

THE SUBDIALECT FILIPINO

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What is "Filipino?"

There is much difference of opinion on this matter. According to one school of thought, Filipino is not only different from Tagalog, but that it (Filipino) still does not exist, but on the contrary, it still has to be developed. If one were to pursue this argument to its logical conclusion, it would lead to the authorities stopping the compulsory teaching of "Filipino" in schools, and ending its use in government, since such a language still does not exist.

That this opinion has influence even in government can be gleaned from the fact that it was the argument used by the Cebu Regional Trial Court in 1990, when it stopped the Department of Education, Culture and Sports and its officials in the Central Visayas from requiring the use of Filipino as a medium of instruction in schools in Cebu (Philippine Daily Inquirer, June 10, 1990). We all know that this issue became moot and academic when the Cebu Provincial Board withdrew the ban on the compulsory teaching of the putative national language on the "request" of then President Joseph Estrada in 1998.

<http://newsflash.org/199810/ht/ht000561.htm>

On the other hand, the predominant view these days (incidentally, that held by the authorities, at least at DepEd/DepTag) is that Filipino already exists. The following is taken from an article by the late Bro. Andrew Gonzalez, one of the staunch supporters of Filipino:

"The national language of the Philippines is Filipino, a

language in the process of development and modernisation; it is based on the Manila lingua franca which is fast spreading across the Philippines and is used in urban centers into the country.

"De jure, it is named in the 1987 Constitution of the Republic of the Philippines a language that will be enriched with elements (largely vocabulary) from the other Philippine languages and non-local languages used in the Philippines. De facto, the structural base of Filipino is Tagalog, a language spoken in Manila and in the provinces of Rizal, Cavite, Laguna, Batangas, Quezon, Camarines Norte to the south of Manila and Bulacan, Nueva Ecija, and part of Tarlac to the north of Manila. The enrichment has been going on as the language spreads itself through the mass media and as a medium of instruction in schools at all levels."

<http://multilingual-matters.net/jmmd/019/0487/jmmd0190487.pdf>

It is therefore clear (from a Tagalogista source) that Filipino is based on Tagalog, specifically the form of Tagalog spoken in Manila. This explains the DILA stand that "Filipino," as taught in Philippine schools today, is a subdialect of the Manila dialect of the Tagalog language.

The question is, does a language lose its identity and become another language when it borrows from other languages? This question is at the heart of the Tagalogista argument, that simply by borrowing from other Philippine languages, Tagalog (or Manila Tagalog) has become an entirely different language, "Filipino."

Take the case of English. English is perhaps unmatched in the number of words it has borrowed from other languages. According to **The Miracle of Language** by Charlton Laird (Greenwich, Conn.: Fawcett Publications, Inc., 1953), "in one of the large dictionaries like the New International, more than

half the words are likely to come from Latin, and of these more than half are likely to come through French" (p.81). Yet, no one is seriously proposing to change the name of English to, say, Anglo-Latin or Anglo-French on this basis. It is still English, which remains the same language as that used by Shakespeare four centuries ago, and is also the language spoken in the United States, Britain, Australia and English Canada.

Let's examine the case of Tagalog/Filipino. A possible indication of the contributions of the non-Tagalog languages to the contemporary speech of Manila might be found in **Tagalog Slang Dictionary** by R.David Zorc and Rachel San Miguel (Manila: De La Salle University Press, 1990). Slang would tend to be more receptive to loanwords than, say, the literary language, or the standard form of the language. Yet, according to the introduction to the book (by Dr. Zorc), only 2% of the entries are from "Bisayan" (not differentiated according to individual language), while Kapampangan and Ilokano account for another 0.1% each. No other Philippine language is mentioned individually in the estimates. In other words, the non-Tagalog Philippine languages had an aggregate contribution of less than 3% to the Tagalog slang vocabulary. Thus, the "basis of the national language" has a long way to go before it can be said to be an amalgam of the Philippine languages, as many Tagalogistas assert.

To be fair, it must also be mentioned that 38% of the words in Zorc's and San Miguel's dictionary come from English, and 17% from Spanish (it must be pointed out that slang words comprise only a portion of the total vocabulary of a language). But then, Bikol does not cease to be Bikol, nor does Hiligaynon stop being Hiligaynon, by borrowing from Spanish or English. Why should Tagalog become "Filipino" when it does?

One might also cite the on-going debate in the Tagalog Wikipedia over whether to rename it the "Filipino" Wikipedia (instead of its current name) as proof that the boundary between Tagalog and Filipino is far from clear even to speakers themselves.

It is obvious then that the so-called "Filipino" is merely a form of Tagalog, and not a separate language. Not surprisingly, the Ethnologue classifies Filipino as being the same as Tagalog:

Filipino

[fil] Throughout the country. Alternate names: Pilipino. Classification: Austronesian, Malayo-Polynesian, Meso Philippine, Central Philippine, Tagalog

http://www.ethnologue.com/show_country.asp?name=PH

And, as we have said, **DILA chooses to be more specific: it considers "Filipino" a subdialect of the Manila dialect of Tagalog.**

A Chronology of the Subdialect

1934

Proponents of Tagalog in government are reportedly involved in efforts to change the language provision in the draft Constitution, so that "a common national language based on existing native languages" becomes "a common national language based on one of the existing native languages." (Art. XIV Sect. 3) of the 1935 Constitution.

[Source: Vicente Albano Pacis, on national language issue, Philippines Daily Express, May 23, 1983]

1936

In his message to the First National Assembly on October 27, 1936, Quezon recommended "the creation of an institute of national language which will study the Philippine dialects... for the purpose of developing and adopting a common national language."

[Source: "The Case for Pilipino" by Apolinar B. Parale (Manila: MCS Enterprises, 1970)]

1937

On November 12, 1937, the First National Assembly approves a law creating a National Language Institute to make a study and survey of each of the existing native dialects, with a view to choosing one which was to be used as a basis for the national language of the Philippines.

[Source: <http://www.geocities.com/athens/academy/3727/tagalog2.htm>]

1937

On December 31, 1937, President Quezon proclaimed the language based on Tagalog as the National Language of the Philippines. The then President Manuel L. Quezon appointed to compose the Institute, Jaime C. De Veyra, as chairman, representing Samar-Leyte-Visayan; Santiago A. Fonacier, representing the Ilocano regions; Filemon Sotto (Cebu-Visayan); Casimiro Perfecto (Bicol); Felix S. Sales Rodriguez (Panay-Visayan); Hadji Butu (the Muslims) and Cecilio Lopez (Tagalog), as members. The reasons why Tagalog was so chosen were the following:

1. Tagalog is widely spoken and the most understood in all the regions of the Philippines;
2. It is not divided into dialects as Visayan is;
3. Tagalog literature is the richest. More books are written in Tagalog than in any other native language;
4. Tagalog has always been the language of Manila, the capital city, even long before the Spaniards came;
5. Tagalog was the language of the Revolution and Katipunan---two incidents in Philippine history that have left us a heritage we all can be proud of.

[Source: <http://www.geocities.com/athens/academy/3727/tagalog2.htm>]

1938

On June 18, 1938, the National Assembly created the Institute of National Language (this is different from the National Language Institute which was then dissolved). This new Institute was given the task of preparing a dictionary and a grammar to be published not later than two years after the President's proclamation of the National Language. Within the time limit given, the Institute prepared and submitted to the President a Tagalog-English vocabulary, authored by Dr. Cecilio Lopez; and a grammar entitled *Balarila ng wikang Pambansa*, authored by Lope K. Santos.

[Source: <http://www.geocities.com/athens/academy/3727/tagalog2.htm>]

1940

On April 12, 1940, Quezon issues Exec. Order 263 requiring all public and private schools and private teacher training institutes to teach in the fourth year of all high schools the national language.

[Source: "The Case for Pilipino" by Apolinar B. Parale, 1970]

1940-41

The teaching of the National Language was set in the fourth year of all high schools, and the second year of all normal schools in both public and private schools in the Philippines.

[Source: <http://www.geocities.com/athens/academy/3727/tagalog2.htm>]

1942

In July 1942 a notice on the official language in the Philippines was promulgated claiming that the official language of the Philippines be Japanese or Tagalog, but for the time being English be allowed to be used.

[Source: <http://ec.hku.hk/kd96proc/authors/papers/miyawaki.htm>]

1942-45

The propagation and use of Tagalog is encouraged during the Japanese occupation. Article IX Section 3 of the 1943 Constitution reads: "The government shall take steps toward the development and propagation of Tagalog as the national language." According to Padolina and Magno (*Chemical Education in the Philippines*), "The Japanese aggressors instituted the teaching of Nippongo, together with the use of Tagalog to replace English in government, to eliminate traces of American influence."

[Source: http://www.sil.org/asia/ldc/plenary_papers/andrew_gonzales.pdf
www.chanrobles.com/1943constitutionofthephilippines.html

<http://www.t.soka.ac.jp/chem/CEAP/Philippines.html>]

1946

Commonwealth Act No. 570 was promulgated on July 4, 1946 when the independence of the Philippines was granted by the United States. It provides for the use of the National Language as one of the official languages of the Philippines (with Spanish and English) in government offices.

[Source: <http://www.geocities.com/athens/academy/3727/tagalog2.htm>]

1956

May 26, 1956, the official Filipino [sic] version of the National Anthem, *Lupang Hinirang*, translated by Idefonso Santos and Julian Cruz Balmaceda, was proclaimed.

[Source: <http://www.msc.edu.ph/centennial/spirit.html>]

1959

On August 13, 1959, the Dept. Order enjoining every Filipino to observe National Language Week on August 13-19 of every year is issued. It also provided that the National Language shall be referred to as "Pilipino" to impress upon the National Language the indelible character of Filipino nationhood.

[Source: "The Case for Pilipino" by Apolinar B. Parale, 1970]

1961

In 1961 the office of the Secretary of Education enforced the use of the term Pilipino when referring to the National Language.

[Source: <http://www.geocities.com/athens/academy/3727/tagalog2.htm>]

1962

Philippine stamps switch from English to Pilipino-Tagalog.

1967

Philippine coins switch from English to Pilipino-Tagalog.

1973

Under the martial law government of President Ferdinand Marcos, NBE (National Board of Education) Resolution No. 73-7, s.1973 makes bilingual education in English and Pilipino the official policy in Philippine education.

[Source: <http://www.ncca.gov.ph/culture&arts/cularts/others/language/language-policies.htm>]

1974

Under President Marcos, DECS Order No. 25, s.1974 provides that Pilipino shall be used as the medium of instruction in social studies/social sciences, music, arts, physical education, home economics, practical arts and character education. English, on the other hand is allocated to science, mathematics and technology subjects. In effect, the use of the vernaculars in the first two grades is abolished.

[Source: <http://www.ncca.gov.ph/culture&arts/cularts/others/language/language-policies.htm>]

1986

President Corazon Aquino creates the 1986 Constitutional Commission, which drafts a new Constitution (ratified in 1987), the first such Philippine fundamental law which explicitly states that a national language, Filipino, already exists (Art. XIV Sect. 7). Both Filipino and English are official languages. Under this Constitution, however, English may be abolished by a mere act of Congress, while Filipino can only be abolished by amending

or repealing the Constitution.

[Source: Constitution of the Republic of the Philippines. Constitutional Commission of 1986]

1987

Education Secretary Lourdes Quisumbing issues Department Order No. 52, s.1987, the 1987 Policy on Bilingual Education, which requires the use of Filipino as a medium of instruction in schools at all levels in addition to English under the bilingual education policy. This in effect confirms the continuing validity of DECS Order No. 25, s.1974 issued by the Marcos martial law government.

[Sources: Philippine Daily Inquirer, June 10, 1990; <http://ncca.gov.ph/culture&arts/cularts/others/language/language-policies.htm>]

1987

Acting Bataan Governor Leonardo Roman directs all local officials in the province to use Pilipino as the official language in all symposia, sessions and official communications.

[Source: Philippine Daily Inquirer, December 28, 1987]

1988

Mayor Macario Asistio, Jr. orders the use of Pilipino in all transmittal letters, memorandums [sic], orders and official communications, in the city government of Caloocan, in effect banning the use of English.

[Source: Manila Times, April 14, 1988]

1988

The Department of Local Government under Secretary Luis Santos directs the use of Filipino as the official medium of communication at the local level.

[Source: Manila Bulletin, August 11, 1988]

1988

On August 25, 1988, President Corazon Aquino signs Executive Order No. 335 enjoining all departments/bureaus/offices/agencies/instrumentalities of the government to take such steps as are necessary for the purpose of using the Filipino language in official transactions, communications, and correspondence, replacing English as the official medium of communication in government.

[Sources: Philippine Daily Inquirer, September 2, 1988; <http://ncca.gov.ph/culture&arts/cularts/others/language/language-policies.htm>]

1988

DECS Order No. 84 issued by Secretary Quisumbing directs DECS

officials to implement President Aquino's Executive Order 335, requiring the use of Filipino in all government transactions and communications.

[Source: Philippine Daily Inquirer, June 10, 1990]

1988

Brig. Gen. Alfredo Lim, superintendent of the Western Police District, orders WPD officers and men to use Filipino in messages to and from mobile patrol cars in line with President Aquino's order directing all military and police forces to use the national language.

[Source: Manila Bulletin, November 5, 1988]

1989

In response to President Aquino's Executive Order No. 335, members of the Cebu provincial board and Cebu City council pass separate resolutions deploring the presidential order. Later, the Cebu provincial board passes an ordinance banning the use of Filipino-Tagalog as medium of instruction in Cebu's schools, and as a medium of official communication in the province. This is followed by a resolution calling for a change of the name of the "Sangguniang Panlalawigan" (provincial board) to "Balay Balauranan," (with the members to be called "Magbabalaod"), and another calling for the singing of the national anthem in Cebuano.

[Source: Manila Bulletin, October 3, 1989]

1989

Ninety-seven congressmen from both the administration and the opposition sign Resolution 1418, which urges President Aquino to withdraw or suspend Executive Order 335. In addition, Rep. Maria Clara Lobregat (LDP, Zamboanga City), one of the authors, files House Bill 1419, also urging President Aquino to withdraw E.O. 335, as well as DECS orders which seek to implement it.

[Source: Malaya, August 16, 1989; Philippine Journal, February 13, 1990]

1990

Cebu officials petition the Cebu regional trial court to stop the Central Visayas officials of the Department of Education, Culture and Sports from requiring the use of Filipino as a medium of instruction in schools in Cebu. The court issues a writ of preliminary injunction on June 8, stopping the implementation of DECS Order Nos. 52, 84 and 21, in effect preventing the department from requiring Filipino as a medium of instruction in Cebu schools, or as a medium of government communications and transactions in DECS offices in Cebu.

[Source: Philippine Daily Inquirer, June 10 and 17, 1990]

1990

DECS Order 21 issued by Secretary Isidro Cariño (under President Aquino) enjoins the use of Filipino in reciting the oath of allegiance to the constitution and the country.

[Source: Philippine Daily Inquirer, June 10, 1990]

1998

The "Flag and Heraldic Code of the Philippines" (Republic Act 8491, approved February 12, 1998) prohibits the singing of the National Anthem in a language other than the "national language".

[Source: <http://www.gov.ph/aboutphil/RA8491.asp>]

1998

The congressional body (EDCOM) jointly headed by House Minority Leader Carlos Padilla and Sen. Edgardo Angara recommends the adoption of Filipino from Grade 3 towards the rest of a student's schooling.

[Source: <http://www.mb.com.ph/MTNN2005050433956.html>]

1998

President Joseph Estrada issues a directive to the DECS to spearhead a heightened campaign to propagate Filipino.

[Source: The Philippine Star, May 19, 1999]

1998

In Oct. 21, 1998, President Joseph Estrada urges the "Sangguniang Panlalawigan" of Cebu (Cebu provincial board) to repeal two ordinances which ban the use of Filipino as the medium of instruction in schools in the province. Estrada had earlier sent a letter-memorandum to the Cebu provincial board through its presiding officer, Cebu Vice-Governor Fernando Celeste, pointing out that Ordinances No. 89-8 and 95-11 ran counter to the purpose and spirit of the 1987 Policy on Bilingual Education.

[Source: <http://www.newsflash.org/199810/ht/ht000561.htm>]

1999

Education Secretary Andrew Gonzalez (under President Estrada) announces the implementation of a program which would replace English with three major "dialects" [sic], Tagalog, Ilocano and Cebuano, in Grade 1, after which (Grades 2 to 4) Filipino will be used except when the subject is English.

[Source: The Philippine Star, May 19, 1999]

2002

The "Sangguniang Panlungsod" of Iligan City passed a resolution

prohibiting their Cebuano version of the Lupang Hinirang---Mutyang Pinangga. This came after Councilor Alfredo Busico protested that they were violating Republic Act 8491 or the National Flag and Heraldic Law. Violating the law incurs up to a P20,000 fine or imprisonment of not more than a year.

[Source: Philippine Daily Inquirer, November 20, 2002]

2003

President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo directs the Department of Education to restore English as the primary medium of instruction.

2004

Representatives Liza Maza, Satur Ocampo, Teodoro Casiño, Joel Virador, Crispin Beltran and Rafael Mariano, who represent party-list groups in Congress, file House Bill No. 1563, written in Filipino, which seeks to make “Filipino” the main medium of instruction in Philippine schools.

[Source: INQ7.net, May 7, 2005]

2004

House Bills No. 676, 2846, 2894, 3203 are filed by Reps. Alipio Badelles (NPC, Lanao del Norte); Raul del Mar (Lakas, Cebu); Eduardo Gullas (Lakas, Cebu) and Luis Villafuerte Jr. (Kampi, Camarines Sur), respectively. The bills provide for the use of English as the main medium of instruction; the vernacular may be used as an auxiliary medium in the first grade.

[Source: INQ7.net, May 7, 2005]

2006

September 19, 2006, voting 132-7, the House of Representatives approved on third and final reading a bill mandating English as the medium of instruction in all schools across the country. House Bill 4701 or An Act to Strengthen and Enhance the Use of English as the Medium of Instruction in Philippine Schools, was approved in plenary Tuesday night.

[Source: The Philippine Star, September 21, 2006]