

REVIEW

YAP, FE ALDAVE. 1977. *A comparative study of Philippine lexicons*. Manila: Institute of National Language, Department of Education and Culture, and National Media Production Center. Pp. xxx, 429.

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One finds in this book a convenient summary of Philippine lexicons involving eighty major and minor languages and dialects. The preliminary work done in compiling these lists consisted of several stages which the author describes in broad or general terms. The description of these different stages is found in the beginning of the book, before Part One.

The preliminary information furnished in the beginning is a vital section of the book because it lays the basis for the lists.

To begin with, a Philippine linguistic map is presented. The map locates, by means of numbers, the places in the Philippines where some eighty languages and dialects (selected from a universe which ranges from 150 to 200 languages) of the Philippines are spoken. The Philippine languages and dialects and the places where these are spoken follow an alphabetical arrangement on the pages following the linguistic map. Unfortunately, *language* and *dialect* are terms which the author uses rather indiscriminately in this work.

Several items of information about the languages and dialects of the Philippines are included. The so-called major languages, eight of them, qualify as 'major' ones on the basis of number of speakers. Yap provides the major languages with general descriptions, indicating, for example, the percentage of users, the provinces where these are spoken, and other names by which these languages are known.

A section on related studies constitutes the next part of the book. The chapters follow the usual sequence of a dissertation, which leads one to believe that this is a published version, with some adaptations, of the author's doctoral dissertation at the University of Santo Tomas.

Related studies date back to 1902, with the first survey of the Philippine languages and dialects in the twentieth century reported by W.E.W. Mackinlay. The author has taken painstaking efforts to list every possible reference that is known to have bearing on her work. From these references, one can see how linguists and anthropologists discovered more and more Philippine languages during the period 1900 to 1960. In presenting her related studies, Yap includes information on historical and comparative linguistics and cites the works of C. E. Conant, O. Dempwolff, C. Lopez, and other linguists of the Philippine languages.

At this point, the reader cannot help but feel slightly lost in trying to understand the purpose of this section and its relevance to the over-all import of the book. What substantive relevance is there, for example, between the features described by C. E. Conant on *f* and *v* in the Philippine languages and the list of vocabulary entries from different Philippine languages other than to establish sound correspondences? The conclusions of Conant, if they are truly relevant to the vocabulary lists, should have been explicitly related to these lists.

COMPARATIVE STUDY OF PHILIPPINE LEXICONS

To cite another example. Yap cites O. Dempwolff's publication on the reconstruction of the phonology of Proto-Austronesian and C. Lopez's translation:

Another pioneering work was Otto Dempwolff's three-volume publication on the reconstruction of the phonology of Proto-Austronesian (1934-38), in which Tagalog was included as one of the basic languages analyzed. Cecilio Lopez, who is considered the first Filipino linguist, made studies on Dempwolff (1939). This three-volume work was recently translated from German to English in a three-volume mimeographed publication (1972) by the Linguistic Society of the Philippines (xv).

Beyond merely enumerating related works, a much more interesting and profitable exercise would have been to show some critical points in Dempwolff's analysis which influenced the lists compiled.

In fairness to the author, however, this publication is only the first part of a two-part work; the second part is supposed to contain the comparative and descriptive analysis. Thus far, this volume has not yet been published.

Perhaps, if the related studies had been interwoven into the procedure for data collection rather than discussed separately, there would have been no questions raised as to their contribution to the rest of the work.

Included as part of the related studies are some publications of the Institute of National Language (1972), a series of word lists of some major Philippine languages. The present book on Philippine lexicons, the author herself explains, is an attempt to offer a more accurate listing of some Philippine lexicons. 'This present investigation arises from the inadequacies of some INL published related studies' (xvi).

Yap's data for the word lists were taken from primary and secondary sources. These sources were necessary for the procedure employed, which consisted of three main steps: (1) establishing the sound laws in the eighty languages selected; (2) searching available dictionaries, vocabulary lists, word collections of the eighty languages and dialects for entries (in addition, data from informants for eight major languages and dialects and informants for eleven minor languages and dialects were gathered); (3) comparing words to identify probable cognates, the bases of which were phonetic, semantic, total and partial resemblances. Yap is quite careful about what to consider and what not to consider as cognates in order to avoid the pitfalls into which earlier word gatherers fell. According to her, in these earlier lists, words with different meanings in Philippine languages as well as a considerable number of loan words, mostly Spanish, were included as cognates (xvi).

A phoneme inventory of the eighty Philippine languages and dialects introduces the Philippine lexicons, which contain more than four hundred entries in Pilipino (with cognates in the other seventy-nine languages, where they exist). Hence, the list expands an earlier list; the lexicons are 'based on the 372 expanded word list specifically designed for Philippine languages prepared by Lawrence A. Reid' (xvii).

In a comparative study of lexicons, it is quite important to show the main correspondences obtaining among the sounds of the languages (hence, sound laws) inasmuch as it will be these sound laws which will test the cognacy of a citation with other sets of related forms. Yap herself states that 'these sound laws were then used to

identify probable cognates among the lexical items in the eighty languages selected for this study' (xvii). And yet, one cannot find any statements about these laws anywhere in the work. Undoubtedly, Dempwolff's and Dyen's lists were used as guides in establishing the sound correspondences; these are listed at the end of the book with the unexplained use of the term 'index'.

What would have been better was to integrate the first part with the projected second part, which is planned to contain both a descriptive and comparative analysis: on the basis of the comparative analysis, the rationale behind the groupings of certain entries could be better explained. What is present now is a list of cognates (grouped into subsets) and non-cognates for some four hundred entries (given in Pilipino and English) among some eighty Philippine languages.

As a useful list of equivalents of Pilipino entries in other Philippine languages, the book is unquestionably valuable. With the data it provides, the comparative linguist can formulate his own sound laws and have the necessary citations for his reconstructions; the ethnographer can have his semantic subsets to do cognitive mapping; and the language planner will have a source book for needed terminology.