
PHILIPPINE LINGUISTIC POLICY IN THE GLOBAL CONTEXT

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ABSTRACT

The Philippines suffers an enduring linguistic problem that is not identified as such. Through the 20th century the goal has been to study a foreign language hoping for economical competitiveness in an Asian context. At present, this very context has revealed the fallacy of abandoning the education of the citizens in its own setting, much less pointed out the problem—Diglossia. By using an alien means of communication in the schools, the whole education has been alienated, and the result is a society that does not know their history (in Spanish), much less have a future other than to be manpower in a capitalist market (in English). Highlighting the experience of the multilingual European Union, the paper explains a model for the Philippine setting in the context of the [“House Bill 162: The Multilingual Education and Literacy Act of 2010.”](#)

Keywords: *linguistic policy, diglossia, linguistic intellectualization*

Linguistic Policy and Global Multilingualism: The Philippine Case

Languages are vehicles of communication that are not constrained to kin, race, culture and even to political boundaries. Languages are living instruments of communication between human beings, trends in the identification of common units of relation (ethnic communities), which eventually can develop material culture and sophistication (civilization) towards a complex political administration (State). In this process politics is very important in establishing a linguistic status. Hence, through legislation a language can be promoted or neglected, an alien language encouraged, others condemned to die or to remain in a marginal domain and, when the State is in process, a local one selected as national. Languages follow the same way that the political organization of a community:

Bago makaugnay ang mga dayuhang Kastila noong ika-16 na dantaon, wala pang iisang pantayong pananaw ang mga grupong etnolingguwistiko sa buong arkipelago, sa kabila ng kanilang pagiging magkakamag-anak at lubusang pagkakahawig sa lahi at kalinangan. Wala pa nga noon ang nasyon Pilipino na sumasaklaw ngayon sa mga kultura’t lipunang nabanggit; lalo’t higit, tulad ngayon, wala pa rin isang bansang magbibigay ng kabuuan sa Kapilipinuhan. Ang nasyon Pilipino ay nabuo lamang

noong ikalawang bahagi ng nagdaang dantaon. Nabuo ito sa pagsusumikap ng mga elite ng bahaging Kristiano ng kolonyang Kastila. Ibig sabihin, nabuo lamang ito sa isang bahagi ng Kapilipinuhan na nalantad nang husto sa Kanluan at, samakatuwid, nabahiran kung hindi man talagang nabago ito – i.e. natuto ng wikang Kastila at napasok (gaano man kabahagya) sa kulturang Kastila at, sa pamamagitan nito, sa sibilisasyon ng Kanluran (Salazar, 2000, p.87).¹

In the construction of a Philippine community beyond kin embracing heterogeneous ethno-linguistic groups around an archipelago of seven thousand islands, a main political event was the establishment of a common political administration. “The Philippines,” the Spanish administration of the Archipelago during the Modern Era, allowed the development of both, a civil culture and a State embracing a common political entity. Different people will join a common political project towards nation formation and civil culture. In a Southeast Asia crossroad between the Indian and the Pacific Oceans, between the Indian, Islamic and Chinese cultural influences, understandably the alternative influence came from the West. Where Indonesia and Malaysia built their civil culture from Indian and Islamic civilizations, and where Vietnam did from China, the Philippines did from Western civilization:

The Spanish period is often dismissed today as ‘the colonial period.’ In fact it is more than that. During this period, civil culture, in this case the Western, finally plunged deep roots in the lowland, coastal settlements of Luzon and Visayas. The Spanish period thus plays a role in Filipino culture far different from that of the Dutch period in Java or the French period in Vietnam. In the latter two, pre-Western civil cultures were already large, ancient trees at Western contact in the sixteenth century [...] Questions can be raised about how urban pre-1571 Manila and Tondo were, but not about Intramuros de Manila [...] Under Spain, an all-inclusive moral system, Catholic Christianity, spread. This was accompanied by an abstract, speculative system of thought, Scholasticism that was transmitted via an exact script, stored in libraries, and taught by professional thinkers. Starting in the nineteenth century, a skeptical Rationalism deriving from the Enlightenment gained ground (Ziálcita, 2005, p. 168).

¹Our translation: “Before they could link with the Spaniards in the sixteenth century, there was no uniform *pantayong pananaw* to all the ethno-linguistic groups of the entire Philippine Archipelago, despite their racial kinship and civilization. The Filipino nation did not exist as we understand it today, certainly much less covered the whole of peoples who today are described under the term “Filipino”. The Filipino nation was made only in the second half of the nineteenth century, as a result of the efforts made by the elite of the Spanish colonial system, exposed to Western culture that was transformed through the Spanish language and Hispanic culture”.

Following European liberalism and the Republican model, Filipino bourgeois and folks pioneered politics at the turn of the century in the Asian context. A modern social revolution was undertaken, culminating in a Republic with all the elements of a Nation: a flag, a national anthem, a Constitution and a national language. Spanish language played a capital role in the new political entity, and the natural process was its complete nationalization. However, the Malolos' Republic was aborted as well as Spanish language, changing the political status towards a North-American colony where English was the appointed language. Where Filipinos before were able to build a Republic, now they were told to start from ABC: "A people that had got as far as Baudelaire in one language was being returned to the ABC's of another language (Joaquín, 2005, pp. 170-171)." Philippine nationalists confronted intellectually the new scenario, through the press and the literature. Fernando María Guerrero, Cecilio Apostol, Pacífico Victoriano, Claro Mayo Recto, José Palma, Manuel Bernabé, Jesús Balmori were Filipinos that fought Americanization in the common tongue of a multilingual nation—Spanish. Despite this stance, English was imposed, isolating Filipinos under the umbrella of the American way of life, and making them servants and clients of the new capitalist world:

English displaced both Spanish and the vernaculars as the primary symbolic system through which Filipinos represented themselves, that is, constituted themselves as colonial subjects with specific positions or functions in the given social order [...] English became the wedge that separated the Filipinos from their past and later was to separate educated Filipinos from the masses of their countrymen (San Juan, 1991, p. 96).

After the Constitutional Convention of the Commonwealth government in the thirties, President Manuel L. Quezon envisioned the formation of an actual National Language (*Wikang Pambansa*) that might eventually replace the role of English in an independent State. Given the fact that Spanish was aborted as a national language, and English was certainly an artificial reality, Filipino was the linguistic policy to be implemented. Nevertheless, the evolution of *Wikang Pambansa* across the 20th century was a tortuous path from Tagalog-based to Pilipino, until arriving in the 1987's Constitution into Filipino:

"ARTICLE XIV. SEC. 6: The national language of the Philippines is Filipino. As it evolves, it shall be further developed and enriched on the basis of existing Philippine and other languages."

Despite political attempts to spread Filipino in all levels and domains of the Philippine arena, Filipino still remains an eventual project to be finalized (Almario, 2000). The spread of Filipino has been mainly achieved by mechanical phenomena: large migrations towards metropolitan Manila, Manila as national mass-media producer, Manila as scenario of the major political events, etc:

When an official language was an artificial thing, created by international elites, and spread as far as possible among local populations, it is understandable that the bigger budget should have created the bigger language. But when the population starts to grow, as the urban population of Metro Manila has, its language (Tagalog) has come to dominate the country just as its speakers have, English or no English. And when a population starts to move towards that irresistible attractor, the US economy, as the Mexican and central Caribbean populations now are, new speaker communities will begin to crowd in, even if this means encroaching on the heartland of the most dynamic, and widely spoken, language in the world, English. (Ostler, 2006, pp. 378-379).

Hence, Tagalog emerged in the Philippines as much as Spanish did in the United States. However, Tagalog has to face the dilemmas of both: Filipino-National-Language endeavor as well as Filipino-English clash—Taglish (Thompson, 2003). At the end, Filipino is in a position to be one of the super-languages of the world, given the fact that around one hundred million people can use it as a first or second language (Almario, 1997). Filipino is within the first twenty-five most spoken languages of the world. However, its number of speakers, its cultural production and development is minimal (Paz, 2004). Here the unsolved dilemma of Philippine linguistics emerged—the Diglossia.

The Philippine Historical Diglossia

Although Filipino is entering the 21st century as one of the super-languages of the world—with practically one hundred million speakers—its situation is far from ideal: lack of main linguistic references (grammars and dictionaries), nominal literary production, insignificant academic use and, most importantly, predated by switch-coding and diglossia. Diglossia (δίγλωσσος) is the linguistic phenomenon that happens when two or more languages coexist within a same community. The community is usually forced to establish domains for each code, domains in terms of social life: the public and the private space. Wherever the speaker targets intimacy, the mother language will emerge. On the contrary, in public and formal speeches, the standardized code will do. Meanwhile, a High variety (H) rules the formal and impersonal domains, the Low variety (L) does the informal and personal ones, in such a degree that diglossia has the same patterns, regardless of regions and languages (Wardhaugh, 1998, p. 87). The main characteristics of a diglossic setting follow:

- a) SOCIAL FUNCTION: H for formal and impersonal domains; L for informal and personal ones.
- b) SOCIAL PRESTIGE: H is recognized whereas L is undervalued
- c) ACQUISITION: H is learnt at class, L is learnt at home.

- d) LEXICON: H has sophisticated vocabulary whereas L has not.
- e) STANDARDIZATION: H is supported in codified grammars, orthographies and dictionaries, whereas L lacks linguistic codification.
- f) HERITAGE: H has a long and reputable literary tradition, whereas L has not.

During the Spanish advent, an autochthonous written system was developed in the Archipelago. However, only personal letters and poems seem to be the main purpose of the written system—*Baybayin*. Certainly, a grammatical tradition was not undertaken using *baybayin*, though the use of a script standardized for the first time rules in Philippine languages. Nevertheless, its syllabic character confused the phonetic expression of the language, *baybayin* represented a landmark in formalizing a written Philippine code. Latin script is the other dramatic landmark (without forgetting Arabic script, which played a pivotal role all through the history of the Archipelago (Donoso, 2009). In this sense, it is here where we could locate the first historical moment of diglossia recorded. Accordingly, Malay started to be the language of prestige in Philippine shores:

Manila was a bilingual community at the time of the Spanish advent, its bourgeoisie speaking Malay as a second language even as their descendents were later to speak Spanish and English [...] Malay was the *lingua franca* of Southeast Asia commerce at the time and had been for many years [...] Indeed, it was probably the language which Sulu royalty spoke with a community of Chinese Muslims in a trading station on the Grand Canal in Shantung province in 1417 [...] and it is significant that the majority of them [foreign words] were already Malay borrowings from civilizations farther to the west at the time of their introduction into Tagalog [...] The Tagalog spoken in Manila in the late sixteenth century was a cosmopolitan dialect whose novelties took years to spread to the provinces (Scott, 1984, pp. 42-44).

After the introduction of the western Humanism and the culture of the European Renaissance (where Linguistics was a capital task), Latin script provided not only the phonetic translation into a written code of Philippine languages, but also the starting point of linguistic codification. Accordingly, a huge task of codification was undertaken covering all the major languages in the islands. Grammars, dictionaries, translations, original works, and a large linguistic and philological conscious endeavour were set in motion for the first time for Philippine tongues (Sueiro, 2003; José, 1998). Both linguistic works and numerous original texts were written (Anonymous, 1947; 1991; Aquino de

Belén, 1990; Blancas de San José, 1994; Oliver, 1995). Latin and Spanish represented a new world in the linguistic Philippine arena:

Latin was thought to stand in such close relation to God's own language that it still functioned as the special medium for framing God's laws and for conducting the liturgy of the church. The special status accorded to Latin was inextricably bound to the nature of the message it bore within itself. The Tagalog should be organized around the matrix of Latin is a function of the Spanish belief in the proximity of Latin to the spirit of God's Word, a proximity that lent Latin its authority to preside over the vernacular languages [...] The reconstruction of Tagalog in terms of Latin was done in the Castilian language. Here Castilian stands as the mediating term [...] in the linguistic transaction between Latin and Tagalog (Rafael, 1988, p. 28).

Obviously from 1571 until 1898, the running-time affected history and languages as well. Spanish language was eventually taking roots within Filipino society, definitely since the last half of the 19th century. The development of a bourgeoisie, education, transportations, regular press and incipient industrialization facilitated emergent common consciousness in a common good—the Nation. Through Spanish, Filipinos created the Nation, until such a degree that Philippine Nationalism cannot be understood without Spanish. In the process of nationalization, Spanish influenced decisively the linguistic Philippine landscape (from Tausug to Ivatan), created a new Philippine language (Chabacano), a specific Philippine Spanish dialect, immense administrative records, a Philippine Literature with specific aesthetics, and served as *lingua franca* and reference in the compilations of dictionaries of any Philippine language. Hence, as a Philippine language, Spanish linked the aspirations of the Nation:

While nationalists associate the learning of Castilian with progress and modernity, the Spanish friars see it as a challenge to their authority and a veritable theft of their privileges. Hence, the word for 'subversive,' *filibustero*, also refers to a pirate, hence to a thief [...] For nationalists, Castilian was supposed to be the route to modernity. Progress came, so they thought, in gaining access to the means with which to communicate directly with authorities and with others in the world. It followed that the Spanish language was a means of leaving behind all that was 'backward' and 'superstitious,' that is, all that came under the influence of the friars. To learn Castilian was to exit the existing order of oppression and enter into a new, more 'civilized' world of equal representation (Rafael, 2006, pp. 26-28).

Malolos' Republic was born, having Spanish as national language. However, both were aborted by North-American interventionism. The spread of English as the only medium of instruction radicalized the *per se* complex Philippine linguistic scenario. Added to several major and dozens of minor vernacular languages, as well as Spanish as national language, English was enforced without more vacant spaces. Consequently, spaces had to be made.

In 1905 Wenceslao Emilio Retana wrote a capital document titled "*Del porvenir del castellano en Filipinas*" (About the future of the Spanish language in the Philippines). Contrary to what was expected, Retana focuses the attention on Tagalog rather than on Spanish, quoting precisely José Rizal:

En vez de tener aspiraciones de provincia, tenedlas de nación», decía el Gran Tagalo. —«Cada pueblo tiene su idioma, como tiene su manera de sentir»; «el idioma es el pensamiento de los pueblos»; «mientras un pueblo conserva su idioma, conserva la prenda de su libertad». —Tomo estas citas de El Filibusterismo, la obra más nacionalista de Rizal [...] El triunfo de Filipinas en el concierto internacional de la Mentalidad será cuando leamos en la portada de un libro, impreso en París, ó en Washington, ó en Madrid: OBRA TRADUCIDA DEL TAGALO (Donoso 2007, p. 228).²

The day a book published in Paris, Washington or Madrid displays in the cover "Work translated from Tagalog," that day would be the triumph of the Philippines in the international concert of knowledge. However, from then on Tagalog—together with all the regional languages—has been clashing with English, since Spanish was totally persecuted in establishing English as *lingua franca*. Spanish was also displaced as the language of the Philippine nationalism in the thirties, when Manuel L. Quezon's project of *Wikang Pambansa* elevated a Tagalog-based *koine* (Κοινή) as the forthcoming language after the Commonwealth. Pilipino, then Filipino, took the lead towards bilingualism, a policy to achieve competence in a division of domains: Filipino for inner affairs and English for foreign affairs. Nevertheless, the division between the own and the other alienated Filipinos, precisely because diglossia was predating the language. In other words, Filipino—a language that almost nobody knew what was about—was busy in the discussions between P and F:

In any case, the simplest if over-simplified way of distinguishing Tagalog, Pilipino and Filipino is the language it borrows from: Tagalog borrows from Spanish, Pilipino from Spanish and English, Filipino from Spanish, English and other Philippine languages [...]

² Our translation: "Instead of having aspirations for a province, aspire for a nation", said the Great Tagalog. —"Every people have their language, as their way of feeling"; "language is the thought of the people"; "while a people preserve their language, retain their freedom". —I take these quotes from *El Filibusterismo*, the most nationalistic work of Rizal [...]. The triumph of the Philippines in the intellectual international arena would happen when we could read on the cover of a book printed in Paris, Washington or Madrid: Book translated from Tagalog".

There is no denying that the decades of bilingualism have resulted in the deterioration of English and Filipino proficiency in (and out) the academe. Actually, what has deteriorated is the ability to think with perspicacity and depth. The result is Taglish, the convenient language for underdeveloped—and, therefore, consistently shallow—minds (Tinio, 1990, p. 20 and p. 93).

At present, when English is being contested at the very own core of the United States by Spanish (being nowadays the United States a larger Spanish-speaking country than even Spain), why in the Philippines is the definitive expansion of Tagalog-based Filipino unsatisfactory?; why does diglossia persist?; why has a complete intellectualization of Filipino not been achieved? Maybe it is not only due to linguistic reasons, but sociological as well. Colonial mentality persists in the country (Enríquez, 2008), and a serious and responsible intellectual activity has to be undertaken to conciliate the historical paradigm towards the Philippine Civilization in the modern world:

Ang Kalinangang Bayan ang siyang dapat maging batayan ng Kabihasnang Pambansang may sariling pantayong pananaw bilang diskursong pangkabihasnang. Samakatuwid, dapat masaklat ng Kalinangang Bayan ang Kulturang Nasyonal. Sa praktikal sa pananaw, dapat matunaw sa (o kaya'y maging bahagi ng) Kalinangang Bayan ang Kulturang Nasyonal, upang mabuo ang Kabihasnang Pambansa [...] Nasa simula pa lamang tayo ngayon ng yugto ng pagpapasaklaw ng Kulturang Nasyonal sa Kalinangang Bayan (Salazar, 2000, p. 123).³

Model of Philippine Linguistic Setting

Bilingualism and even multilingualism are the common linguistic scenarios of practically all the societies of the world. Very few countries can state that its population is completely monolingual, although in many just one language has official status. But “officiality” does not have to reflect the complexity of the linguistic scenarios. Even more, “officiality” means a language that by political reasons has achieved a political status. Hence, policy has a lot to do with the spread and socio-political status of languages. A language that achieves officiality is obviously socially recognized. If that society has another language or languages besides the official, it is expected that the official will influence the others until the grade of subordination. Thus, bilingualism and multilingualism usually do not mean full competence of the speaker in different codes, but division of domains according to social and political imperatives.

³ Our translation: “*Kalinangang bayan* should be the basis of the “National Civilization / *Kabihasnang pangbansa*”, reflecting the prospect *pantayong* that owns the Filipino people, that is, the Philippine cosmos integral to the way of understanding the world. In fact, *kalinangang bayan* should embrace the national culture / *Kulturang Nasyonal* as if they were one [...] We are witnessing only the beginning of the merger between national culture and local culture (*Kulturang Nasyonal* into *Kalinangang Bayan*)”.

Only when the different codes are socially and politically fully recognized, can speaker develop satisfactory competence in a scenario of multiple codes. Otherwise, the so-called bilingualism is rather diglossia: the code deprecated by the social and political establishment:

They excuse themselves by saying, 'But, you see, I do not know Tagalog enough to be able to explain Aristotle in it.' It is nearer the truth to say that it is Aristotle they do not know enough; that is why they cannot explain Aristotle in Tagalog, or in any other manifestation of English except the collections of English words they have learned to string together [...] Certainly, there is no language in the world that is not adequate for uttering any thought the mind can think. Many educated (and educating) Filipinos only think so because they have been accustomed to a medium of expression that has been invented by others and are either lazy or diffident about working on a language of their own invention. Or because they don't *think*, giving the impression of thinking only because they juggle memorized English words and phrases with consummated skill (Tinio, 1990, pp. 8 and 35).

In many cases "bilingualism" has been confused with "diglossia." In the Philippine case, without any doubt this has been and still is the misjudgment. The statement that the Philippines is the third largest English-speaking nation in the world hides the issue negligently —the deep Philippine linguistic problem, connected with the educational system: "The so-called Philippines advantage [by knowing English] has resulted only in the Philippines being poorer than all the other Asian countries educated in their own language (Tinio, 1990, p. 56)."

A scenario of diglossia cannot be corrected and balanced towards satisfactory bilingualism by the very own fact that their speakers are not aware of their linguistic problem. English is *de facto* assumed as imperative for the intellectual capacity of Filipinos, meantime Filipino language, or any Philippine language, is seen as incapable. Filipinos think that their knowledge and opportunities in the global world are only possible by mastering English, when in fact they cannot master English or any knowledge because of failure to master their very own mother language:

Only 'native varieties' are Standard English; all 'non-native varieties' are sub-standard. Countries which have their own language hope to speak the 'international' language had better speak it according to the rules of one of the standard varieties— in our case, the WASP American [...] It is a matter of linguistic sovereignty and the sovereign rights of ownership. We do as we please with what we own. We give up freedom the moment we

step into a language we are merely visiting. Like it or not, to use English is to let English use us (Tinio, 1990, pp. 4 and 99).

It is a fact that the Philippines has a linguistic problem. However, very few Filipinos admit it. In the meantime, plenty of excuses are elaborated: the Philippines is the third largest English-speaking nation; English as imperative for globalization; English as language of the existing books, therefore of the education; English as *lingua franca*; Filipino as local and bizarre (*baduy*); Filipino as incapable of expressing scientific and technological knowledge, etc⁴.

Besides, the assumption of English without questioning diglossia has cost a deep fracture in the autonomous capacity of critical thinking. When diglossia persists and is not targeted, it is widely assumed that only opinions and statements are valid if they are formulated in the dominant code. Filipinos only can have a valid statement if they formulate it in English, when statements from the English-speaker world use to be valid for the Philippines without further questioning. Accordingly, this is how the fracture between Filipinos and their historical and cultural roots started, disallowing a critical insight into their own issues:

But our distorted attitude to foreign languages is amply demonstrated in the cavalier attitude with which educators regarded and finally got rid of required Spanish learning. Part of the prejudice against Spanish is, of course, due to the great American-induced prejudice against the Spanish part of our history. But the prejudice has been counterproductive because illiteracy in Spanish has disabled millions of Filipinos from reading into the archives of their past as well as linking with Spanish-using countries at the present without American English intervention. (Tinio, 1990, p. 96).

Interventionism has been the modern justification of colonialism. Culturally, interventionism states that only by guidance can development be achieved, otherwise isolation happens. Isolation is a threat that impulses towards dependency. Wherever the Philippines were crucial in the first transcontinental and global network in history, the one connecting by the first time Europe, America and Asia—the Manila Galleon— interventionism linked the Archipelago in an only-American-dependence. Wherever the Philippines were crucial in the development of humankind history, in the 20th century became irrelevant (as much, the scenario of devastation and rape in World War II). Therefore, it is needed to target diglossia and mental dependence (*i.e.*

⁴ Rolando Tinio wanted to point out in a drastic insight towards where the educational and linguistic problem run: "The problem is that students have lost the sense of poetry, the sense of tragedy, the sense of music, the sense of the sublime [...] And since our version of the Technological Age is premised on the categorical imperative of earning a fast peso or dollar, the question is reduced, after all is said and done, to the nitty-gritty: 'What's the quickest way I can earn the most with my hands and feet?' The answer is obvious: Prostitution," p. 26.

colonial mentality) if the Philippines wants to have a recognizable position in the 21st century.

European countries are multilingual. Every European citizen can speak at least three languages in all the sets and linguistic domains. European citizens can interchange the language without being predated by diglossia, thus the national European languages are equally recognized in political terms (in other words, the official language of all the members of the European Union has the same political recognition). As far as regional European languages are concerned, the European Union follows the member internal policy. Accordingly both domains are protected, the local and the international, and the linguistic rights of the European citizens preserved.

In the case of Spain, a member of the European Union, four languages are officially recognized: Castilian, Catalan, Galician and Euskera. Castilian has the status of national language and, therefore, imperative all over the Spanish territory. Catalan is official together with Castilian in Cataluña, Valencia and Balearic Islands; Galician is official in Galicia; and Euskera is official in the Basque Country and Navarra. Thus, in schools the regional and the national languages are the medium of instruction. Starting in primary education a first foreign language is introduced: English. Starting in secondary education a second foreign language is introduced: French; as well as a first classical language: Latin. If a person specializes in the Humanities minor within the secondary education, a second classical language is introduced: Greek. Consequently, when a student ends secondary education, he or she has to master a regional language (Castilian, Catalan, Galician or Euskera), and the national language (Castilian, called internationally Spanish); and has to be familiar with both first and a second foreign languages (English and French), and at least to know a first classical language (Latin) and eventually a second one (Greek).

In sum, by a resolute linguistic policy diglossia can be targeted. However, the Philippines lacks it by the very simple reason that Filipinos seem unaware of the existence and dimension of a linguistic problem. In addition, since Marcos's times the linguistic policy of the government has been puzzled and the budget provided for linguistic affairs minimal. Philippine linguistic policy is very unstable and unclear, as seen in the results of the educational system. Filipinos grow up without mastering a language, even their own language. How is it possible to know a foreign language, when the person is illiterate in the mother tongue? Obviously, without mastering a code it is difficult to master knowledge. Despite the fact that the *Komisyon sa Wikang Filipino* has already a large history and presence all over the nation, it is difficult to work when a governmental policy does not implement a linguistic policy (DD. AA., 1995). When the policy is *laissez faire*, the consequences are expected: Taglish.

Towards Philippine Linguistic Intellectualization

No culture is pure, neither is language. Yet grammar is stable. Grammar represents the simple rules to create infinitive knowledge, as well as alphabet is the simple symbols to create infinitive concepts. If those rules are not clear, the speaker will always lack completeness to express his/her knowledge. Therefore, the need for a supplementary code to be able to complete the thought. In a context of linguistic contact, where two or more languages are available, it is easy to understand that the speaker who lacks awareness of the rules will depend on the other codes. Hence, diglossia will make him/her a linguistic dependent (in consequence, a thought's creator dependent). The solution to the issue is very easy: to make the rules clear, to create the linguistic bases (orthography/ grammar/ dictionary/ dialectological atlas), to spread the code in all levels of communication, and to dignify the language through literature—hence, intellectualization. It is not needed to create a linguist out of every speaker, but speakers who are aware of the rules (in the same way that car drivers have to be aware of the rules, if not chaos happens). It is actually the linguist and philologist who have to compile and make clear the rules to the community of speakers, similarly, the government has to implement a coherent linguistic policy.

Linguistic policy means to establish common possibilities and rights in a bilingual or multilingual community. Wherever two or more codes are available for the same community, the political administration—the State—has to provide equal rights to codes and speakers. In a modern State, discrimination cannot happen by the use of a language, certainly not by the use of the mother language⁵. A Filipino who speaks Ivatan and lives in Basco has the same linguistic rights as that of a Filipino who lives in Jolo and speaks Tausug. Both hold a Filipino passport. However, both have to understand each other in a common language, a language national to the whole administered land. This is where Filipino emerges. Together with regional languages, Filipino has to be the other general medium of instruction (Liwana, 2001; Peregrino, 2000).

It is only when the future citizen masters his/her mother language and the national one can the teaching of a foreign language start. English has to appear in the curriculum in a stage when mother and national languages have been solidly internalized. As a second language, English can successfully fulfill its command as international code. Yet as a medium of instruction, English preserves diglossia within the Philippine arena.

⁵ In this context appears the "[House Bill 162](#): The Multilingual Education and Literacy Act of 2010", a preliminary approach to provide linguistic rights to major Philippine languages (exclusively in the educative system).

Finally, as a classical language for the Philippine curriculum, Spanish is the most influential code in Philippine linguistics. Moreover, Spanish plays a basic role in the intellectual use of modern Filipino:

Spanish-based intellectualization is the de facto ‘traditional’ mode; the present lack of contact between Spanish and Filipino has, however, resulted in the displacement of the former by English, although Spanish still plays the role of intermediary language in the conversion from English to Filipino (Amio, 2000, p. 40).

Not only because almost the complete history of the Archipelago is safeguarded in documents written in Spanish language, the most important Philippine Literature is written in Spanish, and the *Artes* and *Vocabularios* of Philippine languages are in this language, Spanish represents to the Philippines what Latin represents to the European nations, but because phonetically, lexically and grammatically, Spanish is needed in the formalization of modern Filipino. Similarly as Europeans (and by extension all Westerns) use Latin and Greek languages for the intellectualization of their modern codes, Spanish is the classical language in the Philippine setting. As Latin for Europeans, Spanish is dead for Filipinos. This is why Spanish became the classical model, a dead language that carries the foundational elements which caused the genesis of Philippine modernity, as Latin represents the Classical Antiquity and Humanism that created modern Europe⁶.

To summarize, the Philippines has a very pervasive linguistic problem. Diglossia is a common linguistic phenomenon in the history of languages. As a common phenomenon in bilingual and multilingual sets, its historical presence in an archipelago of seven thousand islands and multiple codes is obvious. Diglossia has been predating speakers’ rights in the Philippines for the last century within a political context of so-called Democracy. Modern States rule on the basis of equality between all the citizens. Regardless of gender, race, religion or languages, citizens of modern States have the same rights and obligations. To enforce linguistic rights, modern States implement linguistic policies which target mainly diglossic phenomena. Notwithstanding, Philippine diglossia is out of control, and speakers are socially and politically recognized

⁶ In addition, the Philippines even has its own institution, the “Philippine Academy of the Spanish Language” (*Academia Filipina de la Lengua Española*), fully recognized all over the Spanish-speaking world, as the other national academies of the Spanish-speaking nations, from Argentina to the United States. Thus, if one observes the back-cover of the official dictionary of the *Real Academia Española*—the main institution all over the world with authority to establish the rules of the Spanish language—there it is the name of all the academies, including *Academia Filipina de la Lengua Española*. Accordingly, it gives the authority of Filipinos in terms of the Spanish language spoken in the Philippines. This is to say, as Mexican Spanish, Argentinean Spanish, Castilian Spanish or North-American Spanish, Philippine Spanish is totally valid, as Filipino Spanish-speakers have the right to establish their peculiarities through an academic institution, in this case, the *Academia Filipina de la Lengua Española*, which is still in activity and internationally recognized (Lelilia Cortés, 1965). Unluckily, there is not such institution for English in the Philippines. An interview with the eldest of the Filipino academicians, Guillermo Gómez Rivera, in Gallo, 2007.

only if they use one code (English). Regional languages (Bicolano, Visaya, Pampango, Pangasinense, Ilocano, Tausug, Chabacano, Waray, Ilonggo, Maguindanao, Maranao, Ivatan, etc.) do not have practical recognition. Tagalog-based Filipino as National language has, but seems to fight in a desert. Due to lack of strategy and decision, a super-language of the world, known by practically one hundred million people, the twenty-fifth most important human code at present, it is being rejected even by its own speakers as incapable of carrying knowledge and off the wall (*baduy*). If Filipinos want to face the challenges of the 21st century with the same instruments that modern nations use, obviously a linguistic policy has to be addressed. They see how Malaysians, Singaporeans, Koreans, Japanese, even Macanese are successful in the global world and keep strong national pride. Meantime, Filipinos possibly look afraid of their cosmopolitan past and hold on to English as a table of salvation:

Filipinos love their way of life. However, problems appear when they reflect on their identity and try to explain this to themselves, to fellow Filipinos, or to outsiders. This is not helped by the readiness of biased Anglo-Americans and fellow Asians who scorn the Filipino for not being truly Asian [...] Filipinos may be English-speaking, but their culture is less known and less appreciated among the English-speaking public in Asia, Europe, or the Anglo countries than either the Tibetan or the Laotian. In the global competition for national prestige, the Ilocano, Tagalog, or the Visayan competes with one arm tied behind (Ziálcita, 2005 pp. 11 and 9).

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