

MIXED BILINGUALISM: A PRELUDE TO INCIPIENT CREOLISATION OF PILIPINO?¹

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0. BACKGROUND

From a radio broadcast, PULUNG-PULONG SA KAUN-LARAN (English loan-words italicised for easy identification):²

Kung pag-uusa-an no natin ang *irregularities*, ano? Kung sabagay, kung ang isang estudyante ay nakapasa rito dahilan lamang sa isang *leakage* wika nga, o iyong nakakuha siya ng mga *question* na kanyang nasagot kaagad, palagay ko *this will be to the advantage of the student concerned*. Kung saka-sakaling siya'y makalusot, makarating ng kolehiyo, e baka maging *very embarrassing on his part* naman, ano? Kung saka-sakali na kung nasa kolehiyo na siya ay hindi siya makaangkop doon sa *level* na dapat niyang kalagyan. *I think this has something to do now with the pattern of education* na sinusunod sa mga kolehiyo... *Aside from this*, sa *NCEE examination* ay naghihigpit na rin sila ngayon, sapagkat *they won't worry about anymore* dito sa sinasabi nilang *decrease in enrolment* sapagkat magkakaroon na rin sila ng *technological, vocational*, at saka *occupational courses* so that *they cannot afford anymore to get in people who are not fit for college*. Hindi po ba, Miss Sangalang?

And, also, during a conference on linguistics and bilingualism, the master of ceremony³ blurted out over the microphone:

Tayo'y magkakaroon ng *fifteen minutes break* at *afterwards* tayo'y babalik dito *to resume the conference*. Merong *sandwiches* at *soft drinks* diyan sa *corridor* para sa mga gustong mag-*refreshment*. Ang *next speaker* na isang kilalang *linguist* ay ipakikilala sa atin *after the break*.

The "mixing" of Pil(ipino) and Eng(lish), as shown in the above quotations, is fast becoming the normal acceptable style these days among the Tag(alog) bilinguals, especially in urban centres, like the Greater

Manila Area (GMA).⁴ Any GMA Tag bilingual will accept the above manner of code switching⁵ as typical and prevalent.

Goulet (1971:83-6) gives the following extralingual factors influencing language mixing, as well as the motivations for its use and the functions it serves: (1) for precision, i.e. Eng words give the exact meaning the speaker wants to convey; (2) for comic effect, i.e. mixing is very effective in creating humour; (3) for transition, i.e. a shift in language may mark a transition in thought; (4) for atmosphere, i.e. Pil heavily laced with Eng expressions conveys a "stateside" effect; (5) for creating social distance, i.e. "distance" is created between two interlocutors when one starts speaking purely in Eng; (6) for snob appeal, i.e. parents may try to set off their children from those of their neighbours by teaching them Eng as a first language; (7) for secrecy, i.e. parents who do not want their small children to understand the conversation at a particular moment resort to mixing of Eng with the vernacular.

1. THE PROBLEM

The Department of Education and Culture (DEC), in consonance with what is embodied in Article IV, Section 3 of the 1972 Revised Constitution⁶ and with Resolution No.73-7 of the National Board of Education,⁷ came up with an operational definition of bilingualism in Philippine education - that Pil and Eng shall be used as separate media of instruction in definite subject areas. This one-subject-one-language policy is aimed, it is presumed, to produce highly diglossic Filipinos who will be able to function adequately in the separate use of Eng and Pil in any language domains.⁸

It is being hypothesised in this study, however, that in spite of the policy of the DEC on the mutually exclusive use of Eng and Pil in the different school subjects, there will still be a random mixing of Eng and Pil which will eventually lead to the creolisation of the latter. Languages in contact usually start linguistic change with simple borrowing; then the borrowing becomes complex and breeds linguistic convergence, which in turn eventually breeds a creolised variety of either language.

Specifically, it is being hypothesised that the random mixing of Eng and Pil now obtaining among students and professionals of the GMA is a linguistic phenomenon which can be considered as incipient creolisation of the latter.

2. CREOLISATION AND STANDARDISATION

Dell Hymes (1971:84) defines creolisation as that "complex process of sociolinguistic change comprising expansion in inner form, with convergence, in the context of extension in use". Language standardisation, on the other hand, is defined by Ferguson (1968:31) as the "process of one variety of a language becoming widely accepted throughout the speech community as a supradialectal norm... rated above regional and social dialects...".

Whether these two processes impinge upon each other is not the subject of this paper. Offhand, however, this researcher strongly believes that creolisation works both ways in the standardisation of a language, i.e. some of the universal dimensions expected of a standard language are enhanced while the others are hindered.

With the present stage of development of Pil, one can easily deduce that it can not yet measure up with the universally accepted norms for language standardisation. And if Pil is really being creolised (something to be proven in this study) because of its continued contact with Eng, the more it becomes premature to talk about its possible standardisation. It would be like an over-eager father wanting his child to be born even during the gestation period.

At this stage, perhaps one relevant thing that language scholars can do is to pinpoint the location of Pil in the whole network of language standardisation, identify the changes it is undergoing, study where it is heading to while it coexists with Eng in the tongues of the bilingual Filipinos.⁹

This study is one of its kind. It focuses on the possible symptoms or manifestations of incipient creolisation of spoken Pil among students and professionals of the GMA. Of course, this may appear to be a long shot toward standardisation but, surely, it is spotlighting Pil where it is now.

Perhaps one good study subsequent to this is something about the possible standardisation of Pil in the face of its creolisation.

3. THE BILINGUAL SITUATION

The effect of the Filipinos' linguistic and cultural contacts with Spa(nish) and Eng is mirrored in both the spoken and written Tag prevalent especially in the GMA. In fact, to an ordinary Spanish or American listener, Tag, with all its peculiar intonation and staccato rhythm, will not sound altogether foreign because he will be able to retrieve a hodgepodge of Spa or Eng words woven in its intricate system of affixation. And if the listener is uninitiated, he might suspect that Tag

is an Indo-European language, belonging to the same family where Spa or Eng belong.

A little knowledge of Philippine history, however, will make one understand that the Spa and Eng words interspersed in Tag utterances are actually loanwords from the two foreign languages; that such is the result of our contact with Spa for almost 400 years and with Eng for more than half a century.

Theoretically, the longer the period of contact, the greater would be the linguistic influence of the coloniser's language on that of the colonised. The almost four centuries of Spa rule in the Philippines could have completely hispanised the Filipinos, i.e. the Spa language could have completely nativised and replaced the native languages. This did not take place, however. Frake (In: Hymes, op. cit., p. 223), in tracing the origins of the Spa creoles in the Philippines, says that the consequences of hispanisation in the New World and in South-East Asia differed:

In the Philippines, in spite of rapid Spa conquest, almost total conversion to Christianity, and over three hundred years of occupation, the Spa language failed to establish itself. Spa replaced no indigenous Philippine language, and its role as an auxiliary language was sufficiently tenuous that it was quickly supplanted by Eng after the American occupation. Today, apart from the many Spa loanwords in Philippine languages and a few speakers of Spa in the upper echelons of society, the linguistic legacy of Spain in the Philippines is limited to the existence of several communities that speak a Spa creole language as their mother tongue.

This is in contrast with Eng, which became more widespread only after two decades of American rule in the Philippines:

By 1918 in the Philippine Islands, 49.2% were literate, 26.4% being males and 22.8% being females. Of the literate native population ten years of age and over, the census of 1918 found that 33.9% of the males and 22.4% of the females spoke English, while only 30.4% of the males and 16.9% of the females spoke Spa; 32.1% of the males and 21.5% of the females were able to read and write Eng while only 27.0% of the males and 14.5% of the females were able to read and write Spa. The larger proportion of Filipinos with a knowledge of Eng shows the progress made since implantation of the American educational system.¹⁰

The above data and discussion can be summed up as follows: