

REPLY TO POTET ON THE CORE ETYMOLOGICAL
DICTIONARY OF FILIPINO

R. DAVID ZORC

MRM Inc.

I am grateful to Brother Andrew Gonzalez for forwarding Potet's remarks and this opportunity to reply to them. I am pleased with Potet's interest in and comments on the *Core Etymological Dictionary of Filipino* (CEDOF). To some extent I can appreciate his disappointment in my treatment of foreign loans.

In the introduction to the CEDOF, I stated that 'loans are identified on the basis of a comparison with the form and meaning of each word from a suspected donor language. It is also deemed sufficient to cite the immediate contact language through which a word entered the Philippines'. (i) Insofar as the average user would not be versed in such a panoply of scripts, a Romanized transliteration suffices to identify the form in each language. I agree that it would have been of some benefit to include the Sanskrit, Chinese, Japanese or Arabic characters, but I am not versed in any of these languages and the danger of introducing blatant errors out of sheer ignorance was too great. Further, based on what was available to me at that time in the outback of Australia, it was typographically impossible. In my 1979 article (*Philippine Journal of Linguistics* 10:66) which was meant to explain the rationale behind the CEDOF, I noted:

An etymological dictionary is of necessity a cooperative effort, based on the amount of research that must be done, and on the number of languages that need to be searched for likely cognates A scholar who has a full knowledge of Chinese, Sanskrit, Tamil, Arabic, Persian, Spanish, English, Malay, Buginese, Javanese, and several Philippine languages would be a boon to Philippinologists, but is probably non-existent. Yet words from all these languages have found their way into Tagalog, and hence Pilipino; although some came through an intermediate route through Indonesian languages. Tracing the history of such loanwords is itself a fascinating study, and shows the impact of other societies. ..

I would therefore welcome any cooperation with Potet or anyone else in seeing that a future edition could include such faithful rendition of the actual written forms in the source languages. Such a cooperative effort has been successfully undertaken in the etymological study of Indonesian where a loosely-woven international consortium of professors is insuring the accuracy of the identification of loanwords from Arabic, Sanskrit and Persian (Russell Jones of London), Dutch and English (Grijns of Leiden), Chinese and Portuguese (Luigi Santa Maria of Naples)

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along with the indigenous elements and modern language (Lombard of Paris).

I disagree about the need for a phonetic vs phonemic transcription of the source language forms and for the detailed accentual characteristics of the Tagalog words that Potet has included in his representation. These are redundant characteristics of each respective language or of Tagalog phonology and accentuation. There is no precedent (surely in English lexicography) since even the Oxford Dictionary does no more than cite the donor form in its respective orthography. In setting out on any lexicographic study, the researcher must consider the use and user. The only two user groups I envisioned were Filipinos (who show a major interest in the history of their language and would ignore detailed linguistic information) and Austronesian comparative linguists (who wish to see the cognition of Tagalog forms with established reconstructions or words in the languages that hold their interest). I feel that I have served these two groups to the best of my abilities.

The inclusion of Tagalog words from the earliest sources is also a desideratum which has captured my interest. This involves the kind of etymological study that is most common in the comprehensive dictionaries of the world's major languages. Potet is absolutely correct in the need to refer to the original meaning or forms cited in the *Doctrina Christiana* or, for that matter, in Pedro San Buenaventura's first dictionary of the Tagalog language (1613) and all those that have followed. The importance of words like *aklat* 'book' and *limbag* 'printing' which I was forced to omit due to the etymological strictures under which I originally put myself should not be underestimated and must somehow be accounted for. How words have evolved or been lost since that time is another kind of etymological endeavor that is most worthwhile, but one for which I have had neither time nor adequate material nor financial resources.

This space offers me an opportunity for a kind of 'apologia' for the failure of any further fascicles to appear since 1985. Data, but, alas, no time is available for the final three. I left both academia and Australia in 1986 and have been employed in industry in the USA where this sort of endeavor does not at all fit into the needs of the language business. While I have tried to push forward on my own time, personal and family commitments have prevented any further work. There is some hope that funding opportunities may materialize in the next year or two. Otherwise, in the worst case scenario, the project will have to be completed upon my retirement. If that must be the case, I would be willing to pass on all of my data with appropriate guidelines to anyone who could complete the work ahead of such a schedule. My love for this project and the recognition of its importance for the fuller lexicographic picture of Tagalog prompts me to yield and/or cooperate to see it to completion.