

PILIPINO NUMERALS: A DISCOURSE ON LANGUAGE INTEGRATION

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INTRODUCTION

DISCUSSIONS ON HOW FAR PILIPINO CAN BE DEVELOPED INTO A MODERN medium of communication in all aspects of national as well as local life in the country have been the pre-occupations of many national leaders involved in this process. Attention has been concentrated, however, on the possibility as to how far that language can be used as the medium of instruction in the schools, more specifically in the elementary school level. Some of the views that have been elicited in these discussions may be summarized as follows:

(a) Pilipino is still unable to replace English as the medium of instruction, because of the lack of scientific terms in its vocabulary. To fill up this deficiency, much time is still needed. This means that English should still remain as the medium of instruction. Meanwhile, work should be started on the preparation of textbooks in Pilipino and other types of book to be used in the schools on all levels by Filipino writers and educators;

(b) Pilipino lacks the capability to “educate” the Filipinos as a nation which is as progressive as other nations that use English as the language of science. English is the medium through which one could achieve progress on the highest possible level; and

(c) English is a foreign language to the Filipino people; therefore it would be easier to impart knowledge to them in their own language. Thus it would be better if Pilipino is the medium of instruction in the schools, first on the elementary level, then in the secondary and finally in the college levels; whereas English would remain as a foreign language course only.

Irrespective of these views, one point is clear—there is *growing* interest in the national language. Tagalog, chosen as the base in the development of Philippine national language, lacks scientific and modern technical terms to express modern ideas and concepts. It has not yet realized its application throughout Philippine society. However, this does not mean, that the language cannot be modernized. Chinese, Japanese and Bahasa Indonesia for example, have proven their capabilities in all branches of studies without difficulties. What is important is the will of the people themselves to develop a national language. In this connection, J. V. Cruz, a columnist of the *Manila Times*, wrote that:

"One argument that has been advanced against the use of Pilipino in the schools is that there is an inadequacy, and the reason simply is that English always has been the medium of instruction, so why should anyone have bothered in the past to produce Pilipino textbooks and other teaching aids? But this argument is a case of putting the cart before the horse. Once Pilipino is introduced as the medium of instruction in the schools, books and other teaching devices in this language will materialize as a matter of course. Airports got to be built when airplanes started flying, not before.

Another argument that has been invoked is that Pilipino is an impoverished language for keeping up with the progress of science, medicine, technology and industry in the more advanced countries. This is fallacious contention. There is no such thing as an impoverished language, provided that language is given a normal chance to grow and develop. Given such opportunity, Pilipino can and will keep up with the pace of progress and advancement all over the world. It will improvise where it will have to improvise, borrow here and there where it will have to borrow here and there, and lift boldly where this may be the most convenient and practical alternative."¹

Furthermore, Teodoro A. Llamzon, S.J., more or less elaborates in vivid terms J. V. Cruz's arguments—

"... it is not true that because Pilipino now lacks an adequate technical vocabulary to cope with the most modern advances in the arts and sciences, it can never develop such vocabulary in the future. As a tool of communication, every language that we know today has a built in capacity to refer to any object or situation in the outside world."²

It is necessary to note, that every nation has its own culture. No matter how extensive Spanish and American influences in the Philippines are, the Filipinos have developed a culture entirely of their own. Hence, not all feelings, thoughts and hopes of the Filipino can be adequately expressed in Spanish or English. Likewise, not all the feelings, thoughts and hopes of the Indonesian people can be adequately expressed or explained in Dutch. Thus, in formal speech, even in informal speech, life among members of the family, where intimate feelings are expressed, the Filipinos prefer to use Tagalog as their own language. In this relation Teodoro A. Llamzon, S.J. writes:

"The Filipinos (with few exceptions) do not feel entirely at home in English. It is true that they speak English at all times—especially in the mass media and in educated circles. But for the most part, when Filipinos are by themselves, in more intimate circles (parties, house calls, etc.) their talk usually reverts to the native (Tagalog, Ilocano, Cebuano, etc.) or to a pigeonized version ("mismix") of English. The native tongue is still the language of intimacy, camaraderie and close friendship."³

¹ J. V. Cruz, "We'll find Pilipino words, don't worry." Manila: *The Sunday Times*, July 21, 1968, p. 5-A.

² Teodoro A. Llamzon, S.J., "On Pilipino as medium of instruction," *Philippine Free Press*, Number 23, Volume LXI, August 17, 1968, p. 6.

³ *Loc. cit.*

But some questions may be raised relevant to this problem of language development, *vis a vis* Pilipino, *viz.*, What would be the form of Pilipino? To what extent would Pilipino differ from Tagalog? What do we mean when we say that Pilipino is based on Tagalog? Do we have to adopt the totality of Tagalog enriched with elements from the vernaculars and foreign languages? The phrase "based on Tagalog" does not mean that one has to accept everything found in Tagalog. Whatever is functional and practical should be retained, but whatever has become obsolete, useless, impractical and generally not acceptable for the Filipino people should be replaced with elements from the other Philippine languages and foreign languages. Furthermore, Pilipino is not the language of any one tribe or group who may feel a proprietary interest in it as its dialect, but it belongs to the entire people. Filipino should be [is] the mirror of the national culture. It stands to reason, therefore, that the other Philippine languages should make a positive contribution towards the continuing development of Pilipino.⁴

It is only along this line that the Filipino shall accept Tagalog as the basis of the national language, not only officially, but also in reality, without dispute or controversy.

THE NUMBERS IN PILIPINO

To illustrate my views, I would like to present the numbers in Pilipino. Can the numbers in Tagalog be a basis in Pilipino numeral system? If the numbers in Tagalog were composed with other major Philippine languages, it may be seen that several numbers in Tagalog probably need to be changed or substituted in order to fulfill its function as national language which can be accepted by the whole Philippine society.

1 — *isa*. There seems to be no problem in the use of *isa* in Pilipino, because other Philippine languages like Iloko, Hiligaynon, Cebuano, Pampango and Tausug show similar or almost similar phonology. Compared to Bahasa Indonesia (Indonesian language), besides the word *satu*—one, the word *esa* is also used in the expression "Tuhan Jang Maha Esa," meaning "The One Supreme God." Apart from this, in Bahasa Indonesia the prefix *se* is also found which must have come from the word *isa* or *esa*, which means "one", for instance: *seratus*, "one hundred", *seribu*, "one thousand", *seorang*, "one person", *setengah*, "one half".

2 — *dalawa*. In Iloko and Tausug, *dua* is used, in Cebuano and Hiligaynon *duha*, in Bicol *duwa*, in Pampango *adua* and in Maranao *doa*. Both in Bahasa Indonesia and Bahasa Melayu (in Malaysia) the word *dua* is also used. In Pilipino the use of the word *dua* is perhaps more acceptable for the majority of the Filipinos do not use the word *dalawa* as it is in Tagalog.

⁴ See and cf. Ukun Surjaman, "Bahasa Indonesia, the Indonesian National Language," *The Philippine Journal of Education*, Volume XLVI, Number 4, October 1967, p. 254.

This will also facilitate communication among the different linguistic groups in the South East Asian regions. Development of a common language for Malaysia, Indonesia and the Philippines appears easy considering the existence of significantly common vocabulary in the three languages.⁵ After all, Bahasa Melayu, Bahasa Indonesia and Tagalog belong to a common ancestor, called Austronesian.

3 — *tatlo*. Just like the word *isa*, the word *tatlo* may be used in Pilipino. In Javanese (spoken in Central and East Java), *telu* is used; in Sundanese (spoken in West Java) *tilu*, while in Bahasa Indonesia and Bahasa Melayu the word *tiga* is used.

4 — *apat*. The word *apat* also does not present a problem in its usage in Pilipino, because in other Philippine languages its phonology shows almost the same structure. In Bahasa Indonesia and Bahasa Melayu the word *empat* [ampat] is used, but in daily conversation the word *ampat* is used more frequently. It is probable that *ampat* will later replace *empat*.

5 — *lima*. The word *lima* may be used in Pilipino. What is interesting is that the word *lima* is the only number that does not undergo any change in phonology in Philippine and Indonesian languages.

6 — *anim*. *Anim* may also be used in Pilipino, because in other languages its phonology is apparently the same. In Bahasa Indonesia and Bahasa Melayu *enam* [anam] is used. However, in daily conversation the word *anem* [anam] is used more often. It is probable that the word *anem* will eventually replace the word *enam*.

7 — *pito*. *Pito* may be used in Pilipino. In Javanese the word *pito* is also used, whereas in Bahasa Indonesia and Bahasa Melayu the word *tujuh* is used.

8 — *walo*. Just like *pito*, the word *walo* may be used in Pilipino. In Javanese, *walo* is also used, whereas Bahasa Indonesia and Bahasa Melayu use *delapan*.

9 — *siyam*. *Siyam* may be used in Pilipino. In Bahasa Indonesia and in Bahasa Melayu *sembilan* is used.

10 — *sampu*. In Cebuano, *napulo* is used, in Iloko, *pulo*, in Pangpango, *apulu*, in Bicol, *sampulo* and in Maranao, *sapulo*. Bahasa Indonesia and Bahasa Melayu use *sepuluh*. Would it be more appropriate for Pilipino to use *sapulo* (one ten) in order to be more easily accepted by the majority of the Filipinos? Besides, its phonology is similar to that of Bahasa Indonesia and Bahasa Melayu. It is interesting to note that Indonesia and Malaysia have succeeded in unifying the romanized orthography of Bahasa Melayu and Bahasa Indonesia on June 27, 1967,⁶ which perhaps would be

⁵ Paraluman S. Aspillera, *A Common Vocabulary for Malay-Pilipino-Bahasa Indonesia*. Published by the Institute of Asian Studies, University of the Philippines, July 1967, p. iii.

⁶ See: "Agreement of the Spelling Committee Meeting," Tenggara, Vol. 2, Number 1, April, 1968, pp. 79-83.

a good basis for the establishment of a unified numeral system for Pilipino.

Commenting on this unification, S. T. Alishjahbana expressed his view, among others:

“We should regard the agreement reached by the Indonesian and Malaysian representatives for the unification of Bahasa Indonesia in Indonesia and the Malay language in Malaysia as an important event in the history of Malay-Indonesian language as well as in the history of cooperation among nations in Southeast Asia. This is the first stage in reunifying Malay and Bahasa Indonesia after the two languages (which in reality are one) had been separated by Dutch colonialism in Indonesia and British colonialism in Malaysia, Brunei and Singapore, followed by the separate growth of the four areas as independent nations. This attempt at unification must be received with joy by all those who use Bahasa Indonesia or Malay because the more uniformity there is in the use of a language over a wide area the more efficient will be the communication between its users, and the greater the possibility of its development as a great language. When there are more users for a language not only will there arise more talented creators and thinkers within the language but they will also have a bigger audience.⁷

The numbers 11 through 19 may be illustrated thus:

11=labing-isa	16=labing-anim
12=labindalawa	17=labimpito
13=labintatlo	18=labingwalo
14=labing-apat	19=labingsiyam
15=labinlima	

This system is different from that which are found in other Philippine languages, e.g., Cebuano, Hiligaynon, Iloko, Maranao, Tausug, etc.

The succeeding numbers after *ten* in:

Cebuano, based on the denomination *napulo* (ten):

11=napulo'g usa (ten plus one)
12=napulo'g duha (ten plus two)
13=napulo'g tolo (ten plus three)
14=napulo'g upat (ten plus four)
15=napulo'g lima (ten plus five)
16=napulo'g unum (ten plus six)
17=napulo'g pito (ten plus seven)
18=napulo'g walo (ten plus eight)
19=napulo'g siyam (ten plus nine)

Iloko, based on *pulu* (ten):

11=sangapulo ket maysa (ten plus one)
12=sangapulo ket dua (ten plus two)
13=sangapulo ket tatlo (ten plus three)
14=sangapulo ket uppat (ten plus four)
15=sangapulo ket lima (ten plus five)
16=sangapulo ket innem (ten plus six)
17=sangapulo ket pito (ten plus seven)

⁷ S. T. Alishjahbana: "Critique of the Spelling Agreement," *Tenggara*, Vol. 2, Number 1, April, 1968, p. 84.

- 18=sangapulo ket walo (ten plus eight)
 19=sangapulo ket siyam (ten plus nine)

Maranao, based on *sapolo* (ten):

- 11=sapolo ago isa (ten plus one)
 12=sapolo ago doa (ten plus two)
 13=sapolo ago telo (ten plus three)
 14=sapolo ago pat (ten plus four)
 15=sapolo ago lima (ten plus five)
 16=sapolo ago nem (ten plus six)
 17=sapolo ago pito (ten plus seven)
 18=sapolo ago walo (ten plus eight)
 19=sapolo ago siao (ten plus nine)

Tausug, based on *hangpo* (ten):

- 11=hangpo tag isa (ten plus one)
 12=hangpo tag dua (ten plus two)
 13=hangpo tag too (ten plus three)
 14=hangpo tag upat (ten plus four)
 15=hangpo tag lima (ten plus five)
 16=hangpo tag unom (ten plus six)
 17=hangpo tag pito (ten plus seven)
 18=hangpo tag walo (ten plus eight)
 19=hangpo tag siyam (ten plus nine)

Perhaps for Pilipino, the denomination 11 through 19 may be arranged as follows:

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| 11 — sapulo't isa (ten plus one) | 11 — labing-isa |
| 12 — sapulo't dua (ten plus two) | 12 — labing-dua (instead of labindalawa) |
| 13 — sapulo't tatlo (ten plus three) | 13 — labing-tatlo (instead of labintatlo) |
| 14 — sapulo't apat (ten plus four) | 14 — labing-apat |
| 15 — sapulo't lima (ten plus five) | 15 — labing-lima (instead of labinlima) |
| 16 — sapulo't anim (ten plus six) | 16 — labing-anim |
| 17 — sapulo't pito (ten plus seven) | 17 — labing-pito (instead of labimpito) |
| 18 — sapulo't walo (ten plus eight) | 18 — labing-walo |
| 19 — sapulo't siyam (ten plus nine) | 19 — labing-siyam (instead of labinsiyam) |

or:

If Pilipino accepts *sapulo* for the denomination 10, the denomination 20 up to 90, may be arranged as follows:

- | | |
|-------------------|--------------------|
| 20 — duang-pulo | 60 — anim na pulo |
| 30 — tatlong-pulo | 70 — pitong pulo |
| 40 — apat na pulo | 80 — walong pulo |
| 50 — limang-pulo | 90 — siyam na pulo |

One hundred (100) is *sandaan*. In Iloko *sanga gasut* (one hundred) is used, in Cebuano, *usa ka gatus* (one hundred) in Hiligaynon, *isa ka gatus* (one hundred), in Tausug *hanggatus* (one hundred), whereas Bahasa Indonesia and Bahasa Melayu use *seratus* (one hundred). Would it not be better for Pilipino to use *sagatus* (one hundred)? If *sagatus* were accepted, the two hundred (200) through nine hundred (900) may be arranged as follows:

200 — duang-gatus	600 — anim na gatus
300 — tatlong-gatus	700 — pitong-gatus
400 — apat na gatus	800 — walong-gatus
500 — limang-gatus	900 — siyam na gatus

One thousand (1,000) is *isang libo* (one thousand). In Iloko *sanga ribo* (one thousand) is used, in Cebuano *usa ka libo* (one thousand), in Hiligaynon *isa kalibo*, where Bahasa Indonesia and Bahasa Melayu has *seribu*. May *isang libo* be changed into *salibo*? Based on *salibo*, following numbers may be arranged thus:

10,000 — sapulong-libo	100,000 — sagatus na libo
20,000 — duang-pulong libo	200,000 — duang-gatus na libo
30,000 — tatlong-pulong libo	300,000 — tatlong-gatus na libo
40,000 — apat na pulong libo	400,000 — apat na gatus na libo
50,000 — limang-pulong libo	500,000 — limang-gatus na libo
60,000 — anim na pulong libo	600,000 — anim na gatus na libo
70,000 — pitong-pulong libo	700,000 — pitong-gatus na libo
80,000 — walong-pulong libo	800,000 — walong-gatus na libo
90,000 — siyam na pulong libo	900,000 — siyam na gatus na libo

For 1,000,000 the word *samilyon* is suggested.

SUMMARY AND OBSERVATIONS

The above proposals for a system of numbers in Pilipino may be summarized —

1 — isa	70 — pitong pulo
2 — dua	80 — walong pulo
3 — tatlo	90 — siyam na pulo
4 — apat	100 — sagatus
5 — lima	200 — duang-gatus
6 — anim	300 — tatlong-gatus
7 — pito	400 — apat na gatus
8 — walo	500 — limang-gatus
9 — siyam	600 — anim na gatus
10 — sapulo	700 — pitong-gatus
11 — sapulo't isa or labing-isa	800 — walong-gatus
12 — sapulo't dua or labing-dua	900 — siyam na gatus
13 — sapulo't tatlo or labing-tatlo	1,000 — salibo
14 — sapulo't apat or labing-apat	10,000 — sapulong-libo
15 — sapulo't lima or labing-lima	20,000 — duang-pulong-libo
16 — sapulo't anim or labing-anim	30,000 — tatlong-pulong-libo
17 — sapulo't pito or labing-pito	40,000 — apat na pulong-libo
18 — sapulo't walo or labing-walo	50,000 — limang-pulong-libo
19 — sapulo't siyam or labing-siyam	60,000 — anim na pulong-libo
20 — duang-pulo	70,000 — pitong-pulong-libo
21 — duang pulong isa	80,000 — walong-pulong-libo
32 — tatlong pulong dua	90,000 — siyam na pulong-libo
43 — apat na pulong tatlo	100,000 — sagatus na libo
54 — limang pulong apat	200,000 — duang-gatus na libo
65 — anim na pulong lima	

76 — pitong pulong anim	300,000 — tatlong-gatus na libo
87 — walong pulong pito	400,000 — apat na gatus na libo
98 — siyam na pulong walo	500,000 — limang-gatus na libo
30 — tatlong-pulo	600,000 — anim na gatus na libo
40 — apat na pulo	700,000 — pitong-gatus na libo
50 — limang-pulo	800,000 — walong-gatus na libo
60 — anim na pulo	900,000 — siyam na gatus na libo
	1,000,000 — samilyon

The planned development of Pilipino should be in the hands of a Committee composed of a group of linguists with specialization on various major languages of the Philippines; a group of experts in many fields of knowledge, such as medicine, law, economics, agriculture, etc.; a representative author; a representative journalist; a representative radio/television announcer.⁸ This committee should be coordinated by the Institute of National Language.

It is high time that the Institute and the committee which are in charge with the specific duty to compare Tagalog with the other major languages of the Philippines publish the results of their investigations, in order to fill the gaps found in Tagalog or if necessary change the elements which are considered not practical or not really acceptable with the elements of other vernaculars. In this connection Rep. Aguedo Agbayani, explains, that in order to eliminate the mental resistance to the acceptance and propagation of the Tagalog-based national language on the part of non-Tagalogs, he proposes among others: the areas of similarity among the vernaculars and the Tagalog-based national language should be widened as much as possible, in order to facilitate its acceptance and learning by non-Tagalogs, and to hasten its propagation among them; simplify the grammar of the Tagalog-based national language and of the vernaculars; an initial vocabulary of the national language should be formed consisting mainly of words that are common to all Philippine tongues, including Spanish and English words "as are already familiar to the Philippine tongue, having been accepted and being generally used in the same," which is ordained by the law.

He further proposes the implementation of RA 184, as amended by RA 333, by appointing other members of the Institute of National Language so that the major Philippine dialects will be represented in that body, or better still increase the membership to include Kapampangan, Pangasinan, Magindanao-Maranao and Tausog-Samal. This will assure the non-Tagalogs that they will not be discriminated against.⁹

Should these practical proposals be accepted and implemented, there would be no reason why Pilipino would not belong to the Philippines, and at the same time stimulate its continued development as a national language.

⁸ Ukun Surjaman: *op. cit.*, p. 301.

⁹ Rep. Aguedo Agbayani, "A realistic approach on the national language problem." *The Manila Times*, September 30, 1968, p. 9-A.

The results of the decision of the Committee as "legalized" by the Institute of National Language should be communicated throughout the country, through the schools, government and private offices by means of the newspapers, radio and television.

Perhaps, the following questions may arise—Will this change not create a compulsion from the national government over the masses? If such changes bring about the practical development of Pilipino, then there should be no reason for opposition. However, the final acceptance lies in the people themselves. The findings of the committee must be carefully discussed before it is circularized by the Institute of National Language. Perhaps, a regular congress on the National Language may be convened for further study of these findings and for final acceptance.

It is interesting to note that the Lupon sa Agham (Committee on Science) under the auspices of the Unesco National Commission of the Philippines has been collecting, forming and systematizing scientific and technical terms. Until August 1968, it has accumulated 6,500 Pilipino words for scientific and technical terms.¹⁰ The task of developing a national language, which is the lingua Filipina of the different ethnic groups, is not an easy one. However, with a sense of mission on the part of the people themselves and their leaders, Pilipino will become one of the modern languages of the world, respected by other peoples. Gonsalo del Rosario writes of this view—

"A far more meaningful justification for having a national language is the attainment of national unity. This is a practical and productive function [*sic*]. We have seen how India, sundered by many languages, has actually split into two parts, and we have witnessed how Japan, welded firmly by Nipongo, has remained [*a*] strongly united people through the disaster of utter defeat in a global war.¹¹

¹⁰ Eddie Monteclaro, "Language problem", Manila: *The Manila Times*, August 12, 1968, p. 1.

¹¹ Gonsalo del Rosario: "A Modernization-Standardization Plan for the Austro-nesian-Derived National Languages of Southeast Asia," *Asian Studies*, Volume VI, Number 1, April, 1968, p. 2.