equate a value (typically in currency) with the described object. Both categories utilize the prefixes *maN-* and *tig-* to form their respective numerals. However, contemporary usage reveals that the prefix *maN-* is predominantly associated with the term *mamiso*, which translates to 'one peso each'. In contrast, the prefix *tig-* continues to be employed in conjunction with a broader range of numerical values.

(9)

b<um>ili	ang	lalaki	ng	**maN-(p)iso=ng**	kendi
<REAL.TR>buy	NOM	man	GEN	VAL-peso=LKR	candy

'The man bought a candy that costs one peso each.'

(10)

mga	bata=ng	anghel	na	naN-ha~hatak	ng	mga	dayuhan=g	puti	para
PL	child=LKR	angel	REL	REAL.ITR-REDUP~pull	GEN	PL	foreigner=LKR	white	PREP

pa-bil(i)-ʰin	ng	**tig-pi~piso**	nila=ng	barbekyu
CAUS-buy-IRR.TR	GEN	VAL-REDUP~peso	3PL.GEN=LKR	barbecue

'Young angels pulling white foreigners to buy their one-peso barbecues'

In Hiligaynon, the prefix *tag-* is also used to form valuation numerals. Consider sentence (11) as an illustration.

(11)

ga-baligya	sila	sang	**tag-lima**	ka	piso	nga	tsokolate	(HIL)
REAL.ITR-sell	3PL.NOM	GEN	VAL-five	NUM.LKR	peso	LKR	chocolate	

'They sell five-peso chocolate.'

3.5. Collectivity

In Tagalog, collective numerals serve to denote quantities that are understood as groups, batches, or collections, thus emphasizing concepts of multiplicity, singularity of occurrence, or clustering. There are two primary forms for expressing collective numerals.

The first form employs reduplication of the base numeral. This structure can be represented as $\sigma_1\sigma_2$redup + base numeral, and it conveys the notion of actions being performed by groups or clusters. Furthermore, this form can imply that a specific number of participants is engaged in the action, thereby accentuating the collective nature of the activity rather than the individual units involved.

(12) | *mga* | *bahagi* | *ng* | *katawan* | *niya* | *na* | **isa~isa=ng** | | *s\<um\>u~suko* | (TGL) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| PL | part | GEN | body | 3SG.GEN | REL | REDUP~one=LKR | | \<REAL.ITR\>REDUP~give up | |

'Parts of his/her body that are giving up one by one.'

A similar strategy can also be observed in Hiligaynon, where reduplication of the base numeral is also used to express collectivity. Forms such as *duha-duha* 'in twos' and *lima-lima* 'in fives' highlight the grouping of entities or actions into sets.

Meanwhile, the second form adds the suffix *-(h)an* to the numeral. This construction conveys a meaning similar to that of the first form.

(13) | **dalawa-ʰan** | *lang* | *ang* | *pag-pasok* | *sa* | *pinto* | (TGL) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| two-COLL | PRT.only | NOM | STEM2-enter | OBL | door | |

'Entering through the door is limited to two people at a time.'

3.6. Definiteness or Limitation

There also exist numeral forms in Tagalog and Hiligaynon that denote precise quantities, implying that there is no variation in amount, whether in surplus or deficiency. This definiteness conveys a certain intentionality behind the speaker's action or counting, emphasizing specific quantities within the discourse.

In Tagalog, these numerals manifest in three primary morphological structures, each conveying specificity with nuanced tonal or functional differences. The C_1V_1-redup + numeral form (e.g., *iisa*, *dadalawa*) not only specifies an exact count but also enhances the reference of the numeral, adding an evaluative dimension that may imply scarcity or a particularly limited set. For instance:

(14) | **da~dalawa** | *ang* | *ba~bagal~bagal* | | *pa=ng* | *mga* | *waiter* | (TGL) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| REDUP~two | NOM | REDUP~slowness~REDUP | | PRT.also=LKR | PL | waiter | |

'Only two, that are also slow, waiters are present.'

In this example, *dadalawa* underscores the restricted number of waiters, with the reduplication intensifying the focus and often suggesting a critical undertone.

The second morphological form involves the base numeral combined with the suffix *-(h)in* (e.g., *dalawahin*), which targets a specific, achievable quantity. This construction expresses actions in which a defined amount is sought as an intended outcome. It is also commonly employed with the prefix *pag-*, signaling a particular target in imperative contexts. The imperative usage is inherently exactive, indicating that the action should achieve or replicate a precise result.

(15) | **dalawa-ʰin** | *mo* | *ang* | *balot* | *ng* | *tinapay* | (TGL) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| two-IRR.TR | 2SG.GEN | NOM | packaging | GEN | bread | |

'Double the packaging of the bread.'

(16) | *ito* | *ay* | *batay* | *na* | *rin* | *sa* | **p\<in\>ag-isa=ng** | *ulat* | *ng* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| PROX.DEM.NOM | INV | based | PRT.already | PRT.also | OBL | \<REAL.TR\>STEM2-one=LKR | report | GEN |

Philippine National Police (PNP)		*kahapon*	(TGL)
Philippine National Police (PNP)		yesterday	

'This is also based already on the consolidated report of the Philippine National Police (PNP) yesterday.'

The final form is the reduplicated C_1V_1 + numeral base + *-(h)in*. According to Santos (1939/2018), it conveys exact amounts with the connotation of nothing more, nothing less. The usage of this construction has

become functionally restricted in contemporary Tagalog, predominantly occurring within monetary contexts (e.g., *pipisuhin*, *lilibuhin*).

In Hiligaynon, these kinds of numerals are streamlined into a singular form: base numeral + *-(h)on*. However, if the construction is imperative, the suffix *-(h)on* is replaced with *-(h)a*. This is exemplified in the following sentences:

(17) **duwa-ʰon**   ko   na   ang   i-hatag   ko   sa   imo   (HIL)

two-IRR.TR   1SG.GEN   PRT.already   NOM   IRR.TR-give   1SG.GEN   OBL   2SG.GEN

'I will make what I will give you twice as much.'

(18) **duwa-ʰa**   na   ang   i-hatag   mo   sa   akon   (HIL)

two-IRR.TR   PRT.already   NOM   IRR.TR-give   2SG.GEN   OBL   1SG.GEN

'Make what you will give me twice as much.'

This structure allows Hiligaynon to maintain a concise representation of exact quantities across diverse contexts, adapting morphologically for imperative functions without the addition of further complexity.

THE PECULIAR CASE OF *ISA*

In addition to the previously mentioned functions of numerals in Hiligaynon and Tagalog, the numeral *isa* 'one' is found to exhibit a range of functions that extend beyond its core numerical meaning. Through various morphological constructions, *isa* serves not only to quantify but also to articulate intricate concepts of indefiniteness, unity, consensus, singular action, and exclusivity.

4.1.   Indefiniteness

As noted by Blake (1906), the term for one in Philippine languages serves a significant role as an indefinite article. This function of *isa* is illustrated in the following example sentences from Tagalog and Hiligaynon:

(19) *nag-ta~trabaho*   *raw*   *siya*   *noon*   *sa*   **isa=ng**   *canteen*   (TGL)

ITR.REAL-REDUP~work   PRT.reportedly   3SG.NOM   OBL   one=LKR   canteen

'He/she was said to be working in a canteen back then.'

(20) *nag-ta~trabaho*   *raw*   *siya*   *noon*   *sa*   *canteen*   (TGL)

ITR.REAL-REDUP~work   PRT.reportedly   3SG.NOM   noon   OBL   canteen

'He/she was said to be working in the canteen back then.'

It is evident from sentence (19) that the inclusion of *isa* introduces an element of indefiniteness, as it does not specify which canteen the subject is working at. In contrast, example (20) demonstrates that the absence of *isa* suggests a more definite reference, indicating that a specific canteen is recognized by both the speaker and the listener. A similar observation can be made in sentences (21) and (22).

(21) *diri*   *naga-puyo*   *ang*   **isa**   *ka*   *dalaga*   *nga*   *taw(a)g-on*   *ta*   *nga*   *Ana*   (HIL)

PROX.DEM.OBL   REAL.ITR.live   NOM   one   NUM.LKR   lady   LKR   call-IRR.TR   1PL.INCL.GEN   LKR   Ana

'Here lives a lady whom we will call Ana.'

(22) *diri*   *naga-puyo*   *ang*   *dalaga*   *nga*   *taw(a)g-on*   *ta*   *nga*   *Ana*   (HIL)

PROX.DEM.OBL   REAL.ITR.live   NOM   lady   LKR   call-IRR.TR   1PL.INCL.GEN   LKR   Ana

'Here lives the lady whom we will call Ana.'

In (21), the inclusion of *isa* modifies *dalaga* 'lady' and conveys an indefinite reference. In contrast, in (22), *dalaga* is presented without *isa*, implying that the subject is a specific entity familiar to both interlocutors. This comparison further illustrates the capability of *isa* to delineate between indefinite and definite references in discourse.

4.2.   Unity and Singular Action

In Tagalog, the base *isa*, when combined with the affixes *m/nag-* and *ka-*, signifies that multiple entities have come together to form a single, unified whole. In the following example, *isa* transcends its numerical meaning

to express a shared stance or purpose. This construction underscores the transition from plurality (individual people) to singularity (a unified cause).

(23) **nag-ka-isa**   ang   klase   sa   pag-ha~handa   (TGL)

REAL.TR-STEM1-one   NOM   class   OBL   STEM2-REDUP~prepare

'The class united in preparing.'

Similarly, in Hiligaynon, the term *isa* also conveys the concepts of unity and togetherness. When combined with the nominalizing affix *pag-*, it forms the word *pag-isa*, which translates to 'unity'.

Another related use of *isa* can be found in the word *pinagkaisahan* in Tagalog. *Pinagkaisahan* uses the affixes *pag-*, *-in-*, *ka-*, and *-han*, and expresses a collective action directed toward an individual or group. *Isa* here signifies the idea of a singular, unified force coming together with consensus, but in opposition, as in

(24) **p<in>ag-ka-isa-han**   siya   ng   kanya=ng   mga   kaibigan   (TGL)

STEM2<REAL>STEM1-one-TR   3SG.NOM   GEN   3SG.GEN=LKR   PL   friend

'His friends united against him.'

Here, the action is singular in focus but collective in execution.

The terms *pinagkaisahan* and *m/nagkaisa* may exhibit superficial similarities; however, it is crucial to recognize that *pinagkaisahan* generally carries a more negative connotation in contrast to *magkaisa*, *nagkaisa*, or Hiligaynon's *pag-isa*. The latter terms embody more affirmative notions of unity and collaboration.

4.3. Uniqueness and Isolation

The numeral *isa* in both Hiligaynon and Tagalog may function as a linguistic marker for both uniqueness and solitude. In Tagalog, *isa* can appear in the reduplicated form *m/n/pag-iisa*, which expresses the idea of being alone or unmatched. For example, in the sentence:

(25) ang   **nag-i~isa**   ko=ng   walo=ng   taon=(n)g   gulang   na   munti=ng   dalaga   (TGL)

NOM   REAL.ITR-REDUP~one   1SG.GEN=LKR   eight=LKR   year=LKR   age   REL   little=LKR   lady

'My only eight-year-old little lady.'

The term *nag-iisa* signifies that the eight-year-old girl is the sole child of the speaker, thereby highlighting her exclusivity and singular status.

Likewise, in Hiligaynon, *isa* may be employed in the form *isahanon, nag-isahanon,* or *nagaisahanon*, which articulates the notion of being alone and underscores a state of isolation. For example:

(26) antes   nila   siya   gin-bilin   nga   **naga-isa-hanon**   sa   bukid   (HIL)

PREP.before   3PL.GEN   3SG.NOM   REAL.TR-leave   LKR   IRR-one-STAT   OBL   mountain

'Before they left him alone in the mountain.'

The word *nagaisahanon* in sentence (26) indicates that the individual was left alone, emphasizing the absence of any companions.

The same forms may also be used to express that something is unmatched, like what is illustrated in the following example:

(27) **isa-ʰanon**   lamang   ang   *Golden State Warriors*   nga   wala   sang   na-angkon

one-STAT   PRT.only   NOM   Golden State Warriors   LKR   NEG   LKR   REAL.TR-get

nga   ka-lutus-an   (HIL)

LKR   STEM1-loss-NMLZ

'The Golden State Warriors are the only ones that did not get any loss.'

4.4. Deception

In certain contexts, the term *isa* extends beyond its literal meaning to metaphorically characterize instances of deception or one-upmanship, as exemplified by the verb *m/naisahan* in both Tagalog and Hiligaynon. In this

figurative usage, *isa* signifies situations in which an individual has been outwitted or deceived. The subsequent examples illustrate this particular function of *isa*:

(28) **na-isa-ʰan**   *na*   *sila*   *ng*   *senador*   *na*   *ito*   (TGL)

REAL-one-TR   PRT.already   3PL.NOM   GEN   senator   LKR   PROX.DEM.NOM

'They were already outwitted by the senator.'

(29) **na-isa-ʰan**   *ka*   *sang*   *bata*   (HIL)

REAL-one-TR   2SG.NOM   GEN   child

'You were outwitted by a child.'

4.5.   Singular Acts or Instances

Tagalog also employs *isa* to signify a one-time or singular action, often in idiomatic or euphemistic contexts. For instance, the verb *nakaisa* denotes a singular successful act, typically within the idea of sexual or intimate interactions. Unlike other instances where the abilitative morpheme *naka-* combines with numerals to indicate multiple successful actions, as in *nakasampu*, *nakaisa* is distinct in its strong euphemistic usage. While *naka-sampu* and similar constructions are commonly attested in daily interactions to directly express the number of times an action was achieved, *nakaisa* carries a more figurative meaning, emphasizing not just completion but also the social implications of the act.

(30) **naka-isa**   *ang*   *binata*   *sa*   *dalaga*   *kagabi*   (TGL)

REAL.ITR-one   NOM   young man   OBL   lady   last night

'The young man was able to do it (once) with the lady last night.'

Similarly, the term *paisa*, which means 'to allow someone to perform an action once,' embodies concepts of permission and allowance, particularly within sexual contexts. In this instance, *isa* highlights the idea of a singular action, emphasizing the exclusivity and constraints associated with the act by indicating that it is limited to a single occurrence.

4.6.   Reciprocity

The numeral *isa* is also used to express reciprocal action in both Tagalog and Hiligaynon, as seen in examples (31) and (32) below. In this usage, *isa* connotes a mutual or shared action, often translated as 'each other' in English. This function of *isa* indicates a bidirectional or shared relationship between entities.

(31) *hindi*   *pa*   *rin*   *kami*   *na-pa~pagod*   *o*   *nag-sa~sawa*

NEG   PRT.still   PRT.also   1PL.EXCL.NOM   REAL.ITR-REDUP~tiredness   CONJ   REAL.ITR-REDUP~boredom

sa   **isa=(a)t**   **isa**   (TGL)

OBL   one=CONJ   one

'We are still not tired or bored with each other.'

In example (31), *isa't isa* functions as a reciprocal pronoun, showing that the two people referred to as *kami* performed a mutual action toward one another.

In Hiligaynon, *isa kag isa* functions similarly to *isa't isa* in Tagalog, indicating mutual or reciprocal action. This construction also conveys a bidirectional action, where *isa* serves as a component of reciprocity.

(32) *palangga-a*   *niyo*   *ang*   **isa**   **kag**   **isa**   (HIL)

love-IRR.TR   2PL.GEN   NOM   one   CONJ   one

'Love each other.'

DIVERGENCE OF NUMERALS AND ADJECTIVES

In Tagalog and Hiligaynon, numerals exhibit distinct grammatical behaviors and functions that set them apart from canonical adjectives, reflecting differences in both syntax and semantic scope. While numerals like *dalawa* 'two' and *sampu* 'ten' serve to quantify entities, adjectives such as *malaki* 'big' and *maganda* 'beautiful' typically express qualitative attributes. This difference is evident when examining how each type of word interacts with nouns, as well as the restrictions in comparative and descriptive constructions.

In a simple construction such as (33), the numeral *dalawa* specifies the number of plants, indicating quantity without providing additional descriptive information:

(33) **dalawa** *ang* *t<in>anim* *ko=ng* *halaman* (TGL)

two NOM <REAL.TR>plant 1SG.GEN=LKR plant

'The plants that I planted are two.'

Here, *dalawa* functions grammatically to indicate the quantity of the noun *halaman* 'plant'. Replacing *dalawa* with an adjective such as *malaki* 'big' results in a syntactically correct sentence, but the change from numeral to adjective fundamentally alters the meaning of the sentence, as in example (34):

(34) **ma-laki** *ang* *t<in>anim* *ko=ng* *halaman* (TGL)

STAT-size NOM <REAL.TR>plant 1SG.GEN=LKR plant

'The plants that I planted are big.'

In this example, *malaki* 'big' provides a qualitative description of the *halaman*, specifying its size rather than its quantity. Thus, while both numerals and adjectives are grammatically acceptable in this sentence structure, they serve distinctly different functions: numerals quantify, while adjectives qualify.

The same contrast can be observed in the following examples from Hiligaynon:

(35) **tatlo** *ang* *kan-on* *ko* *nga* *paho* (HIL)

three NOM eat-IRR.TR 1SG.GEN LKR mango

'The mangoes that I will eat are three.'

(36) **namit** *ang* *kan-on* *ko* *nga* *paho* (HIL)

delicious NOM eat-IRR.TR 1SG.GEN LKR mango

'The mangoes that I will eat are delicious.'

In the provided examples, it is important to note that despite the adjective used in sentence (36) being monomorphemic, unlike the adjective in sentence (34), the differences observed in the pairs of sentences (33) and (34), as well as (35) and (36), remain consistent.

The distinction between the syntactic behaviors of numerals and adjectives becomes even more apparent in comparative and superlative constructions, where only adjectives can be grammatically used. In example (37), *maganda* 'beautiful' is used in a comparative structure, expressing a qualitative comparison:

(37) *mas* **ma-ganda** *ako* *sa* *kanya* (TGL)

more STAT-ganda 1SG.NOM OBL 3SG.GEN

'I am more beautiful than him/her.'

(38) *mas* **sampu** *ako* *sa* *kanya* (TGL)

more ten 1SG.NOM OBL 3SG.GEN

'*I am more ten than him/her.'

The ungrammaticality of (38) highlights that numerals in Tagalog do not operate under the same syntactic or semantic rules as adjectives. While adjectives can easily be used in comparative structures, numerals cannot. This is because numerals specify quantity rather than describe quality, which makes them incompatible with the requirements for comparisons based on qualitative attributes.

It is also observed that common affixes used in forming adjectives in these languages—such as the Tagalog *ma-* for stative qualities (e.g., *maganda* 'beautiful')—are notably absent in numeral constructions. In Hiligaynon, affixes like *ka-* commonly form adjectives or adjectival expressions, yet these are not applied to numerals. This absence of affixation with numerals across both languages suggests that, structurally, numerals do not conform to the morphological patterns typical of adjectives, aligning instead with a distinct word class. Consequently, the data support a categorization of numerals as inherently quantitative, lacking the morphological flexibility required for qualitative description. This reinforces their functional distinction and

further separates their syntactic and morphological roles from those of canonical adjectives in Tagalog and Hiligaynon.

CONCLUSION

In the extensive history of linguistic research in the Philippines, the description of numerals has been the subject of several studies. However, a critical reassessment of prior analyses and an examination of contemporary usage reveal notable discrepancies in these earlier characterizations. This study investigated the diverse functions and forms of numerals in both Tagalog and Hiligaynon, demonstrating that, despite some superficial similarities to canonical adjectives, the inherent characteristics of numerals cannot be appropriately categorized within the framework of specific parts of speech, such as adjectives.

Moreover, this research has identified several significant challenges associated with the classification of numerals as adjectives. For instance, numerals cannot be affixed with common prefixes used for adjectives, such as *ma- napaka-*, nor are they utilized in comparative and superlative constructions. These syntactic behaviors highlight the distinct nature of numerals and further differentiate them from adjectives.

Based on the findings of this investigation, the researcher seeks to reinforce Malicsi's (2013) proposition that numerals in Tagalog are distinct from adjectives, a conclusion that extends to numerals in Hiligaynon as well. Furthermore, this paper advocates for recognizing numerals as constituting their own distinct word class, thereby enriching the understanding of their syntactic and semantic functions.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The present study acknowledges several limitations, particularly in its scope of data and its exclusive focus on the Hiligaynon and Tagalog languages. To address these issues and expand upon the current findings, several recommendations are suggested for future research.

First, developing a larger corpus and recruiting additional language consultants would yield a more comprehensive and reliable data set. This is especially critical for the Hiligaynon language, where the current study identified notable data constraints.

Furthermore, the inclusion of other Philippine languages in future analyses could significantly advance the discourse on word classification within Philippine linguistics. Such cross-linguistic comparisons have the potential to reveal broader patterns and distinctions that will enhance the theoretical frameworks surrounding numerals and parts of speech in these languages.

Additionally, the findings of this study highlight the need for further inquiry into the nature of adjectives in Hiligaynon and Tagalog. For instance, the behavior of non-gradable adjectives like *patay* 'dead' in Tagalog and *busong* 'pregnant' in Hiligaynon, which cannot be used in comparative and superlative constructions, challenges the traditional boundaries of what constitutes an adjective in these languages. This raises critical questions about whether non-gradable lexical items should be categorized separately and whether a unified category of adjectives truly does exist in Hiligaynon and Tagalog. Future research should explore these issues to better understand the syntactic and semantic behaviors of adjectives and other word classes in Philippine languages.

By addressing these identified limitations and pursuing these new lines of inquiry, subsequent research can contribute to a more holistic understanding of numerals, adjectives, and parts of speech across diverse linguistic contexts. Such efforts will ultimately enrich both theoretical insights and practical applications within the field of Philippine language studies.

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APPENDIX
List of Abbreviations

1 – First Person

2 – Second Person

3 – Third Person

CAUS – Causative

COLL – Collective

DEM – Demonstrative

DIST – Distal

DISTR – Distributive

GEN – Genitive

HAB – Habitual

IMP – Imperative

IRR – Irrealis

ITR – Intransitive

LKR – Linker

NEG – Negative

NOM – Nominative

NMLZ – Nominalizer

OBL – Oblique

PL – Plural

PROX – Proximal

PREP – Preposition

PRT – Particle

REAL – Realis

RECIP – Reciprocal

REDUP – Reduplication

REL – Relative

SG – Singular

STAT – Stative

STEM1 – ka –

STEM2 – pag –

TR – Transitive

VAL – Valuative