SOME COMMENTS ON LANGUAGE ENRICHMENT

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IN THE PHILIPPINES today, as well as in other countries, there is great interest in language planning. Because of the fact that language is a primary social process, language planning is a kind of directed social change. One kind of change which language planners in the Philippines desire to bring about is the technical enrichment or intellectualization of the national language.

In 1976 and 1977 during a series of roundtable conferences on the development of the Philippine National Language, the Linguistic Society of the Philippines raised the following questions concerning intellectualization (see Gonzalez and Bautista 1981):

1. How can the Pilipino lexicon be intellectualized?
2. When do we coin and when do we borrow?
3. What can be borrowed from native languages?
4. In borrowing from foreign sources, do we have to choose between, for instance, Spanish and English sources? Or do we borrow freely from both?
5. How do we spell these words?
6. Do we allow borrowed words and coined words for the same referents to compete freely?
7. Who should coin these words?
8. Who should decide whether these words are suitable or acceptable?
9. How do you measure the propagation of these words?

These are difficult questions and finding satisfactory answers will require objectivity and careful consideration of a number of factors. The following are comments and suggestions which may be helpful to those who must take the initiative in finding those answers.

There are several principles which may determine the particular course which intellectualization of a language will take. First there is a principle of recognized need. Success in achieving directed change in a community is closely related to the desire in that community for a particular change. In terms of language enrichment, where a recognized need for enrichment exists in a speech community or in a segment of a speech community, enrichment can be achieved without much difficulty. Conversely, where there is no recognized need, language enrichment will be slow and difficult.

Secondly, there is a historical principle. The history of language contact may very likely determine, or at least influence, the path which enrichment will follow. Consider the history of English. Because of the Norman Conquest of England in 1066 A.D., technical and religious language in present-day English is largely French, Greek, and

Latin-based instead of Germanic or Old English. Here in the Philippines, because of the Spanish and American colonial periods there are both Spanish and English overlays which have developed and are still developing in Pilipino, and these overlays may very well determine or influence what the options can be for successful enrichment.

Lastly, there is a principle of reinforcement. Where multi-lingualism exists in a speech community and one of the languages in use already has an adequate technical lexicon, the creation of technical lexicons for the other languages of the community will be facilitated if the terms introduced are either semantic or phonological cognates of terms already in use in the lexicon of the first language. This means that terms being adopted into one or more of the languages will be more easily accepted if they resemble phonologically or semantically the terms in the first language. This is true because of the fact that they will be reinforced by their counterparts in the lexicon of that first language.

To summarize, the course of technical enrichment of a language may be affected by three principles: a principle of recognized need, a historical principle, and a principle of reinforcement. Obviously, there are other factors to be considered, but the above comments and suggestions are given with the hope that they may be of some small help in highlighting certain problems involved in language enrichment.

REFERENCE

GONZALEZ, ANDREW, FSC and MA. LOURDES S. BAUTISTA (eds). 1981. Aspects of language planning and development in the Philippines. Manila: Linguistic Society of the Philippines.