

## THE LANGUAGE STUDY CENTER: A RETROSPECTIVE COMMENT

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### 1. INTRODUCTION

From my perspective, the language education in the Philippines has, for several decades, been one of the most vibrant in the world. Under the aegis of UCLA and specifically through Cliff Prator, and with funding from the Ford Foundation, I had the extreme good fortune to work as a member of the professional staff of the Language Study Center at the Philippine Normal College from July 1967 through December 1968, and again from May through August of 1969. Happily, I have also had the opportunity to continue to maintain collegial contacts with Filipino language educators during the 20 years following my return to North America.

### 2. DEVELOPING A RESEARCH AGENDA

My chief recollections of those early days focus on the sense of enthusiasm and excitement with which professional staff and graduate students at the Center participated in the initial steps to expand and to intensify a policy-related applied research agenda for the LSC. Thus, my early days saw the conclusion (through a series of student theses supervised by Tommy Anderson and others) of the follow-up study to the initial Rizal Experiment. Then, partially through the launching of new graduate courses in Psycholinguistics (a course which began essentially as a seminar in Social and Psychological Aspects of Bilingualism) and Research Methods in Psycholinguistics, several new directions in language education research emerged:

(1) We surveyed all PNC undergraduate students to collect information about their patterns of language use and proficiency. The resulting information became the base for a 'file' for locating student language informants for field work, and the data were summarized and presented in the first occasional paper in an LSC series. (Jack Wigfield took lead responsibility for this activity.);

(2) A series of perhaps still controversial studies was undertaken using the matched-guise procedure which had been developed by Wallace Lambert at McGill University (who was later to visit PNC as a short-term consultant during a particularly devastating typhoon) to examine various facets of social and ethnic identity and to assess individuals' more personal reaction to various languages and dialects (see, for example, Tucker 1968a, 1969b);

(3) An 'alternate days' bilingual education program was implemented in the laboratory school at PNC to examine the relative effectiveness of providing English and Filipino instruction to youngsters using this new and quite different format of presentation which drew upon the bilingual facility and capability of many of the then-practicing Filipino teachers (Tucker, Otones and Sibayan 1969);

(4) A series of 'word association' studies was conducted to use this technique as one index to measure and to assess students' developing proficiency in their two respective languages (Tucker 1968b; Tucker 1969a; Capco and Tucker 1971);

(5) Work was begun led by Robert C. Gardner of the University of Western Ontario with Emma Santos Castillo to broaden the base upon which the original attitude and motivation studies had been conducted to include work in this quite different social setting;

(6) Research was begun (Tarampi, Lambert and Tucker 1968) on the effects of 'anxiety' on second language learning and usage --a topic which has very recently received renewed attention in the second language learning/teaching literature;

(7) A series of studies was begun collaboratively with Donald M. Taylor and other students (Tucker, Taylor and Reyes 1971) to examine the role of ethnic and cultural stereotypes among individuals from different backgrounds; and, most importantly,

(8) the National Language Policy Survey was undertaken which involved a collaborative effort among all of the senior staff at the LSC to gather data--from a stratified, random sample of Filipino residents, teachers, and individuals associated with the mass media--concerning their use of languages, attitudes toward languages, and need for languages in their daily personal and social lives. This latter line of investigation was particularly important because it signaled the initial phase of a 20-year commitment by LSC staff members, with other colleagues, to an active involvement in language-

education- policy planning, implementation and evaluation.

My recollections of our work during July 1967 to August 1969 are inevitably positive and happy ones. I recall fondly the sense of shared enthusiasm for trying to improve the process and quality of language education in the Philippines through implementing an applied research agenda. I remember vividly the absence of any artificial status barriers, the long hours in the always crowded LSC, and the particular joys of checking personally on the progress of Language Policy surveyors and thus of seeing first hand much of the Philippine countryside from Basco to Tawi-Tawi. I remember most of all the commitment, the integrity, and the friendship of the staff and the students from and with whom I received my own practical introduction to the field of language education (see Tucker, Taylor and Lambert 1970).

### 3. LSC IN PERSPECTIVE

Because of my current position, I have the opportunity from time to time to visit other language education centers around the world, to review their workplans or statements of accomplishment, and to meet with their staff members. The Language Study Center at PNC has always been for me a prototypical center or model for language educators--a center equally concerned with applied research, graduate training, and the provision of technical assistance to the field, through the dissemination of information and the offering of in-service training. The degree to which staff from the Language Study Center--with colleagues from other Philippine universities, the Institute of National Language (INL) and the Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL)--have been centrally involved in the definition and implementation of language education policy for the country has always struck me as quite remarkable. In so many countries around the world, the results of applied research really never do inform policy formation and more often than not language educators choose not to become involved in the process. In the Philippines, with individuals such as Bonifacio P. Sibayan and Fe T. Otones, exactly the opposite has been the case. Its language educators have devoted themselves to the mission of seeking to inform and to improve the conditions of Philippine language education. They have succeeded to a remarkable degree.

Ako ay nasisiyahan sa pagkakaroon ng pagkakataon na maging bahagi ng gawaing ito.

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