

THE INTELLECTUALIZATION OF FILIPINO- AGENDA FOR THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

ANDREW GONZALEZ, FSC
De La Salle University

1. CULTIVATION AND INTELLECTUALIZATION

In speaking of language development, most sociolinguists take Haugen's four-dimensional model as a working frame of reference: selection, standardization, dissemination, and cultivation.

Under cultivation falls intellectualization....

Tagalog-based Pilipino (so-named in 1959) and now Filipino (the name used by the 1987 Constitution) was selected in 1937, began its standardization in 1939 through the completion of the *Batarila* and a bilingual word list, and has been disseminated since 1940 through its teaching in fourth year high schools and in teacher-training colleges, its teaching at all grade levels since 1946 and up to the university level since 1978; since 1940, it has been undergoing cultivation and elaboration.

The standardization of the language goes on at present largely under the aegis of the *Linangan ng mga Wikang Pilipino* (formerly *Surian ng Wikang Pambansa*) through the latter's periodic publication of *patnubay* or guides to spelling and correspondence, and its publication of dictionaries (bilingual, and more recently, in press, a monolingual dictionary).

In addition to being disseminated as a subject, Filipino is likewise being disseminated as a medium of instruction under the 1974 Bilingual Education Policy and now the 1987 Revised Policy on Bilingual Education. In addition, nearly independently of the school system, the mass media have been disseminating the language through the radio and television and through movies in theaters, on video, and on TV. There is likewise a lively press in Filipino, both daily newspapers and weekly periodicals, including some in both English and Filipino.

Tagalog, the basis of Filipino, has a rich oral literature dating to prehistoric times, and since historic times (the coming of the Spaniards), a rich written literature as well

which began to be written extensively in the nineteenth century, in poetry, drama, and short fiction. In the twentieth century, literary production has continued unabated, and especially within the past twenty years, there has been a genuine efflorescence of socially committed written literature in Filipino using different genres in literature: plays, novels, short stories, lyric and narrative poems, and a new genre for the Filipinos, TV and movie scripts.

Hence, it would be an inaccuracy to make a statement that as yet Filipino is not cultivated. Rather, Filipino IS cultivated--in fact, its literature is alive and well and continues to flourish and expand--insofar as literature or works of the creative imagination are concerned.

In this area, freedom to write, support of promising literary artists through writing grants and publication outlets, encouragement through prizes and public honors, and above all, the nurturing of a reading public that will constitute the clientele and the 'significant others' of these writers will be more than sufficient to bring this cultivation to new peaks. In other words, the structures are in place; what is needed is merely to continue to encourage and support on-going activities.

In planning the development of a language, the language planner and engineer must do corpus planning, that is, he must bring about a state of affairs in which writings in the language are encouraged to multiply to constitute a significant corpus or body of written literature.

Viewed in another way, from the British linguists' favorite mode of speaking, language cultivation should consist of building registers in the language for the different intellectual disciplines or fields of specialization so that the knowledge of the world may be made available through the language. That is why the term INTELLECTUALIZATION is used, suggested by Garvin and Mathiot, basing themselves on the pioneering work of the Prague School in the 1920's in this crucial area of language development.

Among reading experts, likewise looking at this phenomenon from the point of view of the receptor-reader, 'decontextualized speech' is used as a term, for the characteristic of these special registers of language used to set down knowledge in various disciplines is that it is language which is not based on the immediate (here and now) context but is decontextualized. As texts build up, contexts are created within the universe of discourse of a particular piece of writing on a specific academic subject. This kind of text makes use of the referential (ideational) and textual functions of language, to use the terminology of M.A.K. Halliday, himself building up and improving on the key insights of Prague linguists such as Vilem Mathesius and Havranek.

The building up of texts of a specific language in process of intellectualization is a function of social, political, and intellectual conditions under which the particular language is used.

Moreover, not all intellectual fields of specialization need to be developed at once, nor is it absolutely necessary in the long term for every field of endeavor to be intellectualized to the same degree. The choice depends on the country and its resources. For example, during the Meiji Restoration of 1868, the Japanese decided that they would intellectualize Japanese for all content areas or registers and have succeeded admirably in doing so, except that presently, in the newer fields of physics and in computer science, there is less pressure to cultivate Japanese, at least for the advanced levels of these disciplines; the Japanese now make extensive use of English for these two registers. Norwegian scientists at the university level learn English and use it for their intellectual work more than Norwegian.

In Israel, while Modern Hebrew is used as a university language for all subjects, every university professor likewise learns English and uses it for scientific work.

For Filipino in the Philippines, language policy makers and language educators must map out the remaining task of development, specifically, not the cultivation of Filipino as a literary language (it is already being rapidly developed for this aspect) but the cultivation of Filipino for non-literary academic discourse not only at the tertiary level but certainly at the primary and secondary levels as well.

Thus far, efforts to intellectualize Filipino have been attempted from the bottom up (in grade schools). Our experience and the evaluations made indicate that this is a wrong approach; it is asking too much of the grade school teacher in the field to intellectualize Filipino even for primary school use. In fact, by Grades 5 and 6, Filipino teachers in the classroom, no matter how linguistically versatile, have found it difficult not only to develop terminology (these terms have now been provided by the *Linangan ng mga Wikang Filipino* as part of its contribution to the process of intellectualization) but to actually explain principles and concepts of their respective social science disciplines. In secondary school, especially for economics in third year, it has become virtually impossible.

A second approach, therefore, from the top down in a trickle-down pattern, must be added if nothing else because we know that the other direction is not very effective. Moreover, this approach has much to recommend itself since it depends on the most intelligent, most creative, and most linguistically able of our society's members, the academics in universities, who have the intellectual competence in their subject areas and some of whom have the linguistic versatility to shift medium from English to Filipino.

2. THE NEED FOR A RESEARCH MAPPING CONFERENCE

There have been many initiatives taken by different language societies and bodies in the Philippines to encourage and to discuss the tasks of intellectualization ahead, really the agenda for Filipino for the rest of the century and undoubtedly for at least the first half of the twenty-first century.

The Board of Directors of the Linguistic Society of the Philippines wanted to focus its attention, however, on only one aspect of this cultivation and effort towards intellectualization, namely, to map out a research agenda for linguists and language educators and social scientists to help in this over-all national effort. In this way, a theoretical base for teacher training would be developed for the Secondary Language Teacher Education Project of Philippine Normal College, which co-sponsored the conference.

While there had been scattered suggestions on researchable issues which needed to be looked into and while there had been admirable initiatives taken by individuals to explore one or another of these issues, an integrated program of research mapping out these various dimensions and their specifications as well as suggesting approaches with which to carry on research in these relatively unexplored areas of investigation was deemed to be very useful.

The delineation would give direction to both senior and junior linguists in researchable areas, especially for graduate schools with language departments where students (masteral and doctoral) 'need' research topics for their papers. Rather than engage in relatively stereotyped inquiries, more creative papers could be ferreted out with a program of researchable areas.

More significantly, since the field of intellectualization is a relatively unexplored area even in developed countries, local researchers could not rely on foreign sources; in the past, such reliance had led to merely replicative rather than original research. If local scholars could make breakthroughs in this area, then they would be given the unique opportunity of giving rather than receiving intellectual content—for a change. Moreover, it would give our most creative language researchers an opportunity to make a significant

contribution to the world's knowledge, in this case, because they are in the best position to do so and because for once they have to rely on their own observations and experiences rather than see reality through the prism of the West.

For this reason, the Linguistic Society of the Philippines, in co-sponsorship with the Secondary-level Language Teachers (SLATE) training program of the Language Study Center of the Philippine Normal College, invited a selected group of interested language educators and linguists as well as subject specialists interested in making a contribution towards the intellectualization of Filipino for a conference that would map out the research agenda and suggest methodologies to go about doing the necessary investigation.

From among the participants, individual research projects would be developed to be carried out by the participants as senior researchers with their graduate students as assistants; the work of the latter could be turned in as thesis requirements, with proper acknowledgment, and subsequently a joint publication could be developed.

Depending on the response and the speed of work, perhaps an annual conference could be called, reporting on work in progress and focusing on specific dimensions needing further exploration which would be suggested by the on-going research itself. The conferences could then be a stimulating factor to encourage continuing research on a topic which would take a generation to do justice to. Support for publications of the work and the research itself and the annual conference could be obtained in the future from local and foreign foundations. The proceedings of the conference would, of course, be published as needed documentation for the process of development.

This special issue of the *Philippine Journal of Linguistics* is the first set of papers to be published from the first conference on the intellectualization of Filipino held at Philippine Normal College on January 8 and 9, 1988.