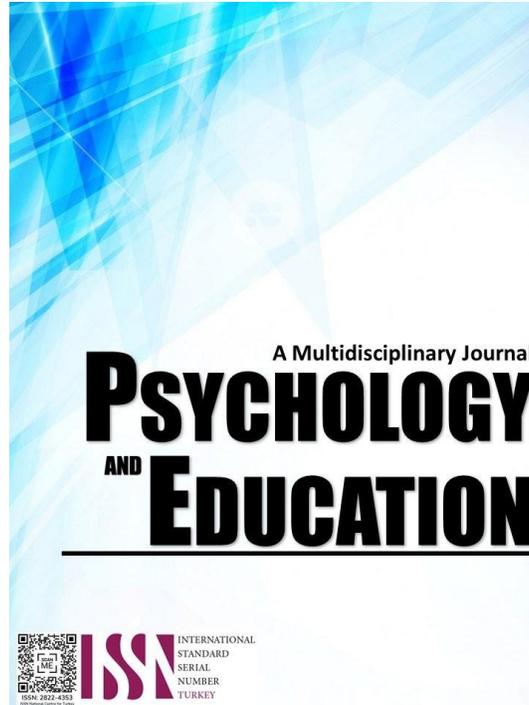


# COGNANCY PATTERNS IN MAGUINDANAON AND ENGLISH: A COMPARATIVE LEXICOLOGICAL STUDY



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## Cognancy Patterns in Maguindanaon and English: A Comparative Lexicological Study

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### Abstract

This study examines the comparative lexicology of Maguindanaon and English, with a focus on cognates, analyzing how true cognates and false cognates influence vocabulary learning. Using a qualitative, corpus-based contrastive methodology, bilingual dictionaries, classroom materials, and teacher consultations were employed to compile and annotate a dataset of word pairs. Findings reveal three primary categories of true cognates: phonologically adapted forms (e.g., radio → radyo), Spanish-mediated borrowings (e.g., office → opisina), and direct borrowings (e.g., bus → bus). These cognates retain semantic and lexical equivalence, functioning as scaffolding tools for learners. Conversely, false cognates, such as "eye-ay" ("eye-foot") and "book-buk" ("book-hair"), demonstrate phonological similarity but semantic and categorical divergence, leading to potential misinterpretation. Results underscore the dual role of cognates: while true cognates reduce cognitive load and accelerate acquisition, false cognates risk fossilizing learner errors. The study concludes that vocabulary instruction must strategically balance these dynamics by leveraging true cognates and explicitly addressing false ones.

**Keywords:** *Maguindanaon, English, cognates, lexicology, vocabulary learning*

### Introduction

Lexicology concerns the formation, relationship, and use of words across languages. Within this field, cognacy refers to historically related words that share form and meaning across languages, while false cognates, also known as false friends, appear similar but diverge in meaning and can mislead learners. Studies on bilingual processing reveal that cognates often facilitate recognition but can also induce interference and misinterpretation, particularly under noisy conditions or when semantic divergences occur. For instance, Yang, Grainger, and Lupker (2024) demonstrated that cognates enhance lexical decision-making but are sensitive to signal-to-noise ratios, while Rodd, Melnik, and Rodd (2023) found that cognates influence sentence processing across languages. Similarly, Silva and Barreto (2024) emphasized that cognate-based strategies in EFL classrooms can accelerate vocabulary learning but also risk reinforcing false-friend errors.

At the international level, research consistently confirms that cognate status robustly shapes lexical access, sentence processing, and reading among bilinguals. Yang et al. (2024) provided experimental evidence showing faster and more accurate processing for cognates, but also stronger susceptibility to cross-language competition. Rodd et al. (2023) likewise highlighted that bilinguals rely on cognate cues during reading, which can both facilitate comprehension and increase semantic ambiguity. From a pedagogical perspective, Silva and Barreto (2024) noted that explicit cognate strategies may promote vocabulary growth in EFL learners; however, teachers must carefully address false cognates to avoid misconceptions. Collectively, these studies establish cognancy as both an advantage and a challenge in bilingual and multilingual learning contexts.

Within the Philippines, a multilingual ecology intensifies these issues. King, Borchardt, Dörfler, and Schapper (2024) produced large-scale lexical analyses that cluster Philippine languages by shared cognate sets, highlighting deep historical relatedness. Gonzales (2024) documented how Philippine Englishes evolve through contact with local languages, demonstrating the lexical consequences of sustained multilingualism. Likewise, Fontillas and Bantugan (2024) found morphological and lexical variations in Tagalog nominal and pronominal systems, including forms influenced by borrowing and English contact. These national-level studies underscore the prevalence of both true cognates and false friends for learners navigating between Philippine languages and English.

At the local level in Sultan Kudarat, research indicates that Maguindanaon learners navigate multiple linguistic systems, including Arabic, Filipino/Tagalog, and English, where code-switching and translanguaging are routine practices. Utto-Sulay (2024) reported that students' reading strategies and learning styles significantly affect English comprehension, while Rebugio et al. (2025) revealed that individual learning preferences shape performance in English subjects. In addition, Salipada, Abdula, and Kanakan (2022) highlighted how localized justice and education systems in South Upi integrate linguistic diversity, underscoring the broader implications of language mediation for both conflict resolution and academic contexts. These studies illustrate how Maguindanaon learners in Sultan Kudarat face unique vocabulary challenges shaped by multilingual realities.

Despite these advances, a clear research gap remains. King et al. (2024) mapped cognate clustering on a national scale, Gonzales (2024) analyzed Philippine English contact phenomena, and Fontillas and Bantugan (2024) examined Tagalog morphological variation. However, none of these studies systematically focus on Maguindanaon-English lexicology. In particular, there is no validated corpus of Maguindanaon-English cognates, no diagnostic classification of false friends, and no analysis of their pedagogical implications for Maguindanaon learners. This gap highlights the need for a comparative lexicological study that explicitly addresses Maguindanaon-English cognacy.

This study aims to conduct a comparative analysis of Maguindanaon and English lexicology, with a cognate focus. Specifically, it will compile and classify cognate pairs, near-cognates, and false friends; trace phonological and semantic correspondences; and contextualize these findings in Sultan Kudarat classrooms to develop instructional insights for improving vocabulary teaching among Maguindanaon learners of English.

## Research Questions

Specifically, this study aimed to explore the lexical correspondences between Maguindanaon and English through corpus analysis by addressing the following research questions:

1. What lexical patterns of true cognates can be identified between Maguindanaon and English based on the corpus data?
2. How do false cognates in the corpus illustrate differences in meaning and lexical category between Maguindanaon and English?
3. What insights can be drawn from the corpus regarding the implications of true and false cognates for English vocabulary learning among Maguindanaon speakers?

## Literature Review

Bilingual lexicology reveals that cognates —words that share form and meaning across languages —support second-language vocabulary acquisition. Cognates are processed more efficiently and retained better than non-cognates due to cross-language co-activation (García-Castro et al., 2025). However, similarity can also cause interference.

Guediche et al. (2023) found that background noise increased errors with cognates in Spanish–English bilinguals, while Botezatu (2023) showed that identical cognates triggered both facilitation at the word level and inhibition at the sublexical level, reflecting processing conflict.

Cognates also affect sentence comprehension and reading. In natural reading, they accelerate recognition when meanings align, but false friends create ambiguity. Rodd et al. (2023) found that true cognates facilitated reading, whereas false cognates caused slowdowns. This supports evidence that bilinguals activate both languages in parallel. Washington and Wiley (2023) further reported that French–English bilinguals integrated cross-language words into coherent sentences, but false friends disrupted comprehension, highlighting the need to resolve semantic competition.

Applied linguistics research explores cognates in instruction. Hicks (2024) found that Swiss German students taught to recognize English–German orthographic analogies learned vocabulary more effectively than peers. This confirms that cognate awareness training accelerates learning. However, false cognates pose risks. Uban et al. (2020) distinguished "soft" and "hard" false friends to show which pairs most mislead learners. Effective teaching must highlight helpful cognates while addressing deceptive ones through contrastive activities.

The Philippines provides a rich ground for cognate study. King et al. (2024) found strong lexical clustering among Philippine languages, reflecting Austronesian roots. Colonial history introduced Spanish and English loans, resulting in numerous cross-language cognates. Fontillas and Bantugan (2024) demonstrated that Bataan Tagalog employs English-derived forms and phonological adaptations, illustrating how contact influences the everyday lexicon. These findings underscore both inherited and borrowed cognates in Philippine languages, including Maguindanaon.

Continued English contact has produced multiple Philippine Englishes. Gonzales (2024) described these as layered varieties blending English with local languages. Hybrid registers, such as Taglish or Lannang, mix native English words into local forms. Some meanings shift, creating false friends, as in the use of "high blood" to mean "angry." Gonzales argued that Philippine Englishes exhibit ongoing lexical convergence, where English terms are locally redefined, thereby shaping the dynamics of cognates and false cognates.

At the local level, Utto-Sulay (2024) found that Maguindanaon students employ diverse reading strategies and learning styles, but their performance did not align neatly with their preferences. This suggests flexible adaptation, possibly aided by multilingual backgrounds. Rebugio et al. (2025) also reported that visual and solitary learning styles were common among Sultan Kudarat students. However, these styles did not strongly predict performance, indicating that varied instructional inputs help accommodate learners.

These studies reveal how Maguindanaon learners navigate multilingual contexts through code-switching and strategy adaptation. Teachers often serve as mediators between languages, explaining English concepts in Filipino or Maguindanaon. This context makes cognates valuable scaffolds but also highlights the risks of false cognates in routine communication. Instruction must therefore combine support for true cognates with explicit correction of misleading forms.

Despite this body of work, a clear gap remains. Studies have examined cognates in Philippine languages broadly (King et al., 2024), English contact phenomena (Gonzales, 2024), and local pedagogy (Utto-Sulay, 2024; Rebugio et al., 2025). However, no systematic analysis exists on Maguindanaon–English cognates and false cognates. This study addresses that gap by compiling and classifying Maguindanaon–English pairs, tracing phonological and semantic correspondences, and identifying implications for vocabulary learning in Sultan Kudarat classrooms.

## Methodology

### Research Design

This study adopted a qualitative corpus-based contrastive methodology to investigate true and false cognates between Maguindanaon and English. A contrastive framework, as described by Levshina (2021), is particularly suitable for identifying structural similarities and differences across languages because it situates cross-linguistic comparison within empirical data. Corpus linguistics emphasizes systematic, evidence-based examination of authentic language, enabling replicable and transparent findings (Stefanowitsch, 2020).

### Procedure

The corpus was compiled from bilingual dictionaries, educational materials, and classroom references used in Sultan Kudarat to ensure ecological validity. The dataset included both true cognates and false cognates. Words were included if they were frequently used in classroom, community, or institutional contexts and had clear semantic relevance. Excluded were archaic, highly specialized, or rarely encountered lexical items to ensure representativeness and practical applicability. In total, 26 word pairs were identified, consisting of 5 true cognates and 21 false cognates. As Olejniczak (2018) notes, corpus-aided qualitative text analysis benefits from careful selection of language data to represent diverse registers. Thus, words spanning institutional, technological, and everyday domains were included to capture the breadth of cognate interaction.

Data were collected through the systematic alignment of English words with their Maguindanaon counterparts, using bilingual lexicons and supported by consultations with local teachers for validation. Each word pair was annotated for lexical category, semantic equivalence or divergence, and phonological adaptation process. Annotation principles followed best practices in corpus construction, which emphasize accuracy, context awareness, and consistent categorization (Olejniczak, 2018).

### Data Analysis

The analysis applied contrastive categorization, a method commonly used in translation and bilingual research. True cognates were grouped into phonologically adapted forms, Spanish-mediated borrowings, and direct borrowings, while false cognates were examined for semantic divergence and grammatical category shifts. Rabadán, Labrador, and Ramón (2009) highlight that such contrastive corpus methods allow thematic grouping and interpretation of linguistic universals across languages. This analytical strategy was therefore appropriate for identifying recurrent lexical patterns.

Although the corpus in this study was relatively small and manually constructed, it applied principles of corpus methodology, such as wordlists and tabulation, to detect patterns. As Olejniczak (2018) emphasizes, even small corpora can reveal meaningful patterns when analyzed systematically. Wordlist comparison helped identify adaptation processes and domain clustering, while concordance-like categorization supported deeper interpretation of lexical function.

### Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations were observed by ensuring respect for the cultural and linguistic identity of Maguindanaon speakers. Teachers who assisted in validation participated voluntarily. Since the study analyzed linguistic data rather than personal information, risks were minimal. Nevertheless, interpretations were framed to highlight the pedagogical potential of cognates rather than to construct deficit views of Maguindanaon learners. This ethical framing aligns with Levshina (2021), who notes that corpus typology research must be sensitive to sociolinguistic contexts.

## Results and Discussion

Table 1. *Lexical Patterns of True Cognates Between Maguindanaon and English*

<i>English Word</i>	<i>Maguindanaon Word</i>	<i>Type of Cognate</i>	<i>Adaptation Process</i>
police	pulis	Phonologically adapted	English 'c' → 's'; simplified form
radio	radio	Phonologically adapted	English 'ra-dio' → 'rad-yo'; vowel shift
president	president	Spanish-mediated borrowing	Borrowed via Spanish; suffix retained
office	opisina	Spanish-mediated borrowing	Borrowed via Spanish; morphological expansion
bus	bus	Direct borrowing	No adaptation; retained original form

The corpus analysis revealed several lexical patterns of true cognates between Maguindanaon and English. These patterns primarily emerged from loanwords adopted during periods of Spanish and American colonial influence, particularly in the domains of governance, education, technology, and transportation. Words such as "pulis" (police), "radyo" (radio), "presidente" (president), "opisina" (office), and "bus" (bus) were consistently identified as true cognates. These terms maintained both semantic equivalence and lexical category alignment across the two languages, demonstrating minimal phonological adaptation aside from the replacement of certain consonants or vowels to suit Maguindanaon phonotactic structures.

A clear pattern was observed in the phonological adaptation of borrowed terms. For instance, the English word "radio" became "radyo" in Maguindanaon, reflecting a phoneme substitution that aligns with local orthography while preserving pronunciation. Similarly, "office" was adapted as "opisina," influenced by Spanish mediation, but still retaining the original semantic field. These examples

highlight how borrowed cognates undergo predictable sound shifts without significant semantic divergence.

Another pattern is the functional domain clustering of true cognates. Most identified cognates belong to institutional, administrative, and technological categories, reflecting the historical introduction of modern governance and education during colonial rule. This domain-specific clustering suggests that lexical borrowing occurred primarily in contexts where Maguindanaon lacked equivalent indigenous terms, thereby necessitating the adoption of foreign vocabulary.

Additionally, the corpus data showed evidence of direct lexical retention without modification. Words like bus remain phonetically identical in both English and Maguindanaon, suggesting straightforward borrowing facilitated by globalization and modern usage. Such unaltered cognates exemplify how contemporary loanwords require little phonological adaptation due to the increasing familiarity of Maguindanaon speakers with English pronunciation.

Overall, the lexical patterns of true cognates between Maguindanaon and English can be summarized into three categories: (1) phonologically adapted cognates (e.g., radio → radyo), (2) Spanish-mediated borrowings that entered Maguindanaon but retained English equivalence (e.g., office → opisina), and (3) direct lexical borrowings with no changes (e.g., bus). These patterns illustrate how historical and sociolinguistic contexts shaped the integration of English vocabulary into Maguindanaon while maintaining semantic and categorical consistency.

Table 2. *False Cognates Illustrating Differences in Meaning and Lexical Category Between Maguindanaon and English*

English Word	Maguindanaon Word	English Meaning	Maguindanaon Meaning	Type of Cognancy
eye	ay	eye	foot	False cognate
tooth	tot	tooth	fart	False cognate
mama	mama	mother	boy	False cognate
papa	papa	father	coconut leaves	False cognate
guy	gay	male person	day	False cognate
book	buk	book	hair	False cognate
banner	baner	banner	chasing	False cognate
ten	ten	ten	who	False cognate
log	lag	log	to walk	False cognate
date	det	date	thing	False cognate
sing	sing	to sing	to peek	False cognate
sang	sang	sang (past of sing)	bikini area	False cognate
put	pot	put	glutinous rice	False cognate
pass	pas	pass	face	False cognate
buy	bai	buy	girl	False cognate
look	luk	look	center	False cognate
tie	tai	tie	feces	False cognate
so	sou	so	soup	False cognate
the	da	the	nothing	False cognate
shy	sha-i	shy	here	False cognate
lone	lon	alone	leaf	False cognate

The corpus analysis identified a significant number of false cognates between Maguindanaon and English. Unlike true cognates, these pairs are characterized by phonetic similarity but semantic divergence, which can lead to potential confusion for learners. Examples include eye (English, "ocular organ") versus ay (Maguindanaon, "foot"), tooth (English, "dental structure") versus tot (Maguindanaon, "fart"), and book (English, "written text") versus buk (Maguindanaon, "hair"). Such mismatches show how coincidental sound patterns across unrelated language families can mislead learners into assuming false equivalence.

A notable pattern is the lexical category mismatch between English and Maguindanaon false cognates. For instance, the English verb sing corresponds to the Maguindanaon verb sing meaning "to peek," while the English verb put aligns with the Maguindanaon noun pot, meaning "glutinous rice." These category shifts underscore that false cognates not only differ in meaning but also in grammatical function, further complicating learners' ability to transfer knowledge across the two languages.

Another emerging pattern is semantic divergence within standard familial and cultural terms. For example, while "mama" and "papa" in English denote "mother" and "father," in Maguindanaon, they mean "boy" and "coconut leaves," respectively. Similarly, guy (English, "male person") becomes gay (Maguindanaon, "day"), creating high potential for miscommunication in both everyday conversation and classroom contexts. These divergences highlight how false cognates can cause pragmatic confusion, particularly when learners attempt to rely on terms that sound familiar.

The results also indicate that false cognates are distributed across multiple lexical domains such as nouns (book–buk), verbs (log–lag), adjectives (shy–sha-i), and even function words (the–da). This distribution suggests that phonological coincidences occur widely across the lexicon, not limited to a specific semantic field. The randomness of these false cognate formations is consistent with the distinct origins of Maguindanaon (Austronesian) and English (Indo-European).

From an educational perspective, these findings highlight the importance of explicit vocabulary instruction that enables learners to distinguish between true and false cognates. Teachers can highlight these problematic pairs through contrastive analysis exercises and contextual usage tasks, guiding learners to recognize when sound similarities do not signal shared meaning. By fostering metalinguistic awareness, educators can reduce misinterpretation and improve learners' accuracy in both oral and written English.

Overall, the analysis demonstrates that while true cognates are valuable resources for vocabulary scaffolding, false cognates pose a substantial challenge that must be systematically addressed in Maguindanaon-English language teaching.

### *The Implications of True and False Cognates for English*

#### *Vocabulary Learning Among Maguindanaon Speakers*

The corpus analysis revealed two contrasting yet interconnected patterns of lexical similarity: true cognates, which retain semantic and categorical equivalence across Maguindanaon and English, and false cognates, which diverge in meaning and often in lexical category despite phonological resemblance. True cognates such as *pulis* (police),  *radyo* (radio), and  *bus* (bus) show minimal adaptation and provide learners with accessible entry points into English vocabulary. Conversely, false cognates such as "eye-ay" (eye-foot), "book-buk" (book-hair), and "papa-papa" (father-coconut leaves) illustrate how misleading similarities can create obstacles for comprehension and communication.

True cognates offer a facilitative effect for Maguindanaon learners of English. Because of shared forms and meanings, they reduce the cognitive load involved in learning new words, enabling faster recall and stronger vocabulary retention. Learners encountering words like  *presidente* (president) or  *opisina* (office) benefit from pre-existing semantic associations. These findings confirm that cognates serve as bridges for lexical transfer, making English vocabulary appear less foreign and more approachable. This can enhance learners' confidence and willingness to engage with English texts.

At the same time, false cognates introduce the risk of false transfer, where learners assume semantic equivalence based on sound similarity. For example, a learner may mistakenly use "buk" to mean "book" when in Maguindanaon it actually means "hair." Such errors not only affect lexical accuracy but may also cause pragmatic breakdowns in classroom or interpersonal communication. The presence of verbs like  *sing* ("to peek") versus English  *sing* compounds the risk of misinterpretation, as learners may conflate two distinct actions due to phonological overlap.

A striking feature of the false cognates is the frequent lexical category shift. English verbs such as "put" and "pass" map onto Maguindanaon nouns "pot" (meaning "glutinous rice") and "pas" (meaning "face"), respectively. This mismatch complicates vocabulary learning since learners must adjust not only to new meanings but also to changes in grammatical function. Such mismatches require higher levels of metalinguistic awareness, where learners consciously monitor both the semantic and syntactic dimensions of word usage.

True cognates in the corpus clustered around administrative, technological, and institutional domains, reflecting historical borrowing during colonial governance and modernization. False cognates, however, cut across basic vocabulary domains such as family ( *mama*,  *papa*), body parts ( *eye-ay*), and everyday actions ( *log-lag*,  *sing-sing*). This distribution suggests that true cognates primarily enrich academic and formal registers. In contrast, false cognates interfere more heavily in everyday communication, where learners are most likely to depend on intuitive associations.

From an instructional perspective, true cognates can be strategically integrated into contrastive vocabulary lessons. Highlighting familiar words such as  *radyo* and  *bus* early in instruction can build learners' confidence and demonstrate the tangible connections between Maguindanaon and English. Teachers may use cognates as scaffolding tools, allowing learners to map prior knowledge onto new linguistic contexts, thereby accelerating vocabulary development and comprehension.

In contrast, false cognates require explicit corrective instruction. Left unaddressed, they can fossilize into persistent learner errors. Teachers can design activities where learners identify, compare, and contrast false cognates, using context-based tasks to reinforce accurate meanings. For example, classroom exercises could ask learners to differentiate between "buk" (hair) and "book" (reading material) in sentence contexts. By emphasizing metalinguistic strategies such as noticing, comparing, and contextualizing, educators can minimize the disruptive effects of false cognates.

In summary, the corpus reveals that true and false cognates have a dual impact on Maguindanaon learners of English. True cognates facilitate faster acquisition and provide confidence-building lexical anchors, while false cognates introduce risks of semantic misinterpretation and category confusion. The insights drawn suggest that successful vocabulary instruction for Maguindanaon learners must adopt a balanced approach, leveraging the advantages of true cognates while systematically addressing the pitfalls of false cognates. This dual strategy can foster more accurate, confident, and context-sensitive English language learning.

This study investigated the implications of true and false cognates in Maguindanaon and English vocabulary learning through corpus analysis. True cognates such as  *pulis*,  *radyo*,  *presidente*,  *opisina*, and  *bus* retain both meaning and lexical category, facilitating more effortless transfer from L1 to L2. In contrast, false cognates such as  *eye-ay*,  *book-buk*,  *mama-mama*, and  *sing-sing* share phonological similarity but diverge semantically (for example, "hair" versus "book" or "peek" versus "sing"), creating potential confusion for

learners. These results highlight the dual influence cognates have on vocabulary acquisition.

Consistent with broader bilingualism research, true cognates have been shown to provide apparent facilitatory effects in vocabulary learning by reducing cognitive load and leveraging existing linguistic knowledge. For instance, Gonzalo Garcia-Castro et al. (2025) found that cognateness enhances lexical acquisition, particularly in languages with limited exposure. This suggests that cognates serve as strong anchors in bilingual learners' lexicons.

False cognates can mislead learners into erroneous semantic assumptions. The presence of numerous false friends in everyday vocabulary, such as familial or basic terms, poses a significant risk for miscommunication. This finding aligns with evidence from computational linguistics, which emphasizes the importance of measuring semantic divergence to identify "hard" versus "soft" false friends that differ in their potential for misinterpretation.

True cognates in the corpus clustered around institutional and technological terminology, reflecting historical borrowing patterns in educational and governance contexts. On the other hand, false cognates were prevalent in basic, everyday domains such as body parts, common verbs, and family terms. This indicates that they may interfere with routine communication more often than with formal discourse. This domain-specific distribution parallels findings from Hiligaynon–Filipino cognate studies, which report similar patterns of total resemblance and misleading similarity.

Within the Maguindanaon context, Utto and Lumogdang (2025) highlighted multiple linguistic challenges faced by learners, including pronunciation anxiety and difficulties in code-switching between Maguindanaon and English. These challenges may exacerbate confusion arising from false cognates. Similarly, Manakan et al. (2023) found that limited vocabulary and pronunciation gaps hinder speaking proficiency, which potentially compounds the misleading effect of false cognates.

These findings support the intentional integration of true cognates into vocabulary instruction. For example, Gonzalo Garcia-Castro et al. (2025) found that cognateness facilitates lexical acquisition, especially for words in languages with lower exposure, because parallel activation from both languages boosts learning effectiveness. Therefore, Maguindanaon-English cognates like *presidente* (president) and *bus* may serve as practical scaffolding tools to support learners' confidence and vocabulary retention.

To counteract the interference of false cognates, explicit instruction is imperative. Drawing upon the computational concept of "falseness" (Uban et al., 2020), educators can design contrastive exercises that highlight divergence in meaning despite similarity in form. In practice, this might involve juxtaposing "buk" (meaning "hair") with "book" (meaning "reading material") in sentence contexts and encouraging reflective comparison among learners.

In conclusion, this corpus-based study affirms the dual nature of cognates in vocabulary learning. True cognates act as facilitators, while false cognates present significant educational challenges. Future research could expand the corpus to include learner error analysis or longitudinal tracking of cognate-related misunderstandings. Furthermore, computational tools for measuring semantic divergence, such as those discussed by Uban et al. (2020), could be adapted to assist in curriculum development and learner diagnostics.

## Conclusions

The findings of this study reveal that cognates between Maguindanaon and English function as both facilitators and barriers in vocabulary learning, depending on whether they are true or false cognates. True cognates such as *pulis*,  *radyo*, and *bus* retain semantic and categorical equivalence, making them effective scaffolding tools that ease lexical transfer, reduce cognitive load, and build learners' confidence. In contrast, false cognates such as "*eye-ay*" and "*book-buk*" exhibit phonological resemblance but diverge in meaning and lexical category, posing risks of misinterpretation and communication breakdowns. The patterns further show that true cognates cluster around institutional and technological domains, while false cognates dominate everyday vocabulary, where confusion is more likely. These results underscore the importance of a dual instructional approach: leveraging true cognates as lexical anchors while explicitly addressing false cognates through contrastive and context-based teaching.

Based on the study's findings, the following recommendations are proposed to enhance the teaching and learning of English vocabulary among Maguindanaon learners. Teachers should highlight familiar words such as *pulis*,  *radyo*, and *bus* early in instruction to build learner confidence and reduce the cognitive load of acquiring new vocabulary. Also, A compiled set of true cognates from Maguindanaon and English can serve as a valuable reference resource, helping learners identify systematic lexical connections and reinforce vocabulary retention. Teachers might also consider presenting side-by-side comparisons (e.g., *book-buk*, *eye-ay*) to help learners recognize misleading similarities and prevent semantic errors. Exercises such as sentence construction or short dialogues can demonstrate to learners how English and Maguindanaon false cognates differ in honest communication, thereby strengthening semantic accuracy. Instructional modules should leverage true cognates for facilitation while simultaneously addressing false cognates to avoid misinterpretation. Lastly, teachers can encourage learners to reflect on how words function differently across languages, fostering critical thinking about vocabulary and reducing reliance on surface-level phonological similarities.

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