

## **The State and Directions of Philippine Linguistics and Language Study**

Subtitle or Surttitle: "**Thank God**"

R. David Paul Zorc [Delivered: 2005.02.26; archived 2005.03.28]

I shudder to think that I might not have walked down the path our Good Lord had opened for me. I have had a fascinating life and career as a linguist, and every moment of it has been truly blessed.

As a linguist, I have had the opportunity to work on eighty different languages representing five distinct world language families:

Austronesian (including all native Philippine languages, Malay and Indonesian)

Cushitic (Somali and Oromo)

Niger-Congo (including the Bantu subfamily: Sotho, Zulu, Xhosa, Rwanda & Rundi)

Indo-European (Armenian, English, Latin, Greek, German)

Australian (Pama-Nyungan, especially the Yolngu-Matha dialect bloc of 54 speech varieties)

With this award, I am indeed "in good company"

1st 1996 - Dr. Bonifacio P. Sibayan

2nd 1997 - Curtis D. McFarland

3rd 1998 - Leonard Newell

4th 1999 - Emy M. Pascasio

5th 2000 - Teodoro A. Llamzon

6th 2001 - Ma. Lourdes S. Bautista

7th 2002 - J. Stephen Quakenbush

8th 2003 - Estefania S. de Guzman

9th 2004 - Emma S. Castillo

Of us ten awardees, four are American (McFarland, Newell, Quakenbush, Zorc) and six are Filipino. What are Americans doing with such an honorable distinction from the Linguistic Society of the Philippines? I think it is not only fitting, it is our only resort, as there is no equivalent honor available in a basically monolingual America! We linguists all share a love of the Philippines and a enormous amount of respect for Philippine languages.

It is my goal here to trace my own linguistic history, which began as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Kalibo, Aklan in September 1965 with that of linguistic developments here in the Philippines.

As to a request from my favorite "cousin-in-law," Ernesto "Boy" Perlas, if Tish Bautista is willing to perform a modern dance number, it would be with my blessing!

My guests represent my entire history in Philippine linguistics.

A few members of the Kalibo Boys Choir and my students at the Kalibo Pilot School (from the mid to late 1960's) are attending:  
Dante A. Crisostomo  
Paul M. Icamina  
Marde I. Infante  
Ingersol Zarate  
Aloysius A. Meñez

Then there are members of Nellie's family who represent the 36 years of our marriage which overlaps with most of my career in linguistics:

Maria-Nellie Prado Zorc  
Ma. Evelyn Prado Nacaya  
Carmen Mayleen N. Tan  
Ramon C. Tan  
Edwin Prado Nacaya  
Kervin Arthur N. Tan  
Kim Alexis N. Tan  
Ernesto R. Perlas, Jr. (my long lost favorite "cousin-in-law")  
Leonardo Aquino Pineda (married to Cielito, my wife's eldest sister)

Here also are my more recent linguistic contacts (e.g., that the McNeil Language Research Center has contracted to write books on their languages). They come from UP, from Ateneo de Zamboanga, and elsewhere, all of whom have become dear friends.

ZAMBOANGA (July 2003 and July 2004)

Maritoni G. Destua  
Fr. David John M. Delos Reyes, S.J.  
Precious T. Mazo  
Rommel N. Miravite  
Milbert D. Padayao  
Clint Sanchez  
Day S. Tardo  
Francis Ray Vesagas  
Shirven John Vilorio

UP (July 2003)

Maria Khristina Manuelli (Chair lady of the Department of Linguistics) and her friend.

ZORCY'S ANGELS (September 2003 contractees for Dialog & Drill books)

Almahdi Alonto (Meranao)  
Genesan Velarde Moharin (Yakan)  
Alzad Sattar (Yakan)  
Iskak Tenex E. Racman (Magindanaw)

Santiago B. Villafania (Pangasinan)

FRIENDS

Nelson A. Quito Jr. (brother of my nephew's wife)

Ryan A. Quito (brother of my nephew's wife)

"Mayad-áyad nga hápon. Malípay akó it dóro ay íya akó sa ínyong atubángan." (Good afternoon. I am very happy to be here before you.) I have spoken in Inakeanon to demonstrate that it was the first Philippine language I learned -- in fact, well enough to write poetry in it. Here it is used in the context of the need for research on ALL Philippine languages and for efforts to achieve understanding among all ethnic groups. Learning this language represented four years of my life, from September 1965 through June 1969, during which time I was fortunate enough to publish a grammar and a dictionary (prior to any formal linguistic training), to establish and promulgate a single orthography in all 17 municipal schools, and to found the Kalibo Boys Choir.

After the Peace Corps in September 1969, I enrolled in a Ph.D. Program at Cornell University in Ithaca NY. Thanks to Prof. John Wolff's encouragement and support, I had both a scholarship and a fellowship. We also had a lump sum from the Peace Corps of approximately \$4,000. Nevertheless, our money ran out within a few months, what with establishing ourselves in the US, so Nellie had to work to "support me in the life to which I was accustomed!" Ironically, one of the hardest things for me in returning to the USA was having to look up to my classmates, most of whom were six-footers. I had gotten used to being at most people's eye level in the Philippines, so height became my biggest culture shock. I asked permission of my professors to allow Nellie to attend my classes -- so that I would have at least someone to look down upon. This paid off in more ways than one.

When we returned to the Philippines in 1970-71 for my doctoral research on central Philippine languages under the auspices of a Foreign Area Fellowship Program grant, we were invited to a Ford Foundation dinner attended by many Filipino linguists. At one point, a lively debate erupted about the role of focus in Philippine languages, and Nellie was right there in the midst of the fray along with the best of them. When asked if she had a "Masters in Linguistics," she immediately quipped, "No, I have a Master in Linguistics."

In June 1973, while I was in the throes of a sixth re-write of my dissertation, Prof. Dyen at Yale University hired me to work in the "Austronesian Genetic Classification Project." This has caused many to assume that Prof. Dyen was my chairman (actually it

was Prof. Charles Hockett at Cornell) and that my degree was from Yale (but it was Cornell). It was during this period that I met Dyen's graduate students, who themselves have become great names in Austronesian or other areas of linguistics: Curt McFarland, Berndt Nothofer, Shingeru Tsuchida. Also while at Yale I had a lot of productive interactions with Prof. Harold Conklin of the Anthropology Department.

Our son, David Nicolas-Prado Zorc was born in New Haven, CT in May 1974.

Just as Prof. Dyen's grant was about to run out, I saw an ad for a position with the School of Australian Linguistics needing support in the training of Australian Aborigines to support their bilingual programs. It seemed so much like the kind of work associated with the Peace Corps, but far, far better paying! I applied and was accepted, so we moved to Australia in January 1976. During our stay there, I was able to work on a wide variety of Australian Languages such as Tiwi, Ngankikurunggurr, Anindilyakwa, but mostly my students came from a bloc of 54 speech varieties known as Yolngu-Matha.

Fortunately, the heads-of-school (Dr. Barry Alpher and Dr. Kevin Ford) were very supportive of my work on Philippine languages, as evidenced by a number of my articles on Austronesian accent, conference attendances in Canberra, Bali and Fiji, and even my first sabbatical dedicated to the *Core Etymological Dictionary of Filipino*. Altogether, four fascicles were published during my Senior Lecturship days in Australia.

In August, 1986 we repatriated to America and settled in the greater Washington, DC area. I spent most of August and September looking for work. Again, the Good Lord had doors waiting to be opened. I went to a Peace Corps reunion on Sunday October 5, 1986, armed with a dozen resumes. I met Pam Moguet, an American Peace Corps assigned to Benguet who had a Filipino husband and who worked for the Language Research Center of MRM Inc. in Hyattsville Maryland. She told me they had an opening for a linguist to write a Cebuano Newspaper Reader. She gave my biodata to Mr. Mathias the owner and manager on Monday, the sixth, I was interviewed on Tuesday, the seventh, and hired on Wednesday, October 8th!

The *Cebuano Newspaper Reader* was ready for publication in six months, and Pam and I were assigned to work on an *Ilokano Newspaper Reader* together. After that was completed, I was asked to work on a *Tagalog Newspaper Reader*, and later the now infamous *Tagalog Slang Dictionary*. My last Philippine project was the

*Hiligaynon Reader* in 1992. Meanwhile, my brother-in-law, Leonardo Aquino Pineda, had helped complete a *Kapampangan Reader* and Chito Belchez a *Bikol Newspaper Reader*. It was felt that all the work that needed to be done on Philippine languages had been done. The only way I could "survive" in the firm was to become a "language whore" -- to sleep with whatever languages the boss required. My first such excursion was with Somali where I had already been asked to develop a textbook (1990), but then to work on a handbook for our troops posted in Somalia (1992), and to revise an existing *Somali-English Dictionary* (1993).

Thereafter, Armenian was my next assignment (1993), which led to the publication of a reader with a comprehensive grammar (1995), and a dictionary (1995).

Then it was back to Africa, but within the Cushitic family with an *Oromo Newspaper Reader, Reference Grammar and Lexicon* (1996).

After completing a "Survey of Sub-Saharan African Languages" (manuscript), it was decided that I would work on one of three South African Bantu languages, depending on getting a suitable informant: Sotho, Xhosa, or Zulu. A *Sotho Reader* with reference grammar was the first for me (1998), and, after a successful trip to South Africa, I was able to subcontract the work on both a *Xhosa Newspaper Reader* (Lloyd 2002) and a *Zulu Newspaper Reader* (Gowlett 2004), both of which I edited prior to publication.

For the last four years (2001-2005), I have been deep in the labors of writing a comparative grammar of Rwanda and Rundi. On the way, my colleague, Louise Nibagwire and I were able to produce a reader (2002). This has turned out to be the most difficult task I have ever encountered and will probably be my magnum opus.

But all of this is about me. What of the same time period in the Philippines?

I met Ted Llamzon when I was here for my graduate research in 1970, became an early member of the LSP, and had my first lecture in 1971 on "Current and Proto Tagalic Stress," published the following year in the third issue of PJJL.

The Consortium of La Salle, Ateneo and Philippine Normal has been a very successful endeavor and much of its efforts and output has been in applied linguistics. Meanwhile, the University of the Philippines, with such notables as Ernesto Constantino, Cecilio Lopez and Consuelo Paz, has worked in the theoretical and

historical arenas. The third entity has been the Summer Institute of Linguistics whose members work indefatigably on both theoretical and applied aspects of the language to which each team is assigned. The output of the Philippines over the last 40 years has been prolific and significant! If one takes the Philippine Journal of Linguistics as a guide, there is everything to be proud of, for no linguistic stone has been unturned. There is a wealth of articles on bilingualism, polylingualism, specific dialect studies, the sociolinguistics of language, phonetics, phonology, morphology, and pragmatics, and, yes, even on historical Austronesian linguistics.

What of the future of Philippine linguistics? It should be "more of the same." More surveys of lesser-known and hardly-ever studied Philippine speech varieties. SIL has provided us with numerous surveys of many of the non-major Philippine languages from Ivatan in the north through Tboli in the south. Moreover, UP sends graduate students every summer to different linguistics areas. This should continue and individual and collective write-ups would contribute enormously to our understanding of the lesser known languages.

I attended a paper at an African language conference last April in which the author said he could find no papers on polylingualism. For monolingual America, this comes as no surprise. There any paper on bilingualism seems to forge new ground. But it is common in the Philippines, as it is in India and in Africa, for an individual to speak four or more languages (a mother tongue, a father tongue, a local trade language, and an international academic language). Sadly, these facts, and the psycholinguistic variables surrounding this phenomenon are not recorded or poorly documented in the literature. This is fallow ground, and Filipinos could become world authorities in this field. Ironically, one need not travel further than a neighbor's house (if not one's own) to find field subjects!

Funding for research could be raised. Such as the Philippines & Oceanic conference to be held this coming Wednesday, March 2, 2005. Prof. Floro Quibuyen raised money from the Japan foundation and from the Australian government to cover every aspect of the conference (merriendas and honoraria, even the publication of the conference proceedings). "Go ye and do likewise!"

I have asked several friends to help keyboard some of my far flung articles from pre-computer days. Hence, a Zorc compendium is in the works bringing together some of my better insights into a single place. I would appreciate help from any of you in

determining which of my outpourings deserve such a place and which can remain relegated to the dust of history. But the historical and brilliant works by Scheerer and by Conant also deserve being brought together to give insight to budding comparativists as to how Austronesian linguistic judgements form and progress.

My final words must be addressed to Bro. Andrew Gonzalez, who has so favorably sponsored my research ever since the early 1980's. He let me stay at LaSalle Brothers' Quarters so as to avoid the long commute every day (allowing me some three extra hours of work per day on whatever project I had before me). He has published every article I have submitted to the Phil. Journal of Linguistics. And he has held a dinner in my honor every time I've returned to the Philippines (and that used to be annually between 1978-86 when we were in Australia). Although the award is named in his honor, I owe him "utang na loob" big time. His fostering or sponsorship is one of the main reasons I developed a good reputation in Philippine linguistics, which has subsequently set me up for the honor they are going to bestow.

Postscript. Zorc talks to the LSP

1977. "Determining the influence of Philippine majority languages upon minority languages." LSP. (5pp)

1981. "The value of Philippine languages in reconstructing Proto Austronesian laryngeals (\*h and \*?)." LSP. (3pp)

1983. "The prehistory of the Tagalog people (through their language)." LSP, Jan. 1983. (6pp)

1989. "Filipino Slang The Genius of a Nation." LSP, Aug. 1989. (2pp)

2003. "How knowledge of Philippine languages prepared me for Bantu languages," Metro-Manila Linguistic Circle, De La Salle University, July 11, 2003.

2004. "A Multi-Level View of Language and Philippine Linguistics: Rules vs. Relations." LSP Lecture, Saturday, 10:00 a.m. July 24 and UP Lecture, 2:00 p.m. July 26, 2004.

2005. "The State and Directions of Philippine Linguistics and Language Study," lecture for the Bro. Andrew Gonzalez, FSC, Distinguished Professorial Chair in Linguistics and Language Education for 2005. February 26.