

a753408

The Filipino Language in the Malaysian Linguistic Space

By:

Rodney C. Jubilado

(Paper presented at the *International Conference: Filipino as a Global Language: Future Directions and Prospects* held on 17-19 March 2008 at University of Hawaii-Manoa, Honolulu, USA)

Perpustakaan Universiti Malaya



A513365326

The Filipino Language in the Malaysian Linguistic Space*

Rodney C Jubilado, University of Malaya

1.0 Introduction

The country which is known now as Malaysia has a varied geography encompassing the Bornean states of Sarawak and Sabah and the Malay Peninsula. Its final formation was in 1965 when Singapore exited from the Federation of Sabah, Sarawak, and Malaya. This country has its historical share of European colonization starting with the Portuguese in Malacca followed by the occupation of the Dutch and finally by the British rule. It was with the British rule that various subjects of the British Empire were brought to the country. What remains nowadays is that of the colorful mosaic of diverse people, language, and culture which make up Malaysia. Malaysia can be described as a multicultural and multilingual society. As a multilingual society, various languages belonging to widely dispersed language families found their way to Malaysia and are currently spoken by large communities of speakers. The indigenous population speaks languages belonging to the Austronesian family of languages. Other language families are those of Sino-Tibetan language family spoken by the indigenous Chinese and the Dravidian language family by the Indian communities. There are also languages which originated from other parts of the subcontinent of India particularly those of the Indo-European language family.

Among the Austronesian languages spoken in Malaysia are those of the Philippines. The presence of Philippine languages in Malaysia started in Sabah during the emergence of the sultanates in the 15th century. The most dominant Philippine language in Sabah is

the Bahasa Suluk or Tausug. The speakers are concentrated heavily in Sandakan, Semporna and Kota Kinabalu. Bahasa Sama-Bajau is the second largest Philippine language in Sabah. Other languages include Chavacano, Iranun, Cebuano, and Ilocano. One of the currently used languages is “Tágalog” or “Tagáwug” among the Muslim Filipinos. This variety is officially known in the Philippines as Filipino confining Tagalog to the niche of being a regional language in the Tagalog region (Paz, 1995).

2.0 The Filipino Language: A Brief Sketch

The Filipino language is a product of natural linguistic evolution. It sprang out of the fusion of Tagalog language and the source languages of Spanish and English. Before the arrival of the western powers, Tagalog itself had also language contact with Sanskrit, Chinese and Arabic. These linguistic influences are much visible in the lexicon. Albeit, Filipino is still an Austronesian language which exhibits a verb-initial typology and complex verb morphology.

Its political aspect of evolution is due to the political primacy of Manila in the Tagalog Region. Tagalog, the language in Manila and the nearby regions, was mandated by the then President Manuel L. Quezon, the President of the Commonwealth of the Philippines in 1937. It was explicitly stated in the 1937 Constitution that Tagalog was the basis of the national language of the Commonwealth of the Philippine Islands. The status of the Tagalog language as the basis of the national language was diminished when the 1973 Constitution rescinded Tagalog and named the national language as Pilipino with the initial letter “P”. The [p] sound instead of [f] is common among Tagalog speakers and other speakers of Philippine languages. In daily speech for a common Tagalog speaker, the phonemes /p/ and /f/ is realized as [p].

The teaching of Tagalog/Pilipino as the national language of the Republic of the Philippines was sanctioned by the Philippine Constitution itself. The teaching gave rise to the spread of the Tagalog/Pilipino language in the republic. At present, it is taught in all levels of education alongside with English.

In 1974, the Department of Education started the bilingual policy. This allowed the students to learn English and Pilipino languages. In 1987, the Pilipino language was changed to Filipino with an “F”. The Bilingual Education Policy (BEP) was further instituted with the dropping of the other local dialects as used in teaching at the early elementary grades. The BEP had the purpose of the acquisition of proficiency in Filipino and English which was bluntly a failure. It produced Taglish – the bastardized Tagalog with so much English words. Taglish syntactic structure is an outright expression of code-switching and/or code-mixing. The example below is typical in Manila:

Conversation 1

A: Where did you go? Sabi mo, antayan mo ako.

B: I went to SM Megamall. I couldn't wait for you. Ang tagal mo kasi.

Conversation 2

A: Wanna go to Greenhills? Kasi may nakita akong nice bag in one of the stalls doon.

B: Talaga? Sige. Let's try.

The above conversations exemplify the type of language variety easily heard among university students in Manila and quite pervasive among students of exclusive private universities in the big cities outside Manila. The English translation is as follows:

Conversation 1

A: Where did you go? You said you would wait for me.

B: I went to SM Megamall. I couldn't wait for you. I got bored waiting for you.

Conversation 2

A: Do you want to go to Greenhills? I saw a nice bag in one of the stalls there.

B: Really? OK. Let's try.

Let us leave this part for the moment and move on to another section. The thing that I am trying to say is that there exists the further development of Filipino – its Anglicization. This is a point of departure from the Hispanization of Filipino which is a thing in the past somewhere in the course of the development of the Filipino language. For the moment, let us shift the focus to the Filipino orthography and the discussion on the fate of Spanish words as they underwent Filipinization.

2.1 The Orthography of Filipino

The Filipino orthography is composed of 28 letters. This new alphabet is based on the 26 letter of the English alphabet plus the two letters ñ and ng. Please see the tabulation below.

a	b	c	d	e	f	g
h	i	j	k	l	m	n
ñ	ng	o	p	q	r	s
t	u	v	w	x	y	z

Generally the letters c, f, j, q, v, ñ, z, x are used in the spelling of words mostly originating from Spanish and English. Among the Spanish words are Corazon, Davao del Norte, Negros Occidental, Fernando, Jose Rizal, Iñigo, Quezon, Villanueva, Zaldivar, to name a few which are all proper names and are still currently used. In the case of common Spanish nouns, these nouns underwent Filipinization. Majority of the spellings

are changed to follow the pedagogical description “**Anong bigkas siyang baybay**” which means that the spelling must be constrained by the phonological principles and processes of the first language which in this case is Filipino. Simply put, the word must be spelled according to its sound. Examples of the Filipinized Spanish words are presented below.

No.	Spanish	Filipino	Gloss
1	angeles	angheles	angels
2	cinturon	sinturon	belt
3	ciudad	siudad	city
4	civilizacion	sibilisasyon	civilization
5	cuaderno	kwaderno	notebook
6	cuchara	kutsara	spoon
7	Dios	Diyos	God
8	educacion	edukasyon	education
9	estatua	istatwa	statue
10	gobierno	gobyerno	government
11	iglesia	iglesia	church
12	libro	libro	book
13	mesa	mesa	table
14	monumento	monumento	monument
15	santo	santo	saint

Table I. Examples of Filipinized Spanish Nouns

Table I presents the Spanish-based nominal lexical category. Note that some of the nouns are spelled according to Spanish orthography. It is so when there is a corresponding sound or orthographic representation in Filipino. The religious mindset and orientation of the Filipinos are reflected by some of these words which are categorically belonging to the spheres of religion particularly Roman Catholicism as introduced by Spain. Normally, all Hispanic words are commonly used and are in most cases competing with the native words or most currently the English words.

Aside from the nouns, Filipino makes use of Spanish adjectives, verbs and prepositions too. All of these categories undergo lexical and orthographic processes as the nominal category does. To exemplify, the Filipino language has the adjectives **gwapa**

and **gwapo** which correspond to the Spanish words **guapa** and **guapo** 'beautiful' of the feminine and masculine genders respectively. Observe more examples on Table II below.

No.	Spanish	Filipino	Gloss
1	aburrido	aburido	'boring'
2	antipatica, antipatico	antipatika, antipatiko	'mean'
3	claro	klaro	'clear'
4	decente	desente	'decent'
5	dominante	dominante	'dominant'
6	educado	edukado	'educated'
7	elegante	elegante	'elegant'
8	estricta, estricto	istikta, istikto	'strict'
9	falsificar	palsipika	'to forge'
10	maldita, maldito	maldita, maldito	'bad' (character)
11	pobre	pobre	'poor'
12	puro	puro	'pure'
13	santa, santo	santa, santo	'holy'
14	solo	solo	'alone'
15	tonta, tonto	tonta, tonto	'foolish'

Table II. Examples of Filipinized Spanish Adjectives

Table II presents the examples of Spanish adjectives which are entered into the Filipino lexicon. The feminine and masculine inflected forms are also absorbed and used according to the inflectional properties of the Spanish gender. It observes the syntax of the adjective phrase in Spanish which means that masculine nouns are used with masculine adjectives and feminine nouns are used with feminine adjectives. Although some of these adjectives underwent semantic shift like **aburido** 'boring' which I would say that it means '**irritable due to so many problems**', in most cases the original meaning is retained.

In the case of Filipinized Spanish verbs, the same undergo the change of spelling and retention or change of meaning. The main difference of Filipino verbs from its Spanish counterparts is the use of the inflected form instead of observing the correct

inflection of the Spanish verbs. Observe the examples of Filipinized Spanish verbs on Table III below.

No.	Spanish	Filipino	Gloss
1	apelar	apela	'to appeal'
2	ayudar	ayuda	'to help'
3	castigar	kastigo	'to castigate'
4	cerrar	sara	'to close'
5	comparar	kumpara	'to compare'
6	confesar	kumpisal	'to confess'
7	confirmar	kumpirma	'to confirm'
8	consentir	kunsente	'to allow'
9	consultar	kunsulta	'to consult'
10	contar	kwenta	'to count'
11	copiar	kopya	'to copy'
12	declarar	deklara	'to declare'
13	descubrir	diskubre	'to discover'
14	empezar	umpisa	'to start'
15	entender	intindi	'to understand'
16	explicar	isplika	'to explain'
17	gastar	gasta	'to spend'
18	investigar	imbestiga	'to investigate'
19	juzgar	husga	'to judge'
20	rezar	dasal	'to pray'

Table III. Examples of Filipinized Spanish Verbs

Except for the verbs **kumpisal** 'to confess', **kastigo** 'to castigate', **dasal** 'to pray', generally the Filipinized Spanish verbs are verbs inflected in the simple present 3rd person singular according to the Spanish verb system. It is characteristic among language varieties undergoing language contact. All of these Filipinized Spanish can be affixed with any verbal affixes as any native Tagalog verbs do. Therefore, the Filipinized Spanish verbs in Column 3 of Table III are considered root words and assumed their fully inflected forms when they undergo computation in the syntactic structures. To conclude by exemplification, the Filipinized Spanish verb **umpisa** 'to start' is inflected as **mag-umpisa** 'to start', **nag-umpisa** 'started', **nag-uumpisa** 'starting', **mag-uumpisa** 'will start', **umpisahan** 'to be started', **inumpisahan** 'was started', **inuumpisahan** 'is

being started', **uumpisahan** '**will be started**'. There is a vast array of verbal affixes (applicatives, middles, unaccusatives, unergatives, causatives, etc) which can be used in inflecting and deriving verbs in Filipino. This paper presents the basic **agentive** and **theme/objective** verbal affixes.

Regarding Spanish prepositions, there is only one which enters freely into the computation and the Filipino lexicon. It is the preposition **para** '**in order to, for**'. It spelled in the same way as it is in Spanish but its use has few deviations. Normally in Spanish, **para** '**for**' is used with the infinitive like, **para empezar** '**in order to investigate**'. However in Filipino it assumes the function of the two prepositions **para** '**in order to**' and **por** '**for**'. To end this part, observe the examples below.

1. Pumunta si Pedro sa simbahan **para magkumpisal** ng kanyang kasalanan.
'Pedro went to the church in order to confess his sins.'
2. **Para** sa kaibigan ko ang regalo. 'The gift is for my friend.'

Generally speaking, most of the Filipinos have no cognizance of the Spanish words in the lexicon of Filipino and other Philippine languages. The loanwords are just assumed as originally Philippine. Unless one is knowledgeable of the Spanish language, one can identify the Spanish origin of the word. In 1987, the teaching of Spanish as a compulsory subject was abolished. I consider this as (1) a loss of rich and indispensable cultural heritage and (2) closure of a extensive avenue of learning.

As provided by the constitution, English, in conjunction with the Filipino language, is the official language of the Republic of the Philippines. Its influence is so pervasive that it could be seen, heard, and felt everywhere in the Philippines. All the major signboards, street names, and building names are written in English. Majority of the broadsheets are

written in English and are having wide circulation. There are regular broadcasts and film shows in English. The medium of instruction in all levels of education is still in English. The government affairs are officially conducted in English. The Constitution of the Republic of the Philippines is in English and the English version is the basis for interpretation. In the churches, there are provided time slots for religious services and masses to be conducted in English. To make the story short, English is everywhere in the Philippine society and encroached every aspect of the Filipino community.

Regarding orthography, English words are in the process of Filipinization. Various sections are still debating on the standardization of spelling. There are others who are hesitant in adopting Filipinized re-spelling of English loanwords. Others make use of the invented words which are Tagalog-based like **kaguruan** ‘faculty’ instead of **fakulti** ‘faculty’. At the Linguistics Department of the University of the Philippines, the re-spelling of English loanwords is accepted and quite liberal. Observe some of the English-based words as presented in Table IV below.

No.	Filipinized English loanwords	Competing Words	Gloss
1	department	departamento, kagawaran	‘department’
2	linggwist	dalubwika	linguist
3	ekspert	eksperto, dalubhasa	‘expert’
4	fakulti	kaguruan	‘faculty’
5	government	gubyerno, pamahalaan	‘government’
6	memorandum	opisyal na sulat	‘memorandum’
7	organiseysyon	organisasyon, lipunan	‘organization’
8	profesyon	propesyonal	‘professional’
9	representativ	kinatawan, representatibo	‘representative’
10	revyu	rebyu, pagbabalik-aral	‘review’

Table IV. Filipinized English loanwords

Table IV presents only a sample of English loanwords. Just like the Spanish loanwords, English loanwords are re-spelled according to the Filipino orthography.

Original spelling if the Filipino orthographic system permits. Furthermore, the sample of Conversations 1 and 2 in the preceding pages testify the pervasiveness of English in daily speech. In various written texts like in newspapers, magazines, and books, the English words are readily spelled according to English orthography.

The Language System of Filipino

This section deals with the summary of the language system of the Filipino language. This aims to present a sketch of the sound system and the morphosyntax of the Filipino language.

A. Sound System of the Filipino Language

Basically, the Filipino language has 21 consonant sounds /p, t, k, ʔ, b, d, g, h, m, n, f, v, ŋ, s, z, j, ç, l, r, y, w/ and five vowel sounds /a, e, i, o, u/. These sounds are tabulated in Tables V and VI consecutively below.

Manner of Articulation	Place of Articulation					
		Labial	Alveolar	Alveo-palatal	Velar	Glottal
Stop	+voice	b	d		g	ʔ
	-voice	p	t		k	h
Nasal	+voice	m	n		ŋ	

	-voice					
Fricative	+voice	v	z			
	-voice	f	s			
Affricate	+voice			j		
	-voice			ç		
Liquid	+voice		l r			
Glide	+voice			y	w	

Table V. The Consonant Sounds of the Filipino Language

Table V presents the inventory of the consonant sounds of the Filipino language. Some sounds are in most cases of foreign influence like / f, v, z, j, ç/. These sounds appear commonly in loanwords from the English language such as **fakulti** ‘**faculty**’, **konvensyon** ‘**convention**’, **zebra** ‘**zebra**’, **sabjek** ‘**subject**’, **cheke** ‘**check**’. It can be observed that the loanwords have undergone change in spelling but the original meaning is retained.

Height of the Tongue	Manner of Articulation		
	Front	Central	Back

High	i	u
Middle	e	o
Low	a	

Table VI. The Vowel Sounds of the Filipino Language

Table VI presents the inventory of vowel sounds of Filipino language. Basically the five vowel sounds correspond to the five letters a, e, i, o, and u. To exemplify, these sounds appear respectively in the following words, namely, **abaka** ‘a kind of hemp’, **elementarya** ‘elementary’, **itik** ‘duck’, **monumento** ‘monument’, and **unggoy** ‘monkey’.

B. Morphosyntax of the Filipino Language

The computation in Filipino language is similar to any indigenous Philippine language. Syntactic structures are affected by the morphological structures of the morphemes which enter into the computation. The Filipino morphemes are categorized as bound and free morphemes. Bound morphemes are affixes and the free morphemes are the bases. The lexical category of the fully derived/inflected form can be distinguished normally in syntax. The most commonly used affixes are those associated with nouns and verbs. To substantiate and exemplify this part, let us discuss and focus on the verb system of the Filipino language. Observe Table VII which shows the partial paradigmatic representation of the base **kain** ‘eat’ below.

Base	Affix	Aspect		
		Contemplative	Perfective	Imperfective
kain	-um-	kakain	kumain	kumakain
	in-	kainin	kinain	kinakain

Table VII. Partial Paradigm of the Verb Kain

In syntax, the base **kain** 'eat' can exist in these following constructions:

3. Malaki ang kain ng batang iyan. 'The child is a big eater.'
4. Kain na. 'Let's eat.'

In sentence 3, the base **kain** 'eat' is marked by the subject-NP marker **ang** 'the'. Here, the base **kain** 'eat' is understood as noun. In sentence 4, the base **kain** 'eat' functions as a verb which normally appears in the irrealis sense. There are other syntactic environments which allow the base to exist and can be distinguished as either a noun or a verb. Furthermore, the paradigm in Table VII shows the agentive-affix **-um** and the theme- affix **in**. By employing argument/thematic structure, the resulting inflected verbs can be represented in (5) as follows:

5. **kain: V; /um:in/ <1, 2>**
<agent, theme>

This argument/thematic structure shows that the base **kain** 'eat' is a verb and can be affixed with either **-um** or **-in**. The resulting inflected verbs **kumain/kinain** 'ate' take two NPs – an agent and a theme – as the participants in the event as signified by the meaning of the verb. This is made clear by observing the syntactic representations of 5 in 5a and 5b below.

- 5a Kumain ang bata ng mangga. 'The child ate the mango.'
- 5b Kinain ng bata ang mangga. 'The mango was eaten by the child.'

In sentence 5a the base **kain** 'eat' is inflected with the agentive-affix **-um** and is in the perfective aspect. It has the **agent-NP ang bata** 'the child' which functions as the subject of the sentence as it is the NP marked by the subject marker **ang**. The other **NP ng mangga** 'the mango' functions as the theme or object of the sentence as shown by its marker theme or object marker **ng**.

In sentence 5b, the base **kain** 'eat' is inflected with the theme-affix **-in** and is in the perfective aspect. The theme or object NP **ng mangga** 'the mango' functions as the subject as shown by the subject marker **ang**. The NP **ng bata** 'the child' is marked by **ng** 'by' and still functions as the agent of the sentence.

The point of raising the argument/thematic structure of verbs is to show that it is the very core of the sentence which the processes of language teaching, learning, and acquisition are geared. I would like to end this part by saying that the Filipino language is an Austronesian language of the Philippine-type. Its long list of complex verbal affixes warrants another paper and cannot be treated exhaustively in this current paper. Suffice it to say that using the affixes **-um** and **-in** is enough to give a glimpse of the complexity of the morphosyntax of the Filipino language.

3.0 The Teaching of Filipino among Malaysian Students

The Filipino courses are normally taught at the Department of Southeast Asian Studies (DSAS) at the Faculty of the Arts and Social Sciences (FASS) of the University of Malaya (UM). Aside from Filipino, there are other three Asian languages taught at DSAS, namely, Burmese, Thai, and Vietnamese.

3.1 The Filipino Language Students and the Filipino Courses

The following Table VIII presents the number of students enrolled in the Filipino courses from 2001 until 2007 at the DSAS at the Faculty of the Arts and Social Sciences of the University of Malaya. It also presents the course codes and the descriptive titles of the courses in Filipino. These courses are designed for students pursuing the degree of Bachelor of Arts in Southeast Asian Studies at UM. Each of these courses is taught 4 hours a week and carries the weight of 3-credit hours.

Academic Year	First Semester			Second Semester			Total Number of Students
	ATEA1319 (Bahasa Filipino I-A)	ATEA2419 (Bahasa Filipino II-A)	ATEA3419 (Bahasa Filipino III-A)	ATEA1419 (Bahasa Filipino I-B)	ATEA2424 (Bahasa Filipino II-B)	ATEA3424 (Bahasa Filipino III-B)	
2001/02	12	4	2	19	6	2	45
2002/03	15	4	8	18	4	7	56
2003/04	17	7	5	16	8	3	56
2004/05	29	6	8	29	4	8	84
2005/06	30	26	5	26	26	4	117
2006/07	33	17	26	33	16	26	151
2007/08	40	14	17	40	12	17	140

Table VIII. Enrollment of Students in Filipino Courses

The table above also shows that there is a very significant increase in the number of students taking up Filipino language courses. The increase is from 45 students in 2001 up to 140 students in the academic year 2007/2008 which signifies a 311% increase. The student population taking Filipino is made up mostly of Malaysian citizens. In the years 2005 till 2008, there were also students coming from Brunei. These foreign students are Malays and are fluent speakers of the Malay language, another Austronesian language.

Among Malaysian students, the Malays constituted a very strong majority among Filipino language students.

When I made a survey asking them why they took Filipino language, various answers came up ranging from the influence of mass media and for academic and personal learning. Majority answered affirmatively because of the Filipino films which are shown on Malaysian TV. Among the films shown in Malaysia are *Sana'y Wala ng Wakas*, *Ngayong Nandito Ka*, *Mula sa Pusong Anak*, *All of My Life*, *Crying Ladies*, *Forevermore*, and the like, whose stars are of Hispanic or American phenotypes like Jericho Rosales, Kristine Hermosa, Rico Yan, and Claudine Barretto among others. These Filipino actors and actresses captivated the Malaysian audience including those who took Filipino courses. These films are presented either with Malay subtitles or dubbed in Malay. These films serve as a very positive motivating factor among these Filipino language learners. In all of the Filipino courses, the use of the film is implemented for pedagogical purposes.

The first year courses ATEA1319 and ATEA1419 are considered as either elective or required courses among BA students at FASS-UM. As the students are choosing their majors after the first year of studies, those who are taking BA in Southeast Asian Studies at DSAS are required to take the remaining four semesters of Filipino courses of ATEA2419, ATEA2424, ATEA3419 and ATEA3424. In relation to the course content, these courses are taught inclusive of language, culture and Philippine institutions. Various types of texts are employed to ensure the acquisition of the four macroskills - the listening, reading, writing, and speaking. The first year courses are taught focusing on the rudiments of basic grammar such as sentence types, agentive verbs

-um and **mag-**, NP markers, and the basic question patterns. These topics are complemented with the teaching of everyday greetings, self-introduction, asking for direction, following directions, biographical sketches and the Philippine geography and tourism. The students need to write simple biographical sketches of themselves and of their friends. They are also required to present dialogues, group discussions, and do individual oral presentation choosing their own titles. The second year courses ATEA2419 and ATEA2424 are set for the learning the intermediate level. The sentential structures include the use of compound and complex sentences necessary for intermediate paragraph writing. The complexity of the verb system is gradually introduced particularly the verbal affixes **-in**, **-an**, and **i-**. The students are further introduced to Philippine Literature focusing on the fables, folklore, poetry, and the narrative. The texts from Philippine History include the pre-Islamic Filipinos, the Islamization of the Philippines, and the Hispanization of the Philippines. Activities are done which enhance the four macroskills of the students.

The third year course ATEA3419 and ATE3424 are aimed to enhance the students' knowledge of the Filipino language and Philippine Institutions. These courses provide the students the learning of the causative verbs and the number inflectional category in verbs. They are further immersed into the Philippine Institutions by using the texts based on the novels of Dr Jose Rizal, namely, *Noli Me Tangere* and *El Filibusterismo*. The texts from American colonialism and the contemporary Philippines are also used in the teaching of these courses. Advanced level of activities is done for the enhancement of the acquired level of proficiency and skills among students.

Calculating the grades is fixed as follows: course work 30%, oral 20%, and final examination 50%. To get an A grade, the student needs to obtain the 76% mark carrying the weight of 4.0. The conditional passing mark is set at 36% carrying the weight of 1.0.

3.2 Issues in Teaching Filipino Language

There are three major issues that I would like to address here, namely, (1) the use of English as the medium of instruction, (2) non-availability of localized teaching materials, such Filipino-Malay or Malay- Filipino dictionaries and textbooks, and (3) the close affinity of Tagalog and Malay languages.

Generally speaking, the Filipino language students speak Bahasa Malaysia, a variety of Malay which is the official language of Malaysia. As a foreign lecturer, I use English as the medium of instruction and gradually increase the usage of Filipino as the students progress to higher levels of the language. The use of English as the medium of instruction doesn't help at all due to lack of proficiency in English. English is considered as a language of interference in the learning process of the students. Aside from these some students personally feel that English is such a foreign language with religious connotation and therefore contrary to their religious beliefs. Others signify their contempt by accusing English as a colonial language and labeled it derogatorily. The outright statement among students is that English is a difficult language to learn. Whatever reasons the students can fabricate, English is used in teaching Filipino courses alongside with the Filipino language itself. Owing to the fact that there are so many English words in the Filipino lexicon, reading texts and comprehending it could be facilitated if the students are proficient in English.

To date, there is only one available textbook (*Learn Filipino*) for the teaching of ATEA1319 which is authored by Dr Alicia Vega Atilio and published by the University of Malaya Press in 2001. Among the reference materials, the students make use also of the books (1) *Filipino for Everyone* authored by Paquito Badayos and published by Pelanduk Publications in 2000, (2) *Language Phrases* by Dr Atilio which is published by the UM Press in 2001. For the remaining seven courses, the teaching materials are currently written and are in polishing stage for compiling and eventual publishing. Among the dictionaries used are those authored by English (1986) and Constantino (1999).

Currently, there is the research group which is headed by Associate Professor Dr Asha Doshi and Associate Professor Dr Zubaidah Ibrahim-Bell and with the collaboration of the author of this paper and Assistant Professor Maria Khristina S. Manuelli of the Department of Linguistics of the University of the Philippines. It aimed to write and publish the bilingual Malay-Filipino dictionary.

When it comes to the close affinity between Malay and Filipino, the classroom scenario may have this picture. Consider the words **salamat** 'thank you', **dalamhati** 'emotional pain', **langit** 'paradise, heaven', **lupa**, 'land', **bukid** 'mountain, farm', **harapan** 'front, façade', **sakit** 'pain', and **guru** 'teacher' among others. Since these words are either homophonous or homologous with the Malay equivalents, these words are taken by face value and translated as is in Malay. The translation produces semantically anomalous sentences or outright ridiculous and even hilarious statements. Observe the sample translation below:

6. Filipino: Nag**dalamhati** ang nanay ko.

Act-Focus-pain the mother my

'My mother is in pain.'

Bahasa : 'Ibu saya menderit.'

7 Students' translation to Malay: Nenek ada dalam hatinya. 'Granny is in her heart'

8. Other Anomalous constructions:

8a Niluto ng manok si nanay.

Obj-foc-cook by chicken the mother

'The chicken cooked mother'

8b Kinain ng isda si nanay.

Obj-foc-eat by fish the mother

'The fish ate mother.'

The oral aspect of learning and its output can be given the blessings of indulgence by giving less correction but not the writing aspect. In times when the students' grammatical errors are corrected, this typical reply comes in a template manner: "Boleh lah. Sama saja lah!"

4.0 Conclusion

The Filipino language in Malaysia is confined among the Filipinos working and residing in Malaysia. It is also spoken by some of the Malaysian citizens in Sabah who are of Filipino ancestry. In the popular media, the Philippine films serve as the vehicle of the Filipino language. This language occupies its academic space at the University of Malaya where it is taught among students of the Faculty of the Arts and Social Sciences and of Languages and Linguistics as well. Teaching Filipino among Malaysian students is challenging and fun. The lack of the proficiency in English language among students does not mean that the students are hindered from learning the language. However, it is a blunt fact that the proficiency in English language would help in facilitating learning.

Although Filipino teaching materials are not readily available, the same can be compensated by pursuing steps in writing and producing instructional materials and collaborating with some researchers. The close typological affinities of the Austronesian languages – Filipino and Malay – can either be a blessing or a curse in the teaching and learning processes. There are also some interpersonal factors that can affect the learning of the language which both the teachers and the students are cognizant. The openness towards socio-cultural differences among students and teachers is elemental in teaching and learning a foreign language.

5. 0 Bibliography

- Adger, D. (2003) *CORE SYNTAX: A Minimalist Approach*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Agoncillo, T. (1990). *History of the Filipino People*. Quezon City: GAROTECH Publishing.
- Aspillera, P. (1981). *Basic Tagalog for Foreigners and Non-Tagalogs*. Las Piñas City: M&L Licudine Enterprises.
- Alicio, A. (2001a). *Learn Filipino*. Kuala Lumpur: UM Press.
- _____. (2001b) *Language Phrases in English, Bahasa Melayu, Filipino, Spanish*. Kuala Lumpur: University of Malaya Press.
- Badayos, P. (1995) *Filipino for Everyone*. Subang Jaya: Pelanduk Publications.
- Buenaventura, L. (1996). *Learn to Speak Filipino the Easy Way*. Quezon City: Phoenix Publishing House, Inc.
- Constantino, E. (1999) *The Contemporary English-Filipino Dictionary*. Quezon City: EAC Center for Philippine Languages.
- Crowley, T. (1998). *An Introduction to Historical Linguistics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

- Dumanig, F. and Jubilado, R. (2006). *The Descriptive Analysis of Surigaonon Language*. A paper presented at the XVI Meeting of the Southeast Asian Linguistics Society on Sept 20-21, 2006 at ATMA JAYA Catholic University, Jakarta, Indonesia.
- English, L. (1986) *Tagalog-English Dictionary*. Mandaluyong City: National Book Store.
- Jubilado, R. (2003). *Philippine Linguistics, Filipino Language and the Filipino Nation*. A paper read at the UKM SOLLs' International Conference on Language and Nationhood: Confronting New Realities December 16 – 18, 2003 at Marriott Hotel, Putrajaya, Malaysia.
- Jubilado, R. and Nasirin Abdillah. (2006) *How to Give and Receive in Malay and Cebuano*. A paper presented at the 9th Philippine Linguistics Congress on 25–27 January 2006 at the University of the Philippines, Diliman, Quezon City, The Philippines.
- Kroeger, P. (1993). *Phrase Structure and Grammatical Relations in Tagalog*. California: CLSI Publications.
- Paz, C. (1995). *Ang Wikang Filipino: Atin Ito*. Quezon City: University of the Philippines System.
- Rackowski, A. S. (2002) *The Structure of Tagalog: Specificity, Voice, and the Distribution of Arguments*. Ph D Dissertation: MIT, Cambridge, MA.

This paper was presented at the First International Conference on Filipino as a Global Language at University of Hawaii-Manoa, Honolulu, Hawaii, United States of America on March 17-19, 2008.