

Different Perceptions on the Linguistic Development of Tagalog Speech over Time among Three

Different Generations of Filipinos

Word Count: 3833

## **Literature Review**

### **Precolonial Era: Before 1521**

Before Spanish colonization begun in 1521, the Filipinos lived in separate small communities called barangays. The people living within a barangay clustered and relied on each other for safety and survival. The clustering within different barangays promoted the development of several dialects, with one dialect being unique to one specific barangay. Despite the clustering, some barangays did trade with each other and even with other ethnic populations such as the Chinese. This introduced Chinese vocabulary to the Filipino languages/dialects. In the fourteenth century, Islam along with Sanskrit were introduced to the Philippines islands also by trade. Sanskrit vocabulary were thus also incorporated into the Filipino languages/dialects. One of these languages was Tagalog (see Appendix B). Later in time, Tagalog would eventually become a dominant language of the Philippines (Stevens 1999). This literature review will focus mainly on the development of Tagalog and how it has changed in its use through speech.

### **Spanish Colonial Era: 1521-1898**

In 1521, Spain began their colonization of the Philippines until 1898. This introduced Spanish vocabulary into the Tagalog language, producing a hybridized Tagalog-Spanish language. Through Damon L. Woods' analyzation of Tomas Pinpin's book *Librong pagaaralan nang manga Tagalog nang uicang Castila*, the Filipinos during Spanish colonization voluntarily incorporated Spanish words into their Tagalog speech. They did so in order to avoid the risk of Spanish entirely replacing Tagalog on the islands and to also communicate with the Spaniards.

### **American Colonial Era: 1898-1946**

At the conclusion of the Spanish-American War, the United States acquired the Philippines from Spain and began their colonization in 1898 until 1946. This introduced a second

language to the Philippines, English. According to “CORRESPONDENCE FROM MANILA” from *The Journal of Education* written in 1899 and published by the Trustees of Boston University, the U.S. quickly implemented English classes into the curriculum of Filipino schools one year after colonization in 1899. The English language continued to prosper as a prominent language on the islands even after the Philippines’ independence from the U.S. in 1946.

Modern Era: 1946-2019

In the modern era, Tagalog has emerged as the dominant language of the Philippines among the many other dialects. According to Teodoro A. Llamzon in “On Tagalog as Dominant Language” from the journal *Philippine Studies* there are three main reasons as to why it dominated. One is that it is most common language spoken in the capital of the Philippines, Manila. Being the capital, Manila thus carries the highest prestige among the other cities and thus influences other Filipinos the most. A second reason is that many Filipino writers wrote in Tagalog. More Filipino works of literature were written in Tagalog than in other dialects, conveying the perception that Tagalog is the most developed language to the Filipinos. A third reason is that most Filipinos consider Tagalog more ‘Filipino’ and traditional in expression than the rivaling English which has continued to also prosper on the islands. According to Allan B. I. Bernardo in “English in Philippine Education: Solution or Problem?”, the Department of Education of the Philippines implemented the Bilingual Education Policy in 1974 in which Filipino and English would both be used as languages of instruction within schools. After several years of the languages Spanish and English settling on the islands, Tagalog concocted as a new mixed language consisting of native Filipino, Spanish, and English vocabulary today. The introduction of ‘foreign’ languages not only led to the incorporation of new vocabulary among the Filipinos but also induced a new social phenomena involving speech alteration. According to

Gertrudes R. Ang's "The Filipino as a Bilingual or Multilingual: Some Implications" Filipinos can be viewed as multilingual individuals since they incorporate Tagalog, English, and Spanish words. Furthermore, the concept of speech alteration among Filipinos is presented. This concept explains that Filipinos will incorporate English or Spanish words into their Tagalog speech in order to "enrich" or "decorate their native language to exhibit prestige. Filipinos will do this depending on the "place, occasion, and person."

### Conclusion

Based on the research that has been done, Tagalog has been an ever-changing language in terms of speech. Based on Tagalog's dynamic history and today's era of globalization, Tagalog speech is expected to continue developing with the further incorporation of vocabulary from other languages. Therefore, this study will research the following research question: What are the different perceptions on the linguistic development of Tagalog speech over time among three different generations within an ethnical Filipino family?

### Method Section

#### Introduction

The goal of this method was to explore the perceptions among a multi-generational Filipino family on the linguistic development of Tagalog speech through an open-ended approach. In this method section there are a total of seven headings: Introduction, Design with subheadings Sampling and Materials, Assumptions, Limitations, and Ethical Considerations.

#### Design

A case study has been used with six individuals who have been interviewed in total: at least two representing each of the three different generations. All of the participants were ethnically Filipino and within the same family. A standard number of six open-ended interview

questions were asked for each participant. Additional follow-up/probing questions have been asked for some individuals. For the interview questions that have been used see Appendix A. The interviews took place face-to-face or via phone call with an iPhone. With consent, the interviewees were recorded with an application named Voice Memos on a second iPhone. All the recordings are kept private, protected by a password locking entire access to the iPhone. The recordings were transcribed by hand and eventually typed onto separate Word documents on a computer. Paper and a writing utensil were additionally present during the interviews to be used for any notetaking and as a secondary means of collecting data if the interviewee chooses not to be recorded. All individuals in the data collection and analysis were identified with pseudonyms.

### Sampling

Ethnic Filipinos have been specifically chosen for this research due to convenience for the researcher; the researcher is ethnically Filipino and has easy accessibility to Filipinos. (cite Leedy here) Three generations of Filipinos with at least two individuals per generation will be used in effort to achieve a diverse pool of responses.

### Materials:

The materials that will be used includes two iPhones, one computer, paper, and a writing utensil. The instruments will include interview questions and the iPhone application named Voice Memos.

### Assumptions

Three assumptions were taken into account for the study. One assumption was that some of the individuals would have a certain language that they are not comfortable speaking. Therefore, all the participants were given the freedom to speak and respond in whichever

language they chose in order to maintain comfort and to show respect. This freedom was provided to also increase the chances of obtaining responses that are clear, expressive, and elaborate. If the individuals were to be forced to speak in a certain language, they could potentially provide vague or imprecise data if the required language is not their most comfortable language. A second assumption was that although the participants were ethnically Filipino, because they live in United States it was assumed that they would answer predominantly in English. A third assumption was that some of the individuals would not speak entirely in English and would therefore use some Tagalog or other Filipino-dialect-derived vocabulary. To accommodate this assumption, Google Translate was chosen to use to translate any unknown vocabulary words into English.

#### Limitations

Since the design of this research study was to interview individuals, challenges and constraints were expected to occur during the data collection. Some of the anticipations included people declining to be interviewed; people choosing to not be recorded; people not fully understanding a question and asking for further clarification; people choosing to not answer certain questions due to preference, privacy, or discomfort; and people providing inadequate responses and therefore requiring further follow-up/probing questions. Since the interviews were entirely voluntary for the individuals, they were given the freedom to participate to whichever degree and length of time. Furthermore, there was a possibility of a bias being present in the research, for the researcher is Filipino who may have involuntarily applied his knowledge of Filipino culture and social behavior when interviewing other Filipinos and analyzing the data.

#### Ethical Considerations

Since the design of this research study was to interview individuals, a consent form was presented to an individual asking them if they would like to participate in the study. If an individual decided to participate, they were asked interview questions but were not forced to answer each question. Each participant was given the freedom to answer or to reject any of the questions presented. They were also given the freedom to drop out of the study at any time. In this case, any responses or data that have been collected related to that individual were erased if that individual requested so. The participants' identities and responses remained anonymous and kept private in the data collection and data analysis. The interview responses were recorded, kept, and locked on a password protected iPhone.

#### **Appendix A: Interview Questions**

- 1) Tell me about your background. (background is collected to determine how relevant the questions may be to the interviewee and to determine how they may respond)
  - a. Describe where you were born and raised.
  - b. Explain what languages you can speak.
    - i. Primary language?
- 2) Tell me your thoughts on how Tagalog, in speech, has developed or changed as a language over time.
  - a. Do you believe other languages have influenced Tagalog?
- 3) Tell me about how you personally utilize Tagalog in your speech.
  - a. Do you speak purely in Tagalog using only native vocabulary or do you incorporate 'foreign' words?
    - i. Is there a trigger that causes you to incorporate more or less foreign words within your Tagalog speech?

- 4) What influences the habits/manners of your Tagalog speech?
  - a. Primary language used in your schooling?
  - b. Societal trends?
  - c. Both?
  - d. How?
- 5) What are your thoughts on the interrelationship between Tagalog speech and social class?
  - a. Do you believe Filipino individuals from a certain social class have a distinct ‘version’ of Tagalog speech?
- 6) Is there anything else you would like to tell me?

## Appendix B: Definitions of Terms

- Tagalog: the principal language of the Philippines (dictionary.com)

## Results

From the six interviews that took place, four themes were perceived by the interviewees. The four themes are: Linguistic Environment, Language Mixing, Usage of Languages/Adaptation, and Language and Social Class. The definitions of the themes are provided in the table below.

Table 1: Definitions of Themes

Theme:	Definition:
Linguistic Environment	The language(s) spoken in the participants’ home city when they were being raised. This includes the schooling environment and the household environment that they grew up in.



Language Mixing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Code-mixing</li> <li>- Code-switching</li> </ul>	The act of blending or using two or more different languages in speech. Code-mixing is the act of mixing the vocabulary of two or more different languages. Code-switching is the act of switching from one pure language to another pure language in speech.
Usage of Languages/Adaptation	How one alters their linguistic speech depending on where they are and who they are talking to.
Language and Social Class	A certain social class will exhibit their own unique linguistic speech.

### Theme 1: Linguistic Environment

All six of the interviewees were born and raised in Manila, Philippines and thus grew up in the same linguistic environment. Their linguistic environment will be divided between their schooling environment and their household environment. Beginning with their schooling environment, all of the interviewees attended schools whose medium of instruction was English for all classes besides the Filipino subject class. The Filipino subject class was the only class in which the interviewees learned and spoke Tagalog. They described that the reason for English being the medium of instruction was due to the United States colonization of the Philippines in past history. They asserted that their schools strictly required all students to only speak pure Tagalog in the Filipino subject class and only speak pure English in all their other classes; if one was caught speaking even one Tagalog word, they would be punished. In their household

environments, they all stated that one of the languages that they spoke was Tagalog. For example, Generation 3A stated,

At home it was mainly Spanish and Tagalog...when I was in school so we're talking about in the '60s up to the early '80s, at that time you know we were not allowed to speak Tagalog if definitely if it's an English class. They were very very strict with that. And because I was in a private school that was run by Belgian nuns, it was even stricter. So they would prefer that we speak in English. And I know, if I'm not mistaken, we were even punished, I can't remember what the punishment was when we spoke Tagalog, I really cannot remember if we had to pay or something, I can't remember. So they were discouraging that. We only speak Tagalog when it's Tagalog class.

#### Theme: Language Mixing

All six of the interviewees stated that they can speak more than one language. All of them stated that they are able to speak Tagalog and English with Generation 1A, Generation 1B, and Generation 3A being able to speak Spanish in addition. Furthermore, all of them perceived that they sometimes mix the languages in their speech. Two types of language mixing were perceived by them: code-mixing and code-switching. These terms are often used synonymously but in this paper they will be defined as two separate terms. According to Dr. D R Mabule, code-mixing is the act of incorporating vocabulary from several languages into one speech, while code-switching is the act of using one language and then switching into another language in one speech. All of the interviewees stated they code-mix Tagalog, English, and Spanish. Although Generation 2A, Generation 2B, and Generation 3B could not speak full Spanish, they still code-mixed some Spanish words with their Tagalog base speech. All of the interviewees explained that the long period of Spanish colonization of the Philippines in the past caused the permanent

replacement of some Tagalog words to Spanish words within the Tagalog base language. For example, Generation 3A stated,

Spanish was always injected there because we were colonized by Spain and there are a lot of families who have ancestors/relatives who were from there so they could still speak the language and it's like a status symbol at the same time. Spanish was a big influence to Tagalog. A lot of Spanish words are the same way in Tagalog.

This explains why Generation 2A, Generation 2B, and Generation 3B are able to speak Tagalog with some Spanish vocabulary but are not able to speak full Spanish. Furthermore, Generation 1A, the eldest participant, explained that the ability to speak full Spanish is now being lost within the younger Filipino generations which parallels with the younger participants Generation 2A, Generation 2B, and Generation 3B's inability of speaking full Spanish. Generation 1A stated that, "The Filipino children today have lost the gift of Spanish speech," corresponding with Generation 3B statement, "I never spoke Spanish in the household. I never learned Spanish. My elder siblings grew up with my grandparents who spoke Spanish so that's why I can't Spanish." Additionally, all interviewees stated that they also code-mix English with Tagalog (including Tagalog hybridized with Spanish), calling the blending of the two "Taglish". They all stated that the reason for "Taglish" was the United States colonization of the Philippines in the past after Spanish colonization. For example, Generation 1A stated that, "The U.S. colonizing the Philippines enforced English into the schools. Today, schools in the Philippines teach in English and most Filipinos can understand English and speak English."

### Theme 3: Usage of Languages/Adaptation

All six of the interviewees perceived that their actions of code-mixing and code-switching Tagalog, English, and/or Spanish depended on where they are and who they are

talking to. Their schooling years is an instance in which the interviewees found themselves code-switching between Tagalog and English. As mentioned before, the interviewees explained how Tagalog was only allowed in the Filipino subject class. As a result, the interviewees as children found themselves constantly changing their speech as they went from one class to the Filipino subject class. As a result of learning both English and Tagalog during school, all six of the interviewees also explained how they eventually started speaking “Taglish” in casual conversations with friends as stated by Generation 2A, “With your real friends that you hang around you normally, mainly speak Taglish.” Furthermore, all six of the interviewees noted that they are emigrants from the Philippines. They explained that when they were entered their new country, they needed to adapt or alter their speech in order to communicate clearly with who they were speaking to. For example, Generation 3A explained,

There was a time that when my husband and I lived in Belgium, most of the Filipinas there, they were not from Manila they were from the province. They were very nice people, down to earth, but they only spoke Tagalog. If they spoke English, it was broken English. But they would speak a bit French. So because of that, I would speak pure Tagalog because you try to adjust to who you’re with you know what I mean because you don’t want them to say, “Oh my gosh you speak English all the time... Today, it is only my mom who lives in the same town here in the U.S. as I’m in. She and I mostly converse in Tagalog at our respective homes. However, we would speak English or Spanish when we are in public places surrounded by Americans or Hispanics.

#### Theme 4: Language and Social Class

All six of interviewees perceived that there is a relationship between language and social among Filipinos. They explained that the majority of the upper class and middle class tended to

know how to speak pure English and often spoke “Taglish” more often than Tagalog; while the majority of the lower class spoke in Tagalog and knew only basic English words and phrases as stated by Generation 2A, “The higher classes class will speak “Taglish” but the lower class will speak straight Tagalog, the real Tagalog words.” They explained that if Filipinos want to portray themselves as more elite or “higher class”, they would utilize more English or Spanish words as seen in Generation 2B’s statement,

I don’t know why, I don’t’ know why speaking in Tagalog was like embarrassing rather than speaking in English so what happened was in the more expensive schools like the Catholic boys and girls schools they spoke English and they mixed it with Tagalog a little bit to be cute. To be socially acceptable. And so the language evolved into “Taglish” which is a combination of English and Tagalog. And it’s accepted, sort of speak. They tend to “English-ize” it, they speak it with a slur, I don’t why they find it cute. They really don’t want to identify themselves with the Filipinos sometimes, they pretend like they are just learning it Filipino or they are not from there Philippines.

### **Limitations**

During the interviewing process, some limitations were encountered that may have affected the accuracy of the data. One limitation is that the researcher is the same ethnicity as the interviewees, Filipino, thus creating the possibility of a bias. Due to the researcher being Filipino, the researcher has prior knowledge on Filipino history, ancestry, and culture in which the researcher may have involuntarily applied in analyzing the data. A second limitation is sample size. The initial sample size planned was three interviewees per generation with three generations, equally to a total of nine interviewees. The sample ended up being two interviewees per generation equally to a total of six interviewees due to personal reasons of the interviewees.

Since a lesser number of participants were used in the study, less perspectives were gathered and analyzed. A third limitation is that the recordings of the interviews were initially going to be transcribed automatically through an application. The application ended up transcribing the words inaccurately, causing the researcher to spend more time transcribing the interviews by hand.

## **Discussion**

The research question of this study “What are the different perceptions on the linguistic development of Tagalog speech over time among three different generations within an ethnical Filipino family?” was formulated to be geared towards the topic of Tagalog speech. Since this study was open-ended, the data obtained was multifaceted and leaked into other topics such as American influence, Spanish influence, and social class. After gathering and analyzing the data, it is learned that Filipinos are not linguistically limited to Tagalog. Several languages are incorporated in their speech involving English and Spanish as well. Furthermore, Filipinos speak the three languages, to which ever extent including code-mixing and code-switching, not just because it is their heritage but also for special uses. Filipinos utilize the three languages to communicate with other native speakers of a certain language from a different country, to communicate with a certain social class who may be prone to speaking a certain language or a type of language such as Tagalog versus “Taglish”, and portray themselves at a certain level on the social hierarchy. It evident through all six of the interviewee’s responses that speaking more English or Spanish words in speech exhibits more prestige. This parallels with another idea explained by all six of the interviewees that the upper class and middle class of Filipinos who have more prestige tend to speak “Taglish” and pure English while the lower class of Filipinos for the most part can only speak Tagalog.

**Interesting Findings/Future Research**

After gathering and analyzing the data, other findings on other topics were found. One finding is that younger generation Filipinos tend to no longer have the ability to speak Spanish compared to the older generation Filipinos. Generation 1A and Generation 1B were both the eldest participants and both knew how to speak pure Spanish. Generation 2A, Generation 2B, and Generation 3B stated that they do not know how to speak pure Spanish. Although Generation 3A was a part of the youngest generation, the interviewee knew how to speak pure Spanish due to often conversations with her grandparents growing up who were half-Spanish. A future case study research could be conducted interviewing ethnical Filipinos on the influence of the Spanish culture onto Filipino culture. Although the research question for this study was geared towards the topic of Tagalog, all six of the interviewees mentioned Spanish influence and Spanish colonization onto the Philippines in their answers, revealing that the Spanish influence onto Filipinos was impactful. A second finding were accent differences between the interviewees when they were speaking and answering the questions. All the interviewees stated that they are able to speak pure English and are comfortable speaking in English. Thus, they all responded to the questions in English but had different accents. A future research study could be conducted investigating what influences the different accents in English speech among ethnical Filipinos who can also speak Tagalog.

## Works Cited

- Llamzon, Teodoro A. "On Tagalog as Dominant Language." *Philippine Studies*, vol. 16, no. 4, 1968, pp. 729–749. *JSTOR*, JSTOR, [www.jstor.org/stable/42720525](http://www.jstor.org/stable/42720525).
- Stevens, J. Nicole. "The History of the Filipino Languages." *The History of the Filipino Languages*, 6 Sept. 1999, linguistics.byu.edu/classes/Ling450ch/reports/filipino.html.
- Woods, Damon L. "Counting and Marking Time From the Precolonial to the Contemporary Tagalog World." *Philippine Studies*, vol. 59, no. 3, 2011, pp. 337–365. *JSTOR*, JSTOR, [www.jstor.org/stable/42634686](http://www.jstor.org/stable/42634686).
- "CORRESPONDENCE FROM MANILA." *The Journal of Education*, vol. 50, no. 16 (1250), 1899, pp. 278–278. *JSTOR*, JSTOR, [www.jstor.org/stable/44049491](http://www.jstor.org/stable/44049491).
- Bernardo, Allan. (2008). English in Philippine education: Solution or problem?. Philippine English: Linguistic and Literary. 29-48. 10.5790/hongkong/9789622099470.003.0003.
- Ang, Gertrudes R. "The Filipino as a Bilingual or Multilingual: Some Implications." *Philippine Quarterly of Culture and Society*, vol. 6, no. 3, 1978, pp. 187–189. *JSTOR*, JSTOR, [www.jstor.org/stable/29791592](http://www.jstor.org/stable/29791592).
- "Tagalog." *Dictionary.com*, Dictionary.com, 2019, [www.dictionary.com/browse/tagalog](http://www.dictionary.com/browse/tagalog).