

Extent of English and Spanish influence

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/DILA/message/167>

There are many people who insist that many Philippine languages are closely related to Spanish solely because of the abundance of Spanish loans (normal thing to happen in a colonized language) and a few grammatical patterns that crop up in a few languages that had substantial contact with Spanish. All Philippine languages (except the few Spanish Creoles – Zamboangueno Chabacano, Ermiteno, Cavitenos) kept intact their Austronesian syntax (word order, grammatical relations) and morphology (prefixes, infixes, suffixes, clitics) and have naturally developed with minimal Spanish syntactic interference. The ancestral language (proto-language) is clearly Austronesian which can be reconstructed for various Philippine subgroupings. See: <http://iloko.tripod.com/philtree.html>.

Many scholars have also reconstructed proto-Philippine from comparing modern lexical data – whether such a language existed is still a matter of debate though, as many linguists view the Philippines as an area of various migrations and convergence, and not populated all from one source.

Back to Spanish though -- the topic of your query. When I say minimal influence, I do not mean Spanish did not play a role at all -- I would like to pinpoint some of the non-Austronesian features of some modern Philippine languages though just to show that Spanish did have some influence in shaping the modern Philippine tongues.

1. Gender (most Austronesian languages do not have word classes, and no Philippine languages have been documented to either). Some modern languages have borrowed gender-like suffixes which are productive (can be used with newly coined terms). Consider Tagalog -oy vs. -ay, -o vs. a Tisoy vs. Tisay; tsimoy vs. tsimay; amerikano vs. amerikana. However, unlike Spanish, gender is not obligatorily expressed on all nouns and adjectives, just a few choice ones

2. Clause combining -- Spanish conjunctions and discourse particles have been borrowed in a few languages. e.g. Tagalog pero; maske (from mas que); porke (from porque) Cebuano pur iso (therefore from por eso); miyintrás tantu (in the meantime, from mientras tanto); iste (from este) used as a hesitation particle

3. some derivational Spanish affixes that can be used with both native and Spanish roots:

Tagalog: pansit-eria; Batangu-eno

Cebuano: palikiru, babayiru (excuse spelling, I am just illustrating the vowel system)

Ilocano: sin-tagari; konsi-lamot; konde-alahas; uttog-ero; baston-ero; baston-era

4. A few grammatical devices, like the comparative morphology in languages like Tagalog and Aklanon. Note the difference between the Tagalog and Aklanon comparative adjectives ("mas" is borrowed from Spanish), and their Ilocano and Waray (reduplicative) counterparts:

Tagalog: malaki > mas malaki; maliit > mas maliit

Aklanon: makusog (strong) > mas makusog (stronger); mataas (tall) > mas mataas (taller)

vs:

Ilocano dakkal (big); dakkakal (bigger); bassit (small); bassassit (smaller)

Waray dako' (big); darudako' (bigger); maupay (good); mauruupay (better)

5. The borrowed preposition 'para' (for) that has helped to reduce some verbal morphology in some language (benefactive verbs)

6. Many Philippine languages, e.g. Cebuano, Waray, Aklanon, have borrowed 'gusto' (want/like) from Spanish. This puzzles many linguists because "basic" verbs such as the verb of desire are usually not borrowed – but then again neither are pronouns and cases like these crop up all over the world.

7. Phonological influence -- the addition of a new minimal sound in some language. Prior to the coming of the Spanish, Tagalog had a 3 vowel system (a, e/i, o/u), Ilocano had a four vowel system (i, E, a, o/u). Some languages had even more complex vowel systems -- Casiguran Dumagat has 8 contrastive vowels. In pre-Hispanic Tagalog, O and U were not contrastive, and neither were i or e (except in cases with diphthongs - aywan > ewan; and very few common words like eto). However, they now are: e.g. oso 'bear' vs. uso 'style'

Some consonant clusters that only appear in foreign loans: BRuha, GRipo, TRes.

The Spanish infinitive endings -ar, -er, and --ir can be applied to borrowed roots to form lexical stems that are clearly not Spanish, even though only the ending -ar was productive in the Spanish spoken at the time of contact, e.g. i-submitir 'to submit (from English)', maka-disturbár 'to be disturbing (from English)', mang-atendár 'to attend (from English)'.

I hope is of help in addressing your question about Spanish influence -- it goes beyond mere lexical borrowing, but has not affected the languages so drastically as to classify them as Indo-European languages. Philippine languages all certain features that identify them as clearly genetically Austronesian: e.g. verb focus; predicate initial basic word order, verb aspect, case prepositions; perfective/realis infix; highly prefixing; elaborate productive morphology with few word class restrictions; and morphological reduplication (used for various purposes).

Happy Thanksgiving to all,
Carl Rubino

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/DILA/message/1461>

From: Linda Nietes

Subject: Re: LINDA'S GRAMMAR SENSIBILITY

Do you know that English is not really a foreign language in the Philippines anymore? Why? Because we (Filipinos) have already "colonized" it, and it is now OURS. Perhaps this is the reason why Filipinos have taken a lot of liberty in changing it, not only in usage but also in pronunciation! And also turn it around, spike it with Spanish and English words and totally change it, that nobody will ever recognize it as the King's language...which was perhaps only spoken during the two-year English Occupation of the Philippines in 1762-63.

This is the pet thesis of Filipino poet-scholar Gémino H. Abad, and the claim has gone around the globe, even gaining exact quotation in a recent article in the New York Times titled "Nations in Asia Give English their Own Quirks."

His general thesis regarding our (Filipinos) writing in English over the last century is that ". . . it seeks to recover a country we have lost, but that also, our country now is within ourselves, as it were, a spiritual homeland." Our poets, most especially use an adopted tongue (English) into a fit instrument for their poetic representations beyond what the English vocabulary and syntax might by their own cultural subscript tend to disfigure. At first our writers wrote in English, but later they wrought from it. All along, over the past century, our writers have colonized English, by which it has been remodeled to our own image."

In 1941, another Filipino poet, Amador T. Daguio wrote, "To Those of Other Lands,"

**"Though I may speak the English language,
Let me tell you: I am a Filipino,
I stand for that which make my nation,
The virtues of the country where I was born.**

**I may have traces of the American,
Be deceived not: Spain has, too, her traces in me,
But my songs are those of my race...**

**... Our fathers gave the graces,
Our hearts pure as the hills, clear as the seas,
I tell you not of greed nor of accumulation.
We have washed off these stains of the West.
Look through us then, beyond what you think,
Know us, understand us; we, too, have our pride.
If you give us flowers, we exchange pearls;
We greet you sincerely; acclaim what we have."**

Amador T. Daguio was only 20 when he wrote "Man of Earth" in 1932, but the translated voice in Fernando M. Maramag's "Cagayano Peasant Songs" in 1912 seems to have already found an English tongue that does not falsify it. The word translation is from the Latin *transferre*, translates, meaning, to carry or ferry across. "Man of Earth" is translation in that deeper sense: the poet ferries across the (English) words his soul's native cargo; no sea-change is suffered because the words have rather been found again or reinvented so that, in the poem's own usage, they establish a native idiom. We must quote Daguio's poem in full because it marks a turning-point in Filipino verses from English.

Another poem, originally called "Land of Our Desire," is quintessential Daguio: the verse or medium is English but the poetry or matter is Filipino. Another poem, "Mountain People" of 1934, is remarkable for its prescience in the predominant use of imagined dialogue, which has become a contemporary poetic technique.

Further, Abad points out, "It is very interesting to note how the poet Daguio forged a new path through English under the New Critical influence in the 1950s. His poem, "Off the Aleutian Islands," which the American New Critic, Leonard Casper, included in his anthology, "Six Filipino Poets," in 1954, is as it were the New Critical version of "Man of Earth." It goes:

**"I have reaped the sickle edge of rain,
Rain harvests that had no grass:
In youth I let, instead, lusty mushrooms
Discover me.**

**Also have I known
The craving blade of rainwash, clean
To my clean bones. But overnight I rose
Upright in marsh ground, naked
Looming with rain.**

**Now, I do not cry, here, because I am bigger
Than a sea gull. A sea gull screams,
Ungently leaps into the wind
Following the concave shine of water.**

**Does it break, irrevocably,
The all-pathos of mirrors,
To look back at rain memories, unvexed?
A gull now cries to the other
Sea gulls: follow me. Follow."**

What a beautiful phrase, that "craving blade of rainwash." As well "the concave shine of water." How imagistically 90s, how millennial and universal. How far-seeing it must have been for Daguió's time.

We salute Amador T. Daguió, as we salute Gémino H. Abad on his excellent exegesis, as finely and charmingly delivered before a lectern as it has been wrought, from English, on paper, as wondrous part and parcel of our "soul's native cargo."