

“OTHER” PHILIPPINE LANGUAGES IN THE THIRD MILLENNIUM¹

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INTRODUCTION

The issue of linguistic diversity continues to generate interest and controversy on a variety of fronts. National governments planning for social and economic development may work on the assumption that “less is more” — that the fewer languages to be dealt with the better. Linguists and human rights activists, on the other hand, are increasingly decrying the decrease in the number of languages of the world. Speakers of languages directly concerned may view the prospects of language loss with remorse, anticipation, or ambivalence. The dawn of the Third Millennium provides an opportune time for re-assessment and re-evaluation of the dynamics of linguistic diversity along with its effects on threatened language communities, on larger societies, and on humankind as a whole. In this paper I first present an overview of the current linguistic diversity in the Philippines. Next I look at the issue of language endangerment from a global and then a more local perspective. And finally I consider the record of the Philippines with regard to its languages, and some possible directions for the dawn of the Third Millennium.

WHAT ARE “OTHER” PHILIPPINE LANGUAGES?

My first task is to define what is meant by “other” Philippine languages. Very simply, I take it to mean Philippine languages other than Filipino (the national language, as decreed by the 1987 Constitution) or Tagalog (the language of the indigenous Tagalog ethnic community which provides the base for Filipino). This definition rules out English, an official language of the country, as well as Spanish and varieties of Chinese. More specifically, “other” Philippine languages include any member of the Austronesian language family other than Filipino or Tagalog spoken by an identifiable, indigenous speech community in the Philippines. Given this definition, how many languages are we considering?

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It may come as a surprise that a definitive answer to this question cannot be given. Reid's 1971 *Philippine minor languages* states that there are over 80 indigenous languages spoken in the Philippines. He lists eight which are "usually labeled major, being ranked by number of mother-tongue speakers. They are Cebuano, Tagalog, Hiligaynon, Ilokano, Bicolano, Waray, Kapampangan and Pangasinan. The other languages are generally known as minor languages" (vii). Curtis McFarland's *Linguistic atlas of the Philippines* lists 118 language varieties in his outline entitled "A possible subgrouping of Philippine languages" (1980:59-61).² This figure counts as distinct languages each member of what he classifies as L-complexes, language clusters such as Ifugao, Kalinga, and Manobo. McFarland states that his listing should be taken as "highly tentative, subject to correction and improvement by other scholars" (10). The 1996 (13th) edition of *Ethnologue*, edited by Barbara Grimes, lists 171 languages for the Philippines. Of these, 162 are living, spoken Austronesian languages indigenous to the Philippines. Why the difference between the earlier figures by McFarland and the more recent figures by Grimes, when both authors claim to be using "lack of mutual intelligibility" as the distinguishing characteristic between languages (as opposed to dialects)? A comparison of the two lists reveals that the *Ethnologue* "slices the pie" into much smaller pieces. For instance, McFarland lists three varieties of Ifugao, whereas Grimes lists four. McFarland lists four varieties of Kalinga, whereas Grimes lists eight. For McFarland's eight (Central) Manobo languages, Grimes lists 13. And there are more examples of the same. McFarland expected his own listing to be "improved upon by other scholars", and clearly Grimes has had access to more as well as more recent data. But have we really discovered 50 more Philippine languages in the past 15 years?³ Grimes addresses this issue in a general way in her introduction, where she states that the addition of "new languages" in recent editions of the *Ethnologue* are language varieties that for the most part "had been thought to be dialects of another language, and are now known to be distinct" (vii). She maintains that "until we receive information to the contrary, we assume all dialects listed under a single language can use the same literature and educational materials" (ix).

So I ask again, how many "other" Philippine languages are we considering? By any source we consult the answer is considerable.⁴ Based on the 1996 *Ethnologue* the answer appears to be 162 (171 minus Tagalog, three extinct, and five non-Philippine languages). Nine of these languages have one million or more speakers (adding Magindanaon to the list of eight major languages above). Twenty-nine have at least 100,000 speakers, and 96 have at least 10,000.

WHAT TYPES AND FUNCTIONS DO THESE LANGUAGES REPRESENT?

Language types and functions

It is instructive to note that not all languages are of the same type or are used for the same functions. One of the clearest discussions of language types and functions is in Ferguson's 1971 article (originally published in 1967) "National sociolinguistic profile formulas". Building on the work of Stewart and others, Ferguson distinguishes five major language types. These are standardized languages, vernaculars, pidgins, creoles, and classical languages. Of languages known in the Philippines, English and Filipino are clear examples of standardized languages, Agta language varieties are clear examples of vernaculars, Chavacano is a creole, and Latin is a classical language. In addition to these five language types, Ferguson recognizes seven language functions. These include in-group communication (as with most of the languages of the indigenous cultural communities), official purposes (as with English and Filipino), wider communication within the country (as with Filipino, Ilocano, Cebuano, and others), medium of instruction (mostly English and Filipino), religious purposes (Arabic in this country), international lingua franca (English), and widely studied as a subject in schools (as opposed to being used as a medium of instruction). The different language types are typically associated with particular functions. Standardized languages, for instance, are more likely to be used for official purposes and as a medium of instruction. Vernaculars are more likely to be used for in-group purposes, marking a particular speech community as what we would call in the Philippines a distinct "cultural community". It is perhaps worth pointing out that there is some ambiguity as to how languages are popularly referred to in the Philippines when it comes to standardized versus vernacular types. The confusion is compounded somewhat further by the use of the term "regional language". I will return to this issue below.

Unifying and separatist functions and ethnicity

In addition to the seven language functions recognized by Ferguson, it is useful to bear in mind two "symbolic" functions discussed by Garvin and Mathiot (1968) in their consideration of standard languages as linguistic correlates of urban cultures. Garvin and Mathiot called these two functions "unifying" and "separatist", and I would like to suggest here that as markers of identity these two functions pertain not only to "standard languages" but to all language varieties. The unifying function emphasizes the individual speaker's membership in a larger community, whereas the separatist function emphasizes the distinctness of that community. This is the essential inclusive versus exclusive dichotomy, characteristically grammaticized in Philippine languages, as in the Filipino phrases *tayong lahat* "all of us" versus *kami lang* "just us". As long as this basic inclusive/exclusive distinction is important for human identity, one might presume that we will continue to have distinct language varieties.

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Another way of conceptualizing the unifying versus separatist functions of language is to say that language is a marker of ethnicity. This is obviously the case in the Philippine context, where in a nationwide survey of ethnic attitudes Rodolfo Bulatao (1973, 1974) found that 95% of his respondents claimed a particular ethnic identity on the basis of language first learned (cited in Gonzalez and Bautista 1986:48).

Fishman defines ethnicity as "peopleness" — an authentic group identity. Specifically he says that ethnicity is "belonging or pertaining to a phenomenologically complete, separate, historically deep cultural collectivity...polarized on perceived authenticity" (Fishman 1989b:216-17). As long as people yearn for "roots" or "connectedness with the past" ethnicity will remain an important part of our total identity. And although there is not a one-to-one correspondence between ethnicity and language, the forces linking the two are so strong that humankind will certainly maintain a plurality of languages indefinitely.

LANGUAGE ENDANGERMENT AS A WORLDWIDE TREND

In spite of our certainty that linguistic diversity will and must persist, one cannot help but marvel at the sheer number of languages in the Philippines. Given this high number, the variety of language types represented, and the variety of functions that these types represent, it is tempting to ask the question: How long can all this last? It is constructive to consider first what is happening on a global scale with language diversity, before looking at some Philippine distinctives. From most accounts, language endangerment on a global scale is both pervasive and destructive.

Pervasive

Linguists and others have been increasingly concerned in recent years with the extent of what has come to be known as "language death" which results when there are no more native speakers of a particular language. This has been a serious matter of concern in North America. Krauss 1992 states that 90% of the languages in Alaska and the Soviet North are moribund — meaning they are no longer being learned by children as a mother tongue. Including Canada and the U.S. as a whole, the percentage of moribund languages remains as high as 80%. The situation for Central and South America is apparently much better for language maintenance, so that the percentage of languages that are likely moribund in the Americas combined is closer to 33%. The situation for Africa, Asia, and the Pacific, where 81% of the world's languages are, is much less documented, but Krauss estimates that as many as 50% will become extinct in the next century. Actually, Krauss's view is even more pessimistic, given his belief that languages can only be considered "safe" from extinction when they have at least one of two forces in their favor: official state support and a very large number of speakers (7). Official state support accounted for only around 55 languages of the world as of 1990. And extending the "safety-in-numbers" limit down to as few as 100,000 speakers will only account for about 600 languages of the world. This leads Krauss to the prediction that "the coming century will see either the death or the doom of 90% of mankind's languages" (7).

Once we accept the notion that languages are dying out today at an unprecedented rate, we still must ask ourselves: Why does this matter? So what if people speak fewer languages in the next millennium than they did in the last? Wouldn't that be an improvement — a move toward global understanding?

Destructive

It is the view of many scholars and speakers of endangered languages that language death is not only a pervasive trend, but also a destructive one. There are several perspectives from which language death can be viewed as destructive. One of these I will call intellectual, one biological, and one sociological.

From a purely academic perspective, the loss of a language is lamentable for the loss it represents to the formulation of linguistic theory, or rather more importantly, to the understanding of language in general. To borrow an example from Hale's 1992 article "Language endangerment and the human value of linguistic diversity", suppose that English were to become the only language for the study of general human grammatical competence. We could only guess at the nature of what could vary in human languages and what was universal, and we know that we would miss an enormous amount (35). But more serious than the handicap that faces us for the formulation of linguistic models or the understanding of language in general is the loss we face in terms of what we could call "intellectual wealth". Again in Hale's words, it is "the simple truth that language — in the general multifaceted sense — embodies the intellectual wealth of the people who use it" (36). Language is inextricably bound with a group's culture and worldview, and with the loss of a language we inevitably lose part of what any particular group of speakers has to offer humankind in general. We lose a means of classification. We lose a means of interacting. We lose particular art forms that are based on the structures of the language in question. We lose part of our human knowledge and experience.⁵

Another way of viewing language death, and the resultant decrease in linguistic diversity, is from a biological perspective. It is perhaps this perspective that is most often employed in academic discussions of language endangerment, so it is worth considering briefly here. Krauss states that "Language endangerment is significantly comparable to — and related to — endangerment of biological species in the natural world" (1992:4). He then proceeds to compare what we know of language endangerment to what we know of "endangered" and "threatened" species in the biological world. The most endangered category in the biological world is that of mammals, with 326 of 4,400 mammal species currently listed as endangered or threatened. "Thus, 7.4% of mammals and 2.7% of birds are endangered or threatened" (1992:7). He says that due to difficulties of actually getting a species listed as threatened or endangered, the actual numbers may be more like 10% of mammals and 5% of birds. Faced with such a situation, Krauss asks, "Why is there so much more concern over this relatively mild threat to the world's biological diversity than over the far worse threat to its linguistic diversity, and why are we linguists so much quieter about it than biologists?" (1992:7-8). I agree with Krauss that the loss of a language diminishes our world in much the

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same way as the loss of an animal species, and that it is appropriate to mourn the loss of the Dicanay Agta language just as it is to mourn the likely fate of the Palawan mousedeer. But I cannot help but see some significant differences between a language and a biological species. The obvious difference is that for the most part, except under the most extreme circumstances, people actually survive the death of a language.⁶ Language loss can generate ambivalence and distress in the lives of those who analyze its effects.⁷ But the fact remains that language death does not equal human death. Except in the most extreme circumstances, people live on. So while the biological metaphor may be an apt one for understanding global linguistic diversity, it is not a perfect one, and we must not lose sight of that in our more sentimental (some would say "humane") moments. It is not a realistic or worthy or even admirable goal to perpetuate all linguistic varieties in their present forms. Hale touches on this when he states that life implies change. "A living tradition implies change," he says. "And it is precisely the development of new traditions which is most consonant with the human purpose. And it is precisely where local languages are viable that new traditions develop" (1992:41). A more worthy goal for us, as Hale states, is to ensure a safe environment for diversity in the world of people.

This leads to the third perspective from which language loss is lamentable, and that is from a sociological perspective. Fishman argues that "Language shift of any kind...is an indicator of dislocation. It implies the breakdown of a previously established societal allocation of functions" (1989b:212). Linguistic dislocation, then, is indicative of other types of dislocation — be they physical and demographic, social, cultural, or a combination of these. The dislocation can be a slow, steady process, but in many instances it is an excruciatingly painful one. Extremely great dislocation results from "conquest, genocide, or massive population resettlement such that locals are swamped out, engulfed, deracinated and decimated by intruders, be they conquerors or settlers" (1989b:212). In his 1991 book, *Reversing language shift*, Fishman explains that the loss of a language is the loss of a "rooted identity" which is "concretely mirrored in the concomitant destruction of intimacy, family and community" (1991:4). Language loss is often merely one indicator of far greater social disruption and real human tragedy.⁸

ARE "OTHER PHILIPPINE LANGUAGES" ENDANGERED?

At present, the Philippines ranks 10th in the world in terms of number of indigenous languages spoken within its borders (Krauss 1992:6 citing Ethnologue 1988). It is only natural to ask then: How many of these languages are currently endangered? Consider Krauss's two criteria for a "safe" language — official support and very large number of speakers. By the first of these two factors we are forced to conclude that Filipino is the only Philippine language that is not endangered. If we base our answer on the second criterion we can reasonably argue that the nine languages with a million or more speakers should also be included on the "safe" list. If we drop down to 100,000 speakers for our safety-in-numbers cutoff, we

come up with 29 languages. This would mean that 80% of the indigenous languages currently spoken in the Philippines are endangered, which is not too far from Krauss's pessimistic prediction. If this were true, we might expect the *Ethnologue* of 2095 to list as few as 15 living Austronesian languages spoken in the Philippines. I believe we will undoubtedly see a decline in the number of indigenous languages spoken in the Philippines in the next 100 years, but I am uncomfortable with such a dire prediction. Are there other social factors to be considered apart from official state support and raw numbers of speakers? Christina Bratt Paulston, in her 1994 book *Minority languages in a multilingual setting*, has claimed that "ethnic groups within a modern nation-state, given opportunity and incentive, typically shift to the language of the dominant group" (9). In analyzing why this is so she has found four forms of "social mobilization" that influence particular linguistic outcomes of prolonged contact of ethnic groups within one nation. The possible outcomes range from language maintenance to bilingualism to language shift. The four forms of social mobilization she outlines are: (1) ethnicity, (2) ethnic movement, (3) ethnic nationalism, and (4) geographic nationalism. After considering a number of instances of both language maintenance and shift, Paulston concludes that only nationalism is a strong enough force to maintain a language. If she is right, then once again we come down to a secure future for Filipino, with just about every other language at risk. Possible additional languages with a secure future are the regional languages Cebuano and Ilocano, for which it could be argued there is nationalistic-like support.

Most Filipinos are currently multilingual, and do not have to give up one language to learn another. Paulston argues, however, that "(m)aintained group bilingualism is unusual, if opportunity of access to the dominant language is present and incentives, especially socioeconomic, motivate a shift to the dominant language" (1994:12). Comparing the situation to Aesop's fable of the wind and the sun competing to get a man to shed his cloak, she claims that in times of economic or political hardship ethnic groups may cling to language as a resource to be used in the battle against oppression, whereas the same groups may readily give up their language in times of economic prosperity (1994:23). Thus we might predict that a brightening economic future for the Philippines will mean the death of many of its languages.

But I am still uneasy with such dire predictions for the majority of the indigenous languages of the Philippines. A factor that Paulston mentions almost in passing is the degree of "ethnic pride or ethnic stubbornness" which different groups exhibit toward culture maintenance (1994:16). My perception, mostly from anecdotal evidence, is that there remains a good deal of such ethnic pride or stubbornness in some parts of the Philippines.⁹ Where language shift does not take place, Paulston claims this is primarily for three reasons: (1) self-imposed boundary maintenance, (2) externally imposed boundaries, and (3) a diglossic-like situation where the two languages exist in a situation of functional distribution (1994:20-21). This last situation is precisely how Filipino bilingualism has been characterized by its own scholars.

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Gonzalez (1980) summarized the current situation of functional distribution in the Philippines as follows:

The Filipino is, in reality, multilingual, using a vernacular in his intimate familial interaction; a lingua franca (a regional vernacular and increasingly Tagalog-based Filipino akin to the language of the Greater Manila area) in his urban communities and in his transactions with other ethnic groups; English in business, industry, academia, for negotiations in international circles and as a language of wider communication.

The Filipino's languages are thus *in complementary distribution* and will most likely remain so for a while. For as long as the Filipino does not uproot himself from his original region, then his local vernacular is assured of its place and its domain. He loses this vernacular only in the process of deethnicization that inevitably follows migration and urbanization. (1980:149, italics added)

What Gonzalez wrote in 1980 could basically be repeated today. For nearly 20 years his characterization of the multilingual Filipino has held. My guess is that it will continue to hold through the dawn of the Third Millennium. It would appear, then, that the Philippines still has some interesting puzzles to offer to the world of sociolinguistics. Why is it, for instance, that the diglossic situation in the Philippines appears to be so stable, and is this situation likely to continue? Trends noted and principles formulated in a North American or European context can profitably be compared with research in this Southeast Asian nation. Another obvious question to ask is why English, the most "destructive" language of any in the world (Krauss 1992:5), simply has not endangered the languages of the Philippines? Surely a major factor is that the indigenous population has never been numerically overwhelmed by an in-migration of native speakers of English. But perhaps there are additional reasons that lead to a peculiarly Filipino multilingualism where use of languages continues to be characterized by "complementary distribution".

Probably no one would argue that English will displace a number of Philippine languages in the immediate future. There is, however, an undeniably greater danger that smaller Philippine languages will be displaced by larger Philippine languages. Such a possibility has indeed been noted by Gonzalez (1980) as well as by Pascasio (1996). I have seen for myself such a process taking place in two language groups of Palawan: Central Tagbanwa and Agutaynen.

TWO EXAMPLES FROM PALAWAN

Central Tagbanwa — moribund

Before massive in-migration began in the 1940s, the population of the northern part of the main island of Palawan consisted of people who have come to be known as "naturales" or "Tagbanwa". Several distinct Tagbanwa languages are spoken in Palawan today, from Aborlan in the south to Calamian on the northern islands. Hence the name "Central Tagbanwa" for those located on the northern main island, between these other two communities. Today there are approximately 800 to 1000 Tagbanwas remaining in this central area. Perhaps only 200 of these are mother tongue speakers of the Central Tagbanwa language, with the majority of these being older people (Scebold 1992:1). It is difficult to find a "pure" Central Tagbanwa community today, meaning one in which there has not been a great deal of intermarriage with immigrant settlers. And even in Binga, San Vicente, the local community with the greatest Central Tagbanwa population, Tagbanwas account for only 20% of the total population.

During an 18-month long survey of all known Central Tagbanwa communities, SIL linguistic researcher Rob Scebold never encountered a mother tongue speaker of the language who could not also use Cuyonon and/or Tagalog. He found no children who were learning Central Tagbanwa as a first language. And although there was the very occasional pre-teen or teenager who could converse in the language, young people for the most part claimed complete inability in it, something confirmed by reports from others and personal observations (Scebold, personal communication).

Scebold posits two major factors which have brought about the decline of Central Tagbanwa language and culture: (1) decimation of the population during World War II, from malnutrition and disease during times of hiding, as well as from other terrors of war; and (2) massive in-migration of settlers from other parts of the Philippines. This story of language shift thus begins as one of dislocation and despair, as a story of being overtaken, overwhelmed, and overrun. Those ethnic Central Tagbanwas who remain today, however, seem to be consciously, successfully, and willfully assimilating into the "melting pot" of northern Palawan. Due to the high rate of intermarriage with speakers of other languages, they have a number of "related alternative identities" open to them, and they are intentionally claiming them. As intermarriage continues, and the socially dominant languages of Cuyonon and Filipino spread, the Central Tagbanwa language is destined to become an artifact.

Agutaynen — endangered?

In contrast to Central Tagbanwa, Agutaynen is a relatively robust language. With approximately 10,000 speakers, it is still being learned as a mother tongue by children, both on the home islands of Agutaya municipality, as well as in certain communities on the “mainland” of Palawan. Many speakers of the language express a degree of pride in their language, which is used almost exclusively and solely for in-group communication. The language is so emblematic of ethnic identity, in fact, that one can almost say that “to speak Agutaynen is to be Agutaynen”. As a speaker of the language, I have often been dubbed the “Agutaynen American” or “Agukano”.

A 1985 survey demonstrated that Agutaynens typically speak three additional languages to varying degrees of proficiency: English, Tagalog, and Cuyonon (Quakenbush 1989). Of primary importance here is that none of these three languages has ever threatened the existence of the in-group language, although there is an apparent shift underway whereby Tagalog is replacing Cuyonon as a language of wider communication. One is tempted to wonder how long before Tagalog becomes a threat to Agutaynen. Although it involves some social risk, it is not unheard of in some communities for an occasional Agutaynen couple to decide to use Tagalog with their children in order to prepare them for a successful school career. The following interview excerpt on the topic of the future of the Agutaynen language is revealing. The respondent is a female in the 25-45 age group.

Researcher: What language do you like the most?

Respondent: Agutaynen, because that’s what my parents taught me. That’s what I learned, Agutaynen.

Researcher: Is it good to know how to speak Agutaynen?

Respondent: Oh, it’s very good indeed! So that you can talk with whoever you meet who’s Agutaynen, even in depth.

Researcher: What language do you want your children to learn first?

Respondent: Like me, what I wanted to do some time ago was to teach them Tagalog. The only problem is it’s embarrassing if I do that here in our barrio, because the people here in “X”, if you start teaching a different dialect, that will get you called “proud”. So, instead of teaching another language to my children, well, I just don’t do it anymore because you’ll get called “high pride”. So now, it’s just pure Agutaynen.

Researcher: Do you think Agutaynen will be used for a long time to come?”

Respondent: Well, in my opinion, it seems it will. Just look at yourself. There you were in America, and you came all the way over here to have yourself taught Agutaynen. (Interview 55)

Thus we see that although there is a generally healthy attitude toward Agutaynen, the door is slightly ajar for the possibility of language shift to Tagalog. At present, local sanctions prevent this from occurring on a large scale.

To conclude this consideration of whether Philippine languages are endangered, we could restate that 80% of this country's indigenous languages may qualify for such status given that they have fewer than 100,000 speakers. Established diglossic patterns of use, however, would seem to militate against the demise of so great a number. On the other hand, there are clearly a few languages that have already been lost, and a few more on their way out. Perhaps 10% (those with 1,000 speakers or less) are in immediate danger of extinction.

THE PHILIPPINE RECORD

Given the Philippines' demonstrable wealth of languages, we might ask how this wealth has been managed. It is unlikely that anyone would argue that there is no room for improvement, but it is quite easy to say that this country presents an enviable record. Scholarship on the languages of the Philippines is advanced, documentation extensive, official recognition is constitutionally granted, and some promising and innovative research in the area of education and language is underway.

Scholarship and documentation

As early as a decade ago it was the consensus of some linguists in the U.S. that most of the "interesting" work in the Philippines had already been done — meaning that there was little left to discover in Philippine languages. Such an opinion is as insupportable now as then. Nevertheless it is an indication of some of the fine scholarly work that has been done on Philippine languages, and the high regard in which that work is held internationally. One of the landmark works of Philippine linguistics is the 1972 *Tagalog reference grammar* by Schachter and Otnes. Numerous Philippine linguists, both in-country and abroad, have focused international attention on the mysteries of Philippine syntax, providing grist for the mills of linguistic theory through their analyses of the complex focus or voice system. Historical and comparative linguistics have likewise benefited from a well established tradition of scholarship on Philippine languages. In the area of sociolinguistic research the Philippines is also a leader. This was so much so in the mid-80s that Gonzalez and Bautista were able to state the following in their 1986 publication: "Among all the countries in the world today, both developed and developing, perhaps there is no country that can surpass the Philippines in the number, extent, detail, and continuity of language surveys which have been conducted the past 18 years (1966-1984)" (1). The Linguistic Society of the Philippines has not only sponsored numerous symposia, but has

also encouraged research which it has made accessible through publications such as the *Philippine Journal of Linguistics*, the *Studies in Philippine Linguistics* series, and a growing number of special monographs and festschrifts. The Linguistic Society of the Philippines pioneered again in 1992 in hosting the First Asia International Conference on Lexicography. Much more could be said, but it is already clear that the Philippines has an enviable record in the documentation and analysis of its languages, their structures, and their use.

Official Recognition

The Philippines can also consider itself a world leader in its concern and official recognition for the importance of its indigenous languages. While Filipino is the only indigenous language granted "official" status by the 1987 Constitution, there is the implicit endorsement of language development among the cultural communities in Article XIV on Arts and Culture, which states in Sec. 17: "The State shall recognize, respect, and protect the rights of indigenous cultural communities to preserve and develop their cultures, traditions, and institutions. It shall consider these rights in the formulation of national plans and policies."

Other Philippine languages are more specifically mentioned in Article XIV, Sec. 7 of the Constitution which states that "the regional languages are the auxiliary official languages in the regions and shall serve as auxiliary media of instruction therein". This section is cited in the 1987 Policy on Bilingual Education, which specifies that "the regional languages shall be used as auxiliary languages in Grades I and II", and as the "initial language for literacy where needed" (DECS Order 52, s. 1987). As an outsider looking in, I must confess to some confusion here as to precisely what is meant by the term "regional language" in these two contexts. Does this term mean the same as "other Philippine language" as we are using it in this paper, or does it refer to a more restricted set of "major Philippine languages" used as lingua francas within particular regions? The 1974 Implementing Guidelines for the Policy on Bilingual Education clearly specified that "In Grades I and II, the *vernacular used in the locality or place where the school is located* shall be the auxiliary medium of instruction" (DECS Order 25, s. 1974, emphasis added). It would appear that there has been no intended departure from the 1974 guidelines considering the recommendations of Sibayan and Gonzalez (1988) that schools be given leeway to use the "dominant vernacular" during the first two or three grades (145). A more recent article by Pascasio states that the use of "vernaculars" as auxiliary languages in education will continue "as provided in the 1987 Bilingual Policy" (1996:266). Pascasio later makes a distinction between the "vernaculars" in general, and "major vernaculars such as Cebuano, Bicol, Ilocano" (1996:269). So the question remains: Do the "regional languages" mentioned in the 1987 Constitution actually include all "vernaculars" or only the "major" ones based on number of speakers? If only the "major" ones are considered to be regional languages, then how many regional languages are there, and what legal recognition remains for the use of "minor" languages?¹⁰ The answers to these questions are important ones, particularly in light of recommendations from the Congressional Commission on Education, as well as research findings and experience in a pedagogical framework known as the First Language Component Bridging Program.

The Congressional Commission on Education (EDCOM) published its report in 1993 suggesting the use of the "vernacular" as a language of instruction during a child's formative years. The report made special mention of the children of the cultural communities, and specifically recommended that the vernacular be the language of instruction for the first three years of schooling (1993b:98). The fact that EDCOM distinguished at times between "vernacular" and "regional language" can be seen from their recommendation for a mandated language of instruction policy for basic education, which states that "From grades I to III, the medium of instruction should be *the dominant regional language or the vernacular* in places where no dominant regional language exists" (1993a:215, italics added). The role recommended by EDCOM for the vernacular is clearly broader and more definitive than the role outlined for the "regional languages" in the 1987 Bilingual Education Policy.

First Language Component Bridging Program

Even before EDCOM began its research, a pedagogical framework for use of the vernacular in Grades I and II was being worked out in a small mountain town in the Cordillera. The First Language Component (FLC) Bridging Program began as a DECS-SIL joint pilot project in Hungduan, Ifugao in 1985. The project was undertaken in order to address poor test performance on the part of children from that Ifugao school district. There are three major principles in the FLC methodology, as detailed by Hohulin: (1) the child's first language should be used as an instrument for teaching and learning in Grades I and II; (2) the child's cultural model of the world should be used for helping him/her to process perceptual information, understand concepts, and form new ones; and (3) new concepts and skills should be built on existing knowledge structures rather than bypassing them by using a rote-memorization method (1993:2). As the name indicates, the FLC methodology systematically "bridges" from the known to the unknown, from the language of the students to the official languages of instruction. It is not "vernacularization" or "mother tongue education" as such, in that it does not advocate sole or indefinite use of the mother tongue. However, it does capture the essential benefits of "mother tongue education", since it is implemented at the earliest stages of formal education. Eight years of testing in Hungduan showed that students who had been through the program did indeed improve their academic performance even in English and Filipino language tests. Such success is in line with findings on "minority mother-tongue instruction" as reported by Fishman, who notes that

the usual mainstream evaluation of the merits of minority mother-tongue instruction is from the point of view of whether such instruction facilitates acquisition and mastery of the socially dominant language. There is now more than enough evidence that this is indeed the case for certain types of student populations, namely those derived from low home and community literacy environments (1989b:467).

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These are clearly the types of students we find in Hungduan, and not only in Hungduan but in many rural areas of the Philippines. The FLC approach is also consistent with Fishman's statement that "it would definitely seem best to rely upon a learner's strongest language as the medium of instruction in whatever subject area until the weaker language is fully strong enough to carry additional freight" (1989b:469). This is true whether the subjects under study are less verbal ones such as math or science, or the more highly verbal subjects of history, civics, geography, etc.

The First Language Component methodology is currently being taught as part of a six-week program at the Nueva Vizcaya State Institute of Technology under the Master of Education program with specialization in Language, Reading, and Numeracy. Two hundred fifty teachers from Nueva Vizcaya, Nueva Ecija, Isabela, and the Cordillera Autonomous Region have already received training in this program.¹¹ The program directly addresses the recommendations of EDCOM that "early childhood care and development should use culturally indigenous learning materials and the child's first language as the medium of instruction" by training teachers in the development of teaching strategies and the production of supplementary, pupil-centered educational materials (NVSIT 1997). In May 1997 a workshop to produce such materials was co-sponsored by Benguet State University, the Komisyon sa Wikang Filipino, and the Summer Institute of Linguistics. The results included literacy materials in Filipino and nine regional languages of the Cordillera. Another very successful workshop led by Dr. Gloria Baguingan of NVSIT was held the same month to introduce the FLC concept in Lubuagan, Kalinga.

The FLC Bridging Program was originally designed for the systematic use of the vernacular or first language for Grades I and II as a means to introduce new concepts and to teach the other two media of instruction: Filipino and English.¹² It might be argued that such a methodology minimizes the role of the first language, and paves the way for language shift, thereby denigrating the first language. On the contrary, formal use of the first language in education, minimal as it may be, further legitimizes that language as one of dignity and value, and conveys that it is a language worthy of respect, amenable to formal study and analysis, and useful for instructional purposes.

Apart from the important symbolic statement it makes on the value of the language of the community, FLC simply works. The idea of initial instruction in the first language continues to find increasing acceptance and credibility in the educational literature, substantiated by the EDCOM report, as well as in more recent education articles such as Callang (1994:179) and Cortez (1996:54).

CONCLUSION

We have considered in this paper the number of Philippine languages other than Filipino, and some of the roles those languages play in the life of Filipinos. We have said that, based on information in the *Ethnologue*, we know of 162 “other Philippine languages” in use today. Three languages listed in the *Ethnologue* are already extinct, and others will likely follow. However, due to the diglossic nature of Philippine bilingualism in general, linguistic diversity will likely be sustained for a long time to come. In light of these realities, what recommendations can we make for an “Agenda for other Philippine languages in the Third Millennium”? I suggest that we advocate the continued exercise of responsible linguistics in an environment of respect and appreciation for linguistic diversity.

Responsible linguistics

Further documentation of other Philippine languages

What do I mean by “responsible linguistics”? For one thing, it means that we will work to document, explore, and learn from our linguistic resources on hand. As a minimum, this can take the form of phonological and grammatical sketches, word lists and text collections in every Philippine language, with more extensive study in those languages that have more developed vocabularies for certain domains.¹³ A productive avenue for systematic exploration of a language’s lexicon that perhaps has not been widely used is one proposed by lexicographer Len Newell (1995:38-39) — research based on the categories found in the *Outline of cultural materials* (Murdock 1987). A detailed study of the Kalinga legal system might yield indigenous terminology for the enrichment of the lexicon of Filipino, for instance. Likewise for the study of the Ifugao religious system, or the Manobo oral tradition literature.¹⁴ There are any number of possibilities from agriculture and aquaculture to medicine to the social sciences and humanities where insight into the languages of the cultural communities could provide greater insight for us all.

In a tradition of relevance and excellence

Responsible linguistics in the Philippine context will continue in a tradition of relevance and excellence. Looking back to 1964 at the original goals Sibayan lists for the Language Study Center, it is easy to see that these are precisely such goals: “to furnish the necessary leadership in research and in the training of leaders in the teaching of English, Pilipino, and the vernaculars in the school system” (Sibayan 1996:262). Leadership in research and the training of leaders are still key needs for the welfare of linguistics and the linguistic communities in the Philippines. More leaders are needed, not only for but especially in language teaching and the preparation of materials for language teaching. Professional development of linguistic scholars must go hand in hand with development of academic programs in linguistics — especially applied linguistics — at key tertiary institutions around the

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country. By continued in-depth research in and involvement with other Philippine languages, this country still has a great deal to offer its own citizens as well as the international academic and professional world.

With human concern for the speakers of those languages

Responsible linguistics means more than just concern for the languages of one's country. It also includes human concern for the speakers of those languages. Such concern is very much in line with Sibayan's suggestion that the focus of our attention on minor languages should actually be on the people who speak them (1984:1). Where languages are moribund or perceived by the speakers themselves to be endangered, we as linguists have a moral obligation to help however we can. That may mean simple documentation of a language so that, having been recorded for posterity, it can at least maintain a symbolic role in a community's life. But it may mean far more rigorous effort to help provide linguistic tools for meeting felt needs of the cultural communities, tools such as standardized orthographies, dictionaries, or teaching materials. Perhaps more importantly, it involves training members of the language communities themselves in the production and use of such materials. This is the major reason that the FLC bridging program as being taught at NVSIT is such a crucial program. It empowers teachers from the cultural communities to use the linguistic resources of those communities, first by orienting them to the value of such an approach to education, and then by training them to produce and use the actual materials needed. Although use of other Philippine languages in the classroom does not guarantee their continued use in the wider community, it does make a powerful symbolic statement that these languages are legitimate expressions of those cultural communities, and are capable of being used for serious communication. Apart from making important symbolic statements, systematic use¹⁵ of the first language at the early levels of education simply works.

In an environment of respect and appreciation for linguistic diversity

All of the above must take place in an environment that is respectful and appreciative of linguistic diversity. The Philippines should and must continue to celebrate its rich and many-faceted linguistic and cultural heritage. The right to preserve and develop indigenous cultures, traditions, and institutions is recognized by the Constitution, and should be encouraged at all levels, particularly on the local level. Local government and non-government organizations, along with the schools, can help celebrate Philippine heritage. Children will grow up with a healthier self-esteem if they are encouraged to appreciate and accept what is beautiful in their own culture first. One concrete and enjoyable way we can encourage such acceptance is by promoting the literary and performing arts in the local languages from the youngest ages. A healthy pride in one's own heritage predisposes one to accept the best in other heritages and provides a foundation for responsible, reasoned, and reasonable adaptation to "outside" or "modern" ways. "Other Philippine languages" symbolize and to a significant degree embody what is uniquely and most deeply Filipino. May we continue to use, nurture, and celebrate them.

ENDNOTES

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²In a slightly revised listing, McFarland (1994) counts 110 Philippine languages.

³The 10th edition of *Ethnologue* (1984) listed 154 languages for the Philippines, the 11th listed 167 (1988), and the 12th, 179 (1993).

⁴The 1990 national census listed numbers of speakers for 84 indigenous languages, whereas the 1995 census listed 99.

⁵For examples of indigenous knowledge and art forms, see Polenda 1989, Postma 1981, 1984, 1989, Wrigglesworth 1991, and Wrigglesworth and Mengersgild 1991.

⁶See Headland and Headland 1997 for one extreme example of "tribal extinction".

⁷Consider, for example, the controversial notion of 'semilingualism' as discussed in Romaine and Martin-Jones 1986.

⁸See Eder 1987:238 for a discussion of how language loss has accompanied loss of ethnic identity among the Batak of Palawan, a cultural community on the brink of extinction.

⁹Consider for example the following quote from a Philippine linguist-educator on the importance of taking pride in one's ethnic heritage: "Well, at least I can say, 'I am not an American, but no matter. I am a Balangao!'"

¹⁰Sibayan 1994 suggests a three-way classification of "native languages" for the purpose of considering their role as media of instruction. His classification is in reality a mixture of languages and language communities: Class one — major languages with at least half a million speakers and with published materials; Class two — bilingual communities where people speak a minor language and a major language; and Class three — very minor languages, of which he says there are about 35 (58).

¹¹Gloria Baguingan, personal communication.

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¹²The methodology has since been expanded for use at higher levels. Dr. Baguingan reports its successful use even at the college level for the purpose of teaching how to write scientific papers (personal communication).

¹³The Summer Institute of Linguistics has conducted research in some 90 languages of the Philippines, producing in many of these grammatical descriptions, word lists, dictionaries, and text collections; cooperating along the way in the standardization of alphabets and the introduction and expansion of functional literacy in a significant number of the indigenous cultural communities.

¹⁴The 1987 Constitution decrees, in fact, that the national language Filipino "shall be further developed and enriched on the basis of existing Philippine and other languages" (Article XIV, Section 6, paragraph 1). Quoted from Ople (1994:2).

¹⁵What is meant here is systematic, planned use of the first language for pedagogical purposes. This contrasts with "code-switching" or an informal/inconsistent/unplanned mixture of different languages.

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