ON THE STANDARDISATION OF PSYCHOLOGICAL TERMS IN PILIPINO

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The use of Pilipino in Philippine psychological literature is part of an over-all concern for the study and application of psychological theories and methods relevant to the Filipino experience and Asian thought. In the first printed book on *Philippine Studies in Mental Measurement* (Carreon 1912), it can be seen that Filipino educational psychologists insisted on modifying items found in psychological tests as a first step towards the full indigenisation of Philippine mental testing. The wholesale adoption of western tests was viewed with suspicion because their validity had not been demonstrated locally. Approximately seven decades later, the suspicion grew into outright rejection thus providing impetus to the development of original Filipino psychological tests. Some psychologists relaxed said suspicion into passive acceptance by way of adopting and translating Western-oriented tests. A case in point on this issue can be gleaned from a recent Central Philippine University thesis entitled 'The Applicability of American Norms for the Cattell Sixteen Personality Factor Test to a Group of Cebuano Teachers.' The main findings of the thesis point to the inapplicability of said norms.

Sometime in the 1920s and 1930s, interest in the development and standardisation of Philippine psychological tests gained momentum. Filipino psychologists showed much concern with questions of establishing norms, test standardisation, and the reliability and validity of tests. However, minimal attention was given to issues related to language and language standardisation although the standardisation of any verbal test entails the standardisation of the language used in said test. Concern for language revolved on the issue of choosing the language if psychological testing. Panlasigui, a Filipino psychologists

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of note, argued for the use of English as greater attention was given to Pilipino in the local psychological scene.

Towards the late 1950s, Felipe and Miteria developed courses on Filipino psychology and values at the University of the Philippines. As an off-shoot of the renewed interest in the psychology of the Filipino, more meaningful data were gathered in the Pilipino language. Felipe (1961) wrote a thesis on the thematic analysis of the Filipino character using Tagalog short stories. Sollee (1963) used Tagalog stimulus materials in a study of perceptual defense among Pilipino-English bilinguals. Yet, English categories and coding schemes were used in the treatment and analysis of Pilipino data. Some did not even stop short of translating Ilocano and Tagalog data such as dreams to English, unmindful of the unbridgeable nuances across languages and cultures. In fact Fe Abasolo Domingo's (1961) data on child-rearing practices in a Philippine barrio were gathered in Pilipino but suffered distortion through the unavoidable pitfalls of translation into English and was further subjected to alienation through the importation of Western analytic categories in the treatment of data.

The use of locally meaningful categories of analysis emerged by the middle sixties along with the token use of Pilipino in social psychological papers on **hiya** *shame or embarrassment,* **utang na loob** *gratitude,* and **pakikisama** *conformity.* (Bulatao, Kaut, Lynch, but see Lawless 1968).

Token use of Pilipino in written materials appeared deceptive against the background of active use of the Pilipino language among Filipino psychologists and the masses. The language was used in lecture halls, in formal psychological reports as well as in informal conversations among psychologists. However, Pilipino was still heavily mixed and interlarded with English technical and non-technical terms and no psychologist in the 1960s showed much concern about the standardisation of psychological terms in Pilipino.

The intensive use of Pilipino together with the rise of activism in the 1960s was a prelude to the current interest in the standardisation of psychological terms in Pilipino. By the late 1960s and early 1970s, Torres and David started offering psychology courses in Pilipino at the University of the Philippines while de la Cruz followed suit by using Pilipino in experimental psychology at the Ateneo de Manila University.

To date, the use of Pilipino is an established fact in academic Philippine psychology. It is used in undergraduate and graduate courses on General Psychology, Experimental Psychology, Social Psychology, Psychopathology, Behaviour Analysis, Psychology of Language and Psycholinguistics. Since 1972, psychology in Pilipino has been addressing a nationwide audience at the Annual Conventions of the Psychological

Association of the Philippines. Books and journal articles in psychology and written and published in the Pilipino language at an ever increasing rate that it now definitely makes sense to talk about the eventual standardisation of psychological terms in Pilipino.

1. DEMANDS FOR AND ISSUES RELEVANT TO THE DEVELOPMENT AND STANDARDISATION OF PHILIPPINE PSYCHOLOGICAL LITERATURES

As yet, there is no institutionalised planning and no concerted programme helping in the development and standardisation of Pilipino in psychology and the social sciences. The use of Pilipino in the technical fields of academic psychology is a reaction of urgency to complex needs for communication and understanding by a wider audience of Filipinos.

Formalisation according to levels of discourse. The ease of understanding a psychological text in Pilipino has to be partly dictated by the intended audience of the article or material. There is a need to translate the technical language of **Sikolinggwistikang Pilipino** (1974) to **Liwayway** (non-technical, popular) Pilipino, as there was a similarly felt need to translate the technical language meant for the specialist readers of the *Journal of Verbal Learning and Verbal Behavior* to the non-technical language addressed to the lay readers of *Psychology Today*.

Regardless of the level of discourse and the intended audience, the actual use of a language is a recondition of, if not the first step towards eventual language standardisation. This may sound naive and the argument might be couched in a crude language but the claim can be put thus: language use is at the core of language standardisation. Each time a Pilipino term is used to express a psychological concept, an implicit decision is made on the relative appropriateness of the term for the concept. A conscious or unconscious decision to use a term can be straightened and intuitive at one extreme but wrought with difficulties and hesitations on the other. While making implicit decisions on the use of terms on a case-to-case basis might suffice and be the usual approach followed by Filipino psychologists in most areas of psychology, it behooves the psychologists of language to pay attention to forces and determinant factors (if may) which guide the ongoing search for appropriate terminology and system of labeling.

2. PRELIMINARY STAGES OF STANDARDISATION IN PSYCHOLOGICAL TERMINOLOGY

It is proposed that Pilipino terms in psychology should rely heavily on folk data, Asian psychology, and folk-conceived categorisations and labels. This proposal need not be made but the Filipino psychologist

has to be occasionally reminded of his roots in folk thinking and his deeply oriental character. Reminders of this nature are not altogether superfluous. A quick look at the *Philippine Journal of Psychology* and English language journals related to psychology would attest to this need. Contemporary Philippine psychology in the English language is dominated by categories of analysis based on theoretical persuasions developed in the matrix of western cultures. The use of Pilipino should entail the diminution in the use of western-oriented concepts and the consequent increase in the salience of Asian perspectives but the western orientation still looms large in academic Philippine psychology. To correct this imbalance, it is proposed that along with the use of Pilipino and the standardisation of psychological terminology, emphasis should be given to local experience and data as determinants of categories. This is in addition to categories and systematisations provided by the folk language and the implicit metaphysics of Pilipino. However, this approach remains open to the use of concepts and labels from theoretical developments in other cultures.

Decisions on labels for categories are definitely related to the question of language standardisation. On the basis of our experience with the use of Pilipino in psychological research and instruction, I shall discuss five types of labels for psychological categories. There might be more systematic way of classifying the labels but the following should be a workable classification: Imagine a five-point scale where the midpoint is represented by the interactive assimilation of labels and the two endpoints represented by the use of particular or uniquely native labels on one end and the outright borrowing of labels on the opposite end. Somewhere between the midpoint and the 'puristic' end of the scale would be the native labels for universal or shared concepts, while somewhere between the midpoint and the 'antipuristic (outright borrowing)' end would lie the use and endorsement of surface assimilation of borrowed labels.

Our practice in the use of Pilipino in psychology avails of all points in our hypothetical five-point scale. Choice of one end of the scale against the other is sometimes dictated by taste or style but generally dictated by rational and explicit considerations.

The following are some of the considerations that get onto the choice of labels for categories. (One must note that choosing one form against another does not imply the constant use of the preferred form and the non-use of the alternative or rejected forms:

1. The familiarity of a label or its frequency of usage. For example **pakikibagay** (social adaptation) is a better choice than **pakikitungo** (social adaptation) because of the greater familiarity and more

frequent use of **pakikibagay** as compared to **pakikitungo**.

2. The existence of developed literature suggested by one category label as compared to minimal literature in another. To illustrate, there is a choice between the perfectly natural and folk inspired **pagkakaroon ng ideya** (literally *having an idea*) and the rather awkward loan translation **pagbuo ng konsepto** (concept formation). Other considerations would favour the idiomatic rendition **pagkakaroon ng ideya** but the existence of a developed literature on concept formation in English language journals tilts the balance of choice in favour of the calque **pagbuo ng konsepto** which is reminiscent of the English jargon. Also, there is a curious general tolerance for loan translations in Pilipino.

3. The relational and theoretical fertility of a concept (cf. Feather, Atkinson and McClelland). To illustrate, a choice can be made among **saloobin**, **atityud**, **opinyon**, and **palagay**. Other considerations such as the frequency level of usage and the familiarity of a label would favour **palagay** except for its taboo meaning in another Philippine language (Cebuano Visayan). **Opinyon** is a good choice because it is generally understood and it has its anchor in other languages such as Spanish and English.

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