

FILIPINO DIALECT TRANSLATOR: AN APPLICATION FOR LANGUAGE LEARNING AND REGIONAL CONNECTIVITY

ABSTRACT

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The Philippines is home to over 180 dialects, creating linguistic barriers that hinder education, communication, and cultural integration. While the Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE) program aims to bridge these gaps, its implementation faces challenges, particularly due to educators' limited fluency in multiple dialects. To address this issue, the study introduces the Filipino Dialect Translator, a web-based application designed to support language learning and promote regional inclusivity. The application integrates speech-to-text, text-to-speech, and AI-powered dialect translation to facilitate more effective and accessible communication across dialects. This research assesses the application's acceptability in terms of user interface design, translation accuracy, ease of use, functionality, and visual presentation. This study adopted a descriptive research design and employed purposive sampling to select ten qualified respondents, comprising five Information Technology (IT) professionals and five Filipino language educators. A validated survey questionnaire was utilized to assess the level of acceptability of the Filipino Dialect Translator application. Data were systematically analyzed using frequency, percentage, and weighted mean to interpret the responses, while an independent samples t-test was conducted to determine whether significant differences existed between the evaluations of the two respondent groups. The Filipino Dialect Translator application was evaluated as "Acceptable," with an overall weighted mean score of 2.65. Ratings from IT experts averaged 2.77, slightly higher than the 2.54 mean score given by Filipino language teachers. Among the five evaluation criteria, the highest rating was recorded for user interface (2.94), followed by ease of use (2.68), translation accuracy (2.66), presentation (2.52), and functionality (2.46). Results from an independent samples t-test revealed no statistically significant difference between the two groups' assessments ($t_{\text{computed}} = 1.297$, $t_{\text{critical}} = 2.306$). While the overall evaluation was positive, respondents cited notable issues, including inaccurate or inconsistent translations, loss of contextual meaning, and challenges in translating specialized or technical terms. Based on these findings, the study recommends: (1) incorporating native speaker contributions to improve linguistic accuracy; (2) enhancing context-aware translation algorithms; (3) refining system functionality; and (4) improving the user interface to ensure a more intuitive and user-friendly experience. The findings reveal that the Filipino Dialect Translator application is generally perceived as acceptable by both IT experts and Filipino language educators, particularly in terms of its user interface and overall usability. Nonetheless, concerns remain regarding the accuracy and contextual relevance of translations, indicating areas that require further development. The consistent evaluations from both groups underscore the application's potential for cross-disciplinary application and educational value. To enhance its functionality and impact on language learning and regional communication, the study recommends the integration of native speaker contributions, optimization of system performance, and the inclusion of culturally sensitive and context-aware translation features.

RECOMMENDED CITATION

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