

SOCIOLINGUISTICS IN THE PHILIPPINES

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In sketching the state-of-the-art of sociolinguistics in my country,¹ I can take one of three possible approaches: a listing of the main sociolinguists in the country and their work; a listing of 'schools' of sociolinguistics and their areas of interest; a listing by topics.

The danger in the first approach is to mistake biography for the history of thought; in the second, to substitute department politics for insight. I shall use the third approach, instead, by outlining the principal skeins of thought in the discipline and, in passing, mentioning the linguists concerned and their affiliations.

1. MAIN CONCERNS

The main concern or preoccupation in the Philippines at present is the fourth dimension of language development, cultivation or more specifically, the intellectualization of Filipino.

After almost three quarters of a century 'selecting' the basis of the national language, by a surprisingly uncontroversial choice and an overwhelming consensus, Tagalog has finally been chosen as the basis of the National Language, renamed Pilipino in 1959, then Filipino by the 1973 Constitution (without a specific referent), and finally FILIPINO once more by the 1987 Constitution, this time, with a specific referent: Tagalog-based Filipino enriched with loanwords from the Philippine and other languages and henceforth to be called FILIPINO. One variety of this language is widely disseminated and is expected to be spoken by close to 100% of the population by the end of the century. A monolingual dictionary is in press, finally, and guides to usage and to mechanics have been published by our national language agency.

Cultivation has been going on in the literary domain; there is presently a rich corpus of creative work in Filipino which continues to be added to by our artists.

The main task is now the process of using it as a language of scholarly discourse in our schools; based on our experience since 1974, we think that the most productive level in which to do this is at the tertiary level, not the primary one, and to use a 'trickle-down' model of language intellectualization and to concentrate on pre-service education training in teacher-training institutions for the shift to Filipino in a bilingual mode of instruction.

The process of intellectualization is terra incognita, for other than the seminal ideas from Havranek of the Prague School in the 1920's, the historical accounts of language for science developments of Japanese, German and other languages, and documented legal steps in language planning, there is practically no literature on the actual process of intellectualization in the minds of the lead-population creating the corpus of literature. Both sociological and above all psychological parameters must be considered in this process; our own work in this area promises to be a contribution to the world body of knowledge.

Closely tied up with the phases of language development is language planning, which although not called by such a term has been on-going in our country since the sixteenth century; this process has now been documented through historical records.

In modern times, to provide required data for policy formulation, the country has become sophisticated in language surveys; we have extensive experience since 1968 of language surveys at both local and national levels and have authenticated information on language use (who speaks what to whom and about what in specific domains), language attitudes, the implementation of language policy (especially the *evaluation* phase) and theoretical insights from these experiences, to enrich existing paradigms of language development.

Applied linguistics, specifically, the teaching of English as a second language, is quite well developed in the Philippines; insofar as sociolinguistics is concerned, however, the specific contribution would be the insights from nearly a century of English-language teaching on the social, political, economic and cultural conditions for the spread and

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maintenance of a second language and the gradual dissemination of a national lingua franca.

Language policy in the Philippines is carried out almost exclusively by the school system (although the mass media have made significant contributions more by happenstance than direct planning). There is thus a rich lode of experience being mined at present on bilingual education programs. With the present talk on federalization as an ultimate model following decentralization of governance in the country, then the importance of regional and local languages comes to the fore once more, so that in the future the Philippines shall probably have a trilingual program rather than a bilingual program. In work on indigenous minor languages, the analytical work being done by the Summer Institute of Linguistics continues.

An area in sociolinguistics which is highly developed, mostly by SIL field workers, is mutual comprehensibility tests between speakers living side by side and supposedly speaking mutually unintelligible languages.

2. CENTERS

Language development is presently the concern of the *Linangan ng mga Wika sa Pilipinas* (Institute for Philippine Languages), which used to be the Institute of National Language. A congressional body is supposed to be set up, to be called the National Language Commission, to oversee the development of FILIPINO.

The SIL linguists continue to work on minority languages, literacy materials, translations.

Among academic institutions, the University of the Philippines Department of Linguistics and Department of Filipino and Other Philippine Languages focus their attention on the development of Filipino; the Department of Linguistics has consciously taken a 'universal approach' to the development of Filipino, tapping existing lexical resources of all Philippine languages as candidates for possible inclusion into the lexicon of the national language. The Institute of Language Teaching of the College of Education of the same university is doing work on applied linguistics and sociolinguistics.

De La Salle University has a core of sociolinguists working on the cultivation of Filipino, translation, contributions to the build-up of a corpus of scholarly literature in Filipino, and language planning.

Philippine Normal College continues its work in bilingual education research, language planning and applied linguistics.

The only non-Manila center active in language research, mostly descriptive analysis and some language survey work, is the Department of Linguistics of St. Louis University in Baguio.

3. SOCIOLINGUISTS

The dean of sociolinguists in the Philippines, active in research and publications in spite of his official retirement, is Bonifacio P. Sibayan. The Linguistic Society of the Philippines continues its work in this area through its board of directors: Emy Pascasio (Ateneo University), Nelly I. Cubar (University of the Philippines), Ma. Lourdes S. Bautista (De La Salle University), Fe T. Otones (Philippine Normal College), Wilfredo Alberca (Polytechnic University of the Philippines). Other linguists likewise working in the area of the sociology of language are Ernesto Constantino (University of the Philippines), Consuelo Paz (University of the Philippines), Nelia Casambre (University of the Philippines), Roopa Dewan (De La Salle University).

4. CONCLUDING NOTES

Sociolinguistics as an academic discipline is alive and well in the Philippines. It is taught as a special course at both graduate and undergraduate levels, and because of the present preoccupation in the country with national language development, research in the field, especially in the areas of language planning and development and more recently, language intellectualization, is being actively done by a number of senior linguists in the Metro Manila area.

Because of its special role in language development, it occupies center stage in much research in the country and constitutes an important core discipline for courses at the graduate level in language teaching and education as well as in more theoretically-oriented programs.

In the Philippines, the future area of development will be in language cultivation, the documentation of this process, and the psychological and sociological dimensions of intellectualization of Filipino.