

THE FILIPINO BILINGUAL FROM A SOCIOLINGUISTIC PERSPECTIVE

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A major feature of the Philippine language situation is its diversity. The Filipino bilingual lives in a multilingual and multicultural environment. The Filipino bilingual of today possesses a strong national identity but needs to seek to render it more functional for the purposes of national well-being in the modern world. Filipino rather than English can better serve as a medium to express the Filipino's cultural traditions, values, beliefs, and national aspirations. However, there are certain sociolinguistic realities that challenge the Filipino bilingual. One is that it is through bilingual education that we can hope to equip the Filipino bilingual such that he/she will be better prepared to examine the nature of change in this modern world, including its speech and dimensions, and also to enable him/her to understand better the distinctions that must be made between change in the past and that which is on-going. His/her competence in English will equip him/her to handle modern technological developments and to keep up with the rapidity of technological developments and to keep up with the rapidity of technological change. The role of English maybe diminishing on the national level, but certainly for globalization and information technology, it is the language of wider communication in the international level.

This paper will present the profile of the Filipino bilingual in terms of identity, sociolinguistic competencies including attitudes, motivations and proficiency within a multilingual and multicultural setting.

1. INTRODUCTION

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This paper will present the profile of the Filipino bilingual in terms of identity, sociolinguistic competencies including language use, attitudes, motivations, and proficiency within a multilingual and multicultural setting.

2. LANGUAGE ATTITUDES AND MOTIVATIONS

Most of the research on language learning motivation in the 1970s have indicated an instrumental motivation for learning English and an integrative one for learning Filipino (Otanés & Sibayan, 1969; Feenstra & Castillo, 1970; Gaston, 1978; Bangalan, 1979). Respondents want to study English to communicate better, to show that they are educated, and to attain socio-economic success. They want to learn Filipino to show that they are nationalistic and to understand the Filipino cultural heritage. One interesting variation of the findings in Castillo's (1972) study revealed that patterns may be instrumentally or integratively motivated or both in choosing English for their children. It is also noted that the desire to learn English does not necessarily mean an identification with Americans or their way of life, but rather with educated Filipinos.

With the implementation of the Bilingual Policy, a change in language learning motivation has been noted. College students, both Tagalogs and non-Tagalogs, are now instrumentally motivated to learn both Filipino and English. The use of Filipino as medium of instruction in certain subjects at all academic levels has perhaps instilled in the minds of the students the idea that Filipino has now become a tool for understanding and expressing ideas inside the classroom, and that learning this tool and further sharpening it are necessary to be able to participate in classroom discussions (Pascasio, 1979).

Motivation is a necessary factor for successfully acquiring a second language and is related to second language learning achievement (Castillo, 1969; 1972) as well as to attitude (Samonte 1981). Birthplace or language background also influences the degree of motivation to learn a particular language. Understandably, non-Tagalogs have a stronger motivation to study Filipino than English, compared with Tagalogs (Pascasio, 1979). On the other hand, Tagalogs do not show indication of a strong motivational intensity to further improve their Filipino, since they are already native speakers of it (Castillo & Chan-Yap, 1977).

Social and political events seem to play a vital role in the changing attitude of the Filipino bilingual towards the different languages being used in his/her milieu. A trend seems to be noticeable in attitudes towards English, Filipino, and the local vernacular as media of instruction. For instance, in the late sixties (Otanés & Sibayan, 1969), the preference for English as the language of instruction at all academic levels—primary, secondary and tertiary—was reported. The early seventies, marked by activism and nationalistic fervor among the youth, sparked a change among the younger generation (even the young elites as shown by the findings of an attitude survey (Castillo & Chan-Yap, 1977) where there was a desire to replace English with Filipino as medium of instruction. However, the promulgation and implementation of the Bilingual Education Policy in 1974 led to another attitudinal direction. As a result of the problems and limitations encountered in actual classroom interactions, the college students, although supportive of the policy, do not favor the replacement of English with Filipino in those subjects where English was used as the language of instruction (Pascasio, 1979). Parents of varied socio-economic classes and language background in Metro Manila prefer to limit the use of Filipino to the elementary level as medium of instruction. At the secondary and the tertiary levels, English

is preferred as the medium of instruction. Interestingly, parents with higher educational attainment (at least 'college graduate') are more liberal in accepting Filipino as a language of instruction, while those with the least educational background trace the deterioration of education to the inclusion of Filipino as a medium of instruction in the schools (Cruz, 1980).

Among non-Tagalog respondents residing in non-Tagalog speaking communities, the desire to maintain English and Filipino as languages of instruction but with certain concessions is indicated. There is a desire for Filipino and English as media of instruction for courses like law, medicine, etc., but for vocational courses, the local vernacular is preferred (Mendoza, 1978). In a Chinese high school in Bacolod where the students are predominantly Chinese speakers who also speak the local vernacular (Hiligaynon), the use of English and Filipino as media of instruction is highly endorsed. Their teachers are the ones who are resistant to the use of Filipino as the medium of instruction in the subjects specified by the Bilingual Policy (Gaston, 1977).

Proficiency affects both attitude to both English and Filipino. Although both the fluent and the non-fluent speakers of English and Filipino exhibit positive attitude to English, those who are more proficient in English have stronger favorable attitude to English and Filipino than those who are less proficient. On the other hand, those who are less proficient in Filipino have stronger favorable attitude to English and Filipino than those who are more proficient. Among the non-Tagalogs, those who are not proficient in Filipino have favorable attitude to Filipino (Pascasio, 1979).

Mass media exposure also influences attitude to both languages, English and Filipino. Those who watch Filipino and English TV programs have a more favorable attitude to Filipino than those who do not (Pascasio, 1979).

In my recent research on College Freshmen attitudes toward Filipino and English before entering the Ateneo, they tended to have higher scores in the Filipino Language Proficiency Test (FLPT) scores. As well, students with less favorable attitudes toward English upon entering the Ateneo received higher FLPT scores. The two variables were related such that students who had favorable attitudes toward Filipino tended to have less favorable attitude toward English ($G = -.20, p < .05$). Regression analysis showed, however, that having favorable attitudes toward Filipino ($\beta = .29$) for reading and $.35$ for writing, $p < .001$ and having unfavorable attitudes toward English ($\beta = -.18$ for reading and $-.23$ for writing, $p < .001$) exercised independent effects on FLPT performance.

In another more recent study conducted by Fuentes and Mojica (1999) where the respondents come from outside of Metro Manila, the northern Luzon area, of lower and middle social class, the finding was that, in general, the R's attitude English was more favorable than their attitude toward Filipino. When given the option to choose both English and Filipino as medium of instruction, the majority showed a positive attitude toward the use of the two languages. Filipino should be used in certain subjects offered at the tertiary level. English should not be replaced by Filipino as medium of instruction. This suggested the R's positive attitude toward bilingualism, regardless of their gender and socioeconomic status.

The responses also showed that the students felt more motivated to study English. One reason could be the fact that they were aware of the need to study the language for instrumental purposes. This supports the earlier studies. The R's desire to use Filipino hand in hand with English must have been influenced by their spirit of nationalism and their

awareness to maintain their identity as Filipino. Also this could be attributed to the rising popularity of Filipino in print and broadcast media. Another reason could be their thinking that Filipino facilitates their learning of concepts in certain subjects. This was supported by their learning of concepts in certain subjects. This was supported by their claim that they exerted less effort and time when studying in Filipino. The overall results seemed to favor the country's aim of making the Philippines a bilingual nation whose people can speak both the mother tongue and the second language with fluency. The findings of a 1998 study among the Cebuanos have shown that some changes in the students' attitudes have taken place. Their perceived proficiency in Filipino has greatly improved and their perceptions and attitudes towards Filipino and learning Filipino have become more positive. The majority are of the opinion that Filipino should be taught to all students as a subject in college (79%). The spread of Filipino to various domains other than formal education may have contributed to their acquisition of Filipino. It also appears that the Rs are relatively more motivated to study Filipino. As for their reasons for learning Filipino, the positive attitudes to learning the language seem to stem from a sense of nationalism or an awareness of their historical and cultural heritage. The results of this study hint at the impact of the Bilingual Education Policy (Kobari, 1999).

Furthermore, these findings have been supported as a result of the consultative forums conducted by the members of the Executive Board Committee on Language and Translation of the National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA) as reported by Espiritu (1999) in her paper. The NCCA committee seems to have succeeded in convincing the Cebuanos that the regional language will not vanish with the growth of Filipino as a national language. The Cebuanos are now willing to be counted in the tremendous task of developing Filipino to make it the language of academic and other controlling domains such as government, judiciary, business, etc. Given the chance, all Filipinos, whatever their ethnolinguistic group, wish to take part in building their country and also to co-exist in shaping their future.'

3. LANGUAGE USE AND SOCIALIZATION PATTERNS

Domain and role relationship are the significant variables that affect language use, as shown in most of the Philippine studies. The choice of language to use varies in context, and it is affected more by whether one is speaking to a parent, teacher, police officer, priest, friend, or vendor, rather than by whether one is discussing how to manage one's finances or how to solve a family problem or whether one is arguing, requesting or complimenting.

The language surveys found the vernacular to dominate in the home, neighborhood and community. 'Official talk' in school was generally the domain of English, followed by Filipino. At the workplace, the vernacular was used with co-workers, while English, sometimes Filipino, was used with the boss. In general, for the work domain and other domains, the professionals and semi-professionals used more English and Filipino or the code-switching variety, using these two languages, while the non-professionals used more Filipino and the vernaculars, and a little of English language preference for both business and education placed English first, followed by Filipino and then by the vernacular.

In one of my earlier studies, the findings showed that Filipino bilinguals used English in school when interacting with people of higher status and talking about formal topics such as historical events or scientific concepts. At home when interacting with family

members and in the community with peers and subordinates, the local vernacular or Filipino or code-switching variety was used for talking about informal topics.

In my recent research on what factors correlate with language proficiency in English and Filipino, the findings showed that there were significant differences. Nine variables correlated with the English reading proficiency. These are gender, birthplace, and I.Q. for the personal characteristics. For language use, the home with high status person and self talk correlated with English reading proficiency. Socioeconomic status in terms of social class position and household amenities were significant correlates. For media exposure it is the print media. As for writing proficiency, there are four variables, namely, IQ, birthplace, self talk, and print media. With regard to Filipino language reading proficiency, six correlates are statistically significant. These are language attitudes toward Filipino and English, the language use indicators with high status persons and when praying, socioeconomic status in terms of household amenities, and exposure to print media. For Filipino language writing proficiency seven correlates are statistically significant. These are household amenities, attitudes toward Filipino and English when conversing and praying.

Regarding media exposure, English and Filipino print are statistically significant. This study showed that language use and positive attitude are important in achieving language proficiency.

Another interesting finding is that English is perceived to be the appropriate language for formal situations, while Filipino and the vernacular are for informal situations. The Filipino bilingual will continue to use his/her vernacular at home and in the neighborhood for his/her daily activities, to gain functional literacy, to preserve and enhance his/her cultural and literary heritage within his/her ethnic group. S/he will use Filipino, the national language as the lingua franca for unity and national identity, as well as for education and government. She/He will maintain English as the language for wider communication, for economic purposes, for global cooperation, and for international diplomacy.

Value orientations also affect language use besides social relationship. Since the Filipino bilingual is more status and person oriented, he/she stresses the value of social acceptance, smooth interpersonal relationship (SIR), segmentation and ranking. For instance, a lower status person when requesting or asking a favor from one of higher status must go through a long feeler first before the request is made to avoid the embarrassment (*hiya*) in case it gets denied. In a correction or complaint pattern as well as negative comments or bad news, euphemisms, complimentary close on the use of a go-between, are resorted to preserve smooth interrelationship and social acceptance. This is because the Filipino bilingual who is operating in a personalistic system would rank the values of friendliness and ingroup loyalty higher as reflected in his/her use of the language whether Filipino or English.

4. CODE-SWITCHING AND PHILIPPINE BILINGUALISM

Code-switching is one of the by-products of Philippine bilingualism. It occurs mostly when speaking in informal situations. In my research where my respondents are bilingually competent in English and Filipino they code-switch for a number of conversational functions, among which are to establish rapport, to simplify or emphasize a message, to qualify or further explain a previous statement, to make inquiries as well as give

information, instructions, or directions for verification or clarification, and to express politeness.

Participants who do a lot of code-switching are professionals, students, and employers, although some employees code-switch after their boss initiates the code-switching or when the topic of conversation is about a business report or a contract which is in English. In sports such as golf, tennis, or basketball, one finds code-switching occurring frequently because the English terms used in these games are retained. In schools most of the concepts learned especially at the tertiary level or postgraduate level are in English; but in the process of explaining or clarifying, a great deal of code-switching from English to Filipino occurs. For instance, in the office when the boss calls the attention of his/her subordinate regarding some clarification of a business report submitted, code-switching in the discourse occurs, although the topic is in English. Another reason for code-switching is when the boss decides to ease the tension that may have arisen during a correction. The correction is conducted in English, but then the boss switches to Filipino to neutralize the tension during the correction when he/she asks about the welfare of the family. This switch to a personal topic indicates the boss' concern for maintaining Smooth Interpersonal Relations (SIR) between him/her and his/her subordinate, just in case the latter interpreted the correction as a reprimand.

In the broadcast media, Bautista's study (1979) grouped the code-switching patterns into six categories: address forms and five specific acts—greetings, apologies, compliments, directives and probes. In Gonzalez' study (1982) in his study of stylistic underdifferentiation of written Philippine English of the mass media, his findings support my findings where he contends that the code-switching variety is used by well-educated Filipinos who have mastered both English (in its formal style) and Filipino (in its formal, informal, and familiar style) and that it is used in the mass media (spoken and written) for a very distinct purpose: to establish rapport with an audience and an atmosphere of informality, perhaps unconsciously excluding a native speaker of English who is familiar with only one code, and likewise perhaps, unconsciously establishing one's credentials as a nationalist, albeit Westernized. It is now widely used in talk shows in the mass media and even in class, when the teacher wishes to establish his/her credentials as being "with it" and in order to "break the ice" in class.

In a recent study of Bautista where her data consist of e-mail messages, the Filipino bilingual resorts to code-switching for it provides the easiest, fastest, most effective, or most colorful way of saying something, i.e. for communicative efficiency. The bilingual switches to the code that facilitates the best expression of the content he/she has in mind, and the switching can involve a word or phrase, a pre-packaged idiom or expression, a clause, a sentence, and therefore CS occurs intrasententially or intersententially.

No one sociolinguistic variable stands out as the overriding factor determining code-switching. However, the research studies conducted have confirmed the importance of recognized setting, topic, role relationship and domain as interdependent factors in code-switching among Filipino bilinguals. Clearly, code-switching among Filipino bilinguals carries social meaning, and can be accounted for, at least to a certain extent, in terms of social function. A mere knowledge of both languages is not enough. If two participants wish to interpret 'switched' sentences, a knowledge of grammar is not sufficient. It must be accompanied by shared knowledge and shared assumptions about the Filipino's social life.

Evidence has shown that code-switching among the Filipino bilinguals is not random, but it is highly patterned.

5. LANGUAGE AND IDENTITY

In my study of language and identity, the six set of factors related to national identity are: demographic factors, socioeconomic factors, R's and parents language background, mass media exposure, and ethnic identity. These set of factors covered 36 separate variables. Ethnic identity was measured according to instrumental and sentimental attachments instead of instrumental and integrative motivations. 95% of the R's indicated the need of a national language to have national identity. However, sentimental attachments to the Filipino language are expressed in the language ability to express the Filipino bilingual's needs, feelings, sentiments and aspirations in perpetuating the cultural heritage and in becoming an effective Filipino leader. In contrast, sentimental attachments to English are expressed in the ability of the language to impress others, to show status, to impose control/authority. Instrumental attachments also vary by language. Instrumental attachments to English lie in the way knowledge of English hastens material success, modernization and advancement, serves as the primary link to the rest of the world, and increases one's ability to think critically. On the other hand, instrumental attachments to Filipino are expressed as a means of national unity (69% of the Rs said that Filipino should be the official language of the country), as the medium of instruction in the lower grades, and as a mode of communication to get things accomplished.

In the Philippine language situation, both sentimental and instrumental considerations are likely to reinforce one another. Filipino, the national language, draws both instrumental and sentimental attachments.

5.1. Personal background characteristics and national identity

Six personal background characteristics were found to be significantly related to national identity, namely, sample site (residence of R), place of birth, religious affiliation, R's employment status, mother's employment status and type of high school. Sample site appears to be a crucial determinant of national identity. It also appears that a different set of correlates of national identity may appear for each site. Thus, what contributes to a strong sense of national identity may depend upon the community of origin, i.e. whether the community is Metro Manila—based and predominantly Tagalog-speaking, or one that is distant from Metro Manila and non-Tagalog speaking.

5.2. Language background and national identity

The relationship between national identity and language background has also been considered here. Language background covers several aspects: language socialization which includes L1 learned by the respondent and his/her spouse, parents and relatives; the language dominantly used at home and with peers, the extent Filipino language is used at home and with peers, the extent Filipino language is used for inner speaking, mass media exposure in English and Filipino, and language proficiency in English, Filipino, and the local vernacular.

5.3 Mass media exposure

Does exposure to mass media in English and Filipino contribute to a sense of national identity? High mass media exposure in English highly correlated with national identity. In contrast, there is no significant difference between exposure to mass media in Filipino and national identity.

5.4 Language use and national identity

Language use in three categories of situations: (a.) domain (home, school, community), (b.) role relationship (high status, peer, low), and (c.) activity (conversing, asking requesting, persuading and arguing). Findings show that regardless of situation, levels of language use are not associated with national identity. Except for school and high status addressee, national identity scores are higher for those who have higher levels of language use in Filipino. There were no statistically significant differences in national identity by generation. However, generational differences are more prominent in language use patterns.

Although studies in the Philippines have shown that language is an important factor in ethnic identification, there is no one-to-one relation between language and ethnicity. A person can shift his ethnic identity especially if he is multilingual; a parent can continue to think of himself as belonging to an ethnic group while allowing his children to shift to the dominant language of the community; the children can make claims to various identities (Gonzalez & Bautista, 1986).

On the other hand, in Metro Manila, parents feel that the native or ethnic language is very important and should be the first language that should be learned by children. Parents with higher educational attainment tend to be more accepting of the ethnic language (Cruz, 1980).

Sibayan and Segovia's (1984) study shows that ethnic languages will be maintained and not abandoned, if one is to judge from the fact that speakers are proud to be identified with their native language. However, while the non-Tagalogs have been proven to be identified with their native language, there is no guarantee that they will perpetuate it through their children. The prediction is that with the third generation of those who come to the Metro Manila area, the ethnic language will have been abandoned in favor of Filipino, the national language. Furthermore there is now an additive consciousness of the average Filipino that he is a member of a larger polity and nation, that in addition to being Ilocano, Bisayan, or Bicolano, he is also a Filipino.

6. CONCLUSION

The Filipino's language is thus in complementary distribution and will remain so for a while. For as long as he does not uproot himself from his original, then his local vernacular is assured of its place and its domain. He loses this vernacular only in the process of de-ethnicization that inevitably follows migration and urbanization. His use of Filipino, the national language (as mandated by the 1987 Constitution), will serve not only as a vehicle for achieving the goal of national identity and unity but also for facilitating communication and understanding as well as promoting the Filipino people's collective participation in nation-

building. His competence in English will be maintained for as long as economic and social mobility, more opportunities for pursuing higher and better quality of education, more involvement in international affairs, are perceived as advantages and as long as rewards are assured.

The maintenance of English is not incompatible with a genuinely nationalistic bilingual education in the Philippines.

There is a need, therefore, to frame an appropriate language policy which can materially assist in social and national integration and economic upliftment of Filipinos as members of Philippine society and maintaining a balance between internal needs and external necessities in the modern world.

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