

Standard Filipino English. By Teodoro A. Llamzon, S.J., Manila: Ateneo University Press, 1969. Pp. v, 92.

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Teodoro A. Llamzon's *Standard Filipino English* (hereafter referred to as SFE) is the first serious attempt at investigating English as it is spoken in the Philippines, at proving the existence of a dialect of English called Filipino English, and the first linguistic description of one component of such a variety. The recommendations in this study on what variety of English should be the target in Philippine schools must be taken seriously by our language planners.

The salient sections of SFE are: "Standard Filipino English", "The Structure of SFE", Usage and Norms of Acceptability", and "Conclusions and Recommendations".

"Standard Filipino English" attempts at a definition of SFE, identification of the speakers of SFE, and verification of the dialectal status of Filipino English. "The Structure of SFE" presents an autonomous phonological description of SFE (cf. C. A. Ferguson, 1962), and some examples of Filipinisms. "Usage and Norms of Acceptability" presents four experiments designed to determine the norms of acceptability among speakers of SFE and the "Conclusions and Recommendations" suggest that SFE be the target variety for Filipinos, not the American dialect (there are, of course, numerous dialects of American English; cf. Kurath and McDavid, 1961, and McDavid, 1958).

There are a number of points raised in this monograph that need examination.

Is there an English variety called Filipino English? Is it not more accurate to call the English which Filipinos speak as English as a second language? (Cf. Marckwardt, 1965).

Llamzon submits that the existence of a Filipino variety of English "stands or falls on the premise that there is a sizable number of native and near-native speakers of English" (p. 84). What percentage of the population is considered "sizable"? Is this met in the case of SFE?

Llamzon does not say what he means by "sizable." Instead, he cites a recent CEAP report (which showed that 51.43% of the families who responded to a questionnaire said that they "spoke English at home") as an indication of the existence of such an English-speaking community. Although this evidence lends credibility to the hypothesis of such a "sizable" community, it is not conclusive. For one thing, one could say that it is possible that some of the families

in the 51.43% segment also speak Pilipino and/or other Philippine languages besides English; or that these families speak mainly a Philippine language or languages, but English is also spoken in their home.

In short, the claim that a standard Filipino variety of English exists based on the premise that there is a sizable number of native and near-native speakers of English needs further study. It is not immediately evident how one could or should go about proving such a claim. Perhaps, Emma H. Santos' recent study on the motivation of Filipinos when they study English could help in this regard. (cf. Emma H. Santos, 1969). Santos discovered that:

. . . . Contrary to predictions positive attitudes towards Americans were not crucial in the Filipinos' desire to learn English. Rather, feelings of satisfaction with the Philippine community were associated with the integrative motive, and English language achievement. This association suggests that English is perceived in part as a Philippine language, and that the integrative motive to learn English in the Philippines derives from an identification with a set of Filipinos, and this particular set is believed to constitute a Filipino English speaking community.

The Santos investigation, however, is very limited. It was carried out only in Pasig, Rizal. To be of help in establishing the existence of a sizable community of native speakers of English in the Philippines, the various experiments of the study should be replicated in the various cities of the archipelago.

But even if there is an English variety called Filipino English, is there a standard Filipino English? What is it?

There are three attempts at a definition of SFE (pp. 1, 11, and 15). We can dismiss the first two as mere adumbrations. Let us consider the third attempt: ". . . it [SFE] is the type of English which educated Filipinos speak, and which is acceptable in educated Filipino circles." This definition needs refinement. Nowhere is a definition of "educated Filipinos" given, except perhaps, the two instances of listing which could be misleading. The first is the list (p. 14) that includes Pres. Ferdinand Marcos, Senators Emmanuel Pelaez, Helena Benitez, etc. Obviously, this is not a closed list, but can Vice-President Fernando Lopez make the list, i.e. is he a speaker of SFE? The second list includes fifty individuals chosen to identify the "true representative speakers" of standard Filipino English (i.e. "teachers—grade school, high school, college—secretaries, and seminarians from various schools in the Manila area.")

Llamzon presents no criteria for the selection of his "educated Filipino." Linguistic criteria could help. The necessity for more precision in his use of key concepts becomes more evident when he says: "The definition of SFE given above stresses the fact that 'educated individuals' are both the representatives and judges of acceptable speech in a language community." How did the judges, for instance, evaluate whether the four samples (college senior, college professor, college sophomore, and janitor) have poor, acceptable, good, and very good pronunciation or incorrect, correct, and frequent mistakes, and correct and infrequent mistakes, and no mistakes in expression? What were the standards of

evaluation? What were the criteria for selecting these speakers and the judges? What linguistic backgrounds do they have and were these taken into consideration?

The statistics is impeccable; however, as Dr. Lleanor Elequin of the U.P. Graduate School of Education points out, it is a quantification of the "opinion" of the judges, i.e. the criteria used in judging the four speakers were not explicated.

The study of the structure of SFE is limited to an autonomous phonological description. Llamzon presents an insightful analysis in his distinction between formal and conversational styles. This distinction assumes greater importance in view of the sociolinguistic and psycholinguistic implications of his findings. For instance, the Filipino speaker of English switches from one style to the other depending on the occasion, the type of audience or company he finds, his attitude and intentions towards his audience. Philippine linguistics is waiting for a Labov and Llamzon's work provides the first linguistic basis for such study.

In this section, there are a number of inconsistencies and/or possibly typographical errors. These include: a) the use of Filipino English (pp. 35, 43, 46) which gives the impression that this term can be equated with SFE; b) the claim that vowels /i/ and /e/ are realized as [e]* in unstressed position when used in the formal and semi-formal styles, but is unsupported by the illustrations given; and c) the <g> of *fragile* and *frigid* transcribed as /g/, contrary to what seems to be the evidence; the claim that the vowel /v/ is reduced to [e]—what is the vowel /v/?; d) the use of symbols, e.g. [r] symbolizing unreleased (p. 35) but released (p. 38) and unreleased marked with nothing (see [l] and [m, n, ŋ] on p. 39).

The section on "Grammatical Characteristics" is merely a listing that needs further study, e.g. in a check of the utterances which are defined as "English expressions which are neither American nor British [and] which are acceptable and used in Filipino educated circles, and are similar to expression patterns in Tagalog", a number were claimed by native speakers of American English studying at U.P. Clark Air Base as used also in precisely the situations described by Llamzon, e.g. "Can you come here tonight for a drink?", "I was the one who called the ice cream vendor", "He is my relative", "frigidaire", "kodak", "party-line."

The section on "Conclusions and Recommendations" is important to language planners of the Philippines. The sociolinguistic and psycholinguistic implications and factors that influence learning plus the conclusive evidence that "other speakers of English, i.e. Americans and Canadians, do understand Filipinos when they speak English" makes Llamzon's proposal that SFE (i.e. the formal style) be the target in teaching English (not American English) a most reasonable recommendation. It is part of being a Filipino to speak like a Filipino, even if the

* [e] stands for schwa.

medium of communication is English. If our English can be understood up to 99% by American and Canadian native speakers of English, is it not ridiculous that Filipinos strive to speak like Americans?

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