

INTELLECTUALIZATION OF THE FILIPINO LANGUAGE VIEWED FROM THE JAPANESE EXPERIENCE SO FAR*

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1. BACKGROUND

Enrichment

Many good examples come to mind of linguistic enrichment, from Latin enriched by Greek to English enriched by French as well as Greek and Latin. And now our concern is the Filipino language (being enriched by English) as viewed from the Japanese experience so far.

Enrichment has direct relevance to sociocultural development as reflected in language. It is in effect consciously or unconsciously motivated by the 'gap' perceived through linguistic interactions.

In some cases it may go on without conscious effort; in other cases it is possible only by great effort made consciously and persistently. The enrichment which is our concern, i.e. intellectualization, belongs to the latter case.

The intellectualization of the Filipino language as expressed in Gonzalez (1988) and Sibayan & Gonzalez (1995) is in effect motivated by the appearance of ASEAN on the horizon. Greater light might be shed on this process, when viewed from another example of intellectualization, i.e. the Japanese experience so far.

English for intellectualization

The use of English for the intellectualization of Filipino is by nature culture-independent.

Bilinguals proficient in English may carry out the intellectualization (Sibayan & Gonzalez 1995:109). In effect, it must be said, very high proficiency is required here.

This is, however, not very difficult to attain for those who attend to the knowledge-language correspondence in the process of active reading, as is known from our experience. Given the importance of writing ability in English (Sibayan & Gonzalez 1995:109), reading needs to be active (one reads as a potential writer); simple passive reading does not suffice.

With the proficiency concerned, in effect, the problem resides in the initial rather than advanced stages of learning (Ikari 1996a:119). In this respect the problem will not be serious for the Filipino beginner compared to the Japanese counterpart, as was discussed in Ikari 1996a.

Intellectualization by English

There are many Englishes spoken by many people under various sociocultural conditions, as is presented in Kachru & Nelson (1996) and Gonzalez (1994). This fact has much to do with the continuing development of English as a whole. So far, so good.

More important however is the kind of English to be used for intellectualization. It is in effect the English being firmly sustained and actively elaborated worldwide by many people with various linguistic backgrounds. This diversity in backgrounds largely contributes to intellectualized English, helping it better cope with changes. The English thus sustained and elaborated makes for effective intellectualization.

2. JAPANESE EXPERIENCE

Intellectualization

(a) Lexical translation

Intellectualization has been carried out practically by lexical translation. Lexical translation was never easy at the initial stages lacking the stock in knowledge/lexicon. Full advantage could however be taken of the rich resources as well as the simple morphology of the Chinese language. Lexical translation was also pursued throughout the post-war period. The pursuit was no longer very difficult owing to the already rich stock as a result of persistent intellectualization.

(b) Direct adoption

Though predominant until recently, lexical translation has receded, giving way to direct adoption. With intellectual activities viewed more clearly from an international perspective, in effect, preference is given to direct adoption.

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At this point, however, doubt is cast on its directness in the Japanese context. It is in fact considerably reduced due to the writing system. That is, transcription by syllabary applies to the phonologically nativized form. The resultant visual form thus shares nothing with the original (See Ikari 1995, 1996a).

Given this, conventional adoption will contribute little to the intellectual language in the future which is well conscious of an international perspective.

(c) Way ahead

Original rather than transcribed forms have so far been resorted to by those who are conscious of the problem mentioned in (b) above. In the present intellectualized, if not popular, language, original forms obviously have a communicative advantage. The intellectualized language should thus be in line with this advantage.

Illustration

Let us illustrate the Japanese experience so far in relation to the Filipino language being intellectualized. Fortunately we can get many good examples for our purposes. They are those found in the extracts in Cruz's research (1995) on oral communication among students (with supposedly higher intelligence). The extracts are from about 200 pages of transcripts.

Embarras de richesses, yet 25 items are culled, presented as Ex. 1-Ex. #25 below (arranged according to the extracts). With these examples, a distinction is shown between lexical translation and direct adoption, the latter being underscored.

Some observations are to be subsequently made about these examples (see (i)-(v) below).

<u>Examples</u>	Extract
1 ultraviolet rays	11
2 <u>ozone</u> layer	
3 skin cancer	
4 <u>x-ray</u>	
5 radiations	
6 evaluate	13
7 ecosystem	15
8 affect	
9 analyze	16
10 <u>chromium</u>	19
11 <u>nickel</u>	
12 industrial wastes	20
13 industrial wastes	
14 compounds	
15 disintegrate	
16 soluble	

17	<u>hormones</u>	
18	power shortage	25
19	nuclear	
20	marine life	32
21	hydrogen	
22	red tide	
23	extract	
24	chlorine	36
25	react	

Observations

(i) Translation

- a. The great majority is by translation.
That is, 20 out of 25 items.
As for Ex. 2 and Ex. 4, see (ii) and (iii) below.
- b. Translation resorts to the Chinese rather than native stock.
With 20 items in effect only one is by the native stock i.e.

Ex. 22:

red tide = aka sio

(aka 'red', sio 'tide', both from the native stock.)

- c. As for the Verb: Ex. 6, 8, 9, 15, 23, 25, the base is from the Chinese stock.

(ii) Direct adoption

- a. Direct adoption is still a minority in the examples.
That is, five out of 25 items: Ex. 2 (for the first component),
Ex. 4 (for the first component), Ex. 10, Ex. 11, Ex. 17.
- b. No attempts seemed to be made to translate these items.
- c. All except Ex. 4 undergo the above-mentioned transcription by syllabary.

In the case of Ex. 4, one normally resorts to the original form i.e. x.
- d. As for Ex. 10 and Ex. 11, see Ikari (1995):19-20. As for the case in the Filipino language, see Cruz (1995:79).

(iii) Hybrid

- a. Two items in (ii) above are in reality hybrid: Ex. 2, Ex. 4.
- b. In each case the first component is from direct adoption (see (ii)) while the second is from translation (by the Chinese stock, see (i)).

- c. Such birds are not uncommon.
They are likely to gain ground along with direct adoption.
- d. Notice the original form x in Ex. 4. We may easily recognize the original form's excellence in visual transparency vis-à-vis the transcribed counterpart (see (iic) above).

(iv) Transition

- a. Transition is taking place from translation to direct adoption.
- b. This is observed in relation to Ex. 7 (ecosystem). That is, ecology. In the process of recent ecological discussion from an international rather than simply domestic perspective, translation has receded, giving way to direct adoption (though still in transcribed rather than original form).
- c. Transition is likewise possible for Ex. 7.
- d. Such transition is imminent where the concern is no longer simply domestic.
- e. Visual transparency is all the more important in this process.

(v) Plurality

- a. With Ex. 1, 5, 12, 13, 14, original plurality is not reflected explicitly in translation, due to the lack of a plural marker for inanimate nouns in Japanese. (Plurality is only implicit, depending on context, for inanimate nouns.)
- b. Original plurality may be reflected explicitly in direct adoption. But the reflection is uncommon, being largely affected by the above-mentioned native morphological system lacking a plural marker.
- c. With Ex. 17 (hormones) in fact there is no reflection.
- d. No such problem arises in the case of an original rather than transcribed form (Ex. 17 is transcribed).
- e. On the problem with pluralization as is pointed out here, see Ikari 1989.

3. FILIPINO CONTEXT

Intellectualization

Ex. 1 - Ex. 25 above may at the same time illustrate the Filipino language in the process of intellectualization. Direct adoption is quite extensively applicable in the Filipino context, with phonological nativization, and with or without graphical nativization.

Skipping the stages of translation, this one-step intellectualization is now taken to be advantageous. This is accounted for by (a) - (c):

- (a) Difficulties in translation
- (b) Diminishing reward for translation
- (c) Construction of lexical network on its own

Light is shed on (a) - (c) under the heading Advantage below.

Advantages

- (a) Difficulties in translation

Good translation is never easy, even if full advantage is taken of rich resources and simple morphology. It must be precise, concise, and clear, while being 'natural', i.e. congenial to the lexical ambience.

As a matter of fact there are many translations which are imprecise, cumbersome, unclear, or unnatural.

Let us consider an example of such translations in Japanese. This is the case of well-known terms in linguistics:

signifiant/ signifié

The translation of signifiant consists of p intended for the original affix and b intended for the original base, in that order: pb.

The translation of signifié consists of g intended for the original affix and b, in that order: gb

These translations are semantically/morphologically unclear indeed. In fact, no image comes to mind from them.

There is in effect no need of translation (which only hampers understanding). In this case instead,

- 1) First show the equivalence:

significant/ signifié
= 'that which signifies something' / 'that which is signified'

- 2) And then use the original without graphical nativization so that the original transparency may be preserved.

In many cases in fact direct adoption has an advantage over translation, if it is deliberately introduced with some explicative phrases (as in 1) above) while care is taken with original transparency (as in 2) above).

The advantage draws special attention in the case of key terms whose transparency is, as is known in our experience, essential to the understanding of the text as a whole (this is the case of signifiant/signifié).

(b) Diminishing reward for translation

If long-lived, good translation will be rewarded for its efforts. In reality however it may often not enjoy longevity. Given this, in the intellectualization process, direct adoption will have an advantage over translation in view of costs.

(c) Construction of a lexical network on its own

We may say translation has a lexical network advantage over direct adoption in that new translations are supported in the dense and well-established lexical network and easily integrated into it whereas there is no like support in the case of direct adoption.

This advantage has been taken for granted. Insofar as the network is very solid and its solidity is kept intact, in effect, this holds true.

But where direct adoption constructs an extensive network on its own while the conventional network is not solid, this does not hold true. In this case it is not so much translation as direct adoption that is to be advantageous. (Mention is made of this in relation to some examples in Japanese in Ikari 1995:63-5.)

Visual transparency

Given that intellectualized language is par excellence written, we may say (1) and (2) with respect to intellectualization:

- (1) Priority of visual transparency
- (2) No practical need of phonological support

Given (1) and (2), other things being equal, preference is given to the original over the nativized graphical form. That is, (1) favors the original form in its excellence in transparency, whereas (2) favors neither nativized nor original form (no justification by graphical-phonological correspondence).

In this connection notice the fact that while phonological nativization is inevitable, the corresponding graphical nativization is not so. This difference in nativization is accounted for by the difference in L2 mastery between the oral phase and the written phase as is mentioned in Gonzalez 1994: 48 (that is, while the mastery in the oral phase is incomplete, that in the written phase may be complete).

Hence the viability of the pursuit of visual transparency.

Insofar as the Noun and the Adjective are concerned, there is no problem with the pursuit of Visual Transparency in the Filipino language, but not in the case of the Verb due to affixation (reduplication is handled as affixation in view of its prefix-like manner (Ikari 1996b)).

For instance see the examples in Cruz 1995:

maglileak	(base: leak)
imaminus	(base: minus)

With the graphical incongruence:

li	for	lea
ma	for	mi

Such incongruence is inevitable, given the insufficient phonological-graphical correspondence in English (as opposed to say Spanish) on the one hand and the complete correspondence in the Filipino language on the other hand.

The problem, however, is not taken very seriously. This is because 1)-3):

- 1) In adoption, the great majority are Nouns, not Verbs.
- 2) Adopting the nominal counterpart (which is free from affixation) instead of the verb, one may sidestep the problem, given the syntactic propensity to get along well with nominal constructions (that is, easy paraphrase by nominalization in Filipino).
3. The incongruence is in any case relatively easy to recognize (as in the case seen above).

Another advantage: Legacy

Another advantage merits attention in the process of intellectualization of the Filipino language; that is, the legacy of the Spanish language.

As was mentioned above, intellectualized English is being sustained and elaborated by many people with assorted linguistic backgrounds. Among them, Spanish-background people will play a major role. In the process of elaboration, accordingly, the Spanish stock is to be often resorted to.

This is obviously an advantage for the Filipino language which may in effect easily get along well with the Spanish stock owing to legacy. An example serves to depict this advantage. This is a term in meteorology; that is

El Niño

This is directly adopted in English, and there is no translation to The Child.

Being quite congenial to the Filipino language, the term is easily integrated into it. This is in contrast with the Japanese case with no like legacy (there remains no trace of active interactions with Spanish-speaking people throughout the 16th century (Ikari 1995: 52)).

One must in fact begin with asking the questions Q₁ and Q₂:

- Q₁: What does el mean?
Q₂: What does niño mean?

They are followed by the question Q₃:

- Q₃: Who is El Niño?

The questions Q₁- Q₃ above must be asked in the Japanese context before the question Q₄:

- Q₄: Why is the term El Niño employed?

(This is due to the original occurrence of the phenomenon at Christmas time.)

The advantage thus manifests itself. That is, Q₁- Q₃, if not Q₄, would never be asked in the Filipino context. This advantage contributes to improve the Filipino language's potentiality in the process of intellectualization.

4. PERSPECTIVE

A. Potentiality

The intellectualized language is never a still life. The point is how the potentiality is improved by those who are to be provided with it.

The potentiality now concerns the power to cope with activities in a wider context. This has much to do with the Filipino case in view of the role to be played by Filipino-speaking people in the near future (ASEAN immediately comes to mind).

In this regard full advantage is taken of the Filipino language's favorable disposition, that is, its readiness to get along well with intellectualized English. At the same time attention is paid to the legacy of the Spanish language.

B. Effectiveness

Intellectualization is effective if it contributes to the potentiality above. At this point it must be said:

The pursuit of nativization is one thing; effectiveness of intellectualization is another.

As regards visual transparency, in fact the nativization now often works against the potentiality. In this respect the case of Japanese draws attention. The nativization in effect has led to the lack of visual transparency which must now be taken seriously in view of the potentiality.

By contrast, while presumably inevitable due to the L2 mastery in the phonological phase which is incomplete unless one is immersed in L2 before puberty (see Gonzalez 1994: 48), phonological nativization will not work against the potentiality, insofar as one is aware of the nativization. Notice that intellectualized language practically dispenses with phonological support.

C. Consciousness

Being conscious of the priority of the potentiality, on the one hand, and the favorable linguistic disposition, on the other, intellectualization can be effective in the Filipino context.

ENDNOTE

*This is very conscious of Brother Andrew B. Gonzalez's insights in his many works and efforts as well as in his sociolinguistic mission.

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