

## SOCIOLINGUISTIC AND HISTORICAL SURVEY OF FOUR PHILIPPINE MAJOR MINOR LANGUAGES.

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### PROBLEMS.

The science of botany presents an analogy applicable to this linguistic survey. The age of a tree is indicated by the number of rings around the core. A careful inspection of each individual ring can tell us something of the climatic history of each year in the life of that tree. In the case of a very old tree, such knowledge may be the only history we can reconstruct if there are no other records from that locale or epoch.

Each language has rings of vocabulary and structure retained from earlier levels of development within the family, or from levels of contact outside of the family. Thus, a study of Tagalog vocabulary would reveal various stages of development from Malayo-Polynesian (PMP) down through Central Philippine (CPH), the immediate ancestral language Tagalog shares with Bisayan and Bikol. Secondary contacts with Kapampangan, Malay, Spanish, and English are also revealed. Even these borrowings show levels which can be dated, based on the current shape or pronunciation of a form. W. H. Scott has shown that we have no pre-Hispanic historical records, so that only linguistics and archaeology can be called upon in the reconstruction of Philippine pre-history.

In order to make a serious study contributing to the linguistic history of a language, one must have an extensive corpus of textual material and vocabulary, gathered and collated with care.

The focus of linguistic attention in the Philippines has been mainly on languages with very large or very small numbers of speakers. Eight are considered major because of large populations and group prestige. They are well known, having excellent to fair descriptions, grammars, and dictionaries. All of the other languages are "minor" by default. Over fifty languages of such

minority groups in the north and south are currently under analysis by members of the Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL) and other missionary groups. Some information has already been published; more is forthcoming.

However, in the central Philippines the language picture can be made much more precise. Speech types have been labelled "Cebuano", "Waray", "Hiligaynon", etc., but the varieties under each heading exhibit enormous differences among themselves. In some cases, the label applied is flatly mistaken, e.g. calling Kamayo "Cebuano" (see below). My recent work on CPH dialect geography in connection with my dissertation has resulted in a more accurate analysis.

While on field work (1971-72), I came across four speech-types not previously known to scholarship:

Odianganon on Tablas, Banton, Corcuera, and Sibale Iss., a well-marked dialect of Romblomanon, independently grouped as intermediate between West Bisayan (Aklanon, Kinaray-a) and Central Bisayan (Masbate, Waray) dialects.

Jaun-Jaun on Siargao Island, off the coast of Surigao, a well-marked dialect of Surigaonon.

Naturalis in Surigao del Sur (northern half), a speech type intermediate between South Bisayan dialects (Butuanon, Surigaonon) and Kamayo. Research must yet establish if Naturalis is a genetic link between Bisayan and Kamayo, or the product of centuries of intimate contact and bilingualism.

Kamayo in Surigao del Sur (southern half), a dialect clearly in the Mansaka language group.

These dialects (1) are virtually unknown outside of their area, (2) have upwards of 50,000 speakers each, (3) are not mentioned in any published study I know of, and (4) are very important in the reconstruction of CPH linguistic history.

Linguistic maps of the Philippines subsume these under one or another of the major languages through overgeneralization or ignorance. Kamayo has been taken

as Cebuano, whereas it is in the Mansaka group. Odionganon has been taken to be a variety of Hiligaynon, whereas it is a variety of Romblon.

Unlike some minority languages which are slowly becoming extinct through the death of older speakers and the emigration of the young, these four dialects are rapidly being swamped by Philippine languages of wider use and greater prestige.

In-depth research offers three unique advantages: (1) the recording of four speech types which can be expected to disappear soon, (2) observation of the sociolinguistic factors involved in the expected language replacement, and (3) the development of a more solid hypothesis about CPH linguistic history.

Prior close work and consultation with Father Llamzon has revealed both mutual interest in such studies and the need for a co-professor and co-researcher in Austronesian studies at Ateneo de Manila. I plan to have my base, therefore, at Ateneo when not out in the field. [Copies of supporting letters enclosed with my application form.]

#### METHODS.

1. I will gather, with the help of trained researchers, discreetly taped recordings of natural ongoing conversations and narratives from the everyday life of the people, for the purpose of examining language usage and coding as well as of analyzing the handling of the lexicon and grammar of both the target and encroaching languages. Sociolinguistic changes in the area will be studied; e.g. the success of Tagalog (Pilipino) or of any other trade language as a replacing language. Besides extensive recording, a questionnaire will also be devised to examine: What codes (i.e. speech types and levels) exist in the community? How do such codes function? What is the role of the local dialect vis-a-vis the competing language? How does one

feel about his language and its differences or similarities to another? Tests of an individual's knowledge of the target language and the other languages will lead to a better picture of Philippine polylingualism. The responses to these questions about how people feel towards the languages involved will be tallied against the collated results of how they actually speak those languages.

2. Texts of local oral traditions will also be sought: riddles, aphorisms, folksongs, and tales. The vocabulary, grammar, and language mixture of these more fixed traditional texts will be compared with that of the free conversations recorded to see to what degree the current dialect differs from that of previous generations.

3. Vocabulary lists will be compiled to facilitate the comparison of the target languages with other CPH languages in lexical areas most likely to reveal innovations and other features useful in subgrouping them accurately.

4. Other dialects or languages in these locales will be sought as possible links between Bisayan, Mansaka, or other language groups. A grammatical questionnaire which I devised and used with success in previous field work will be completed for each new speech type encountered, eliciting the pronominal, deictic, case-marking, and verb-affix systems.

5. Subgrouping and classification of all speech types studied will be undertaken on the basis of the Swadesh 100 and 200 word lists, as well as a CPH innovational vocabulary list recently compiled by me. In order to insure the exact idiomatic equivalent for each entry (failure to do so has been the pitfall of many lexicostatisticians), words will be elicited through sentences in context rather than in isolation.

#### PROCEDURE AND IMMEDIATE RESULTS.

1. I will teach in the Ateneo - Philippine Normal College Consortium in linguistics, trying to stimulate students to engage in parallel projects in

comparative and historical linguistics. I shall make myself available to the Consortium and to the SIL and other groups or individuals for consultation, active participation in seminars, and visits to research sites. In specific, I plan a seminar on the importance of linguistics in the reconstruction of Philippine pre-history.

2. Although I can direct some of the fieldwork and all of the collation in Manila, at least one third of the time allotted will be spent in the field gathering data and supervising the informants and researchers I have trained.

3. The texts and questionnaires gotten in the field will be collated; drafts describing the results will be prepared for publication in local and international journals.

4. The collation of lexical and grammatical data begun in this project, or submitted by missionaries, graduate students, or other linguists from their own research, will be organized in terms of accessibility to local scholars. In cases where I have successfully encouraged students to undertake research projects, I shall approach local clubs (e.g. Rotary or Lions) or Filipiniana groups for funding and assistance. I had much success in the past in doing this when I was a Peace Corps Volunteer and as a result was able to publish my own Aklanon grammar and dictionary.

5. As much as possible, I will coordinate my own efforts with that of the SIL, of linguists in the field, and of other personnel involved with Fr. Llamzon's own project, A Handbook of Philippine Languages.

#### IMPORTANCE OF THE PROJECT.

1. Sociolinguistic. We will gain important firsthand knowledge of how one language replaces another; how and why changes in various systems of language take place; how codes are used; and to what degree the grammar and vocabulary of a language are restructured: e.g. is the resultant speech Bisayanized

Tagalog or Tagalicized Bisayan? How effective is the national language program, and what are the most effective means of dispersal (viz. the classroom?, radio broadcasts?, comics and literature?, movies?, etc.).

2. Archival. Eventually, grammars and dictionaries of these dying and heretofore unknown languages will be published. In the meantime the data will be duplicated and made available to any interested parties from several centers, such as the Ateneo linguistics library, the INL library, and the SIL libraries in Manila, Nasuli, and Balabag.

3. Pedagogical. Through contact in and out of the classroom, Filipino linguists will be spurred towards more detailed and complete analyses of languages and the establishment of sound methods in comparative studies.

4. Geographical. The combined data will allow us to draw a more accurate dialect-and-language map of the central and southern Philippines.

5. Historical. It seems probable that Tagalog originates from some area currently occupied by speakers of Bisayan. Can we determine that area of dispersal from which the Tagalog speakers, and so also the Bisayan speakers, spread? Tausug has Butuanon as its closest linguistic relative. Do Tausugs originate from the Butuan area, or do both come from somewhere else? Surigaonon is most closely related to Cebuano, yet it shares many features with Naturalis and Kamayo to the south. But Kamayo is not a member of the Bisayan family, which gives rise to the question: are Kamayo and other members of the Mansakic group genetically related to the Bisayan family (and, hence, CPH), or have similarities developed through centuries of contact? The relationships revealed by this study can contribute much to the reconstruction of the linguistic pre-history of the central and southern Philippine area. Ultimately, we will have a better picture of the relationship of Philippine languages with one another, and within the Malayo-Polynesian family.