

From oral to written form: Formulating conventions for Dayunday transcription

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Abstract

The practice of Dayunday as a Maguindanaon* courtship song has existed for centuries. However, it has not received any linguistic investigation. This seminal study aims to address this gap by examining the linguistic features of Dayunday to develop its transcription conventions. In doing so, we hope that the findings of this study may serve as a future reference for Dayunday. To pursue the understudy, a collection of existing videos available on public domain websites were downloaded and prepared for transcription. However, various problems emerged during transcription, mainly since bayuk* phrasings and extemporaneous verses characterize Dayunday. Although the language used in Dayunday is akin to the transcribers, the familiarity of words, clarity of speech, and speech rate have posed severe challenges. To address these challenges, we tried ways to investigate deeper and offer possible transcription conventions which may pave the way for future research projects.

Keywords: problems in data collection, transcription conventions, dayunday

1. Introduction

Taking accounts of spoken language requires an arduous process of transcription without sacrificing accuracy. A thorough understanding of the piece only occurs when it is transcribed and analyzed. Such as the case of Dayunday, a form of staged singing duel practiced by the Maguindanaon tribe in Southern Philippines. Although widely practiced and accepted, there has been an absence of a linguistic description and academic investigation. As lamented by Juanmarti (1905), *Magindanaw* is less known due to the limited manuscripts available and the incorrectness of those existing ones. In addition, Dayunday is observed to have complex linguistic characteristics, making it impossible to establish its grammatical system. Addressing these issues, the present study anchored the preservation of the said practice through a linguistic investigation of Dayunday which will be the benchmark of future research projects.

Maguindanaon songs have a unique history developing from folk songs into political, revolutionary ones. Some of them emerged during the time of repression and violence against separatists (Talusán, 2010). Other popularized songs were hybrid, taking American styles and Maguindanaon expressions to indicate aspirations and Islamic renewal. One of these songs is Dayunday which has emerged concurrently with other song genres. It is sung for different purposes, such as political rallies and parties on the eve of a person's voyage. Besides these purposes, the primary function of Dayunday is for entertainment on the eve of a traditional wedding ceremony.

Although it is widely practiced, it has not received acceptance among religious groups specifically conservative leaders who consider it *haram* (forbidden). Given these constraints, we aspire to preserve a long decade of practice through a linguistic description of Dayunday. We consider our study seminal as it is the first in investigating the linguistic features of Dayunday which offer methodological and analytic insights.

Dayunday is chanted and thus considered a spoken language. As a spoken language, it needs to be transcribed before it is subjected to linguistic analysis. The transcription of spoken language is important as it allows linguistic description and examination of issues embedded in it. Transcription requires careful consideration, specifically on its process. In documenting children's language behavior, Ochs (1979) argued that the transcript should reflect the researchers' interest which opposes Du Bois et al., (1993) who call for a standardized system of conventions for transcription. Transcripts should present a set of symbols and formats as they influence the analysis and the generalizations made. One transcription system for oral language was the Jeffersonian Transcription System (Sacks, Schegloff & Jefferson, 1974). It presents a highly detailed system of transcription convention which is useful for documenting adult conversations. It is in this line that we aim to establish conventions that can be utilized for transcribing oral songs.

2. Literature review

This section discusses the history of the Maguindanaon people from the Maguindanao Province on the southern island of the Philippines. They popularize and continuously practice Dayunday performance despite being opposed by religious leaders.

2.1 Describing Dayunday

Dayunday is a romantic song of duels between men and women. It is sung in an archaic upriver dialect accompanied by modern guitars. Originally, Dayunday is performed as part of wedding entertainment. It is a sacred practice that has become a pre-requisite before getting married. As time went by, Dayunday was utilized by politicians in Cotabato City to attract people to their rallies during post-martial law elections (McKenna, 1998). Traditionally though, Dayunday is between a man and a woman; however, changes have been observed as the latter is now able to express their interest in a man. Many Maguindanaon people enjoy watching Dayunday. Although it is incomprehensible for some, the performers execute gestures that entertain people. Aside from weddings, Dayunday is also performed on other occasions like Despedida of someone who is going overseas and towns' founding anniversaries. The rarest version of Dayunday has religious content to justify its acceptability to the religious leaders.

Since Dayunday is practically a ballad song, it uses figurative language, adding to its complex meaning. It uses artistic lyrics that are attractive to the audience. Usually, the verses are in pairs, but both have the same thought. Those verses and utterances are not used in daily conversations, which makes them hard to understand.

2.2 Magindanawn orthography

Magindanawn orthography is a work in progress. Its first version is as old as the implementation of Mother Tongue Based Multilingual Education in the Philippines way back in 2009 (Philippines Department of Education, 2009 & 2012). Its latest version was in 2019, which modified the writing and spelling systems, particularly the use of **I** and **y** to represent the sound [i], e.g., *matia* (to read), which is spelled in the latest version as *matya*.

There are only four (4) vowel sounds in the Magindanawn orthography represented by the vowel letters *a, i, u,* and *e*. The original consonant sounds of the Magindanawn words include *b, k, d, g, l, m, n, ng, p, s, t, w,* and *y*. However, scientific and technical terms remain in their original language for borrowed words like proper nouns. So, the English alphabet's remaining consonants and vowel sounds are also part of the Magindanawn alphabet classified as borrowed letters. These are *c, f, h, j, ñ, q, r, v, x, z,* and *o*.

With regards to structure, the Magindanawn language is influenced by many languages in the Philippines with a touch of Arabic. Its syntax, particularly the order of subject and predicate, is similar to Filipino.

For example:

Ukai ka i malita ku a nan sa lantay a.
 “Buksan mo ang maleta kong nandiyan sa sahig.”

The verb *ukai* (Magindanawn) “buksan” (Filipino), which mean “open” in English came before the subject *ka* (Magindanawn) “mo” (Filipino), which means “you” in English. The rest of the words in the sentences are placed in the same order in both languages. Unlike in English, the subject *you* comes before the verb, *open*. Apart from the slight modification of its spelling system, Magindanawn orthography is continuously being improved in terms of naming the different word groups. For instance, noun as *ngalan*, verb as *galebekan*, and adjective as *tandingan*. Other parts of speech must be named, and this must be discussed with elders.

Not only does Dayunday need to be preserved, but it also needs proper documentation for accessibility and readability. It is imperative to have sufficient literary pieces that will exhibit their grammatical system. Moreover, coming up with a written form of Dayunday is a convenient approach to making such investigations possible. Given this need, it would be challenging to offer a linguistic description due to the absence of comprehensive transcription conventions.

2.3 Maguindanao: Its people and dialects

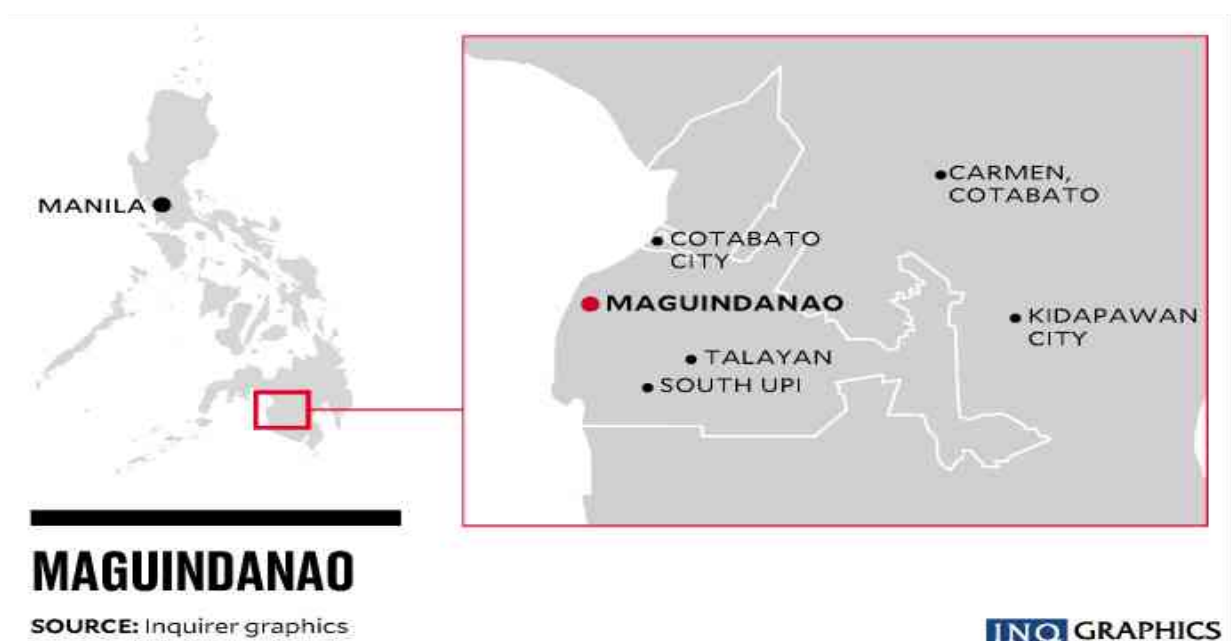
De Jong (2010) described in detail the Maguindanaon tribe, livelihood and dialects. The island of Mindanao is formerly known as Gran Moluccas or Great Moluccas and is named after the Maguindanaons who are part of the wider Moro ethnic group. Currently, there are 36 municipalities with a total population of 1, 173,933 as of June 30, 2021 (Philippine Statistics Authority Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, 2020). The name means people of the flood plains or is derived from the two words *maginged* and *danaw* which means people of the marshy. The Maguindanaos belong to many groups of *lowland* Filipinos who migrated from Southeast Asia years ago. They established their homes in Maguindanao where most of the country’s Muslim or Moro populations reside. Among many tribes, the Maguindanaon is the largest group of Muslims living in dreary, marshy areas of Cotabato.

Figure 1. Total population in BARMM as of 2020 (<http://rssoarrrm.psa.gov.ph/statistics/population?page=2>)

<i>AREA</i>	<i>2010</i>	<i>2015</i>	<i>2020</i>
<i>ARMM</i>	3,248,787	3,781,387	4,404,288
<i>Basilan^{a/}</i>	293,322	346,579	426,207
<i>Lanao del Sur</i>	933,260	1,045,429	1,195,518
<i>Maguindanao^{b/}</i>	944,718	1,173,933	1,342,179
<i>Sulu</i>	718,290	824,731	1,000,108
<i>Tawi-Tawi</i>	366,550	390,715	440,276
<i>Cotabato City</i>	271,786	299,438	325,079
<i>63 Barangays</i>	-	-	215,433

In Maguindanao, there are three major dialects. First is the Maguindanaon which is grouped into *taw sa laya* (upriver people) and *taw sa ilud* (downriver people). The separation is brought about by demography, culture, and political polarization (McKenna, 1996). The second is the so-called *Teduray o Tiruray*. The word *Teduray* comes from *Tew*, meaning *mannad Duray*, referring to a small bamboo with a hook and a line fishing instrument. The *Teduray* used to have the highest population. However, when Maguindanao province became a part of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, *Tedurays* have been scattered in Maguindanao’s neighboring provinces (see Figure 2). Although the *Teduray* belong to one ethnic group, they differ in terms of dialect intonation, rituals, dress and color identities. Lastly, there is the *Iranun*. *Lanun* means pirate in Malay Language. The *Iranun* originally inhabited coastal stretches (Warren, 2001) but later also relocated to the hilly villages.

Figure 2. Map of Maguindanao Province (Image: newsinfo.inquirer.net)



The existence of these multiple dialects within the province of Maguindanao has impacted the language use among the people. They borrowed, adopted, and coined words from the repertoire of dialects. For us, these dialects have affected the transcription of Dayunday.

2.1 Research questions

1. What issues emerged from transcribing Dayunday?
2. What characteristics of spoken language emerged from Dayunday?
3. What conventions can be formulated for Dayunday transcription?

3. Methodology

In this section, we outlined the general approach to gathering data for analysis. The approach included specific decisions in formulating criteria to select Dayunday performances to be transcribed and the data collection process along with the transcription.

3.1 Criteria for selecting Dayunday

The general criteria in selecting Dayunday pieces to be transcribed was solely based on intelligibility. With many interferences during the performance, it must be impossible to carry out the transcription. We also considered the entire length of Dayunday. The performance's beginning and ending must be complete to establish a clear picture of the performance. It was also necessary to deduce the semantics of unfamiliar words using context clues. The pieces have been produced for reasons other than research. With this, the language captured in the video is in its natural state.

3.2 The transcribers

Considering the speech rate and the familiarity of words being used in the performances, transcribing Dayunday necessitated those transcribers who speak the dialects being used. Three researchers speak Maguindanaon while the other has been exposed to the dialect, having lived in the province for four years. Three transcribers included two MA students who work as teachers. Another one had a Ph.D. who serve as an Education Program Supervisor. Although the two MA students were familiar with Dayunday, they had no first-hand experience in singing it. However, the education supervisor did not only sing Dayunday but also performed it on one occasion. It is essential to note that the profile of the transcribers was used to ascertain the validity of the transcripts and to identify the issues governing the transcription process.

3.3 The data and methods of analysis

Two data sets were collected for this study: the transcripts produced from transcribing Dayunday and the journal entries written by the transcribers. In this study, we analyzed the journal entries to establish the issues underpinning the language used in Dayunday. The journal entries, however, were limited and the results may not be generalizable. The transcripts, on the other hand, would be kept for future references and analyses. The data would be helpful, especially when a larger corpus has been collected. The corpus could be analyzed further to investigate the structures of *bayuk* to theorize how singers formulate the lyrics spontaneously. The journals contained examples of unfamiliar words, unintelligible pronunciation, and other similar cases of linguistic interests. The outputs were collated and analyzed thematically. Earlier, we argued that it is necessary to consider the profiles of the transcribers as they may influence the kind of data we analyzed. After collating the data, the transcribers and researchers met.

They analyzed and coded the data together. The use of thematic analysis provided a flexible approach to qualitative data. The purpose of this was to gain new insights into the emerging linguistic patterns and characteristics. Thus, we checked and cross-checked to saturate any possible themes from the codes.

The coding process involved three steps based on Grounded Theory (Strauss & Corbin, 1997). In qualitative research, coding to find common themes and concepts is part of thematic analysis. We started with open coding which included breaking the data into discrete parts to create codes and label them. It was followed by axial coding. We drew connections between open codes by classifying them into similar categories. Finally, selective coding was done to connect all the categories and define a unified theme.

4. Results

This section presents the results based on the three research questions that we raised in this paper.

RQ1: *What issues emerged from transcribing Dayunday?*

The journals of the three transcribers of Dayunday yielded the following overlapping difficulties in transcription. First is the familiarity with words. Although the transcribers and Dayunday singers shared the same dialect, some words may seem unfamiliar. This difficulty could be attributed to the prototypical language in poetic songs. Poetic words are not used in daily conversations. The geographical origin of the singer and the transcriber were other reasons for unfamiliar words in Dayunday. Second, singers used modern guitars as an accompaniment. However, Dayunday is sung in an archaic manner bordering on the unintelligible articulation of words. Words with nasal sounds /n/, /m/ and /ŋ/ were prolonged almost similar to humming (e.g. *Dingin ding... didingin ding*). Finally, clarity of speech was seen as another issue that needs careful consideration. This difficulty could be attributed to various factors. One was the native dialect of the singer as it influences their manner of articulation. In the Filipino language, there are four ways of articulating words: *malumay* (slow without glottal stop), *malumi* (slow with glottal stop), *mabilis* (fast without glottal stop) and *maragsa* (fast with glottal stop). Words are pronounced as *maragsa* and *mabilis* often make the distinction among singers' articulation.

RQ2: *Are there any word-formation processes on Dayunday?*

Based on the initial analysis of the issues in Dayunday transcription, we decided to investigate word-formation processes further. The decision was prompted by the examples of cases we found during the transcription process. Moreover, the examples we have gathered for these word-formation processes posed potential in formulating the conventions. Yule's work (1985, 1996, 2006, 2010) provided the framework for analyzing word-formation processes and their characteristics. We found examples of blending, clipping, borrowing, conversion, and derivation from Yule's list of word-formation processes. Below, we discussed each emerging process and the newly formed words and how they are used in the Dayunday.

4.1 Blending

This process is characterized by joining two separate words into a single form. Initially, blending is achieved by combining the beginning of the first word and the ending of the second word. Examples of blending are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Examples of blended words in Dayunday

<p>‘ibpunku’ from ‘ipedpun ku’ <i>going to start I</i></p>	<p>Sentence: “Ibpun ku sa mapya” <i>am going to start I well</i></p>
<p>‘akungka’ from ‘ku nengka’ <i>me you</i></p>	<p>Sentence: “Kalinyan akungka.” <i>like I you</i></p>
<p>‘matagengka’ from ‘matag nengka’</p>	<p>Sentence: “ matag’engka egkasilap a di’engka egkapangampitan’ <i>only you can glance at but you can never touch</i>”</p>

4.2 Clipping

When the elements of the word are reduced, clipping occurs. Frequently, clipping is applied to words with more than one syllable. Our transcripts have produced clipped words which are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Examples of clipped words

<p>‘kasindaw’ from ‘kasalindaw’ <i>to shine or shining</i></p>	<p>Sentence: “Edsimasima ka den su kasindaw nu alungan”.</p>
<p>‘manis’ from ‘palamanis’ <i>something that makes one likeable (qualities)</i></p>	<p><i>Take notice of you now the shining of the sun.</i></p> <p>Sentence: “Namba i manis’engka sa laki.” <i>That is what like about her I</i></p>

4.3 Borrowing

This is a process by which a word from one language is adapted for use in another (Norquist, 2019). For the Maguindanaon people, borrowing is widely used, either from foreign languages such as Arabic, Malay, English and many others, or local dialects of the neighboring tribes. This happens since Islamic teachings and western education were brought to the Bangsamoro by missionaries from these countries. Early Ulama (Muslim Scholars) earned their education from Arabic countries, too. Other factors for borrowing included intermarriages and the lack of available local terms for such words being borrowed. The example in our table is ‘*alungan*’ or ‘*arungan*’ from the Maranao tribe. Although Maranao concentration is around Lake Lanao, it also shares borders with some Maguindanao municipalities. Some Maranao people also live in Maguindanao to do business, thus, borrowing seems inevitable. Our transcripts have produced borrowed words both from foreign and local languages which are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Examples of borrowed words

Borrowed words	Origin and meaning
<i>alungan</i>	Origin: <i>Maranao</i> meaning <i>sun</i>
<i>ayat</i>	Origin: <i>Arabic</i> meaning <i>verse</i>

4.4 Conversion and derivation

Yule (1985) defined conversion (changing the function of words, e.g. noun to verb) and derivation (creating new words by means of combining small bits of words like affixes) as two separate processes. Uniquely, however, Magindanawn dialect has combined these two processes based on the following examples. The word *papedtayan* has the prefix *paped*. However, it is important to note that the prefix *paped* becomes *papeg* when attached to a word that begins with the consonant *k* like in the word *papegkanen*; *papeb* when attached to a word that begins with the consonant *p* like in *papebpuwasan*. When attached to a word that begins with the letter *d*, it becomes *papen* like *papenduwaya*. It may still become *papem* when attached to a word that begins with the consonant letter *b* like *papembatya*, and *papeng* when attached to a word that begins with the consonant letter *g* like in the *papenggaling*.

This finding is exclusively based on the data collected and analyzed during the transcription of *dayunday*. However, for comparison purposes, we consulted speakers of T'duray and Iranun (the other two major dialects spoken in the province of Maguindanao). We found out that these processes apply the same in their dialects. For instance, in Iranun, they converted a noun to verb, the verb to noun, an adverb to the verb, etcetera by attaching certain affixes, e.g. *paka* + *poro* = *pakaporo*. In this example, the affix used is *paka*, which means *make* attached to the adverb of place *poro*, which means *above*. The word *pakapoforo* is already a verb here which means *make high or rise above*.

In T'duray, a word can be derived or converted from one speech part to another by attaching affixes, e.g. *Kago silikin* (*Don't be noisy*). In this example, the word *silikin* is an adjective that means *noisy* formed by attaching *-in*, an affix that means *full of* to the root word *silik*, a noun which means *noise*. Our transcripts have produced converted words with examples presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Examples of converted and derived words

Converted word	Original word
<i>papedtayan</i> (verb)	<i>tayan</i> (noun)
<i>pedsandenga</i> (verb)	<i>sandeng</i> (noun, verb)

RQ3: What conventions can be formulated for Dayunday transcription?

One of the objectives of this study was to formulate transcription conventions for future researchers who are interested in exploring a linguistically oriented study of Dayunday. First, we are going to describe the symbols and their functions in Table 2. A Dayunday performance is seen to have interludes, prolonged sound with and without a change in melody and prolonged sound with a syllable repetition. Part of every performance is playing the guitar. This varies from one artist to the next. Oftentimes, the melody is the same as the melody that the artist would use as his or her preliminaries which usually contain greetings or acknowledgment of the organizers of the event. Sometimes, the interlude is done by playing an entirely different melody before the preliminary *bayuk* (verses).

Due to a seemingly too much effort to effect art in the performance, some *padadayunday* (dayunday artists) tend to eat the words or even mispronounce them making them unintelligible. There are also times that the *padadayunday* is produced with a prolonged sound (~~, a double tilde is used to represent prolonged), longer than it should be. This is usually done to inject humor or add more entertainment value. The artist may do it by extending the sound by holding the same melody or going to a different melody. Double tildes separated by a colon (~::~) represent a prolonged sound with a change in melody.

Since the *padadayunday* is using *bayuk*, he or she is conscious of and making use of the so-called rhythm and rhymes, too. So, keeping them in mind, he or she uses the contraction of words to reduce the syllables and maintain the rhythm. There are also times that the *padadayunday* fall short of their *bayuk*. They use repetitive syllables or invented combinations of syllables so as not to lose their melody. There are even times that they insert unnecessary syllables into a word to be more appealing to the audience.

Table 5. Symbols and their descriptions

Symbols	Description
(int) interlude	interlude by seconds 01 – 30 seconds int 02 – 60 seconds int 03 – over 1 minute
(int_01:) interlude, underscore number of sec and colon	interlude+change in melody
(__) double underscores in between parenthesis	unintelligible word
[~~] double tilde in between brackets	prolonged sound with the same melody
[~::~] – colon in between double tilde	prolonged sound with a change in melody
(‘) – apostrophe in between parenthesis	contraction of a ‘sound or syllable’ often, verb+noun and pronoun+pronoun
[~~rep] – double tilde and rep	prolonged sound with syllable repetition
(ins:_) -ins followed by a colon and underscore.	underscore represents syllables ra, ri, ru, se, su, sa

We applied these conventions in a sample extract and see the potentials of developing a full convention for transcription purposes. The limited data set we analyzed has affected the full application of the conventions.

Table 6. Application of conventions in Dayunday transcript

<i>Line</i>	<i>Sample transcript</i>
1	(int_01) A pakineg ka den kaka, ka ya den mapait sa langun. Ka u mabu ka pegken bu na mapait pan kanu palia, na labi sa patawali.
2	Endenden [~~rep] kanugun nin den ennn [~~] na kanugun nin den na kanui kauli nengka sin, kanugun nin den ennn [~~]
3	Kanugun nin den ka inidsaneg I dalem a kanugun nin den na di kara pegkawang mandam kanugun nin den I kalundungan akung(')ka kanugun nin den na diaku (') ngka kabulungan kanugun nin den na kanugun nin den ka pababa den su umul kanugun nin dennnna [~~rep] enerna (ins:r) kanugun nin den na pakineg ka sa mapia kanugun nin den ka pakinega ka kunba kanugun nin den I manguda (')ndu matua kanugun nin den ka makaibaratan ku kanugun nin den sa isa unga na niuga a kanugun nin den nay a bun mauna a mapubpug kanugun nin den na temampal sa tambulu.

5. Discussion

Transcribing Dayunday posed several challenges even to the native speakers of *the Magindanawn* dialect. Because of these challenges, this preliminary study was conducted to create opportunities for other researchers who might be interested in investigating Dayunday to understand its linguistic phenomena and find ways to preserve its unique cultural tradition. The primary data we analyzed resulted in three overlapping issues: familiarity with words, manner of singing and clarity of speech. The issues were attributed to the singers' profile and transcribers as well (e.g. their place of origin and their native dialect). Native dialects influenced one's articulation of words such as *maragsa* and *mabilis* (two ways of pronouncing Filipino words) and distinguish between *Iranun* and *Maguindanaon* people). For future researchers, it is necessary to determine the demographic background of the singers so their pronunciation can be profiled and integrated into the conventions.

One significant result that emerged from the transcription is the word-formation processes that are present in Dayunday. Using Yule's (1985) list of word-formation processes, we found blending, clipping, borrowing, conversion, and derivation in the transcripts. Interestingly, conversion and derivation (two separate English processes) appeared to be combined in Magindanawn. Some nouns are converted into verbs by using prefixes. For example, the prefix *paped* changes its final letter *d* when the first letter of the root words *k*, *p* and *d*. These issues and linguistic features that are dominant in Dayunday transcripts become our bases for the formulation transcription conventions.

Transcription conventions are formulated using symbols and words to render the details of the vocal production and utterance (ten Have, 2007). Annotating sung languages poses more questions about the standardized symbols. The symbols we used to formulate the conventions in transcribing Dayunday may correspond to some of the symbols used in the Jeffersonian Transcription System (Schegloff, Jefferson, & Sacks (1974) especially in annotating timed pauses as represented by time in seconds (e.g. 0.2, 0.5). However, we used a colon to represent a change in melody while the Jeffersonian system uses a colon to annotate prolonged vowels or consonants. With reference to sung languages, our conventions are a total mismatch compared to annotating sung Russian which uses IPA symbols (Mitton, 2020). In this study, we present symbols for transcription based on the data we have on hand. It is early to say that these symbols are absolute given the limited data that we analyzed.

6. Conclusion and limitations

The language used in Dayunday offered insights to language researchers. Its patterns, structures and vocabulary can be used as subjects for more significant research projects in the future. Our investigation came from limited sets of data and thus generalizing it seems impossible. However, we are optimistic that this study would attract more scholars to explore research opportunities with the focus of creating a Dayunday corpus and examining how bayuks are formed and which word-formation process is often used. From the results, borrowing words from another dialect implies that the language in Dayunday is continuously growing. The extent to which borrowing is used poses research potentiality.

Nevertheless, this growth may not attract young generations. Having written accounts of Dayunday for references is a must. We believe that this study has contributed to the preservation of Dayunday and its contribution to Maguindanaon culture.

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