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**LANGUAGE CHOICE IN INTERRACIAL MARRIAGES: THE
CASE OF FILIPINO-MALAYSIAN COUPLES**

FRANCISCO PERLAS DUMANIG

**THESIS SUBMITTED IN FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE
OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY**

**FACULTY OF LANGUAGES AND LINGUISTICS
UNIVERSITY OF MALAYA
KUALA LUMPUR**

2010

UNIVERSITI MALAYA

ORIGINAL LITERARY WORK DECLARATION

Name of Candidate: **Francisco Perlas Dumanig** I.C./Passport No.: **WW0444074**

Registration/Matric No: **THA070010**

Name of Degree: **DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY**

Title of Project Paper/Research Report/Dissertation/Thesis (this work):
**LANGUAGE CHOICE IN INTERRACIAL MARRIAGES: THE CASE OF
FILIPINO-MALAYSIAN COUPLES**

Field of Study: **SOCIOLINGUISTICS**

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ABSTRACT

Language choice has become a common phenomenon in interracial encounters in which speakers are always faced with the challenge of choosing an appropriate language in various domains of communication. In multilingual and multiracial societies, language choice can sometimes be crucial because of its social, political, and economic impact on the speakers. Even in the smallest unit of a society which is the family, language choice plays an important role particularly in interactions between husbands and wives who come from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds. It is therefore the objective of this research to examine the language choice in interracial couples' communication. More specifically, this research examines the language choice, accommodation strategies, and code switching patterns in verbal communication of Filipino-Malaysian couples in the home domain. Furthermore, this study explores the occurrence of language choice in relation to ethnicity, first language, and gender. To carry out the study, 60 spouses consisting of Filipino-Malay, Filipino-Malaysian Chinese and Filipino-Malaysian Indian couples were interviewed and given questionnaires which include the socio demographic profile, language choice and accommodation strategies used. Data were collected using the qualitative approach by interviewing and recording the conversations of Filipino-Malaysian couples. To support the qualitative findings, a quantitative approach based on the questionnaire results was also used. The findings of the study reveal that Filipino-Malaysian couples prefer English as their medium of communication at home with some switching to Bahasa Malaysia, Chinese and Filipino languages. The couples' preference of English is prevalent although none of them considered English as their first language. Their mother tongue becomes the secondary preference which is evident in the use of code switching. The findings further reveal that couples' language choice is influenced by ethnicity, first language and gender.

On the other hand, the use of accommodation strategies such as approximation, interpretability, discourse management and interpersonal control accommodation strategies occurs in many interactions. The findings of the study support Giles' & Powesland's (1978) Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT) that in interracial couples' communication spouses tend to accommodate each other by using a range of accommodation strategies which include code switching.

ABSTRAK

Pilihan Bahasa telah menjadi fenomena umum dalam pertemuan antara kaum di mana penutur selalu dihadapi dengan tentangan untuk memilih bahasa yang sesuai dalam pelbagai domain komunikasi. Dalam pelbagai bahasa dan masyarakat pelbagai kaum, pilihan bahasa kadang-kadang boleh menjadi sangat penting kerana sosial, politik, dan kesan ekonomi kepada penutur. Bahkan dalam unit terkecil dari suatu masyarakat yang merupakan keluarga, pilihan bahasa memainkan peranan penting khususnya dalam interaksi antara suami dan isteri yang datang dari pelbagai latar belakang bahasa dan budaya. Oleh kerana itu tujuan dari penelitian ini untuk menyemak berlakunya pilihan bahasa di antara pasangan komunikasi. Lebih khusus, kajian ini meneliti pilihan bahasa, penginapan strategi, dan penukarsa pola-pola kod komunikasi verbal dari pasangan Filipina-Malaysia di domain rumah. Selanjutnya, kajian ini meneliti pilihan bahasa dalam kaitannya dengan etnik, bahasa pertama dan jantina. Untuk melaksanakan kajian ini, 60 pasangan yang terdiri daripada pasangan Filipina-Melayu, Filipina- Cina dan pasangan Filipina-India telah diberikan soal selidik yang meliputi profil demografi sosial, bahasa pilihan dan strategi akomodasi. Data dikumpul dengan menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan mewawancara dan merakam perbualan yang sebenarnya dari pasangan Filipina-Malaysia. Untuk menyokong penemuan kualitatif, pendekatan kuantitatif juga digunakan. Penemuan-penemuan daripada kajian menunjukkan bahawa pasangan Filipina-Malaysia lebih suka bahasa Inggeris sebagai media komunikasi mereka di rumah dengan sedikit peralihan kepada Bahasa Malaysia, Bahasa Cina dan Bahasa Filipina. Pasangan mengutamakan Bahasa Inggeris umum meskipun tidak satu pun dari mereka menganggap Bahasa Inggeris sebagai bahasa pengataran mereka. Bahasa ibunda mereka juga menjadi keutamaan kedua dalam penggunaan peralihan kod. Penemuan juga mendedahkan bahawa pasangan 'pilihan

Bahasa dipengaruhi oleh etnik, bahasa pertama dan jantina. Penggunaan strategi penginapan seperti aproksimasi, interpretability, wacana kawalan pengurusan dan strategi penginapan interpersonal berlaku dalam banyak interaksi. Penemuan-penemuan daripada kajian sokongan Giles & Powesland's (1978) Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT) yang di antara pasangan' cenderung pasangan komunikasi untuk mengakomodasi satu sama lain dengan menggunakan pelbagai strategi penginapan yang merangkumi peralihan kod.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to God for giving me the knowledge and strength to complete this research. I believe that without God's guidance nothing is possible. God has used many precious people who helped me while I was conducting this study.

I would like to thank my supervisor Prof. Dr. Maya Khemlani David for her continuous support and guidance to complete my research. Her words of encouragement and motivation kept me active and interested to pursue this research.

I also would like to thank:

- Dr. Ting Sue Hi for her encouragement, comments, and suggestions during the proposal stage;
- My mother, brothers, sisters, nephews, and nieces who serve as encouragement to me;
- The participants who willingly shared their views and thoughts;
- My church members and my care groups for their prayers;
- My colleagues and friends for their support and assistance;
- Aries for helping to transcribe the interviews and couples' conversations;
- Jun and Zeny for their untiring support and prayers;
- Rance and Maricel my unforgettable best friends who continually supported me;
- Dr. Ivie for helping me in editing this research;

- Dr. Tina, Dr. Rodney, Dr. Daisy, Dr. Maya and Betsy for their words of encouragement;
- James and Dayang Norasyikin for helping me in translating the English text to Bahasa Malaysia; and
- Dennis and Jean for their assistance.

Without their support this research would not have been completed.

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