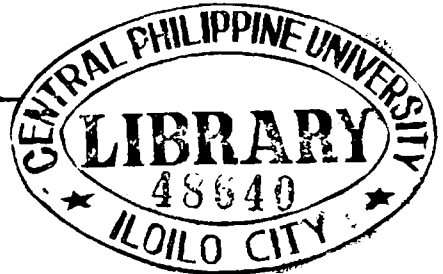


DETERMINING THE PRONUNCIATION PROBLEMS OF  
KINARAY-A SPEAKERS LEARNING ENGLISH  
THROUGH CONTRASTIVE ANALYSIS

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by  
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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

The complex problem of what is to be the language of the home, the national language, the official language, and the language of instruction makes it difficult for the educational system of the Philippines to arrive at simple decisions concerning language instruction and language learning.

This complexity is occasioned by the fact that the Philippines is multiple-tongued, with 81 languages and dialects (66 of which are native and 15 are foreign)<sup>1</sup>. The fact that in some areas two or more dialects are spoken interchangeably by the same speakers makes this already complex situation staggering. Even if this evaluation of the situation seems exaggerated because many of these dialects are mutually intelligible and, except for the eight principal languages, many varieties are each spoken by a small percentage of the population, the lack of success in many of our language teaching and learning programs is of such a magnitude that it behooves us to find out what and how this multiplicity contributes to our difficulties.

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<sup>1</sup>  
Philippines (Republic) National Economic and Development Authority, 1975 Philippine Yearbook (Manila: 1976), p. 117.

Into this babelization or confounding of speech is thrown the imperative need for the Philippines to have a common tongue in its quest for nationhood. It was thought that this need was met by a constitutional provision. But even with the legislation of the Tagalog-based Filipino into becoming the national language, the quest is far from over since the status of Tagalog is like that of a hated foreign language among non-Tagalog speakers whose attachment to regionalism and whose pride in their respective dialects or vernaculars are quite strong. To some Filipinos, it seems that nationalism does not necessarily mean having a national language based on one of the existing Philippine dialects, but simply having a language through which one can relate to one's countrymen. It is felt that the "proper closing to the still open national-language question should be on the basis of facts more than just on sentiments."<sup>2</sup>

For the Filipinos, the tasks of choosing an indigenous common tongue and of learning to use it have become as complicated as learning a foreign one.

Spanish, in spite of the length of Spanish rule in the Philippines, its prestige, and its being taught in

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<sup>2</sup>Eliza U. Griño, "The Dialects of Panay and the Implications of the Manner of Their Spread," Report of a Research Under the Sponsorship of the Ford Foundation (Iloilo City: Central Philippine University, October 31, 1974), p. 1.

classes, has met with resistance. Its cultural value seems to be the only reason now left for its inclusion in our curriculum. Its more lasting impact is assured by the hundreds of Spanish words that have entered into many Philippine dialects. It has already lost, however, its chance of becoming the common language of the Filipinos.

It is wishful thinking to say that the similarity among all the major Philippine dialects could be a basis for a one-dialect-based national language, since it is virtually impossible for these dialects to grow into one. Historical linguistics has shown that within sharply-defined political boundaries, dialects do not coalesce.<sup>3</sup> Even a jargon, such as pidgin or creole, usually soon dies out without ever becoming the native language of any group of speakers. In some cases, a native language is given up in favor of a jargon. The speech becomes a creolized language which has the "status of an inferior dialect of the master's speech and is subject to constant levelling-out and improvement in the direction"<sup>4</sup> of the mother speech. It is, therefore,

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<sup>3</sup> Clifford H. Prator, Jr., Language Teaching in the Philippines (Manila: United States Educational Foundation in the Philippines, 1950), p. 4.

<sup>4</sup> Leonard Bloomfield, Language (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1958), p. 474.

the most influential vernacular that gradually imposes itself as a common tongue. On the other hand, past experiences have made us realize that the vernacular languages "collectively cannot make for national unity even under a single strong political system."<sup>5</sup>

One of the negative results of foreign-language learning in the Philippines, covert though this result may be, is the fact that, in our honest desire to learn another language, we have unconsciously developed some kind of an inferiority complex regarding our own languages and dialects. Understandably perhaps, we feel that our dialects cannot by themselves help us cope with communications necessary in the modern world. We have failed to realize the intrinsic value of developing to the fullest the potentials of these dialects in order to enable us to express ourselves in an unborrowed language. It cannot be denied that much of what we call "our own" are either borrowings or adaptations from the languages of other countries. What is uniquely Filipino and which we have only started to define and delimit is still blurred to many of us. One of the reasons for this is still the little importance and attention we are giving to the local languages in which most of what we can call truly Filipino find expression.

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<sup>5</sup>Leopoldo Y. Yabes, "English as Official Language and Medium of Instruction," The Philippine Journal of Education, 2:(5) 263, November, 1972.

It is good to know that at last attempts are being made to study the dialects of the Philippines on a wider scale. When a language has been recorded, its system can be scientifically described, and its differences from and similarities with another language can be identified more definitely. More specifically, with the Filipinos still in search of a national language, findings from such studies can provide justification for the choice of a local dialect to serve as base of the national language. Furthermore, concerning the implementation of bilingual education, according to the Prator recommendation, implications can be obtained from a scientific study of the "basic differences between the sound systems of English and the various Philippine dialects, and of the exact difficulties Filipino children of different linguistic regions have in pronouncing English."<sup>6</sup>

The controversy arising from the use of English as a medium of instruction and official language of government was carried to no less than the assemblage of Filipino intellectuals and leaders convened for the purpose of changing the 1935 Philippine Constitution, which was labelled colonial because it was a creation of an act of the United States Congress. It will be recalled that the question of what language to use in the proceedings and in the formulation of the new constitution paralyzed the convention for days.

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<sup>6</sup>Prator, op. cit., p. 93.

Ironically, the language which the 1971 Constitutional Convention was expected to eliminate was the very language that prevailed. This decision was one of the most important final decisions made by the Convention.

Thus, paragraph 1, section 3, Article XV of the new Philippine Constitution states:

This constitution shall be officially promulgated in English and translated into all the native languages or dialects spoken by over fifty thousand people and into Spanish and Arabic. In case of conflict, the English text shall prevail.

Paragraph 3, section 3, Article XV further states: "Until otherwise provided by law, English and Filipino<sup>7</sup> shall be the official languages."

The decisions are significant because they were arrived at despite the nationalistic atmosphere that had pervaded the convention, and after seventy-five years of struggle to be independent<sup>8</sup>, and despite the earnest yearnings of the Filipinos to finally establish their national identity.

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<sup>7</sup>The term Pilipino should be distinguished from Filipino which is the proposed national language pursuant to the provision of paragraph 2, section 3, Article XV of the New Philippine Constitution.

<sup>8</sup>This reckoning is based on the dates of the first declaration of independence from Spain which was on June 12, 1898 and of the approval of the New Philippine Constitution on January 17, 1973.

This likewise confirmed once and for all the role of English as a unifying influence in the life of a people of varied ethno-linguistic groupings and as the more efficient instrument of national government and communication, and medium of academic disciplines, literature, business, science and technology.

This is not saying, however, that there is no need to improve existing language programs, particularly in the teaching of English, in the Philippines. Since English is here to stay for a long time yet, better learning and teaching programs are imperative. And since Philippine dialects are the media of community and home life, language programs such as the teaching of English must necessarily be based on some contrastive analysis of the Philippine dialect in contact with the foreign language under study.

At this juncture, it is only proper to introduce Kinaray-a which is the dialect involved in this study.

Kinaray-a is one of the three dialect variants of Panayan Bisayan, the two others being Aklanon and Hiligaynon,<sup>9</sup> the latter being spoken by 10.2 percent of the

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<sup>9</sup> Griño, loc. cit.



Philippine population.<sup>10</sup> Panayan Bisayan, like the other major Philippine languages, belongs to the great Malayo-Polynesian family of languages.<sup>11</sup>

A study by Griño<sup>12</sup> shows this classification of Kinaray-a: Deep Hinaraya<sup>13</sup> (which is of three subtypes; namely, Deep Antique Kinaraya-a, Deep Aklan Kinaray-a, and Deep Iloilo Kinaray-a (the last with two sub-subtypes, Central Deep Iloilo Kinaray-a and Coastal Deep Iloilo Kinaray-a), Dumalagnon, Lemerinhon, Central Iloilio Kinaray-a, Pototanon, and East Coast of Iloilo Kinaray-a. The Kinaraya-a in this study belongs to the Central Iloilo type.

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<sup>10</sup>Philippine (Republic) National Census and Statistics Office, 1970 Census of Population and Housing; National Summary, II (Manila: 1971), p. XXII.

<sup>11</sup>Macario B. Ruiz, "Weighting and Sequencing English Tense-Aspect Modifications for Hiligaynon Speakers" (unpublished Doctor's dissertation, University of California, Los Angeles, 1963), p. 15.

<sup>12</sup>Griño, loc. cit.

<sup>13</sup>A variant term for Kinaray-a and thought to be the native term.

This typing is based on the occurrence of an alternation between certain sound features of Kinaray-a and Hiligaynon. A region that uses / r / where others would use / ɾ / or / ʎ / was considered Kinaray-a territory. If this peculiar use of / r / is accompanied with the use of the tense, unrounded back vowel / ɯ /, the speech was considered of the "deep" type. Other subtypes were identified by the occurrence of any one of these two features. A Hiligaynon territory is one where / l / instead of / r / or / ʎ / is used. Kinaray-a has also one more vowel than Hiligaynon. This is the tense unrounded back vowel / ɯ / which is also called pepet vowel in linguistic literature.

Because of improved facilities of communication and travel, Hiligaynon and Kinaray-a are coming into more and more contact and the differences between the two dialects do not anymore constitute a major hindrance to mutual intelligibility. Furthermore, as shown by the Griño study, the use of certain Hiligaynon segments in a typically Kinaray-a word is evidence that Hiligaynon is becoming more and more the dominant dialect. This is shown, for loss of / ɯ / in many characterizing words in the typically Kinaray-a vocabulary of Pototan, Iloilo.<sup>14</sup> This dominance is further confirmed by a kind of an "inter-dialectal bias".

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Griño, ibid., p. 27.

Some people in the city often refer to Kinaray-a as the language of the mountain people, calling it Binukidnon. In fact, the intonation of Kinaray-a is often the source of laughter and delight, and, not too rarely, of prejudice among non-Kinaray-a speakers. On the other hand, Kinaray-a speakers would often tease a townmate who, after a short stay in the city, is caught using a Hiligaynon word in place of his own, by making such remarks as: "Sang adlaw lang sa syudad, nagsina don."<sup>15</sup>

The incident cited above seems to show that speakers of Kinaray-a are just as proud of their dialect as the Hiligaynon speakers are of their own. And this is the greater reason for the concern about the impact of the dialect on English learning.

## I. THE PROBLEM

a. Statement of the problem. The study hopes to answer the following questions and point out some pedagogical implications of the results of the comparison:

1. What are the differences and similarities between the Kinaray-a and the English sound systems?

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sina is Hiligaynon for that which is kara or karan in Kinaray-a. Roughly, this remark means that the speaker has taken on some affectations after a short stay in the city by using the Hiligaynon word for that instead of the native word.

2. How will knowledge of contrastive analysis help a teacher of English solve pronunciation problems of a Kinaray-a speaker learning English?

3. What are the expected pronunciation problems of Kinaray-a speaker learning English?

4. How have these differences and similarities actually hindered or helped the Kinaray-a speaker learning English?

b. Scope and limitations of the study. This study involved only the Kinaray-a spoken in Central Iloilo, the informants being natives of Tina, Badiangan, Iloilo. Because the grammatical structure of Kinaray-a and Hiligaynon are very highly similar, only their sound systems will be covered by the study. Intonation, which is suprasegmental feature of the dialect, was likewise excluded. This study then included only the segmental phonemes and their phonetic features, the accentual system, and syllable structure.