

## BHINNEKA TUNGGAL EKA: THE DEVELOPMENT OF A NATIONAL LANGUAGE IN THE PHILIPPINES

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### Introduction

It is proper that the title of the essay be first explained. Many, perhaps, do not know the meaning of *Bhinneka Tunggal Eka*. In the Indonesian national experience, it became the main focus of the government in forging unity among its many ethnic societies in developing national consciousness. In developing national consciousness, the general culture was the central focus. The diversities among the various groups were recognized as important components of the national identity, with each never losing its individual ethnic character.

There are many elements of culture that can be identified to illustrate the ideals embodied in the linguistic construct. However, I would like to focus on language which is considered the most sensitive among all cultural elements essential in the understanding of a given society. Like Indonesia and Malaysia, the Philippines has to contend with various ethnic societies speaking a variety of languages -- intelligible or quasi-intelligible or not intelligible to each other. Hence, the need for developing a common medium of communication on a national level. The success of Indonesia and Malaysia in finally solving the problem of multi-linguality in their societies must be taken as models for the many societies that are embroiled in the throes of contending linguistic identities in developing a common medium of communication at the national level. Thus, the Philippines looks at the construct which, at this point in time, is considered a model concept for national unity.<sup>1</sup>

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## Historical Background

In discussing this concept in the Philippine context, I would like to present the history of the development of the national language.

As early as 1981, four periods have been recognized in this development (Constantino 1981:28-39), namely: (a) 1900-1935, the period that was characterized by the struggle between Tagalog and English, (b) 1936-1945, the triumph of the *Balarila ng Wikang Tagalog*; (c) 1946-1970, the battle between the Tagalogs and the non-Tagalogs; and (d) 1971 onwards, characterized by the conflict between Filipino and Pilipino. I would add a fifth period: (e) 1981 to the present. This falls within the context of the bilingual policy, characterized by later developments that are significant in the pursuit of a more stable national language.

Each period will be elaborated on in order to give a much better view of the discussions that will follow. I will use the descriptions by Constantino<sup>2</sup> which, to me, seem more precise:

(a) 1900-1935. There was only one linguist in the country at that time, i.e., Cecilio Lopez, who trained in Germany. With him were non-linguists, identified as *Tagalistas* (Hispanized form of Tagalog speakers), namely Sofronio Calderon and Lope K. Santos, who organized groups composed mostly of Tagalog writers to support Tagalog as the national language of the Philippines.

... These people were afraid that English was going to be the national language because that was the desire of the Americans. The Americans actually had two objectives with regard to English in the Philippines: they wanted to make it only the medium of instruction and the lingua franca all over the islands.<sup>3</sup>

This group was very much concerned about the “denationalization of the Filipinos.” Each member of the group wrote books, grammars, essays in Tagalog and worked extremely hard to make Tagalog the national language of the Philippines.

As a counter-balance to the *Tagalistas*, there was a group lead by Santiago Fonacier and Norberto Romualdez, both non-Tagalog speakers,

who supported the view that the Philippine national language must be based on the many Philippine languages. “They wanted a fusion of major Philippine languages and ... out of this fusion would develop a language which they wanted to be the national language.”<sup>4</sup>

The most important national event during this period was the Constitutional Convention in 1935 which adopted the provision that “the national language should be based on one of the existing languages of the Philippines ... everyone knew that that one language was to be Tagalog because it had been said that for one thing that was the desire of [Manuel Luis] Quezon,”<sup>5</sup> who was then the President of the Philippine Commonwealth. Thus, the Constitutional Convention marked the “death” of the pan-Philippine resource for the development of the national language; but which, of course, was to be resuscitated in the coming years.

(b) 1936-1945. The period was marked by the writing of grammar books elucidating that the national language was based on Tagalog. Giving support to this contention were two developments: the Constitution mandated that Tagalog became the foundation for the development of the national language; the Japanese rule in the Philippines during the Pacific War favored Tagalog as the national language<sup>6</sup> of the Philippines. During this period, the *Balarila ng Wikang Pambansa* by Lope K. Santos became the guide book for the teaching of the national language, with Tagalog as its unopposed basis. Given these two crucial events, Tagalog thrived high in the minds of the Filipino people, but not without the resentment of others who did not speak Tagalog as their mother tongue.

(c) 1946-1970. Marked by the very intense battle between the Tagalogs and the non-Tagalogs. The controversy centered around the activities of the Institute of National Language. In the perception of the non-Tagalogs, the Institute was all for Tagalog to become the national language. Of course, this perception could not be otherwise. The directors of the Institute were all Tagalog speakers, and the proponents of this view were Lope K. Santos, Cecilio Lopez, Jose Villa Panganiban and Ponciano B.P. Pineda. *Tagalog*, however, has now taken the name *Pilipino*.

On the opposite camp were Inocencio Ferrer and Geruncio Lacuesta. Each had his own organization which was very actively involved in the serious criticism of the Institute of National Language. The Institute was also supported by equally strong organizations to propagate *Pilipino*

which was not viewed however as pan-Philippine in orientation, but as *Tagalog* masquerading as *Pilipino*.

(d) 1971-1986. This period, characterized by a major event in the history of the Philippines, provided very significant implications on the development of the national language. This event was the Declaration of Martial Rule in 1972 and which lasted until 1986. The period also saw the promulgation of another Constitution where *Pilipino* was recognized as the National Language. Organizations like the Linguistic Society of the Philippines, the Philippine Association for Language Teaching and *Samahan ng Lingguistikang Pilipino* declared their support for *Pilipino*.

It was during this period that the confrontation between *Pilipino* and *Filipino* was fiercest.<sup>7</sup> It was also during this period that the purists were in direct conflict with the non-purists. The purists were supporters of *Pilipino*, which was Tagalog-based grammatically as well as lexically, with the coining of words as an adjunct of the process. The non-purists were for *Filipino*, a pan-Philippine language resource with very limited utilization of non-Philippine sources where the ideas or concepts expressed may not be found in the Philippine languages, given the centuries-old Philippine exposure to languages belonging to other families of languages.

(e) 1987-1993. The fall of the Marcos dictatorship brought about another Constitution calling for the promulgation of a language policy that would finally resolve this very sensitive, if not socio-culturally, divisive issue. In 1991, the Congress of the Philippines enacted Republic Act No. 7104, creating the Commission on the Filipino Language. This Republic Act mandated the development and investment of Filipino as the national language. The discussions on the language issue in both the Constitutional Commission and in Congress as well as outside the session halls of these two bodies were highly charged, for every one involved had an interest to protect -- his own intellectual patrimony, his language.

### **Some General Comments on the History of Language Development in the Philippines**

Ninety-two years ago, when the notion of a unifying national language began to stir the psyche of the Filipino, it was never thought that such a notion would remain high in the cultural priorities of the people. However, the languages of the colonial powers that dominated the

Archipelago, i.e., Spanish and English, on the administrative, as well as on the religious missions level, had a very deep impact upon the intellectual development and perspectives of the Filipinos. Although on a more basic level their local languages performed the role of unifying their ideals and notions of their being. Inevitably, therefore, despite the dominance of these foreign languages (belonging to another family of languages), the innermost core of their psyche expressed in their natural media of communications had surfaced with great strength of spirit and character. Hence, as we have narrated in the five periods of Philippine national language development, the knowledge gained and understood in terms of the impact of this exercise on the general view of the Filipino people is even related to its journey into its current state.

The journey of *Filipino*, from the time it was conceived and nourished through the years in the minds of our people, has its parallel in the development of English from a “dialect spoken by great mass of people to being accepted as a language of the University, setting aside Greek and Latin to become primarily the media of the Church.” And in this context, the confrontation becomes equally significant in what Gerald T. Burns<sup>8</sup> predicts ... while English still dominates the scene particularly on the University-level, eventually Filipino will become the medium through which “the sources of inspiration: intellectual, aesthetic, spiritual”<sup>9</sup> will eventually prevail.

Indeed, though unrelated to what Burns had written about, there has already been some kind of a recognition of the issue of a common language being sought to be spoken in the Philippine setting:

... the Philippines [as] linguistically unique. It is one of the few countries in the world [where] bilinguals and trilinguals outnumber the mono-linguals. It has a great number of different languages in relation to its overall land area. Most of its literates become literate in a second language which is entirely unrelated in structure and type to their mother tongue. To top it all, here is a land which has not yet found a unifying linguistic force in the development of national consciousness inspite of the close relationship of all major tongues....<sup>10</sup>

Note that these were pronouncements made thirty years ago. What was true then is still true today. As late as a decade ago, an attempt to

resolve the country's multilingual problem was made through an act of Congress (*Batasang Pambansa*) as mandated by the 1972 Constitution (*Saligang Batas*) making bilingualism the order of the day. Mandated, therefore, was the use of the English language and Filipino (which is naturally Tagalog in another dressing). This became the policy of government and implemented by the Department of Education and Culture in Executive Order No. 25, S. 1994 in the elementary and secondary levels of education and gradually would be used in the college/university levels. However, the policy did not prosper because of the recognized inequity that it inevitably spawned.

... the Bilingual Policy of Government is inequitous and discriminatory. It discriminates against all other Philippine languages, and gives undue advantage to Tagalog, which has been tagged as Filipino ... promotes injustice and disharmony.<sup>11</sup>

The policy had its strongest opposition in the Cebuano-speaking areas, particularly represented by the Cebu province. This opposition was institutionalized in an ordinance promulgated by the Cebu Provincial Government prohibiting the use of Tagalog, i.e. Filipino, in all transactions having to do with government -- both local and national. All transactions of the Provincial Government were done through the medium of Cebuano.<sup>12</sup>

It is yet too early to comment on, or, perhaps pass judgement upon Republic Act No. 7104 (1991), mandating the creation of the Commission on the Filipino Language, and declaring that there shall be

... a policy of government to ensure and promote the evolution, development and further enrichment of Filipino as the national language of the Philippines, on the basis of existing Philippine and other languages ... (Section 2).

The Commission has already been organized and functioning, hopefully as expected. Whether or not it will be a major catalyst in the development of the National Language is yet to be seen. Yet, we have a situation where media, particularly the broadcast media, is enjoying some kind of a license in hispanizing every concept, every word that to them does not seem to have an equivalent in Filipino. As such, it is feared that the expected resulting Filipino would in the long-run be merely a creole or

a pidgin, that does not lead to becoming the “source(s) of intellectual, aesthetic and spiritual inspiration.” It is not within the power of this writer to make prescriptions to this effect, but the Commission is expected to work with media to achieve a more literary Filipino -- very intellectual, very aesthetic and very spiritual -- in the transmission of information. In other words, the Language Commission should take the lead in the fulfillment of the “principles of equity, justice, fairness and harmony in terms of our continuing attempt to establish a stable society and culture”<sup>13</sup> represented primarily in the language of the people -- the National Language, Filipino.

### **Language Planning in the Philippine Context**

From all the available documents examined, there seems to have been no definitive planning for the development of a national language. There are those who say that there was planning made, but this does not necessarily correct the impression that there was, indeed, some amount of serious planning made.

The most credible among all these works -- documents, monographs, studies -- appear to have been those by Andrew B. Gonzales, FSC (1980/83). These monographs, which appeared in 1980-1983, dealt with the history of the developing national language -- from what he termed correctly, the First Republic: nationalism without a national linguistic symbol (1896-1898), the period of the Revolution against Colonial Spain and the founding of the Republic. This, however, was cut short by the dubious entry of the United States which took over the gains of the Revolution and the Republic.

The coming of the United States ushered in the American colonial period, characterized by the Commonwealth period (1901-1935) and up to the 1946 Post-War era. This period was interrupted by what has been called the Second Republic (October 14, 1943-August 17, 1945) which was actually the Japanese occupation that started in 1942. It was a brief period described by Gonzales (1980:60ff) as one in which “a linguistic symbol of unity” has been attained, and Tagalog became the “basis of the National Language”.

By mid-1946, the Third Republic was inaugurated with the proclamation of Philippine Independence by the United States of America,

a period characterized by the “rise and fall of Tagalog-based Pilipino”, and also by the “search for a national language to be called *Filipino* ... based not on one but on all of the existing languages in the Philippines<sup>14</sup> as mandated by the Constitution of the Martial Law Regime in 1973. If there is anything that could possibly give the Martial Law Regime some positive development, it may be said that the mandate to develop *Filipino* from the existing Philippine Languages is, indeed, the beginning of the move towards the direction of equity among all Philippine languages, where each will have a role in the development of a national language. I will say more about this when I present the paradigm for the language development.

Gonzales’ monograph ending with an epilog entitled “Toward the Fourth Republic and Filipino” appears “prophetic” in the context of events that ushered in the 1986 People Power Revolution. To Gonzales, this was a period that resumes the search and strengthening of a linguistic symbol. He was very precise when he expressed this essence to

... look[s] towards the future, the renewed search for a common national language mandated once more, this time by the 1973 Constitution. It concludes with general and theoretical considerations concerning language development and returns to the basic theme of the book, the Filipinos’ search for authenticity in a linguistic symbol of nationhood, taking a realistic picture of the prospects of success of such a search given the polyethnic situation of the Philippines and the language loyalties of ethnic groups and their regional ties.<sup>15</sup>

At this juncture, I would like to advert to what he calls the “Inadequacy of Language-Planning Models”<sup>16</sup> throughout the three periods during which the linguistic symbol of national identity/unity was the primary objective. Even with the Fourth Republic this process continued.

Gonzales was quite precise when he wrote that language planning of any type or model aimed at developing a national language is “difficult in a multilingual society where groups will not accept a language [that] is a rival to their own.” With this premise he suggested the Swiss model which declares “all main languages official,” so that no one language stands out exclusively over the others. Or to consider a Philippine model that is still emerging ... “that of creating a name for a code that is still in the process of formation.” The “Code” referred to seems to be *Pilipino* or *Filipino*.



Both models are rejected, i.e., “in the former Swiss model, there is no national language in reality although there is one in aspiration.”

Another is the neutral language model ... “wherein no major group is threatened, because it gives no edge to any other group.” The Indonesian model in Bahasa Indonesia is considered ... “a successful one, and an ideal one, in so far as the neutral language happened to be an indigenous rather than a foreign one.” A sub-model which seems quite acceptable, though “less successful,” and that possesses “high-prestige value ... available only to the elite and worse a non-indigenous language” is the case of English as seen in the Philippines, Singapore, India and Ireland, and Spanish in South America.

I agree with Gonzales particularly in pointing out the inadequacy of the language models because the situation in the Philippines does not duplicate the situations in the models described above. The Indian situation, on closer examination, may be considered similar to the Philippines, but much more complicated than one would recognize under any circumstance considering the nature of the language problem obtaining there.

In concluding this section, allow me to advert again to Gonzales’ very precise view of the inadequacy of the language planning activities in the Philippines:

... a country which has gone through all phases of language planning, repudiated this development, and began the process of deliberate planning for the future once more. What makes the Philippine case unique is that formation, not selection, is contemplated, a formation that envisages development in an undefined sense. Will it entail prior cultivation, in lexical elaboration, intellectualization? Once formation and development are completed, adoption by a formal process ... is planned. Then, presumably dissemination and propagation follow.<sup>17</sup>

Since he was writing during the period of Martial Law, he was referring to a plebiscite where a National Assembly vote could formalize the selection of the language, “especially a language that is meant to incorporate features of all the languages of the Philippines.” But, he also rejected the process through plebiscite, because it would certainly exclude

other languages. He further wrote: “the better alternative would be to plan not to plan and to let social factors, as yet fully unknown to us, take over. For some countries, benign neglect is a better alternative to deliberate and explicit language planning.”<sup>18</sup>

But, it seems to me, that was just the situation which would propel the language problem to a more systematic and deliberate search for its resolution as the Fourth Republic was ushered in by the 1986 bloodless revolution.

### **The Proposed Paradigm**

The previous discussions showed us that there was, indeed, a very serious attempt to develop a national language symbolic of Philippine linguistic identity, when viewed primarily from the desire to achieve national unity. And we have shown in particular the enactment of RA No. 7104 (1991) and the creation of the Commission on the Filipino language. The Republic Act certainly fulfills the “prophecy” of Gonzales in his 1983 monograph. Its promulgation was accompanied by serious discussions inside and outside the halls of Congress.<sup>19</sup> The Commission was organized in 1992.

The Paradigm/Framework herein presented illustrates the systematic development of the symbol of national language identity and unity. While it can be described generally, I would rather that we focus on the language, a cultural value that sits foremost in our perception as crucial to a society’s existence, and survival as well.

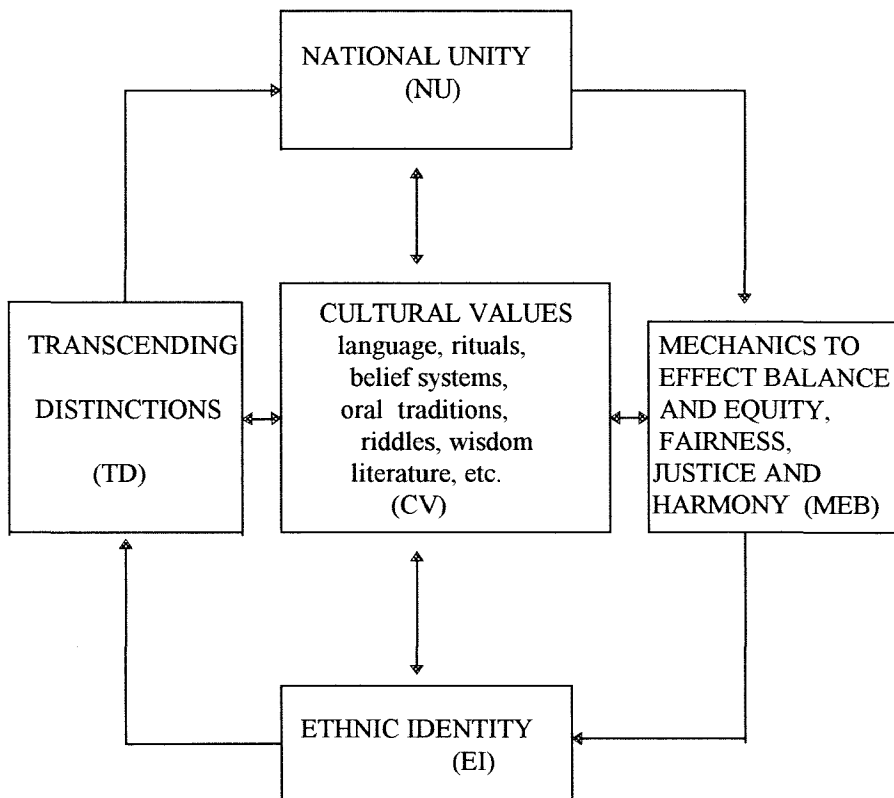
This paradigm was devised more than a decade ago but it had undergone revisions for a better understanding of its message and meanings (See Bibliographic Notes). For a start, let me describe each of the blocks in the paradigm before I discuss their relationships (See Figure 1). Please take note also the direction of the arrows.

Perhaps the paradigm ... “could be the basis on which we can adequately understand the distinctions between ethnic [language] identity and national [language]identity.”

The National Unity (NU) block constitutes the philosophical “god-head” which every society or culture aims to achieve. The Ethnic

Identity (EI) block forms the foundation of the concept of oneness on which the building blocks laid one over the other to effect the notion that we have just advanced. These building blocks are the Mechanisms to Effect Balance and Equity, Fairness, Justice and Harmony (MEB), and the Transcending Distinctions (TD). Each of these two blocks is crucial. While MEB constitutes the external interventions in a given society, such as the Government or NGO's, TD is an internal mechanism that engenders the recognition of the existence of National Unity and Ethnic Identity. TD is effected through mechanisms which I call enculturation and socialization. A brief definition of each may be made here to give us an initial understanding of what I really intend to convey. Enculturation is the process by which one learns and internalizes the values, norms and

Figure 1. **Framework for Effecting National Unity Without Losing Ethnic Identity**



lifeways of the society. It is sometimes used interchangeably with the term socialization. More references to these will be made in a full discussion of *locus classicus*.

The Cultural Values (CV) block forms the pool of all identifiable elements of culture -- language, rituals, belief systems, oral traditions, folklore, folktales, wisdom literature, etc., which, moreover, constitutes the commonalities that identify both NU and EI, as well as the characteristics distinctive only to the ethnic group that identifies them as such. CV provides the dynamics of the movement to and from all directions which return to it again to undergo revitalization, then again ramifying into the four other blocks with each receiving revivification in a continuous cycle.

If we are looking for a perfect example of synergism, the paradigm provides it. Individually, each of the boxes in the paradigm is useless in terms of our understanding of the notion within a given society. The synergism is shown by the arrows that connect each of the blocks in a single and/or two-way relationship. The arrows moving in clock-wise direction connect all the blocks in a continuous circle. The two-way arrows connecting all the five blocks provide the continuing relations between them. What do these arrows mean in the context of the synergistic relations we have just referred to? The answer to this question lies in what we had earlier referred to as the revitalization-cum-revivification of each block in the process of dynamic pulsation in a given social order, and in a continuing relation.

### **The Philippines as *Locus Classicus***

The geography of the Philippine archipelago finds close similarity with the *locus classicus* of the notion under investigation. It shows us a classic example of socio-cultural diversity. "More than seven thousand islands are no small evidence of the potential forces that make islanders insular in their perceptions, and consider the other islanders as causes of conflicts among them should these come in contact with each other." In this instance, geography does not serve as impediment to interchange but rather it is something that strengthens it. This notion brings to full understanding that insularity is no moment here, as the seas are no "barriers towards unity of the development of one single perception of similar phenomena." The seas had, somehow in the past as it has in the present,

been the main avenue, and they have played an important role in the continuing contacts between cultures. They were the highways through which cultural inter-changes occurred.”<sup>20</sup> The arrows that connect the blocks in the paradigm are the seas through which contacts among the islands (blocks) are effected with precise and synergistic efficiency.

In the practical application of the paradigm, the various elements of culture (CV), define the notion of national identity (i.e. unity) with Ethnic Identity (EI) as the underlying foundation of the former. One such cultural element we want to underscore is language. We believe it is easiest to verify because of its daily usage among speakers of various languages and/or dialects.

In an earlier paper I wrote sometime in 1980, I discussed the problems that impede the attainment of national unity. One of the problems is the ethno-linguistic problem.

The ethnic and linguistic identities of each of the groupings in the country has contributed to much of the division of the Filipinos according to these identities. This is recognized by languages spoken by each group, and the emphasis had been primarily on the level of differences rather than on the level of commonalities.

The intelligibility of Philippine languages would range from 35% to about 70% on a very conservative estimate. This would, therefore, belong to greater Austronesian (formerly called Malayo-Polynesian) family of languages. The range of the intelligibility of these languages within this great family is 25% to 65%. Historically, before the intrusion of the western world in Austronesian regions, when various colonial experiences occurred, the range of intelligibility would be higher.

With Filipino developing as the *lingua filipina* with Tagalog as its grammatical base, a common vocabulary must be developed from all the languages spoken in the Philippines. However, there would be no attempt to obliterate the various ethnic languages. Rather, they should be allowed to develop and continue creating their individual literatures. They should even be encouraged with

government support to publish their literatures in their own ethnic languages to make them speakers of not only the *lingua filipina*.

Perhaps, to engender greater consciousness for the other languages spoken by the various ethno-linguistic groups, the tri-language formula adopted by the Indian Government must be examined for what it is worth in the context of Philippine conditions. In brief, the formula is that every Filipino, on the basis of the Language Policy enunciated by Government, must learn English as a tool for higher education and international communications. He must also learn the National Language which is *Filipino*. The native Filipino speaker must learn any of the major Philippine languages, namely Iloko, Bikol, Sugbuhanon, Hiligaynon, Waray, Tausog, Maranaw, Magindanaw. This will certainly satisfy the principle of equity, which creates a sense of unity in a highly volatile situation, where the only lasting possession of these peoples would be their cultural heritage expressed in most vivid terms, the living language.

If we recognize that commonalities do exist among various languages spoken in the Philippines, then a proactive effort on the part of the Government (MEB) has to be taken to in-put all these in the development of a National Language (NU), with TD operating on its own to smooth out some inherent difficulties that arise in the process. The distinctive traits will then fall into EI, recognizing them to constitute the basic elements of its language/linguistic identity. But to leave it alone to effect a unity through TD would take a long period of time as to negate all the expectations of national identity.

In the context of the quotation above, let us be more specific. Inevitably, when we speak of unity, the notions of fairness, equity and justice loom large in order to achieve for the country that “unity in the state of diversity.” The imposition of a language on the national level, which is seen as imperialistic or colonial in nature, will surely create problems. Hence, there is the need for a much more acceptable mechanism (MEB) by which acceptability manifests justice and equity.

We know that the Bilingual Policy of Government is inequitous and discriminatory. It discriminates against all other Philippine languages, and

gives undue advantage to *Tagalog*, which had been tagged as *Pilipino*. It is a mechanism that promotes injustice and disharmony. It is, therefore, the argument of this essay that a much fairer and most equitable MEB must be taken. It is further argued that the tri-language formula be the solution to this problem. And to emphasize this proposed tri-language formula, let me advert back again to Gonzales<sup>21</sup> who made a similar observation which I also underscored in 1980. I wrote then:

... short of a massive upheaval or radical change in the politics of the region, the Filipino will be multilingual, at least tri-lingual, using the vernacular as the language of the home, Tagalog-based Pilipino as an unborn *lingua franca*, and English as the language of commerce, legislation, government and international relations, perhaps using Pilipino and English as the languages of education, and paying lip service to the continuing formation of a common national language called *Filipino*.<sup>22</sup>

I was then very explicit about the equity that each of the languages in the “triangles” enjoys, much more so with the local languages (not vernacular) developing on the same level as the national language, i.e., *Filipino*. This alternative formula I was proposing would bring legitimacy to every language spoken in the archipelago. Each language then could be a contributor to the formation of the national language symbol, thereby giving a meaningful essence of practical reality to the theoretical construct herein presented.

### **Concluding Remarks**

I can only hope that this serious controversy over the language issue will be resolved following the principle of equity and what Filipinos expect the Commission on National Language will do as mandated by law. But it is certain that it will find resolution, inspite of the concomitant difficulties that such a crucial issue is heir to. It is also certain such a resolution can be effected if the construct *Bhinneka Tunggal Eka* could be the framework that shall guide the development of the national goal symbolized by a language that will provide the single identity of a nation-state, and with all elements identifiable within the broader perspectives represented in the ethnicity of each of the contributing languages.

The Philippines is unavoidably moving toward tri-linguality -- a local or regional language, a national language and an international language.<sup>23</sup> The third language, the international language, is already resolved for the English language which has somehow become the international language of communication by the Filipinos. While it is true that the English language has become part of the language environment in the Philippines, it may not necessarily figure in the national language issue in the context of the development of the national symbol of language identity. Rather, the local regional (ethnic) languages will play a crucial role in the full realization of national unity, as shown in the paradigm.

One word of caution must not, however, be overlooked in the whole process of development. In the process, it must be recognized that the society is dynamic and pulsating and, therefore, change occurs. Language is not an exception. "Changes in language involve changes in people." Because language is a cultural element, "changes in language take place in response to other aspects of culture change." What I am trying to point out here is that inspite of the seeming rigidity that is "prescribed" in the paradigm, some room must be given for the changes occurring in the whole process of the development of the national language.

Finally, the Philippines has its models in the Bahasa Indonesia and the Bahasa Melayu/Bahasa Malaysia experiences. The process may take a quarter of a century to achieve but, at least, it could be said that the principles of equity and equality, harmony and justice had been considered. In the end, the language -- by whatever name it shall be called (it could be Filipino) will certainly be the "source(s) of inspiration: intellectual, aesthetic, spiritual."<sup>24</sup> And, that could have, indeed,

... require[d] a very great collective act of work and of will, and not simply metaphysically, of love, to embrace *Filipino* as the heart of Philippine education. But the results, the fruits of that embrace may in the long run prove worthy whatever effort the act required.<sup>25</sup>

This, we can at least say, that the whole process of developing our national symbol of language identity has not been achieved without the necessary sacrifice of the whole Philippine nation.



## Postscript

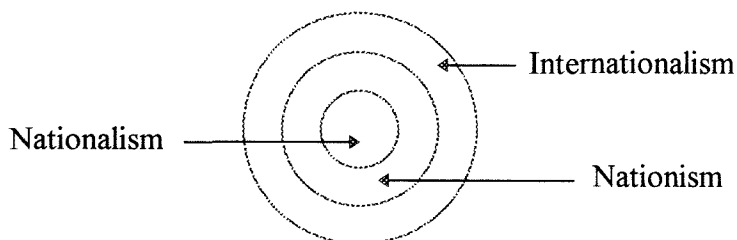
Discussing the Indonesian construct as a model for language planning and language use will gain better appreciation by also discussing the Bahasa Malaysia model which on closer examination provides a more structured framework, if in an extended level. In discussing the case of English and Bahasa Malaysia, Asmah Haji Omar<sup>26</sup> utilized the concept of nationalism and naticnism in language planning and language use, as earlier examined by Joshua Fishman (1968). She wrote ...

... He defines nationalism as a ‘process of transformation from fragment and tradition-bound ethnicity to unifying and ideologized nationality!’ ... the tie between language and nationalism represents a more ideologized historical interaction (in terms of mass ideology) since nationalism so commonly elaborates upon language as one of its markers of symbolic unity and identity!

... nationism is a process ‘where the political boundaries are most salient and most efforts are directed towards maintaining and strengthening them, regardless of the immediate socio-cultural character of the populations they embrace.’ ... in nationalism the development of self-identity and group-identity is through a common language, in nationism it is the question of efficiency or group cohesion that is important.<sup>27</sup>

Asmah Haji Omar argues that these concepts were the bases for the development of Bahasa Malaysia as the language of national unity and identity, and the English language was and is “essential in Malaysia’s rise to become a developing and industrial nation and to take its place in internationalism.” (emphasis mine).

Concluding her exposition, she comes<sup>28</sup> up with what she calls “The Tripartite Ideology” (Figure 2) consisting of Nationalism, Nationism, and Internationalism, with Nationalism as the core, viz.:

Figure 2. **The Tripartite Ideology**

Each of these is not exclusive of the other; each supports the other. Nationalism is strengthened by the two. In other words, the synergy that is effected in the process of interrelationship is fully achieved, thus strengthening the bonds of unity and identity in the Malaysian society.

What were earlier discussed in this paper are reflective of the Tripartite Ideology, i.e., nationalism. Nationism, on the other hand, is expressed in the recognition of the ethnic boundaries in terms of the cultural values that define the identities which also include national identity. The reference to English as the language of international communications defines the third item in the Ideology. While Malaysia has already reached full realization at the ideological level in its language development, the Philippines is moving towards it at a pace which hopefully will parallel Malaysia's achievement.

In the report I made regarding my participation in the Symposium for which the paper was earlier written, I wrote in the evaluation which stated, in part:

... the development of the National Language, i.e., *Filipino*, **MUST** consider, with greater effort, the infusion of its lexical terminologies from the Philippine languages that are identifiable with those in Bahasa Indonesia/Bahasa Malaysia/ Bahasa Melayu. In other words, the broader commonalities between and among Bahasa Indonesia/ Bahasa Malaysia/ Bahasa Melayu and the developing Philippine National Language **MUST** be the **MOST** important consideration. The tendency to hispanize the

National Language MUST be last in our priorities in the lexicographic development of our language, the NATIONAL SYMBOL OF OUR IDENTITY. In the longer term, our Asian identity will be strengthened because our roots will be expressed in terms of our language symbol.

The above statement was not written in a vacuum, rather it was triggered by a paper presented in the Symposium, entitled *Perbedaan Di Antara Bahasa Indonesia Dan Bahasa Melayu Dalam Lingkungan Dunia* (The Difference Between Bahasa Indonesia and Bahasa Melayu in the World Context) by Laurent Metzger. While recognizing the differences between Bahasa Indonesia and Bahasa Melayu (spoken and written form, lexicon, syntax, semantics and language style), Laurent Metzger discussed the varied areas of unity and commonalities of these two languages, including Bahasa Malaysia and Bahasa Melayu Singapura. To achieve this unification, he took efforts at seeking the areas of unity and identity within each and among these languages. He further adverted to the fact that both Bahasa Indonesia and Bahasa Malaysia are now in constant contact with each other to seek those commonalities that exist between them, within which the proposed Bahasa Melayu Singapura and Bahasa Melayu Brunei can well become part of and to benefit thereby. Moreover, he also proposed that to make the unification more meaningful, the languages maybe unified under the name *Bahasa Nusantara* -- Archipelagic Language. And this seems logical considering that all these languages belong to the greater Austronesian (Malaya-Polynesian) language family.

In seeking our Asian connection, it is in this language that we seek its roots. I think I was not wrong in using Bahasa Indonesia/Bahasa Malaysia for my models in the development of the Philippine national symbol of language unity and identity. For it cannot be denied that the Philippines is not only geographically of Asia; its languages are Asian as well, and classified together with all the languages in the Southeast Asian regions within the greater Austronesian family.

To conclude, while the non-Asian languages in the Philippines -- Spanish and English -- continue to have a very strong influence in the current language scene, it should be borne in mind that these, particularly English, will fall under the category as language of internationalism. Considering the long history of Spanish in the Philippines, it is to be noted that the language provided the lexical terminologies of ideas and concepts that had been introduced during its ascendancy. It lost many of its

features, however, to the native languages through the centuries. It will have to give way to the introduction/reintroduction of other terminologies from the other Philippine languages and Bahasa Indonesia/Bahasa Malaysia/Bahasa Melayu, to fulfill both the concepts of nationalism and nationism. English, having sunk its roots in the country, fulfills the internationalism side of the triangle.

To make these happen will be conditioned by factors -- political, cultural, and social -- for which there is no time, at this point, to devote for their discussion.

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### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup>The framework of this paper was inspired by the Indonesian *Bhinneka Tunggal Eka*, “Unity in Diversity” model, which hopefully will contribute to the final unification of the Filipinos in the formation of their national symbol of language identity. It does not, however, preempt whatever have been attained through earlier efforts at language development. Rather, the paradigm or framework is a small contribution to make all those involved in the formation of the national language recognize that the ethnic component of the National Unity is, beyond doubt, crucial in achieving that unity. At the same time, this paradigm/framework sends the message to the same group of people to rethink their position in merely *Filipinizing* or *Hispanizing* every English word and call it *Filipino*, which ends up to *Castenggalog* (Castillan, English and Tagalog). In other words, the framework makes it easier for bringing to the National Language the other ethnic languages -- large or small -- that can truly express the National Psyche, thus sending the message to these ethnic groups that they are part of the National Community. These ethnic groups can no longer be ignored; they must be made part of that continuing attempt at nation-building. For it cannot be denied that language is the soul of a people!

<sup>2</sup>Renato Constantino 1981:28-39

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*, p.28

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 29

<sup>5</sup>*Ibid.*, pp.29-30

<sup>6</sup>cf. Constantino1981:30

<sup>7</sup>cf. Yabes1981:183

<sup>8</sup>Gerald T. Burns 1992:130-167

<sup>9</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 167

<sup>10</sup>Larson 1963

<sup>11</sup>Francisco 1992; cf. Francisco 1980

<sup>12</sup>Kiunisala 1990; cf. Llamson 1977:291-303

<sup>13</sup>Francisco 1992

<sup>14</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 97

<sup>15</sup>*Ibid.*:x

<sup>16</sup>*Ibid.*, pp.155-157

<sup>17</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 157

<sup>18</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>19</sup>See Proceedings, "Specialist Conference" of January 12-13, 1990; Dialogue Between Academia and Chief Executive Officers, Government and Non-Government Agencies, May 9, 1990.

<sup>20</sup>cf. Francisco 1980

<sup>21</sup>Andrew Gonzales 1983:157

<sup>22</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>23</sup>cf. Larson 1963

<sup>24</sup>Ngugi Wa Thiong'o, in Burns 1992:165

<sup>25</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>26</sup>Asmah Hajo Omar 1992:61-81

<sup>27</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 66

<sup>28</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 78-79

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To this writer, the language issue in the Philippines is indeed serious in terms of the total equity in the final development of that national language symbol of identity. Hence, as early as 1966, the issue was partly tackled in a paper "Notes on the Language Problem of India (*Philippine Journal of Language Teaching*, Vol. IV Nos. 1-2 [1966] pp. 1-17). The question came up again in two essays I wrote -- "Language and Cultural Identity Crisis: The Case of the Philippines," prepared for the AILA (International Congress of Applied Linguistics), August 21-26, 1978, Montreal, Canada; and "National Identity" in *Policy for the 1980's* (F. Miranda and M. Mangahas, Eds., Quezon City, 1980). Moreover, reading through Indian history, society and culture made me realize that the largest example, classic as it is, of the history of unity in diversity, i.e., *Anekaa evam ekaa*, is India herself. The paradigm used in this essay had its first appearance in an essay I wrote for the SEAMEO-INNOTECH Indigenous Learning Systems Project in 1982. Titled "Indigenous Systems: the Philippines," the paradigm served as the archetype.

In this essay, and in another one written in 1992, the paradigm has been refined for a better understanding of the notion of the construct *Bhinneka Tunggal Eka*.

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