# Morphological and Syntactic Characteristics of Adjectives in Philippine English: A Corpus-Based Description

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## Abstract

Motivated by the paucity of published corpus-based investigations on adjectives in contemporary Philippine English (PhE) and the possibilities offered by a new corpus, the Corpus of Philippine English (COPE), this study is an attempt to describe PhE adjectives in terms of their morphological and syntactic characteristics. Results reveal that characteristics of PhE adjectives generally align with the descriptions of Quirk et al. (1985), Biber et al. (1999), and Huddleston and Pullum (2002). However, some syntactic functions are not evident in the adjectives in the corpus. Moreover, despite the occurrence of compounding, the corpus's lack of newly derived adjectives indicates a certain linguistic conservatism that has been identified in earlier research. Further synchronic and diachronic studies employing more extensive and varied corpora are recommended to validate the findings of this study. In addition, form-and-meaning-based instruction on adjectives can provide learners with adequate knowledge to utilize the wide range of adjective types in English.

## 1 Introduction

English adjectives play a crucial role in enhancing communication by conveying nuances of meaning, providing additional information, and contributing to the overall expressiveness of communication. Adjectives can "alter, clarify, or adjust the meanings of nouns" (Huddleston & Pullum, 2002, p. 526). Thus, understanding the characteristics of adjectives in different varieties of English is essential for linguists and language enthusiasts alike. In this regard, corpus-based investigations are valuable tools in unraveling the intricate properties of adjectives, deriving insights into their use across communities and their pedagogical implications.

English adjectives demonstrate several defining morphological and syntactic properties (Quirk et al., 1985). Morphologically, adjectives in English can be formed through various derivational processes. They can be marked for comparison to convey varying magnitudes of quality, enabling nuanced expression. Syntactically, the ability of adjectives to function both attributively and predicatively allows for flexibility in expression (Quirk et al., 1985; Huddleston & Pullum, 2002).

The global spread of English has resulted in diverse regional varieties, each legitimate in its own right and each contributing its unique flavor to the language and, ultimately, to its dynamic development. Consequently, variations in adjective use can be linked to historical developments in the evolution of language (Suarez-Gomez & Tomas-Vidal, 2024). Differences in adjectival choice or the formation of adjectives can be influenced by or reflect the local context.

Adjectives offer a rich area of exploration for Philippine English; a corpus-based investigation is valuable to shed light on the characteristics of adjectives in Philippine English. As a data-driven and systematic approach to studying language usage, corpus linguistics offers a quantitative lens through which researchers can identify usage patterns that can aid in examining how adjectives function morphologically and syntactically, specifically as Filipino speakers use them. This can inform English teaching practices and curriculum development and contribute to the broader corpus linguistics and World Englishes fields.

## 1.1 Morphological characteristics of English adjectives

Gradable adjectives can be marked morphologically to express comparative and superlative degrees, inflectionally with the affixes *-er* and *-est,* or phrasally with the form "more/ most" + adjective (Biber et al., 1999). On the other hand, non-gradable adjectives cannot be marked for degrees of comparison and are modified with emphatic or intensifying adverbs.

Generally, monosyllabic adjectives and adjectives ending in *-y/-ly* take inflectional suffixes, while phrasal comparison is typically applied to longer adjectives. Some monosyllabic adjectives can take either form, with emphasis as one possible reason for choosing an alternative over the other. Moreover, disyllable gradable adjectives with no internal morphology, those longer than two syllables, adjectives ending in *-ful, less, -al, -ive,* and *-ous,* and participial adjectives take phrasal comparison. Corpus findings indicate a greater frequency of inflected comparative degree adjectives than superlative degree adjectives and a relatively rare frequency of superlatives in academic writing. Also, there are cases when adjectives are doubly marked for comparison through the combined use of inflectional and phrasal markers (Biber et al., 1999; Huddleston & Pullum, 2002; Quirk et al., 1985).

## 1.2 Formation of adjectives

Most adjectives are derived from either nouns or verbs – a process called adjectivalization (Sleeman, 2019), which can be realized through derivational affixation and compounding. However, within the realm of derivational morphology, adjectivalization has received significantly less attention than nominalization and verbalization (Lieber, 2016; Trips, 2003).

In addition to derived forms, participial forms (V-ing, V-ed) can function as adjectives. Modification with *very* indicates that a participial form is already lexicalized as an adjective (Quirk et al., 1985).

## 1.3 Syntactic characteristics of English adjectives

Adjectives are classified into two types based on their syntactic functions. Attributive adjectives premodify the head of a noun phrase, while predicative adjectives function as a subject complement or object complement. Adjectives can also be postpositive or placed immediately after the noun or pronoun that they modify. Additionally, they can function as heads of noun phrases (Biber et al., 1999; Quirk et al., 1985).

Corpus analyses of English adjectives point to differences in the frequency of attributive and predicative adjectives across registers. Both attributive and predicative adjectives occur relatively rarely in conversations. A difference can be seen in written genres: attributive adjectives are more frequent in expository writing, while predicative adjectives are more frequent in fiction compared to other registers (Biber et al., 1999).

## 1.4 Studies on adjectives in Philippine English and World Englishes (WE)

According to Cao and Fang (2009), adjectives are "an informative but understudied linguistic entity" (p. 207). Studies on adjectives in Philippine English are scarce. In fact, Borlongan and Lim's (2012) meta-synthesis of studies in Philippine English grammar included only one (Borlongan, 2011), which studied adjectives, specifically comparison. Comparing adjectives in the Philippine component of the International Corpus of English (ICE-PHI) with those of the other components, Borlongan (2011) found that ICE-PHI has the most number of occurrences of monosyllabic adjectives in comparison, a trend which he attributed to the wide range of text categories in the ICE-PHI compared to other Englishes in the corpus. Borlongan concluded that PhE follows the general trend toward inflectional over periphrastic comparison across Englishes, a finding echoed in Hagman's (2020) investigation of eight inner and outer circle varieties using the Global Web-Based English (GloWbE Corpus). Likewise, Borlongan found six occurrences of double comparatives in ICE-PHI, reflecting patterns also found in New Zealand English by Hundt et al. (2004). More recently, Bernardo (2017) found two distinctive features of adjectives used in classroom discussions by students of different majors and teachers of varying ranks and educational classification. These features are double comparatives and the use of comparative forms with non-gradable adjectives (e.g., 'perfect').

Meanwhile, corpus-based analyses of Bangladeshi English (Suárez-Gómez & Seoane, 2023) and South African, Nigerian, Ghanaian, Kenyan, and Tanzanian English (Suárez-Gómez &

Tomas-Vidal, 2024) show a preference for analytic constructions. This preference was attributed to their transparency, which makes them easier to learn and use than inflectional comparisons.

## 1.5 Research Objectives

This research aims to describe the characteristics of adjectives in Philippine English. In particular, it aims to describe adjectives' morphological and syntactic characteristics as represented in a contemporary corpus of spoken and written PhE texts.

## 2 Methodology

### 2.1 The Data

The data used in the study is from the Corpus of Philippine English (COPE). COPE was collected and transcribed in 2023 by Doctor of Philosophy in Applied Linguistics students enrolled in Corpus Linguistics and World Englishes classes in a private university in the Philippines. Given time constraints, only two categories from COPE, conversations representing the spoken category and press news reports representing the written category, are included in the study for a more focused analysis. The in-person conversations are 30 files of transcripts with more or less 450 minutes of conversations. Each file usually has about 15 minutes of conversation between two or more Filipino mesolectal speakers conversing in PhE. The researchers provided informed consent forms to participants who conversed for the said category, highlighting that the conversations would be recorded, transcribed, and included in COPE for research purposes, with the assurance that the data would be anonymized. This in-person category was utilized because it is the most informal or casual. In casual conversations, the speakers may not be conscious of their grammar; hence, they may show more PhE features than in formal spoken categories. On the other hand, the press news reports are 50 files of transcripts with a total of more or less 25,000 words, each containing approximately 500 words. The transcripts were taken from publicly available press news reports. The study chose this category because it is written and formal, which are the opposite characteristics of the in-person category. Contrasting features of the categories chosen may help ascertain the possible variations between their features and highlight Philippine English's own identity.

### 2.2 Data Processing and Analysis

Transcripts were Parts of Speech (POS)-tagged using the Stanford POS Tagger, a software that analyzes texts and identifies the part of speech of each word in the transcripts and the other tokens. It has three proficient tagger models for English, although it can be retrained in any language with a few tweaks in its settings. The English taggers utilize the Penn Treebank tag set (The Stanford Natural Language Processing Group, 2023; Toutanova et al., 2003). The POS-tagged transcripts from the software were downloaded and run in AntConc software. The researchers typed in JJ, the abbreviation for the tagged adjectives in the corpus, and clicked start. All hits of JJ in words search query, with ten tokens as context sized, were saved in Excel. The researchers highlighted the adjectives tagged as JJ in the Excel file and rechecked each to see if they were correctly tagged as adjectives. After that, the researchers analyzed each hit to answer the research questions, with the guidance of Quirk et al. (1985), Biber et al. (1999), and Huddleston and Pullum's (2002) discussion of adjectives' morphological and syntactic features.

Antconc software found 4,178 adjectives in the in-person conversations and press news reports transcripts. Of 2,621 words tagged as adjectives by the POS tagger in the in-person conversation transcripts, 141 were incorrectly tagged. They should have been identified as adverbs, adverbial phrases, coordinating conjunctions, determiners, exclamations, fillers, interjections, names, nouns, prepositions, pronouns, and verbs. In addition, 1,557 words were tagged as adjectives by the POS tagger in the press news report transcripts. Sixteen should have been tagged as adverbial phrases, nouns, prepositions, and verbs. With this, only 2,480 adjectives were identified in the in-person conversations, and 1,541 press news reports were transcripts.

## 3 Results and Discussion

### 3.1 Morphological Features of Comparative/Superlative, Participial, Derived, and Compound Adjectives in Philippine English

The formation of comparative and superlative degrees of adjectives in the corpus aligns with the

pattern described by Biber et al. (1999). Monosyllabic adjectives and adjectives ending in -*y* and -*ly* generally take the inflectional comparison, as seen in the cases of *happy, simple, and early*, forming comparatives with -*er* and *angry* and *deadly* forming superlatives with -*est*. Meanehile, among the adjectives given phrasal comparison are gradable adjectives with no internal morphology (e.g., *common, recent, candid, stupid*); adjectives longer than two syllables (*exotic*); adjectives ending in -*ful, -less, -al/-ar, -able, -ive, -ous, -ant,* and compound adjectives or hyphenated words.

Biber et al. (1999, p. 521) provide a phonological explanation for the choice between inflectional and periphrastic comparison: disyllabic adjectives ending in the unstressed vowel -*y* usually take the inflected comparative form, but adjectives ending in -*ly* have a more variable behavior. Similar to Biber et al.'s (1999) corpus findings, the word *likely* was compared using periphrastic forms: one instance for *more likely* and one for *most likely*.

| Comparative Forms | No. of words | No. of occurrences | No. of words | No. of occurrences |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| -er | | | more / less + adj. | |
| Monosyllabic base | 33 | 194 | 3* | 3 |
| | | | *fond, keen, safe (in series)* | |
| Polysyllabic base | 3 | 3 | 36 | 35 |
| *happy; simple; early* | | | | |
| -est | | | most / least + adj. | |
| Monosyllabic base | 23 | 129 | 0 | 0 |
| Polysyllabic base | 2 | 2 | 23 | 23 |
| *angry, deadly* | | | | |

Table 1: Morphological characteristics of comparative and superlative adjectives

Meanwhile, among polysyllabic adjectives in the PhE corpus, there is a greater preference for periphrastic comparison. Among the monosyllabic adjectives, only three were compared periphrastically: *fond, keen,* and *safe. Safe,* in this case, was used as the first in a series with polysyllabic adjectives: *more safe, convenient,* and *exciting* (COPE W1B-013); which may explain why it was given periphrastic comparison.

Generally, findings regarding comparison corroborate Borlongan's (2011) observation that PhE aligns with the broader global pattern of preference for inflectional comparison over periphrastic forms. In contrast, a preference for phrasal forms has been observed in Bangladeshi English (Seoane and Suárez-Gómez. 2023) and African varieties (Suarez-Gomez & Tomas-Vidal, 2024), which is attributed to the transparency of the phrasal form, making it easier to learn and use

among non-native speakers. As the current corpus contains only a few adjectives showing comparative alternation, a more extensive corpus or a longitudinal study can further shed light on whether PhE does, or continues to, favor inflectional comparison. Further investigations can also consider the possible influence of local languages, which exhibit both inflectional and phrasal comparisons, on PhE adjectives.

Notably, there is only one instance of comparative forms for non-gradable adjectives in the data (most favorite), reflecting a feature found by Bernardo (2017). According to Biber et al. (1999), degree marking of inherently superlative adjectives is not unusual, particularly in conversations (Biber et al., 1999), suggesting a flexible approach to language use.

Double comparison is attested only once in the data, in the conversation subset: *I think you're much more smarter than me*(COPE S1A-017), combining inflectional and periphrastic comparison and intensification with much. Despite their occurrence in WE varieties, English speakers and grammars generally deem doubly marked comparatives and superlatives unacceptable (Biber et al., 1999; Hagman, 2020). Similarly, earlier PhE studies (Bernardo, 2017; Borlongan, 2011); found rare instances of double comparatives, suggesting that this has not become a prevalent feature of the variety.

Comparative and superlative forms are more common in the conversation transcripts than in the news articles, as journalism tends to emphasize objectivity and factual reporting. Similar to frequencies observed by Biber et al. (1999), the words *better*, *best,* and *bigger* occurred most frequently in the conversation transcripts, while *better, bigger, lower, more, stronger,* and *higher* occurred most frequently in the news articles. These words generally have evaluative meanings. However, contrary to Biber et al.'s findings, there are fewer superlative adjectives in the news articles (46) compared to conversations (85) in this corpus. Most of the phrasal comparisons occur in the news articles, reflecting the need for more specific vocabulary in news ítems (Biber, 1999)

### 3.1.1 Formation of Adjectives
### 3.1.1.1 Participial Forms

The corpus contains a plethora of participial adjectives formed from the-*ing* and -*ed* forms of verbs. Some of these adjectives can serve both

attributive and predicative functions. There are more *-ed* (58%) than *-ing* forms (42%) in the corpus. Most of the participial adjectives are used predicatively.

The most frequent *-ed* forms are *stressed, excited, interested,* and *surprised.* Notably, *(fully) vaccinated is* also frequent, considering that the time frame of the corpus coincided with the COVID-19 pandemic period. This suggests that adjectives in PhE are used based on immediate contexts, indicating English's responsiveness to sociopolitical events and reflecting the influence of global events on language use and development (Crystal, 2003, 2012; Gustilo et al., 2021).

### 3.1.1.2 Derived Adjectives

Many of the adjectives in the corpus are derived from other lexical classes. There are more derived adjectives in the news (266) than in the conversation (248) component, with 460 unique derived adjectives identified from the two components combined. Most of these adjectives are attributive.

Similar to the findings of Biber et al. (1999), most of the derived adjectives are derived from *-al (e.g., natural, agricultural),* followed *by -ic (e.g., academic, symptomatic,); -ive (administrative, executive),* and *-ble (affordable, predictable*).

So far, analysis of the derived forms does not reveal emerging or new lexical items. There is, however, a novel expression in the conversation data, which involves the use of the suffix *-ish*, in *due in the first weekish of classes* (S1A-020). Here, the suffix may mean in the general vicinity of the first week of classes, with no particular date, which corresponds to the manner of or similar to the meaning of the suffix.

### 3.1.1.3 Adjectival Compounds

The corpus contains examples of adjectival compounds, some already part of the standard lexicon, such as *lighthearted*, *well-rounded,* and *short-term*. Other forms appear to be emergent. Most of these forms are in the news articles.

These compounds reveal insights into how new words may be formed in (Philippine) English, confirming the productivity of compounding as a word-formation process (Dimaculangan & Gustilo, 2018; Hadziahmtovic Jurida & Pavlovic, 2023). For adjectives, compounding may be more productive than derivation. For instance, Gustilo et al. (2021) found a significant number of new compound adjectives in their investigation of the emerging lexicon from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Notably, the word type was used in forming expressions such as Japanese lantern-type kind of thing, Skinny-girl type, and Just a regular cigarette, not the marijuana type. Biber et al. (1999) explain that in such cases, the suffix -type (or like) retains its meaning as a separate word, placing the resulting words in between affixation and compounding; these words are only ad hoc descriptions and not lexicalized (Biber, 1999). This demonstrates how compounding is utilized as a flexible strategy in PhE to fuse existing lexical elements to create nuanced meanings without requiring new derivations, with expressions created concerning unique communicative needs and contexts.

Expectations of the news genre, which favors vocabulary that is clear and understandable to readers, may explain the scarcity of derivations in the corpus. Biber et al. (1999) noted fewer derived adjectives in the news than in academic writing, while adjectival compounds are more frequent in the news than in conversation due to the need to express information more succinctly than through relative clauses. Moreover, while the conversational context may offer wider latitude for the creative use of adjectives, the data suggest that PhE speakers use existing lexical ítems for ease and clarity of communication.

Furthermore, the relatively rare occurrence of innovations and novel derivations resulting in neologisms may suggest that PhE is negotiating its position between stability and innovation regarding adjective use. As Borlongan (2011) pointed out concerning Schneider's (2003, 2007) model of the evolution of postcolonial Englishes, while PhE is increasingly diverging from exonormative standards and innovating independently, it still shows signs of linguistic conservatism.

This finding, however, can be due to the limited scope of the dataset analyzed. Further analysis of the COPE or additional subcomponents may reveal more insightful patterns of innovation across various contexts.

### 3.2 Syntactic Features of attributive, predicative, postpositive, exclamatory, and noun phrase head adjectives in Philippine English

Table 2 reveals that adjectives are more frequent in in-person conversations than in press

news reports. This may be because of the speech style used in the different categories. One employs a formal style, while the other employs a casual style of speech. In casual settings, people tend to utilize more attributive adjectives to express their thoughts, feelings, and emotions. They provide vivid mental representations to their interlocutors so that they can understand what they convey quickly (Yaguchi et al., 2010). On the other hand, news reports usually follow a formal, neutral, objective style and tone, so the lines are more straightforward than the in-person conversations (Schröder, 2010). They focus on facts rather than embellishing their reports with extensive adjectives that may be subjective and indicate biases. Audience is also a factor for the said results. Casual conversations often involve only a few participants or a smaller and more personal audience where people may freely express their opinions, feelings, and personal experiences, which may add emotional depth to the conversations (Blankenship & Craig, 2012; Schröder, 2010). However, in news reports, writers aim to reach a broader audience. Their use of adjectives may be more restrained as they must carefully choose them to maintain an unbiased tone. Time constraints may also be a factor. Casual conversations have no limit on their time. They take as much time as possible to understand each other's ideas. In helping the other person understand the idea, the speaker employs several adjectives that can aid the receiver in understanding the message. Conversely, news reports have time or space constraints. They have to provide complete information with such a limitation, which calls for a need to be direct-to-the-point and disregard the use of extensive adjectives.

| Syntactic Roles/Functions of Adjectives | Frequency by Category | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| | In-Person Conversations | Press News Reports | Total |
| Attributive | 1,184 | 1,256 | 2,449 |
| Predicative | 1,287 | 274 | 1,555 |
| • Subject Predicative | 1,277 | 263 | 1,534 |
| • Object Predicative | 10 | 11 | 21 |
| Post-Positive | 9 | 0 | 9 |
| | 2,480 | 1,541 | 4,021 |

Table 2: Frequency of syntactic roles/ functions of adjectives

In in-person conversations, attributive is the second highest function of adjectives identified with 1,184 counts. On the other hand, it is the highest in the press news reports category, with 1,256 counts. This is unusual since in-person conversations should have more attributive adjectives (Schröder, 2010). This result can be attributed to the fact that the press news reports have 50 transcripts while the in-person conversations only have 30. Although each in-person conversation transcript is 15 minutes' worth of conversation, the interlocutors' relationship may also be a factor that resulted in such a strange result. Interlocutors close to each other may tend to provide extensive attributive adjectives in the conversation to express themselves more and convey their message. However, those whose relationships are just acquaintances may be reluctant to use more of it as there is not much emotional bond between them. Aside from this, since they knew that the conversations were being recorded, they might have limited their conversation with each other, not freely and comfortably expressing their thoughts and emotions. Concerning the attributive adjectives' syntactic features, the corpus revealed that the adjectives are positioned before the noun they modify, which conforms to the prescribed word order of "standard" English (Quirk et al., 1985; Biber et al., 1999; Huddleston & Pullum, 2002). It was also noted that there are several phrases in which a couple of adjectives are seen before the noun they modify, as in:

(1) a *strong friendly* performance

(2) the *physical spiritual emotional* abuse — in-person conversations

(3) a *big big big* lawn

(4) a *political economic social* and *cultural* development

(5) *additional* and *steady* supply — news press reports

(6) a *rational* and *historical* appreciation

This may signify that Filipinos provide a couple of attributive adjectives for a noun that they want to modify, which helps the recipient to have a clearer understanding of the message. Although the frequent use of attributive adjectives to modify a noun in a sentence may not be determined by nationality, this may still be influenced by linguistic and cultural norms, which can be checked and explored with a larger Philippine English corpus. Another peculiarity noticed is that a few sentences that employ attributive adjectives

did not follow the ruling on the order of adjectives. The typical order starts with quantity, followed by quality, size, age, shape, and color (Celce-Murcia et al., 1983; Quirk et al., 1985). These sentences usually repeat the attributive adjective they employ to modify the noun. One example is the sentence three in the previous paragraph.

(3) a *big big big* lawn

The word big was also used as an intensifier in the noun phrase. This may be a manifestation of the first language (L1) transfer. Filipinos typically repeat adjectives to intensify their modification of a noun, as in *"malaking malaking malaking…"* instead of using another adjective or adverb, "extremely big…" The English language tends to avoid repeating words as this is considered redundant. Such occurrences show that although Filipinos mostly conform to the rules of "standard" English, there are still instances that show the transfer of L1 to the second language (L2).

As for the predicative adjectives, 1,287 hits were found in the in-person conversation transcripts – the highest syntactic function of adjectives in the said category. Having this as the highest function identified is not odd. Speakers can use attributive or predicative adjectives in casual conversations, depending on their intention and context. Speakers may use a mix of both functions as there are no strict rules. Meanwhile, there were only 274 hits of the same function in the press news reports category, which is the second highest. It can be seen that the frequency of attributive adjectives in the said category is far higher than that of predicative adjectives. This conforms to the findings of Biber et al. (1999), which reveal that predicative adjectives are less frequent than attributive adjectives in such expository papers. Unlike attributive adjectives that directly modify the noun clearly and concisely and provide specific details without the tendency to introduce subjective evaluations, predicative adjectives are susceptible to it. Predicative adjectives, as seen in the corpus, are often placed after linking verbs to describe the subject. Such a function may only introduce subjectivity or opinion. As mentioned earlier, news reports prioritize clarity, brevity, and objectivity, so having predicative adjectives might negatively affect the report's objectivity. In both categories, it is noticeable that a few object predicative adjectives were found, 10 in the in-person conversations and 11 in the press news reports category. This shows that speakers and writers of the corpus transcripts value brevity and straightforwardness. Object predicative adjectives may lead to longer and more complex sentence structures, increasing ambiguity and confusion. This may be why the predicative adjectives in both categories are rare compared to attributive adjectives.

Generally, the predicative adjectives found in both categories often conform to the standard word order of subject + linking verb + predicative adjective (Biber et al., 1999; Huddleston & Pullum, 2002; Quirk et al., 1985). However, some sentences from in-person conversations that employ predicative adjectives end with an invariant question tag, as in:

(7) You're *hard-headed*, right?

(8) You're *fully vaccinated*, right?  — in-person conversations

(9) It's not a *harsh* punishment, right?

It can be surmised that the question tag "right?" may also be a manifestation of the L1 transfer. Filipinos use this as a translation of the Tagalog term *"di ba*?" often employed when speakers seek agreement on their statement from the message recipients. This supports the findings of Westphal (2020), which reveal that Filipinos often use question tags when conversing in English and that they utilize invariant question tags, including "right?" more than the variant ones (e.g., "isn't it?"). It is worth noting that they were only identified in the said category as they may not be appropriate for news reports.

Finally, post-positive adjectives were also found in the corpus. All nine are from in-person conversations. The sentences that employ post-positive adjectives often start with a subject, followed by a post-positive adjective, and then with or without additional information, as in:

(10) I want to relax with *someone close* to me.

(11) I always crave for *something sweet*.  — in-person conversations

(12) Hopefully, *God-willing*.

However, one may notice the deviation of the ninth phrase, which started with an adverb, expressing a sense of hope or expectation regarding the action or event that follows. This may also be an effect of the L1 transfer to the speaker. This may be translated as *"Sana, awa ng Diyos"* in Tagalog or simply an attempt to translate the popular Visayan word, *"Puhon."* This is a response to a statement one agrees to be hopeful about, recognizing the external factor of divine will.

While many attributive and predicative adjectives and a few post-positive adjectives are

found in the corpus, it is worth noting that no exclamatory and noun phrase head functions of adjectives were found in the results.

In summary, all the syntactic functions of adjectives that transpired in the corpus conform to the "standard" English's syntactical features based on Quirk et al. (1985), Biber et al. (1999), and Huddleston and Pullum's (2002) discussion of adjectives' syntactic features. This may show how adept Filipino speakers are in English grammar and that they conform to these rules in sentences despite the difference in sentence patterns, with English exhibiting a subject-verb sentence pattern in contrast to the subject-last pattern of Filipino. Although Filipinos generally show good command of the English language, the transfer of L1 to L2 still manifests. Some of these manifestations of L1 transfer seen in the corpus include using repetition of adjectives as intensifiers instead of employing another adjective or adverb to intensify the word it modifies. Another is using question tags, predominantly the invariant question tag "right?" as the translated version of the invariant question tag in Tagalog, which is *"di ba?"* Lastly, there is an incongruence of the post-positive adjective in sentence 12 to the word order pattern subject + post-positive adjective + with or without additional information for sentences employing a post-positive adjective. This peculiarity may be seen as an attempt to translate the Tagalog phrase following the same word order, *"Sana, awa ng Diyos,"* or the widely used Visayan word, *"Puhon."* Such findings may be investigated in a more diverse and extensive corpus to establish whether these truly manifest the L1 transfer and, hence, may be considered as the unique features of Philippine English and if some more features and patterns can be identified as features of it.

## 4  Conclusion

This study aimed to contribute to the discourses on the identity of Philippine English that underexplored and underrepresented the grammatical class of adjectives of Philippine English by attempting to provide a corpus-based description of adjectives in Philippine English using the Corpus of Philippine English (COPE). Specifically, this analyzed the morphological and syntactical features of the different types of adjectives observed in COPE. After the rigorous building and POS-tagging of the corpus, the transcripts were processed using Antconc software.

Results were carefully rechecked and analyzed based on the frameworks of Quirk et al. (1985), Biber et al. (1999), and Huddleston and Pullum (2002).

In terms of morphology, results reveal that PhE adjectives conform to the descriptions of Quirk et al. (1985), Biber et al. (1999), and Huddleston and Pullum (2002). There is a preference for inflectional comparisons for monosyllabic adjectives and phrasal comparisons for longer and derived adjectives. Only one instance of double comparison was found in the corpus. Moreover, there is no evidence of productive adjective formation through derivation that results in new lexical items, but there is considerable evidence of compounding to form new words.

As for the syntactical features, the results indicate that only the attributive, predicative, and post-positive adjectives transpired in the corpus. They generally conform to Quirk et al. (1985), Biber et al. (1999), and Huddleston and Pullum's (2002) discussion of adjectives' syntactic features, reflecting the Filipino speakers' adeptness in English grammar despite the difference in the sentence patterns (i.e., English - subject first; Filipino - subject last). However, some peculiar incongruence to the prescribed syntactic features was found in the corpus that may be attributed to the L1 transfer, including repetition of adjectives for intensification, affixing an invariant question tag, di ba, in sentences with predicative adjectives, and a non-conformance to the word order pattern for a phrase that employs post-positive adjectives, as in the case of the post-positive adjective, "God-willing," which can be a word-per-word translation of the Filipino commonly used phrase response *"Sana, awa ng Diyos"* or an attempt to translate the Visayan word *"puhon."* These results imply that the morphological and syntactical features of adjectives seen in COPE generally conform to Quirk et al. (1985), Biber et al. (1999), and Huddleston and Pullum's (2002) description of adjectives. The relative lack of emerging features and new lexical formations support earlier findings that observed a certain degree of stability in the lexicón and gramar of PhE when compared to other Asian varieties (Borlongan, 2016; Borlongan & Lim, 2012).

However, some syntactic functions were not evident in the corpus. This may indicate that Filipinos are not used to employing them in written

and spoken discourses, which may be due to differences between English and their native language or to culture or genre-specific linguistic conventions.

The findings of this study have important implications for language teaching and research. First, exposing learners to varied adjectives and their features in meaningful contexts and experiences may help them use adjectives more confidently and help enrich the characteristics of adjectives in PhE. Extensive discussion of these adjective features, focusing on meaning and form and using corpora to show authentic examples of adjective use, can help achieve this goal. For instance, teachers can develop activities such as role-play exercises, debates, and journalistic writing, which can encourage students to use adjectival forms appropriately. Integrating meaningful adjective use in the English language curriculum may help further build Philippine English's inimitable identity in the context of World English.

Researchers interested in conducting a similar study may utilize more extensive and varied data to determine consistency with the present data and provide better insight into the current and emerging morphological and syntactical patterns distinct in Philippine English.

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