Language Learning as Part of Fieldwork Technique: Some Problems in Communication (1970)

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I shall deal with two late-nineteenth-century political novelists of Asia and one each of their novels: Jose Rizal and his Noli Me Tangere; Suehiro Tetcho and his Nanyo no daiharan (The Severe Disturbance [lit., Great Wave] in the South Seas).[4] The lives of these two novelists and their works reveal the influence of democratic and nationalistic teachings then prevailing in the Western World. Let us, therefore, note the pertinent parts of Rizal's and Suehiro's biographies as well as the two novels, and then attempt to indicate the influence of Jose Rizal and his Noli Me Tangere upon Suehiro Tetcho and his Nanyo no daiharan which Suehiro impliedly acknowledged at the beginning of his novel.

Introduction

The importance of knowing the native language or the local dialect as part of preparation for fieldwork and data-gathering technique has been, until recently, the issue of lively discussions among social scientists. Although almost everyone is agreed that an investigator will be a better fieldworker if he speaks or understands much of the language spoken by

the people he is studying, there are some dissenting opinions. The main objection of those who disagree is that the requirement is not realistic. First, most investigators do not have much time in the field, either for reasons of academic requirements at the university or limitations of financial resources. Second, the use of questionnaire and statistical analysis has become fashionable that actual interviews by the investigator himself are minimal. (In fact, some researchers have not actually met their informants). And third, there are guide-interpreters whose services can be employed and, in some cases, the informants are knowledgeable in *contact languages* (like pidgin English) if not in the language of the investigator himself. Thus proficiency in native language is a superfluous requirement. The issue is still regnant with dissenting views and has continued to occupy the pages of many scholarly journals (cf. Mead 1939, Lowie 1940, Nadel 1957, Brown 1958, Taylor 1958, Bohanan 1958, Beals 1960, Hymes 1962, 1964, Gumperz 1964, Whiteley 1966).

It is not my intention in this paper to add more fire to the controversy. Rather, I shall document with data from actual field experiences why I consider, at least personally, proficiency in native language or dialect an indispensable tool for research. Such skills may be acquired either before going to the field or during the actual fieldwork. This is perhaps stating the obvious. Thus even with my avowed non-involvement in the controversy, I know I am stepping into it. But since the object of studying society is to understand it, it is necessary that investigators seek to discover the rationale underlying the order of social relations and patterns of behavior which, once known, enables them to have better insights into the lifeways of the people and to see society as a whole. And knowledge of the language is one of the important keys to this problem. As S. F. Nadel puts it:

> What we observe we must report and this is only possible through language. Obviously, too, our reports, if they are to be of value, must be communicable, the verbal statement in which I describe what I saw must have a precise meaning for others. (1957: 47)

By language is meant, in this paper, the institutionalized sign system (Carroll 1964: 8), consisting of conventional network of symbolic units and relations, through which "people living in a society, that is, in groups with stable and fairly regular patterns of interaction, normally communicate and transmit many of their feelings, attitudes, and understandings" (Friedrich 1967: 31). As such, it embodies the cognitive system of the group, the principle by which members of the unit commonly construe their world (Frake 1962: 74) or understand the practico-theoretical logics governing their life and thought (Levi-Strauss 1967: 75).

Language and Culture

The relationship between language and culture has already been adequately studied by Edward Sapir (1929), Benjamin Whorf (1952) and their students. Further refinement of the analytical technique has been introduced recently by Ward Goodenough, Floyd Lounsbury, Kenneth Pike, Basil Bernstein, Dell Hymes, Harold Conklin and Charles Frake, to mention only few of the leading scholars. As more students became involved in this intriguing study, more sophisticated research techniques known as psycholinguistics, sociolinguistics, ethnolinguistics or the ethnography of communication have been developed. The emphasis along these lines of inquiry is the cultural content of language as used by native speakers. This development illustrates the growing awareness on the part of many researchers that the best guide to what linguist Edward Sapir called "social reality" is language (1929). For Sapir, language:

> is not merely a more or less systematic inventory of the various items of experience which seem relevant to the individual, as is so often naively assumed, but is also a self-contained, creative symbolic organization, which not only refers to experience largely acquired without its help but actually defines experience for us by reason of its formal completeness and because of our unconscious projection of its implicit expectations into the field of experience (1931: 578).

So close is the relationship between language and culture that most, if not all, behaviors involve both of them,

> whether we think of orders, instructions or other communications which initiate behavior, or of statements about behavior and the things behavior is concerned with, as in moral and other judgments, in the naming of events, relationships, or activities, and in accounts of the world surrounding people. (1957: 40)

The first task therefore of a fieldworker consists not only of recording what is seen and heard but also of finding out what are in fact the "things"in the environment of the people being studied (Frake 1962: 74). This implies that investigators must be able to note in what situations the terms used are said and what the speakers conceive to be the meaning of the terms (Whiteley 1966: 141). As Malinowski put it several years ago: "Exactly as in the reality of spoken or written language a word without linguistic context is a mere figment and stands for nothing by itself, so in the reality of a spoken living tongue, the utterance has no meaning except in the context of situation" (1923: 240).

Concreteness of Native Language

To think concretely and to observe objectively are two abilities we seldom ascribe to people whose culture we study. In the past, peasant farmers or tribesmen are generally labelled as "backward," "superstitious," or even "primitive." This error was largely due to the fact that most investigators did not know what the people were talking about or saying in their presence. Had they known, they would have noted how sophisticatedly precise in their thinking are these "backward" farmers or natives. Precision is an important aspect of scientific attitude. Moreover, concreteness in observation requires a good command of the local lore, of specific categories defining the context of situations where an action occurs or of a system of classification through which objects or actions thus performed are differentiated.

Among the farmers of Central Panay, Philippines, for example, carrying an object or load is oriented to seventeen action processes, depending upon what loads are transported and how these are carried. Generically, the nearest local word *carry* is *dara*. In terms of actions, this is categorized into:

aba	to carry someone on the back, as small children being carried by their peers, siblings, or adult caretakers.
abaga	to carry a load over the shoulders and nape of the neck, as with a big sack of rice which the shoulder blades alone cannot bear.
bagtong	to carry with the use of folded barrel skirt, usually grains and vegetables.
bitbit	to carry with the hands, usually baskets and handled objects.
guyud	to carry by dragging.
kongkong	to carry by straddling on the thigh, as in carrying babies.
kulintas	to carry around the neck in necklace fashion, used by boys in carrying strings of vegetables, mushrooms, grasshoppers, etc.
kulo	to carry on top of the head, as with bundles of grass for carabaos.
ligaw	to carry (i.e. transport) a house from one place to another.
lukdo	to carry on top of the head, usually lighter with loads.
pas-an	to carry the load on top of the shoulder blade.
uribay	to carry a load with one end sliding over the shoulder as in carrying a half-full sack of rice.

sarika	to carry babies by having them seated on the nape of the neck with the legs hanging down each shoulder
sipit	to carry under the armpit.
sikul	to carry by putting the load at one end of a stick or a pole thrown across the shoulder, the hand keeping the balance at the other end.
tuwangtuwang	to carry loads by tying the objects on both sides of the pole or stick which is, in turn, thrown across the shoulders.
yayung	to carry by tying the load at the middle of a pole; with two men (or more) carrying it —one man at either ends of the pole.

The above enumeration of terms describing the kind of action taken in carrying loads is not an exercise in linguistic recordings. It is, in effect, a requirement for understanding the context of situation where the action occurs, as well as the biological, psychological, and social characteristics of actions around which are built patterns of behavior. If, as linguist Harry Hoijer said, language influences and directs the perceptual and other faculties of their speakers, vis-a-vis experience, into prescribed channels of communication (1954: 94), then noting down cultural taxonomies is basic to any analysis of the objective reality of society. Each of the term used to describe an action is usually linked with other qualities or attributes of action which cannot be inferred rightly if an investigator has not inquired into the categories so linked.

Even with reference to ordinary things, objects are classified by the people in concrete terms according to the rational order of cognition. Let us take the common staple, rice. In Western Visayas, it is collectively called *paray*. Selected seedlings are called *binhi*; when sown or about to be transplanted, the young plants are known as *sabod*. Transplanted *sabod*

becomes the *tanom*; the tanom bears *uhay*; the *uhay* matures into grains which is either *upa* (if the seeds inside the husk are poor) or *tingas* (if the seeds are full) which when harvested becomes *paray*, which when dried is known as *uga*; when milled turns to *bugas*, when cooked, into *kan-on*; when mixed with viands, *simano*; and which when cold becomes *kapog*. Before harvest the farmers cut few bundles of green *uhay* and make rice crisps. Here we are confronted with three distinctive categories: if the *uhay* are young and milky when harvested for the purpose, the crisps are called *ubas*; a little maturer, the crisps are known as *pinipig*, and mature enough, they are known as *limbok*. The *ubas* are soft to nibble; the *pinipig* are somewhat harder, and the *limbok* are the hardest of the three. The use of the native terms to describe each of these categories is necessary in that these are untranslatable into English. Some students may find this tedious reading or a superfluous practice.

Paul Bohanan (1958: 162) defended the use of native terms in an ethnographer's report when he wrote:

> The native language is a useful key to analysis, as well as supplying data or a useful field method. This technique of analysis is not merely using "native terms" that are difficult to translate and hence avoiding the task of translation... Rather, the method means analysis, in English, of a foreign word or idea cluster. Far from avoiding the task of translation, we are made intensely aware not only of our subject-matter but also of our instrument of communication. Anthropological analysis done in this way....clarifies...the culture of comparable institutions in our own society, making us see them in a new light.

Rice crisps are generally used for preparing rice cakes for harvest rituals. The ceremonies are very complicated and the limit of the paper prevents me from discussing it here. Suffice it to say that a fieldworker could never record the attitudes and other activities associated with preparing rice either for meals or for ritual purposes if he were not familiar with the language. Perhaps other researchers may find this suggestion irrelevant. But certainly lack of information along these finer aspects of

cultural perception has led a generation of scholars during the 19th century to develop a stereotype about other people's way of thinking.

For example, Lucien Levy-Bruhl, an eminent European scholar during the time made reference to the so-called primitive people's thinking as prelogical. We have enough data today to show that this is not true. As the well-known contemporary French anthropologist, Claude Levi-Strauss said:

> When we make the mistake of thinking that the Savage is governed solely by organic or economic needs, we forget that he levels the same reproach at us, and that to him his own desires for knowledge seems more balanced than ours. (1967: 3)

He further argued that

> This thirst for objective knowledge is one of the most neglected aspects of the thought of people we call "primitive." Even if it is rarely directed towards facts of the same level as those with which modern science is concerned, it implies comparable intellectual application and methods of observation (loc. cit.).

That a peasant farmer or a mountain man is not schooled in our system of schooling does not validate some of our inferences that they are "backward" or "simple-minded." Most of these people are remarkably systematic in their knowledge of their surrounding world: they are extremely scientific in their attitudes toward the biotic life within their respective communities, as well as toward cosmological phenomena which constitute one of the concrete elements of their beliefs and sentiments. Robert Fox reports about the remarkable skill of the Negrito in recognizing and differentiating plants and animals in their environment:

> Another characteristic of Negrito life, a characteristic which strikingly demarcates them from the surrounding Christian lowlanders, is their inexhaustible knowledge of the plant and animal kingdom. This lore includes not only a specific recognition of a phenomenal number of

> plants, birds, animals, and insects, but also includes a knowledge of the habits and behavior of each...
>
> The Negrito is an intrinsic part of his environment, and what is still more important, continually studies his surroundings. Many times I have seen a Negrito, who, when not being certain of the identification of a particular plant, will taste the fruit, smell the leaves, break and examine the stem, comment upon its habitat, and only after all of this, pronounce whether he did or did not know the plant. (p. 178-8)

Anthropologist Harold Conklin relates of the difficulty he encountered when he studied Hanunoo classification of colors. There were apparent inconsistencies in the information given to him by the people and the reality of these objects as he knew them in his own culture. The confusion vanished when he began to think in terms of Hanunoo perceptual categories.

In our system color is defined in the context of contrastive axes—intensity or chroma and brightness or value. The same level of contrasts exists among the Hanunoo but in slightly different color system. First, there is the opposition between light and dark. And second, there is an opposition between dryness and wetness. Thus, a freshly cut, shiny and nearly brown colored bamboo is classified as green when, in our color scheme, it should be classified as nearly red. This intracultural

> analysis demonstrates that what appears to be color "confusion" at first may result an inadequate knowledge of the internal structure of a color system and from a failure to distinguish sharply between sensory reception on the one hand and perceptual categorization on the other. (Conklin 1955: 343)

Conklin further adds that the "study of isolated and assumed translation (i.e. color categories) in other languages can lead only to confusion" (1955: 340). Native categories must take priority when translations can only roughly approximate the meaning of terms.

Seen from these two examples of native abilities to organize their observations and to classify the results of their experimentation, there is no doubt that a field researcher needs more than enthusiasm and theoretical training—he needs above all a good knowledge of what Dell Hymes calls "an ethnography of speaking." That is, the ability to specify what kind of things to say in what message forms to what kinds of people in what kinds of situation (Frake 1964: 127). As Hymes put it succinctly:

> For understanding and predicting behavior, context have a cognitive significance that can be summarized in this way. The use of a linguistic form identifies a range of meanings. A context can support a range of meanings. When a form is used in a context, it eliminates the meanings possible to that context other than those that form can signal; the context eliminates from consideration the meanings possible to the form other than those that context can support. The effective meaning depends upon the interaction of the two. (1962: 19)

Thus, among the farmers in Malitbog even the kind of trail or pathways a newcomer takes or a resident frequents implies certain predictable behavior. Pathways are classified into six kinds: namely, *aragyan*, *dalan*, *talaytay*, *banas*, *buhi*, *loblob*. *Aragyan* are newly opened trails, usually taken as a shortcut, although the term also applies to "openings""in the fence surrounding a garden, field, or blockaded pathways. It can also mean right of way. As soon as a pathway becomes visible due to frequent use, the trail becomes the *dalan*. Trails on top of open ridges are known as *talaytay* and are differentiated from other forms of pathways because of their location. Trails found on shoulders of lower hills, on top of dikes, and across valleys are never known as *talaytay*. When trails are seldom used and the pathways start to fade away, the term used to describe them is *banas*. The size of the pathway influences its characterization. Animal paths are known as *buhi*. The *buhi* are characterized by deep mudholes due to frequent use of work animals, especially during rainy days. When erosion has taken place and steep embankment on both sides starts to form or has been formed the *buhi* becomes the *loblob*.

Let us pause for awhile and examine briefly how these ecological taxonomies affect the cognitive world of the farmers. As a group, the farmers in Malitbog are a highly sensitive people. They are closely attached to their community. This is clearly revealed by the manner in which they differentiate themselves from those living outside the *barrio* and in the manner in which they assess the behavior of strangers as well as their barriomates. The kind of trail or pathway individuals frequently take constitutes one of the bases of evaluating the reputations of persons around the neighborhood and for anticipating the kinds of activities they will eventually undertake. Those who frequently take the *aragyan* (shortcut trails), the *talaytay* (open ridges), and *loblob* (deep trails) are generally suspected as thieves, bandits, bad men, or *aswang* (witches). The answers I usually received when I questioned the wisdom of my informants' judgments were: "Why take the side paths when you do not have bad intentions. Only those who have something to hide or evil things to do shy away from paths taken by many people." Strangers are immediately spotted on the basis of trails they take.

If associations with ecological taxonomies convey certain types of expectations, then fieldworkers ought to keep in mind the functional value of proficiency in the native language. Often these indigenous categories, "together with their defining attributes and the import of using one or another in a situation" (llymes 1962: 26) cannot be elicited through formal interviews but through casual conversations or comments people make about events happening in the village. In the field, every time, comments on local activities are given and I pursued them in some kind of structured interviews, most of my informants would simply stop talking. Later, after I gained proficiency in the language I simply remained quiet as they discussed the meaning and content of any conventionalized utterances. In this way, I gathered more data.

The saliency of this emphasis on native languages as tools for research is further to be found in the usefulness of local terms for analysis of the data collected. Linguist Eugene Nida (1964: 91) has stated that "words are fundamentally symbols for features of the culture." If this is

so, then the key to adequate interpretation of field materials is the ability of the investigator to discover from the speech habits of the people their standards of values and codes of conduct. It is known that no part of culture can be properly studied without reference to the linguistic symbols in use. Of course the method is not merely to focus attention on terms used but also on the analysis of the grammatical or idiomatic forms employed to emphasize the meanings of the usage.

In this connection, the principle of association and analogy might be useful as a guide in discovering the meaning of terms used to characterize qualities or to describe standards of behavior. Among the *Sulod*, terms describing qualities of "beauty" or physical fitness like *maayadayad* (beautiful), *madalig* (pretty), *matahom* (charming) are meaningless categories when used in isolation. The referent must be mentioned as part of the grammatical form or of the idiom. I was always corrected when I used any of these terms singly to show my appreciation of qualities I liked. "Matahom ang ano?" (What is pretty?). Should I make wrong associations either linguistically or materially, I was teased for my ignorance. For example, *maayadayad* is used only when the referent is a woman, usually fair-skinned, or an abstract attribute comparable to acceptable behavior, beauty, charm, appearance or grace. Expressions like *abaw maayadayad ang bayo mo* (how beautiful is your attire) is said only to a woman; no Sulod, unless he is joking, would ever use the expression to refer to a man. In other words, the *maayadayad* is a quality associated with femininity and never with masculinity.

Fairness of skin and femininity in movement are attributes of *maayadayad*, *madalig*, and *matahom*. Even if a woman has all of these qualities, which in our culture would be described as beautiful, if she is not fair-skinned, she is not *maayadayad*. Fairness of skin is not necessarily "white" in our sense of the word. From the Sulod's point of view, whiteness represents a shade different from other color categories. And so is the dark-skinned. Even if a woman possesses an aquiline nose, another Sulod category for beauty, if she is dark-skinned, she is not appreciated as *madalig*. "How could you say that she is (the woman) madalig when she is as dark

as the cooking pot?" was the constant answer, phrased in a question, which I received every time I questioned the wisdom of my informants' choice. *Matahom* has reference to gracefulness. *Ano pagkatahom na ka karan nga daw sa iwal kon magpanaw.* (How could she be beautiful when she walks awkwardly?).

In other words, if I were not aware of these terminologies used by the Sulod to classify categories of quality, I would have judged them wrongly. It needs to be pointed out in this connection that fairness of skin is not a male attribute; it is dark-skin that is preferred. Fair-skinned males are considered lazy and unreliable as husbands.

Value Orientation

Another area of field research where knowledge of native language is highly recommended is value orientation. By value orientation is meant, "a generalized and organized conception, influencing behavior, of nature, of man's relation to man and of the desirable and non-desirable as they may relate to the non-environment and interhuman relations." (Kluckhohn et al. 1959: 411).

Let us turn to the farmers in Malitbog. These people possess a complex set of concepts influencing local behavior. Let us take reciprocity. Reciprocity as a social obligation is expressed in the phrase *utang nga kabaraslan* and *utang nga kabubut-on.* As a system of values, these two phrases constitute the conventional rules that govern a wide variety of transactions in the barrio. There are no English equivalents for these words. Their basic features are likewise difficult to isolate, describe and analyze with precision in that they ramify through all facets of local behavior. The only way by which this can be done is first to examine the semantic base of the terms.

Utang nga kabaraslan and *utang nga kabubut-on* can roughly be translated as "debt of gratitude" and "debt of conscience." These are not precise translations. At any rate, both types of reciprocal obligations—the

kabaraslan and *kabubut-on*—are anchored to the basic concept of utang (a debt). *Utang* is a generic term for debt, or an obligation incurred as a result of something borrowed, a favor done, a service rendered, or a gift given. It must be pointed out that the people do not incur *utang* without good reasons for doing so. *Utang* may be incurred to meet a previous obligation, to help another individual (a friend or kin), to provide for current needs or the like. Normally, business transactions like obtaining loans from moneylenders or a government agency are considered devoid of sentiments. Business is business. But in Malitbog, the fact that someone, however disliked, or however condemned for his previous acts, is able to help another in time of need is enough reason to establish strong sentimental bonds between him and the one in need. For in transactions that follow both orient their relationships not only on purely "business is business" proposition but on the extra-business sentiments of the *utang*. Sentiment is used here behavioristically "not so much in terms of any particular act but through their organization" (Shibutani 1961:333). It constitutes, in other words, the organization of attitudes and perceptions, as well as normative expectations that surround the utang. Functionally, it provides us with clues for the proper understanding of the component tendencies underlying Malitbog behavior related to *utang*.

The second word in both phrases is *nga*. It corresponds roughly to the English preposition "of" and its function is to show relationship between the *utang* (obligation) and the nature of indebtedness. The sentiment underlying the configuration of responses involved in the former is known as *kabaraslan*, that in the latter is *kabubut-on* or plainly *buot*. There is a wider latitude of choice in the latter. *Kabaraslan* is derived from the root word *balos* which means "to reciprocate, to return, to give back, to vindicate." Here the associative elements in the situation define the meaning of the term.

Ka is a prefix which indicates futurity of the action and *an* is a suffix signifying "state of being or the condition" of the act. There is an internal lexical shift from lateral "l" to trill "r" but this phonetic alteration does not in anyway affect the meaning of the term. It is more structural than semantic.

The term *kabaraslan* therefore would mean "something to be repaid, reciprocated, or vindicated" in the future—be it a favor, a service, or a material object.

Kabubut-on is derived from the root word *buot*, the closest English equivalent of which is "state of being good, possessing goodwill, generosity of the heart, having conscience." *Ka* is a prefix indicating futurity and on is a suffix indicating condition of the act. Hence, *kabubut-on* may be translated as "goodwill, goodness of thoughts, goodness of conscience, or generosity of heart."

Utang nga kabubut-on would approximate any of the English phrases: debt of goodwill, debt of gratitude, or debt of generosity of the heart; while *utang nga kabaraslan* would mean a debt to be repaid, reciprocated or vindicated. The term "debt of gratitude" which has been associated with the Tagalog term *utang na loob* applies to both types of Malitbog *utang—kabaraslan* and *kabubut-on*. Linguistically, Malitbog dialect (*kiniray-a*) has no term (at least I have not found any) similar to the Tagalog specifying term as *ka loob* or gift. At any rate, the important thing to keep in mind is that the *utang nga kabubut-on* is established through unsolicited extension of assistance in the form of either gift or services, while *utang nga kabaraslan* is created through solicitation of another's help or services in realizing the goals desired.

Functionally, *utang nga kabubut-on* is more emotion-laden than the u*tang nga kabaraslan*. It transcends the relationship between the contractants. That is, even if social relations are terminated, the people still remember how well-received they were in the house of a friend, or how a friend or an acquaintance helped them in time of need. On the other hand, the *utang nga kabaraslan* is short-lived in that as soon as obligation is "repaid" the relationship is generally terminated. The transcendental quality of the *kabubut-on* obligation emanates from the fact that those who are involved are not required, by custom, consensus of traditional norm, to reciprocate the obligations right away.

The same clues are provided by language in identifying other forms of Malitbog ethics. Among the most frequently mentioned concepts, usually

uttered situationally and seldom revealed in formal interviews are: *patugsiling*, *kabalaka*, *kalolo*, *kakugi* and *kapisan*. These terms do not have English equivalents. The closest English equivalent of *patugsiling* is compassion. It connotes the ability to subordinate one's own interest in favor of someone else's. An individual's deep concern over another's welfare or over a task undertaken is *kabalaka*. It connotes unselfish consideration of another man's feelings, fate, distress or pain. The nearest English term for *kalolo* is "tenderness." It refers to an individual's ability to feel another's inner emotional needs. It could also mean love, kindness, sympathy, unselfishness. *Kakugi* refers to hardwork with propensity to details and thoroughness. *Kapisan* simply means industriousness or a drive for hardwork.

Supernatural World

There are a number of traditional beliefs in Malitbog which underlie local behavior and reinforce the basic secular ethics of the community. Of great importance among these are the *gaba*, *ulin*, *abay*, *tukdo*, *tuyaw*, and *langdayan*. *Gaba* is close to the English term "curse" or punishment received from the supernatural beings or from God for doing things contrary to the accepted norms of the barrio. Deliberate disregard of parental authority, irreverence to saints or priests are some of the sources of *gaba* misfortunes. Ridiculing other persons because of some physical deformity will be enough to cause the *gaba*. The person will suffer the *ulin*. That is, he will suffer the same handicap as the person he laughed at. If the punishment is not meted to him it is meted to his children. *Abay* is an inborn power to cause other people misfortune.

For example, if one is in company of an *abayan* (a person with *abay*) he will always have difficult time obtaining what he wants. Hunters do not encourage persons known to be *abayan* to come with them. A menstruating woman is said to be *abayan*; so is a pregnant one. "Should any of these women pass by while you are fishing," an informant affirmed, "you will never have a catch." *Tuyaw* is a supernatural punishment levied on those who ridicule the rituals or laugh at the practices of the local folk

medicine man. *Tukdo* is close to English word "revenge." It is a form of *balos* (as in *kabaraslan*). Related to this concept are the concepts of *unung* (to suffer with), *damet* (to keep the grudge), and *himalas* (to vindicate).

To understand further why people do the things they do, one should first know what they themselves think of their actions. In folk medicine, among the Sulod and the farmers in Malitbog, treatment of an illness is done only after an elaborate ritual-diagnoses involving chants and prayers. Many of these chants and prayers crystallize the farmers' concept of medicine, the influence of cosmological events over the body, their relations with the spirits of the dead, their world view with respect to sufferings and good life and their conceptualization of the future. Information along these aspects of life is seldom given in formal interviews. The fieldworker has to be there to witness and to listen and to take notes, surreptitiously. I say surreptitiously because it is tabooed to do so when the medicine man is performing the ritual. Here is one instance in which knowledge of native language is an advantage to a fieldworker.

Among the causes of disease in Malitbog are: (1) the anger of the supernatural beings which inhabit the surrounding world; (2) the *aswang* that eat the liver of the victims; (3) the spell of sorcerers; (4) exposure to elements like rain and heat of the sun; (5) the sudden exposure of uncovered parts of the body to evil air (*malain nga hangin*), which is either cold or hot, depending upon the time of the day the exposure occurred; (6) the partaking of cold or hot food; (7) sudden shock or fright; (8) wrong dietary habits such as over-eating or partaking of foods considered "having incompatible elements."

To be able to penetrate deep into the symbolic system of Malitbog folk medicine, as well as of local beliefs in supernatural beings, one has to know the terms people use to label concrete phenomena like health and illness or abstract concepts like spirits and after-life. Indeed, this is the most difficult and challenging task for any fieldworker. Information concerning the activities of the environmental spirits or of the human-superhuman relations is never volunteered. Data have to be gathered through casual conversations, attending séances, participating in prayers,

and eavesdropping. Again, it is at this point that a good command of the native language is an important part of a fieldworker's technique.

Concluding Remarks

The limit of this paper precludes further examination of the close relationship between language and culture, especially in important areas of community life like kinship and socialization. Suffice it for the moment to say that even in establishing rapport with his informants, a fieldworker has to know specific vocabularies to be able to communicate with them. Moreover, he should take note not only of the terms he uses, but he must also be cognizant of the acceptable tonal pattern of the local language for an error in any of these two levels of linguistic etiquette can cause serious trouble. It needs to be stressed that most people have fixed stereotypes of outsiders; either as friends or as enemies. If a stranger fits into the stereotype niche of friendly outsiders, no matter how he abuses the language he is learning or trespass the taboos of the culture he is studying, he will be tolerated. In fact, this is true with us; only our friends can utter expletives in our presence with impunity; otherwise, we resent the act. Or, a statement however innocently stated if said in an accent associated with unfriendly outsiders, people often take offense. As John Adams tells of his experience in an Egyptian village:

> These prescriptions of code manners (linguistic etiquette) suggest that the villagers' interpretation of communications depends on something more than their discursive content. The villagers are ordinarily conditioned to give and receive communications whose content is so stereotyped that he pays little attention to it other than to note that it conforms to the norms of traditional utterances and that the speaker is hence socially acceptable. His interpretation of what is said depends largely upon his attitude toward the speaker. If the speaker is a "friend," then what he says is generally accepted as "friendly." Even if the content is not complimentary, the listener

> assumes that his friend "doesn't mean what he says" or is "only teasing." If the speaker is an "enemy, then everything he says, however conciliatory, is suspect. (1966: 272)

In other words, a researcher who wants to be accepted by the people he is studying should first know the language they speak and the stereotypes they hold for outsiders. Even criminals have their "language" and views about other people; so do all professions. Socialization among human beings, following Sapir and Whorf, is possible largely through verbal communication. Thus we, as field researchers, can penetrate better the people's lifeways through the language they speak. One of the neglected considerations in social science is that the facts we are talking about are at best linguistic facts. We gather data through language and we report such findings in another form of language. We live in an environment which is generally responsive actively or passively, to the words of others. Few indeed are human experiences which have not been received verbally before they are experienced in actuality. To quote Edward Sapir:

> Human beings do not live in the objective world alone, nor alone in the world of social activity as ordinarily understood, but are much at the mercy of the particular language which has become the medium of expression for their society. It is quite an illusion to imagine that one adjusts to reality essentially without the use of language and that language is merely an incidental means of solving specific problems of communication or reflection. The fact of the matter is that the "real world" is to a large extent unconsciously built up on the language habits of the group. . . We see and hear and otherwise experience very largely as we do because the language habits of our community predispose certain choice of interpretation. (quoted by Kluckhohn 1961: 130)

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