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## Philippine Languages in Hawai'i: Vehicles of Cultural Survival

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### Linguistic Background

The Philippines is a Southeast Asian country of some 7,000 islands and islets off the southeast coast of mainland China. It is populated by about 60 million Filipinos. It is said that there are as many as 300 languages and dialects in these islands which belong to the Malayo-Polynesian family of languages.

One of the factors that complicates the language situation in the Philippines is diversity. Linguists say there are 75 to 150 native languages spoken by Filipinos. The latest estimate is 109 languages, or 110 if Chavacano is included (McFarland 1994: 83). Although these languages are in some ways grammatically and lexically similar, they are mutually unintelligible. Furthermore, each of the major languages has several dialects that differ, especially at the phonological and lexical levels. Depending on their region of origin, Filipino immigrants will speak at least one dialect of one of these mutually unintelligible languages.

On the basis of a probable 75 mother tongues according to Weber (1989), six are classified as major languages (the percentages indicating the number of native speakers of each language): Tagalog (25%), Cebuano (24%), Ilocano (9%), Hiligaynon (9%), Bicol (6%), Waray (5%), and others (22%). Because of immigration, these major languages as well as Pampango and Pangasinan are represented in Hawai'i, with Ilokano having the most number of native speakers.

Following the mandate of the 1935 Constitution, President Manuel Quezon proclaimed Tagalog as the basis of the national language in 1937. To free the Tagalog-based national language from its ethnic ties and therefore to facilitate its acceptance, Tagalog was renamed **Pilipino** in 1959. However, the 1973 Constitution rescinded the choice of Tagalog (Pilipino) as the basis of the national language (Gonzales 1977). Pilipino was established as one of the two official languages of the Philippines under the 1973 Constitution—the other being English. The 1987 Constitution stipulates that the National Assembly is to take steps toward the formation of a genuine national language to be called **Filipino**, which will incorporate elements from the various Philippine languages. Philippine language experts predict, especially after the 1987 Constitutional deliberations, that Pilipino will be renamed Filipino characterized by an openness to borrowings from the other Philippine languages as well as from English, Spanish, and other foreign languages (Gonzales 1991: 126).

The 1980 Philippine census indicated that close to 75 percent of Filipinos speak a variety of Pilipino, especially in urban areas. Gonzales (1987: 212) estimates that by the end of the century, 97.1 percent of Filipinos will speak a colloquial or conversational form of Filipino.

Cebuano (or Sugbuanon) is one of more than a dozen languages and dialects, two of which are Hiligaynon (or Ilonggo) and Waray (or Samar-Leyte), that are given the name Bisayan or Visayan. Cebuano is often mistakenly referred to as "Visayan" in Hawai'i.

Ilokano is also known as Ilocano, Ilukano, Iloko, and Iloco. In formal literary writing the term "Samtoy" is used. Because more than 80 percent of Hawaii's citizens of Philippine ancestry are Ilocano, their language is sure to be of importance to those interested in Philippine languages in Hawai'i.

### Features of Philippine Languages

Filipino languages have been influenced, principally in vocabulary, by the languages with which they have come into contact: Sanskrit, Arabic, Chinese, English, and Spanish. Although Philippine languages have many lexical and grammatical similarities, they also have enough significant differences so that they are mutually unintelligible. Tagalog, Bicol, Cebuano, Waray, and Hiligaynon are commonly classified as members of the same subgroup; Ilokano and Pangasinan seem to belong to another subgroup; and Pampango seems to constitute a subgroup by itself (Constantino 1971). Far from being homogeneous, each of the major Philippine languages has several dialects that differ from each other phonologically and lexically.

Some of the grammatical features of Philippine languages are the complex system of affixes, especially of verbs, the power of verbalizing most words, and the use of particles to indicate case relationships and to link modifiers to the words modified. The most important feature, however, is the special case-like relationship between the verb and a particular noun phrase in the sentence often referred to by Philippine linguists as "topic" or "subject". This relationship as actor, goal or referent in the sentence is usually marked by an affix in the verb.

### Language Retention by Early Immigrants

In Hawai'i, the fact that Ilocanos comprised the overwhelming majority of Filipinos undoubtedly fostered a cohesiveness on the plantations, a cohesiveness which was absent when there was more or less an equal number of Filipinos from

the different regions of the Philippines. The crucial role of language in unifying Filipinos in Hawai'i in common undertakings is underlined by the comment, often made by former plantation workers, that the efforts of Pablo Manlapit, a Tagalog, in organizing on the plantations was somewhat hampered by his limited knowledge of Ilokano. A mesmerizing speaker in Tagalog, Manlapit's organizing efforts, it is said, could have proceeded at a faster pace had his mastery of Ilokano been equal to his mastery of his native tongue.

According to Reinecke (1969: 167), the Filipino immigrant group's large size, its short term of residency in Hawai'i, the attitude of transiency held by many of its members, and isolation from the rest of the population made it possible for them to maintain the use of Philippine languages, especially Ilokano. Before the mid-1940s, most of these immigrants did not regard themselves as permanent settlers in Hawai'i, hence there was no strong reason for giving up the use of their native tongue. The plantation environment also contributed to the retention of the native language because it offered neither the opportunity nor the incentive to learn better English after the rudiments of "pidgin" had been learned (Reinecke 1969: 103).

Filipinos generally retained the use of their native languages as well as many aspects of their culture while on the plantations. Several factors were favorable to this retention, a development some viewed as a mixed blessing (viz., on the one hand, it isolated the community from the rest of Hawai'i and hence helped to strengthen prevalent stereotypes; on the other, the continued use of their native languages and observance of customs and traditions was an important element in the survival of the early Filipinos). It is more likely, however, given the circumstances into which Filipinos were thrown, that this retention essentially served as a basic source of group cohesiveness and strength.

Filipinos in Hawai'i are in an environment wherein both the makeshift dialect of the plantations and a more refined, though still local, non-standard form of English are used. According to Reinecke (1969: 94), there appeared to be some difference in the response of Filipinos and that of other ethnic groups to the creole dialect (pidgin) of Hawai'i. The other groups apparently accepted the dialect but Filipinos, because they had learned some English in the Philippines, tried more than other early immigrant groups to learn and use "correct" English. While it is used among Filipinos, pidgin is receiving accretions and other changes from Filipino tongues.

U.K. Das in his "Terms Used on Hawaiian Plantations" (1930, revised 1945) listed twenty-three Filipino words. Excluding the terms of Spanish origin

in the list, the rest are as follows (I, V, and T stand for Ilokano, Visayan and Tagalog):

<i>babai</i>	girl, woman	I, V, T
<i>balay</i>	house	I, V
<i>bata</i>	child, boy or girl	V, T
<i>bayao</i> or <i>bayaw</i>	brother-in-law sister-in-law or brother-in-law	I, T  V
<i>dakayo</i>	you (plural)	I
<i>danom</i>	water	I
<i>ditoy</i>	here, over this way	I
<i>ikau</i> or <i>ikaw</i>	you (singular)	V, T
<i>lalakai</i>	boy, man	I, V, T
<i>sabidong</i>	poison	I
<i>tao</i>	person, people, humankind	I, V, T
<i>tubig</i>	water	V, T
<i>tubo</i>	sugarcane	V, T
<i>unas</i>	sugarcane	I

While there are common elements in the pidgin English of the different ethnic groups, the Filipino version can be distinguished by intonation, stress, and speech sounds, and sometimes by word order and vocabulary (Reinecke 1969: 95). The early Filipino immigrants were divided into two main language groups: Ilokano and Visayan. Language variety in the homeland had led the early immigrants to the choice of Tagalog, the basis of the national language, as an interlanguage. Both Tagalog and English were formerly in use as the lingua franca of Filipinos in the Hawaiian islands (Reinecke 1969: 139). The great influx of Ilokano-speaking immigrants, however, resulted in the replacement of Tagalog by Ilokano as the Filipino lingua franca in Hawai'i. In their study, Lasman et al. (1971: 92) found that out of 503 immigrants to Hawai'i interviewed

in 1971, 96 percent spoke Ilokano but 67.4 percent could also speak Tagalog. In addition, 78.4 percent reported the ability to speak English, although this varied in degree. The data in this study indicate a surprising rise in the number of Tagalog speakers among these more recent immigrants. This may be the result of the rapid dissemination of Filipino (Tagalog) in the Philippines principally through internal migration, rapid urbanization, the mass media, and the implementation of the 1974 Bilingual Education Policy which calls for the compulsory use of Tagalog as one of the media of instruction, the other being English (Gonzales 1977). In the 1990 U.S. Census, Tagalog was listed as the sixth most commonly spoken non-English language at home in America. It was ranked second among 112 non-English languages spoken in Hawai'i homes. If all the Filipino languages spoken in Hawai'i were added together, the total makes the Philippines the largest source of the state's non-English speakers.

#### Loss of Mother Tongue by Later Immigrants

Since most immigrants have already learned some English in the Philippines and since it is the language of superior prestige, linguistic assimilation is rapidly taking place, and the home language is fast being replaced by English or Hawai'i creole English. Another factor that accelerates the rapid loss of the native language is the non-existence of native-language schools for Filipinos. Unlike other Asian groups—Japanese, Chinese and Korean—Filipinos have not operated private schools where the mother tongue could be taught to their children. In most of the public schools, Filipino children have had to learn the English language and from their peers, the Hawai'i creole. The use of the native tongue is confined largely to the home and is used solely by parents and grandparents.

The Filipino-language press and the vernacular clubs formerly helped to perpetuate the native languages. Reinecke (1969: 138) reported that eight Filipino newspapers, mostly in Ilokano, were published in 1935. Cariaga (1935) mentioned five periodicals published in English, Ilokano and Tagalog. In 1980 the University of Hawai'i Hamilton Library had only one such periodical, the *Hawaii Filipino News*. Presently, there are two local Filipino newspapers, the *Fil-Am Courier* (first printed in 1987) and the *Hawaii Filipino Chronicle* (first printed in 1993), but only occasionally do they have articles in Ilokano or Tagalog. University school papers like *Ani* (1979-1993), published by the University of Hawai'i Philippine Languages and Culture Club, printed articles in Ilokano and Tagalog. In 1992, students of Tagalog at the University started an all Tagalog newsletter called *Katipunan* which comes out semi-annually.

The United Filipino Council of Hawai'i has a listing of over 166 Filipino organizations of various sizes in the islands. While most of these clubs have linguistic or regional bases, it has been noted that many of their meetings are conducted in English or in a mix of English and a Philippine language, usually Ilokano. Several radio stations have had broadcasts in Philippine languages since 1933 (*Hawaiian Reporter* 1959: B24). One radio station, KISA, has been on the air since April, 1973 and now broadcasts twenty-four hours daily. Although KISA claims that it uses the three major languages—Cebuano, Ilokano and Tagalog—the latter two, with English, are most frequently heard on its programs.

Television programs from the Philippines are for the most part in Tagalog with English and are aired on a daily basis. The only local Filipino television program is in English. But one local Ilokano program, "Filipino Fiesta," aired almost every weekend in Hawai'i for 33 years before going off the air in 1986.

Movies, frequently in Tagalog, are occasionally shown. Since the Philippine Moving Picture Theatre, Zamboanga, closed in 1973, Filipino movies have been shown irregularly at various places.

### The Push for the Teaching of Philippine Languages

Nine out of ten Filipinos arriving in Hawai'i after 1965 came from the Ilocos region of the Philippines where most of the plantation labor recruits originated (Lasman et al. 1971: 42-43). One of the problems encountered by these immigrants was the inability to use English. To give equal educational opportunity to the large numbers of non-English speaking Filipino children, the state Department of Education with the help of community leaders applied for federal funds to set up an experimental bilingual education program in English and Ilokano, the first language of most of the Filipino immigrants. The program started during the 1975-1976 school year for kindergarten to third grade (K-3) Ilokano pupils in nine schools of the Honolulu district. It was the first Ilokano-English bilingual program in the United States. In 1979, Tagalog was added as one of the non-English languages in the program.

Since the early 1960s, the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa has offered Tagalog or Pilipino language courses. Collateral studies in Philippine literature, folklore and culture were introduced in the mid-1970s. By 1980, UH Mānoa was the only university in the United States that offered a fully developed program in Tagalog language and literature. Recognizing the predominance of Ilokano among Filipinos in Hawai'i, the UH Department of Indo-Pacific Languages

began offering courses in Ilokano in the spring of 1972 as a service to the community. This was probably the first time Ilokano had ever been taught formally in any part of the world. By the 1978-1979 academic year, four levels of Ilokano were being taught. Cebuano, although one of the three Philippine languages most commonly spoken in the state, is not offered at present. Leeward and Kapi'olani Community Colleges offer two levels of Tagalog.

About 150 students take beginning Ilokano and Tagalog every semester at UH Mānoa. Two hundred students are enrolled in four levels of Tagalog, one grammar, one language and culture, and four literature courses. Philippine language students tend to be Filipinos who have lost their native language and are now trying to get it back. When asked why they are learning a Filipino language, 75 percent of the 150 responding language students expressed wanting to "learn more about my roots, appreciate my Filipino culture and communicate with my parents."

The other most common response is to complete the language requirement of two years of a foreign language for a bachelor's degree. Tagalog and Ilokano, like Spanish, German and Japanese, are considered foreign languages at UH Mānoa. On the continental U.S., UCLA, UC Berkeley, San Francisco State University, City College of San Francisco, University of Oregon, University of Michigan, University of Wisconsin, Northern Illinois University, University of Pennsylvania, and Cornell University offer Tagalog as a foreign language. The University of Hawai'i, however, has the largest and most comprehensive Philippine language program in the United States. In recognition of the importance of this program, the University has a U.S. Department of Education grant which has funded students selected nationally to study advanced Tagalog at the University of the Philippines, Los Baños since 1991.

Linguists have developed (largely with assistance from the Peace Corps in Washington, D.C. and the Pacific and Asian Linguistics Institute (PALI) of the University of Hawai'i) twenty-one volumes of language texts, grammars and dictionaries for seven of the eight major Philippine languages mentioned earlier (excluding Waray). The PALI Ilokano and Tagalog texts were used in beginning language classes in Hawai'i and on the U.S. mainland. What is used now for teaching these classes are *Let's Speak Ilokano* (Espiritu 1984), *Conversational Tagalog* (Ramos 1985), and *Intermediate Tagalog* (Ramos and Goulet 1981).

Leilehua High School in Wahiawa introduced Tagalog as one of its regular language course offerings in 1973. The program grew from an experimental offering to an established part of the regular language program but ended when

the teacher retired. Adult education community schools at Waipahu, Farrington and Hilo High Schools teach Ilokano and Tagalog occasionally in Saturday classes.

Recently, Tagalog and Ilokano were taught in the public schools when a private, non-profit educational project developed teleclass materials and had these languages taught in the schools to help maintain community ethnic languages (Ramos and Mabanglo 1991). The two Philippine languages were included among the eleven languages selected for the project. Unfortunately, the project ended in 1992 due to lack of funding. As of 1994, only Tagalog continues to be taught at Radford High School with funding from the Hawai'i Department of Education. Ilokano and Tagalog are occasionally taught in elementary schools.

### Preservation of Philippine Languages

Hawai'i is unique in that it has over a hundred languages, mostly Asian and Pacific, spoken by an enormous variety of ethnic communities. However by the second or third generation, the children of immigrants lose their ethnic language. What is sad is that each year the University has about 400 Filipino students enrolled in Tagalog and Ilokano, only to gain non-functional proficiency after two years of instruction. It is such a big waste of an important national language resource in America when a child's native language is suppressed in the elementary and secondary schools, thus resulting in his/her losing it together with his or her identity, only to make a futile attempt to relearn the language in college (if at all available) because of a search for one's roots. As the President's Commission on Foreign Language and International Studies (1979) pointed out, "The melting tradition that denigrates immigrants' maintenance of their skill to speak their native tongue still lingers, and this unfortunately causes linguistic minorities to be ignored as a potential asset."

The issue of language is of course highly volatile, and even in multicultural Hawai'i there is a strong tendency to argue that the straightest road to assimilation into American society is through the abandonment, or at least the non-encouragement, of the immigrants' native tongue. It is an argument which appears reasonable on the surface but which upon closer scrutiny reveals itself to be only another variation of the idea that "natural selection" should enable the "fit" to survive. What this argument would have us do is to throw people from different cultures into a completely new and strange environment, prevent them from falling back on those mechanisms of adaptation only their culture can

provide, and which can, of course, be given expression only in their native tongues, and then expect them to become productive members of the community.

The preservation of Philippine languages among Filipinos in Hawai'i has been an important aspect of their struggle to survive in the face of the social, economic and cultural biases that have been directed against them for decades. Not only have these languages been modes of communication, more importantly, they have been the vehicles through which those aspects of their culture which have proven most useful have survived. And Filipino culture, it has become clear, has been the main source of strength of Filipinos in Hawai'i.

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## "Typically Filipino"<sup>1</sup>

Albert B. Robillard

### "Typically Filipino"?

This paper is about the conversational/interactional usage of the term "Typically Filipino." The quotation marks on the title are put there on purpose. This paper does not attempt the impossible task of saying what is "Typically Filipino" in a realistic sense. It is plainly obvious that Filipino culture as a manifest topic is reproduced in thousands of conversations, conferences, lectures, papers, and books. This paper does not seek to replace or dispute that reproducible notion of culture or to criticize it. The task is to describe and analyze those interactional occasions where Filipino culture becomes a topic, as in someone uttering "Typically Filipino" or in an utterance which otherwise characterizes Filipinos. This paper attempts to describe how "Typically Filipino" and its equivalents arise in an ongoing interaction as a methodologically appropriate and demonstrably connected topic.

This paper argues for a contrastive method of examining Filipino culture. It is to be read as a statement of an analytic posture. The analyses offered of Filipino culture are exemplary, rather than complete inspections.

There are courses in Filipino culture at many American, Canadian, and Philippine universities, an unlimited number of research projects and literature in which Philippine culture is the main variable, and an Institute of Philippine Culture (IPC) at Ateneo de Manila University. These courses and research projects treat Filipino culture as a describable entity, a constant which can be measured and elaborated upon. The elaborations can result in great archetonic structures on the cultures of every minority in the Philippines (e.g., Conklin, 1980; Constantino, 1983; Keesing, 1962; Rai, 1990; Rosaldo, 1980; Walrod, 1988; Wiber, 1993), the cultures of the language (Llamzon, 1978), the culturally appropriate care of elderly Filipinos (Kuan, 1993), provincial cultures (Vilches, 1979), Muslim culture in the Philippines (Muslim, 1994), the cultures of the Spanish (McCoy, 1993), the Chinese (Baviera and See, 1992; Carino, 1985; See and Chua, 1988) and the Japanese (Osawa, 1994) in the Philippines. There is academic work on Philippine popular culture (Reyes, 1991) and also extensive cultural reportage and commentary in the daily and weekly Philippine press.

Then there are courses, research projects, and literature on the ethnic culture of Filipinos living in the United States. A growing literature is available on a variety of subjects: Filipinos immigrating to Hawai'i, working on the sugar plantations and now in the hotel industry (Okamura and Labrador, 1996;