

## **Pangasinan—An Endangered Language? Retrospect and Prospect**

Victoria B. Anderson  
James N. Anderson

*Languages worldwide are disappearing at an unprecedented rate. Because this has implications for cultural identities and knowledge systems, members of a language group must be aware of the factors that lead to language demise for them to make informed decisions about measures that ensure language continuation into the future. This article discusses some of the processes related to indigenous language loss or maintenance in relation to the decline of Pangasinan, the Philippines's eighth largest language. It provides an overview of the current viability of Philippine languages, and summarizes the history of language policy in the Philippines. It concludes by examining a scenario in which globalization may yield unexpected opportunities for language revitalization.*

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In the first decade of the twenty-first century, there are an estimated 6,800 living languages worldwide (Gordon 2005). More than half of these are endangered. Moreover, taken together, 96 percent of the world's languages account for only 4 percent of the world's people (UNESCO 2001). By a conservative estimate, two languages are lost each month. Most linguists agree that a large majority of the languages in existence today will disappear during this century.

Why should people be concerned about language losses that directly impact only 4 percent of the world's population? Part of the answer for those who do not speak a language at risk is that the 6,500 nondominant languages reveal the enormous range of variation in human cultures, knowledge systems, and conceptualizations of the world. Languages demonstrate the huge diversity of human insights, experiences, and value systems. As such, "[e]very language that dies represents a loss of human culture and a loss of a way of organizing life. . . . Linguists view language as a window into the way that the mind works, and every language that disappears means the shutting of another window with a slightly different view" (Ladefoged 2004).

Mühlhäusler (2001) further emphasizes this important connection among language, culture, and biodiversity: "Languages over time become fine-tuned to particular environmental conditions. It is language that allows people to become efficient users of the environment. But it takes time to get to know a place." In other words, having adapted themselves to specific geographical areas over generations, and having encoded their findings and experiences in language, native speakers are the experts on their particular environments. If their language dies, much of their vast indigenous technical knowledge is likely to disappear with it.

Again and again, boundaries of science have been extended by traditional knowledge that developed over time in various environments of the world. Consider just two examples. First, countless ethnolinguistic groups worldwide have discovered biopharmaceuticals in their specific ecosystems and refined their use. The enormous value of these discoveries is illustrated by the intensity of the current international clash between Western patent law, which assigns ownership

and economic benefit to such wisdom, and traditional systems of knowledge sharing (see Koopman 2003 and references therein). In a second example, knowledge about ocean currents and navigation by the stars (i.e., without charts, compasses, or other positioning systems) made human settlement in Polynesia possible. This traditional knowledge was lost in places like Hawaii and New Zealand, where languages, cultures, and populations were decimated following European contact. However, this seafaring expertise still exists in Satawal, Micronesia, where it is encoded in *paafu*, (“numbering the stars”) and *kapesani serak* (“talk of sailing”), and it is now being retaught to Hawaiians, Maoris, and other Polynesians who wish to reclaim this expertise as part of their heritage.

The diversity of the world’s languages also illuminates the breadth and depth of human cognitive processing. In addition, languages are valuable storehouses of information about human history. Linguistic analysis helps to establish historical relationships among peoples of the world and confirms the lines of evidence contributed by genetic and archeological studies.

### **The Value of a Mother Tongue to Its Speakers**

Language loss represents not just scientific loss, or loss of technical expertise. For “insiders” whose mother tongue is a language at risk, the potential loss is much larger, more immediate, and threatening. Losing one’s first language effectively means forfeiting much of one’s social and cultural identity. Fishman (2001, 3) puts it powerfully and warrants an extended quote:

Such a huge part of every ethnoculture is linguistically expressed that it is not wrong to say that most ethnocultural behaviors would be impossible without their expression via the particular language with which these behaviors have been traditionally associated. Education (in content and in practice), the legal system (its abstract prohibitions and concrete enforcements), the religious beliefs and observations, the self-governmental observations, the literature (spoken and/or written), the folklore, the philosophy of morals and ethics, the medical code of illnesses and diseases, not to mention the total round of interpersonal interactions (childhood socialization, establishment of friendship and kinship ties, greetings, jokes, songs, benedictions, maledictions, etc.) are not only linguistically expressed, but they are normally enacted, at any given time, via the specific languages with which these activities grew up, have been identified, and have been intergenerationally associated. It is the specificity of the linguistic bond of most cultural doings that makes the very notion of a “translated culture” so unauthentic and even abhorrent to most ethnocultural aggregates. The fact that some few ethnocultures and cultural identities *have* been able to “survive” translation is neither here nor there. In the translation they are *not* the same as they were in their original (i.e., most of the associated features itemized above have changed and some have been literally “lost in translation.”) Every sociocultural collectivity interested in doing so has the right to strive for its own perceived authenticity via the language of its own preference. To claim that social meanings can remain the same when a different language, coming from a different ethnocultural point of origin, is employed, is to misinterpret the dynamics and symbols of “insiders” to any culture. Translations may do for “outsiders.” We all read translations of Hebrew, Greek and Latin, not to mention Sanskrit and other classical texts, but,

we cannot pretend thereby, to be enacting the very same cultures and cultural identities of the original authors and audiences of those texts. “Insiders,” in particular, may well want more than a translated culture and identity, particularly if what they conceive of as the “real thing,” can still be protected and intergenerationally transmitted.

Certainly, languages and cultures have always evolved, become enriched by trading influences with neighboring languages and cultures, and died out. The difference at present is the speed with which one language and its embedded culture can supplant another. Technological advances in world communication over the last century and increasing globalization in the last fifty years have greatly accelerated rates of language and cultural change. Moreover, this rapid change can proceed a long way before being noticed by an ethnolinguistic community. One reason for this is that language acquisition in childhood is so effortless that it is natural to take for granted the enormous amount of complex information being interpreted and internalized by the child. For example, most people do not remember acquiring their first language. This is because humans possess a special capacity for acquiring language in early- and midchildhood, which begins to recede in adolescence, and is gone by early adulthood. For the vast majority of humans, acquiring a first language does not involve conscious learning and results in a uniformly high level of mastery. By contrast, learning a language as an adult is arduous. It involves conscious effort and rarely results in anywhere near native-like competence. Thus, by the time people in a community notice that teenagers or adults of a younger generation do not speak the language well or speak it in limited circumstances while preferring to use another language in many settings, it is unlikely that these young adults will be able to attain native mastery. Furthermore, although parents whose children respond to them in another language may believe their children still “know” the home language, the children’s resulting passive understanding will not enable them to transmit the language to their own children. Thus, language loss can occur within a single generation and can go unnoticed until irreversible changes have taken place.

In the next section, we identify factors that have historically accompanied language demise or survival, so that speakers of languages at risk can recognize threatening situations and can either welcome changes or take action against them in an informed way. We then outline the current state of language endangerment in the Philippines and review its history of language policy. Next, we consider the present status of Pangasinan, a Southern Cordilleran language of north-central Luzon. In a concluding section, we describe a possible scenario in which Pangasinenses and speakers of other nondominant languages might maintain the vitality of their mother tongues in this globalized era.

### Factors Affecting Language Decline or Survival

Wright (2004) analyzes historical examples mainly from Europe and Africa and summarizes variables that have affected language viability. She expresses these variables in terms of best-case scenarios that promote the survival of a language. We group these factors into two larger categories: group solidarity and prestige.

## Group Solidarity

What Edwards (1992) calls “demographic security” supports language resilience. Strong language communities are promoted by a stable environment and established ways of interacting with it, including with neighboring language groups. Conversely, if an ethnolinguistic community experiences rapid, large-scale encroachment by members of a new language group or if its environment is suddenly penetrated by new agricultural systems or other forms of development, its language can be threatened. The Negrito languages of the Philippines are an unfortunate case in point. In 1972 the second author visited one of the Dumagat Agta subgroups in central northeastern Cagayan province. Members of this community referred to themselves as Agey. Although still living mainly by foraging and hunting, the group worked seasonally for incoming Ilocano speakers who had cleared forests, settled, and begun farming areas within the Agey territorial range. Most members of the small Agey camp no longer used their indigenous language very often; however, most members spoke Ilocano well.

Sudden transplantation to a new place may also require members of an ethnolinguistic community to change their patterns of language use. In the late 1970s the Agey suffered incursions of both New People’s Army insurgents and Philippine military forces into their area. Eventually, pressure to assist each side required the Agey to move to the lowlands. As a result, the group relinquished their foraging way of life, and largely abandoned their language. In such situations, changes in the surrounding environment and way of life can affect language use even within the group. Community members may shift to a new language even when communicating among themselves because the new language is better adapted to handle situations in which speakers presently find themselves.

“Demographic security” also requires that a community be sufficiently densely populated to maintain some level of endogamy. High rates of marriage outside the language group, substantial outmigration or immigration from other groups, all threaten a community’s cohesiveness, and therefore hamper a language’s chances for survival. Pangasinan is undergoing these types of pressures, as we discuss below.

Geographic and/or social remoteness historically fostered language maintenance by limiting contact with outside forces. Until the advent of global telecommunications, physical barriers such as mountainous conditions, isolation in tropical forest, insular separation, and so on, were strongly correlated with language maintenance and differentiation. Vanuatu and Papua New Guinea have the highest language densities on earth, largely because their terrains historically hampered travel and outside contact. In contrast, present advances in communication and transportation are rapidly increasing the level of contact between smaller communities and the dominant world culture. Such contact undoubtedly confers some enormous advantages on formerly isolated communities. However, speakers of nondominant languages should also retain the right to choose which aspects of a dominant culture they adopt, and how much of their local culture they keep. In order to make active choices, rather than be overrun by situations they do not control, communities must be able to see both the positive and negative ramifications of integration into a dominant culture. On a national scale, an awareness of both benefits and risks has led Bhutan to pursue a policy of cautious development and to limit tourist numbers and permeation by Western media, in order to place some control on the enormous influence by the global value system dominated by the United States market economy (Dorji 2001; Thinley 1998). On a local scale, members of the small migrant Ibaloy community in San Francisco, California, share the concern that their language and ethnicity are in jeopardy—not just in their

expatriate community but also in their traditional homeland in southern Benguet. As a result, whenever a new Ibaloy arrives in San Francisco, the entire community network plans a gathering to enjoy using their mother tongue, to reinforce their ethnicity and solidarity, and to catch up on news of home (Gaspar Sardalla, personal communication).

## Prestige

Another set of factors affecting language health can be grouped under the heading “prestige.” A language whose speakers enjoy high social, cultural, or economic status is more likely to survive, other things being equal. Wright (2004) reports that in the United Kingdom, the Welsh language has been strengthened by the Welsh regional government’s 1997 decision to give official status to both English and Welsh. The Welsh Language Act has made the ability to speak Welsh an employment asset, thus providing Welsh-English bilinguals with an economic edge over monolinguals. In turn, recent censuses show an upswing in community members’ self-identification as “Welsh” as compared with “British.” Concurrently, since 1997, increasing numbers of parents have been choosing bilingual schools for their children.

The Welsh case shows that languages fare better when they have political, sociocultural, or other public recognition. Even if a language is used in only a subset of interactions, it may survive if those interactions are culturally important. Hebrew is an extreme example of a language returning from the brink of extinction. By the fourth century C.E., Hebrew had become largely a written language used in religion and literature, with no native speakers. Nevertheless, because of its strong footing in these important areas, revitalization was possible. Hebrew was successfully revived as a spoken language during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries with the rise of the Jewish national movement. In 1922 the British Mandate of Palestine recognized Hebrew as an official language, and this status further contributed to its adoption by the large number of immigrants who subsequently arrived in Israel.

Within a dominant state, a minority language has a better chance of surviving if the dominant group does not hold a negative view toward it. Countries attempting to encourage national coherence can be threatened by languages that are taken to be in competition with the national language, with the result that minority languages are suppressed. Balibar and Laporte (1974) and others discuss France as a prototypical example: a year after its revolution in 1789, the new government took a language census, discovering that only 3 of 25 million people (12 percent) spoke French as a mother tongue (Grégoire 1794). To suppress rival Gallo-Romance languages, the new government immediately put in place a policy of monolingualism in which it was considered unpatriotic and factional to speak languages other than French. The argument went that “only a single language can foster the fraternity needed for a welfare state and that only a single language can ensure the equality of opportunity needed for a meritocracy” (Wright 2004, 32). Wright points out that this first language census in France was also the last.

In similar fashion, even though the Philippine Constitution guarantees members of its ethnolinguistic groups the right to speak their languages, the “guarantee” does not actively support those languages. To the contrary, the Constitution dictates the use of Filipino and English above grade three in the nation’s schools.

A subtler pressure on minority languages involves the popular belief that nondominant languages are deficient as compared with dominant ones. This inaccurate perception is illustrated by an editorial by Dahli Aspillera that appeared in the newspaper *Malaya* on 5 September 2006. Entitled “More on National Language Month,” the article reflects on Tagalog being chosen as the

Philippine national language. “Why Tagalog? the non-Tagalogs ask, revealing aches of regionalism. It is for this deep-felt pain from regionalism that the name Tagalog was changed to the more benign Pilipino/Filipino.” The article goes on to explain that “Tagalog, of the capital metro area including most of Luzon, was found to have all the criteria of a language. Most other commonly spoken dialects were studied as a possible national language. But it was found that most of the widely-spoken dialects were just that – dialects. . . . [S]tudy of the morphology and philology of Tagalog showed it complying with the criteria of a language.”

These statements sound authoritative and imply that linguistic scholarship has proven Tagalog to be a “language” and other regional speech varieties to be (mere) “dialects.” However, Aspillera (2006) does not define what she means by these terms, nor does she give any of the evidence that supposedly supports Tagalog’s special linguistic status. Not surprisingly, such unqualified statements often lead to the feeling that dialects are (in some complicated, technical way understood only by experts) inferior to languages. Popular usage of these terms would not necessarily be harmful if they simply denoted “other language” and “national language” respectively. Unfortunately, “dialect” often connotes that a speech variety is linguistically or expressively inferior, and such usage devalues small languages, even to their native speakers.

Linguists hold a very different view: speech varieties that people commonly call “dialects” are just as morphologically, syntactically, and phonologically complex as those that people commonly call “languages.” Linguists use the two terms to refer to mutual intelligibility: if two speech varieties are mutually intelligible, they represent two dialects of the same language; if not, they represent two languages.

The judgment of which speech varieties merit the popular term “languages” and which are relegated to the popular term “dialects” is a social and/or political judgment. A definition attributed to Max Weinreich (1945) is apt: “a language is a dialect with an army and navy.” Thus, rather than having been “found” to be a language, Tagalog was declared to be a language, presumably because it was spoken around Manila, which for historical reasons became the Philippines’s most important hub of social and political activity (and not because the language spoken around Manila was inherently superior to others). Manila’s social and political prominence also meant that a larger body of literature was generated in Tagalog than in other regional languages—another reason for its choice as the national language. Again, however, the presence of a large body of literature in no way implies that a spoken language has a more sophisticated linguistic structure, a larger vocabulary, or an enhanced capacity to express concepts than a language that is not written.

A language can remain strong if it is used reciprocally between parents and children, and if all living generations have high, active competence in the language. Where this is not the case, changing cultural values are likely to be at work. If younger speakers’ proficiency begins to differ substantially from that of their parents, language change or contraction is occurring, probably under the influence of neighboring language(s) and/or media in national or international languages. This is a growing circumstance among smaller Philippine languages.

Languages have a better chance of surviving if standard written forms exist, and if many speakers are literate. Viability is enhanced further if literature, media, and entertainment continue to be produced in the language. As we will see below, very little media and entertainment are being produced in Pangasinan, which is a source of concern for Pangasinan’s advocates.

Finally, if explicit value is placed on a language as a unifying marker for a group, it tends to fare better than otherwise. Conversi (1997) compares two linguistic communities in Spain. In Catalunya, language plays a central role in defining identity; it is possible to become Catalan by

becoming proficient in the language. In the Basque country, religion and race are considered central to identity, while linguistic ability in Basque is less important. Since a person can be Basque without linguistic resources, the language per se is more likely to suffer, other things being equal.

The factors discussed above interact with each other. The more positive variables in place, the better the prospects for a community’s language. For this reason, languages may have very small populations and yet remain viable in the long run, if mitigating circumstances promote survival. On the other hand, a language with relatively large numbers of speakers can decline quickly if, for reasons of demographic instability or low prestige, speakers are no longer committed to it.

### Overview of Philippine Language Viability

In large part, Philippine language decline can be attributed to five major factors: Filipinos’ long multicolonial experience, encroachment by outsiders on the territories of ethnic groups, the transformation of ecological and agricultural systems, internal and international migration, and national educational policies intended to homogenize Filipinos.

Ethnologue records 169 living Philippine languages, 32 of which are spoken by Negrito populations scattered through the archipelago (Gordon 2005). At Spanish contact, Negrito peoples accounted for about 10 percent of the Philippine population, “living by hunting, gathering, and trading in forest products with non-Negrito coastal peoples. . . . Today, the Negrito groups total some 33,000 people, comprising only 0.05% of the present national population. . . . All of the 32 Negrito groups speak endangered languages” (Headland 2001, 1).

Of the 137 non-Negrito languages, 27 have communities of fewer than 5000 speakers. Conversely, about 90 percent of Filipinos speak one of nine “major” languages shown in Table 1. All 160 of the smaller and mid-sized Philippine languages and several of the “major” languages are subject to continuing encroachment by industrializing, nationalizing, and globalizing forces.

Table 1: Major Philippine languages, 1990 Census

| Language                | Native Speakers (millions) | Percentage of Population |
|-------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| Tagalog                 | 17                         | 24%                      |
| Cebuano                 | 15                         | 21%                      |
| Ilocano                 | 8                          | 11%                      |
| Hiligaynon (3 dialects) | 7                          | 10%                      |
| Bicolano (5 dialects)   | 3.5                        | 7%                       |
| Waray-Waray             | 2.4                        | 4.6%                     |
| Kapampangan             | 1.9                        | 3.7%                     |
| Pangasinan              | 1.1                        | 2.3%                     |
| Magindanao (2 dialects) | 1                          | 1.7%                     |
| Total                   | 56.9                       | 87%                      |

Source: Gordon 2005

## Effects of Colonialism and Nationalism on Philippine Language Diversity

The Philippines was the only colony of Spain in which Spanish did not dominate indigenous languages. Despite almost four centuries of colonization, Spanish speakers in the Philippines never exceeded 10 percent. Instead, because of the high degree of linguistic diversity in the islands and the scant number of priests available until the mid-nineteenth century, Philippine languages were learned by priests and used mainly to convert Filipinos to Christianity. In 1870, seven years after a Spanish decree to establish public schools, only 2.8 percent of the population spoke Spanish.

By contrast, during the American colonial period in the first half of the twentieth century, U.S. colonial policy and the lack of a preexisting pan-Philippine lingua franca led to English becoming the most important single language in the Philippines. By 1901 an English-based school system was established and staffed principally by 1,074 American teachers. In the following decade this school system spread throughout the archipelago.

The consequences of American colonial policies for Philippine languages were profound. English was instituted almost immediately as the language of government offices, the new legislature, and the judiciary. By the 1920s English had become the language of business, industry, and the professional occupations. Between 1904 and 1941, the use of English as the main medium of instruction in schools, and the use of American textbooks, dictated not just the language but also much of the content of educational curricula, placing Filipino history, literature, and sociocultural values in competition with those of the United States. Between 1898 and 1935, a few newspapers had been published in regional languages, but these were gradually eclipsed by bi- or multilingual newspapers. By the late 1960s most books, magazines, and newspapers were published in English or Tagalog. A decade later, radio and television programming and advertising were mainly in Tagalog or English. Until the appearance of Filipino movies, American movies dominated the market (Clampitt-Dunlap 1995).

In the 1930s the Philippine government adopted a policy to develop a national language (“Pilipino,” later spelled “Filipino”) based on Tagalog grammatical structures and concepts, but theoretically including vocabulary from all Philippine languages. In 1933 a bill was passed recognizing Visayan, Ilocano, Bicolano, Pangasinan, and Pampangan as media of instruction along with Tagalog, but six years later all but Tagalog were restricted to primary grades as auxiliary languages (Fonacier 1980). In 1946 Hiligaynon became a medium of instruction in the west-central Philippines. However, in 1957 regional languages were restricted further to grades one and two, with Tagalog and English used for focal subjects (such as math and science). From third to sixth grades, English was to be the medium of instruction with the regional languages used only as auxiliary languages. At intermediate and high school levels English was to be the medium of instruction with Tagalog as the auxiliary language (Fonacier 1980).

Despite the government’s support on behalf of Pilipino/Filipino during this period, use of the national language grew only slowly. In 1960, 44.5 percent of the population spoke Filipino while 39.5 percent spoke English and 2 percent spoke Spanish. In 1970 the Philippine census reported that 55.2 percent of the population spoke Filipino and 44.7 percent spoke English. Code-switching between these two languages was already prevalent. Various forms of bilingualism were also commonplace between regional languages and either Filipino or English, according to class.

In the 1973 Constitution both Filipino and English were retained as official languages. Later, for nationalistic reasons, Ferdinand Marcos initiated a policy of replacing English with



Filipino in all schools, government, and business. In the Tagalog region, at the elementary level, Filipino once again became the principal language of instruction. In non-Tagalog areas, regional languages were used from first to fourth grades, while Filipino was to be used at high school and university levels. Despite this policy, in 1985 English continued to be widely used in teaching as well as in governmental discourse (Gonzales 1986).

In 1990 Corazon Aquino restated the need to use the national language in government offices and higher education, and in 2002 Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo again announced that Filipino would be the medium of instruction in Philippine schools. She reversed that decision the following year, proclaiming that English would be the language of instruction. Presumably this decision had to do with the value of English as an economic asset in labor migration and more generally in a growing English-dominated world.

Filipino and English currently remain the official languages of the Philippines. Along with these, “Taglish” and “Engalog” (which represent, respectively, Tagalog with substantial lexical borrowing from English, and English with substantial lexical borrowing from Tagalog) now dominate media and everyday conversation in urban centers, and also impact language use among younger speakers of regional languages.

It is important to clarify that although English was originally introduced to the Philippines in a colonial context, it is no longer a colonial language. Pinoy English has become a rich, legitimate brand of English in its own right, like Singaporean English, varieties of English spoken on the Indian subcontinent, and other World Englishes. Indeed, Filipinos take pride in the fact that the Philippines is one of the most populous English-speaking nations in the world. As such, it is appropriate for Pinoy English to continue in a lingua franca role, and for arts, mass media, and literature to be created in Pinoy English, as well as in Filipino and the Philippine regional languages (see Kwan-Laurel 2005 for a similar view).

### **Pangasinan: A Case Study**

Pangasinan is closely related to only four small Southern Cordilleran languages: Ibaloy, Karaw, and Kalanguya on one hand, and Ilongot on the other (Himes 1998). Dialectical diversity in Pangasinan is minimal (Rubino 2002). Pangasinan’s lexicon makes it noticeably different from other Philippine languages; the numbers of loanwords from Sanskrit, Malay, Arabic, Spanish, and English are roughly the same as in other major Philippine languages, but those from Chinese (mainly Fujian) are greater, deriving from a long and intense Chinese influence in the region.

Most Pangasinenses speak two or three other languages: Ilocano, Filipino, and English. Many returning overseas workers speak a diasporic language as well. Currently, Pangasinan is barely the dominant language in its own province, accounting for 48 percent of the province’s population in the 2000 census. At least one-third of communities in the province are linguistically mixed between Pangasinan and Ilocano, with the result that most residents of those places are fully bilingual (Ilocano was spoken by 47 percent of the province’s population in 2000).

Major causes of attrition in numbers of Pangasinan native speakers include migration, relative cultural prestige, urbanization, interethnic marriage, and changing language use in various communicative settings. We discuss each of these factors in turn.

## Migration into Pangasinan

Pangasinan province is presently divided linguistically into three sectors: (1) the central, dominantly Pangasinan-speaking ethnic heartland lying south and east of Lingayen Gulf, concentrated in sixteen municipalities and three cities (San Carlos, Dagupan, and Lingayen); (2) the mixed Pangasinan/Ilocano municipalities surrounding that heartland; and (3) the mainly Ilocano speaking municipalities (and one city, Urdaneta) in the eastern, far western, and southern areas of the province.

Pangasinenses have been established in their geographic area since at least the early thirteenth century. Scott (1989) cites Chinese documents revealing that Pangasinense leaders were trading with Sung merchants by 1225. By 1572, when the Spanish explorer Juan de Salcedo reached Pangasinan, speakers of Pangasinan stretched from the present provinces of La Union to central Tarlac.

Major population changes took place in Pangasinan during the nineteenth century, when established towns began spawning new towns on the southern, western, and then eastern frontiers which were then still mostly covered by forest. Ilocanos, then the largest and densest ethnolinguistic population in the archipelago, began migrating into Pangasinan. Initially, a few Ilocanos moved into northern Pangasinan coastal towns in what is now La Union. Later, groups of Ilocano families petitioned to join Pangasinenses who were forming new towns. As time passed, more and more Ilocanos visited seasonally to harvest Pangasinan's productive rice fields. Seeing the largely uncultivated forested lands, increasing numbers of Ilocanos stayed on and encouraged relatives to join them. Thus, where in 1800 the population of the province was 102,305 (Cortes 1990a), by 1850 it had grown to 242,476 in thirty-four towns, with the increase due substantially to immigration of Ilocanos. Their migration continued into present Tarlac, eastern Pangasinan, and Nueva Ecija as well as the Cagayan Valley (McLennan, 1982).

## Land Ownership, Political Power, and Language Prestige

From the beginning of the Ilocano migration, economic class differences existed between Pangasinense landholders and Ilocano tenants and workers. Although Ilocanos soon outnumbered Pangasinenses in the newly established towns in western and eastern Pangasinan, Pangasinenses nevertheless dominated landholding and retained political leadership in the poblaciones (towns) and even many barangays (villages). From the early twentieth century until the 1960s, towns in the province were politically dominated by traditional elites, often by single families (Cortes 1990b).

Since the 1960s, the prestigious status of Pangasinenses has gradually eroded in the face of a growing, ambitious, and success-oriented Ilocano population. Ilocanos began winning seats in political office during the 1930s. By the 1960s Pangasinan speakers exceeded Ilocano speakers by only 6 percent. Ilocanos continued to grow in number and expand into former dominantly Pangasinan municipalities.

Overt conflict has never characterized the relationship between the two ethnic groups. Today, a certain feeling of prestige remains on the part of Pangasinenses, but Ilocano ethnic pride is also strong, due most recently to the long presidency of Ferdinand Marcos. Marcos, an Ilocano, was elected to the presidency in 1965. After reelection for a second term, he declared martial law in 1972 and remained as a dictator until he was expelled from the country in 1986. During those twenty years, Marcos provided the usual presidential largess to the Ilocos provinces and to fellow Ilocanos. Sometimes stereotyped as "country bumpkins" before

Marcos's presidency, they now took new pride in their ethnicity and language.

Today, in Pangasinan's mixed-language towns, both languages are spoken without obvious prejudice. The two groups intermarry, interact easily, and cooperate in work and in preparations for local celebrations. Little besides pride appears to be made of ethnicity by either group, although ethnic identification seems to remain stronger among Ilocanos. However, while Ilocano has become a major lingua franca in northern Luzon, in the last ten or fifteen years Pangasinenses have begun to voice concerns about the decline of their language, literature, and culture.

In 1988 an organization called the Save the Pangasinan Dialect Movement warned that Pangasinan was "vanishing and only a handful have taken it upon themselves to preserve it as a cultural legacy to future generations of Pangasinenses" (Coronel 1988). The group urged the Department of Education, Culture, and Sports to require Pangasinan to be taught as a subject in the province's elementary and high schools.

Santiago B. Villafania, a Pangasinan poet who writes in Pangasinan, Filipino, and English, advocates strongly for the "preservation and the revival of Pangasinan as a literary language." To this end he hosts a website devoted to Pangasinan poetry (<http://dalityapi.com>). In a 2006 interview with Yoav Tenenbaum for the poetry weblog Magnapoets, Villafania notes:

there is a paucity of literary works published in Pangasinan for nearly half a century now. In recent times, vernacular writers dwindled in numbers as more and more Pangasinan writers educated and exposed to foreign and Filipino (Tagalog) literatures shifted to English and Filipino. I am one of the five writers to date writing in Pangasinan language and four of them are already in their prime. It was this very reason why I picked up the cudgels for Pangasinan poetry in spite of the lure of writing in English and Filipino. With the publications of my poetry books in Pangasinan, I do hope that I could also rekindle the primal passions of the young Pangasinenses to reinvigorate our language and literature through writing in our mother tongue.

In an essay called "Pangasinan: a Dying Dialect?" (<http://www.pangasinan.gov.ph/theprovince/dialect.htm>) A. R. Ravano quotes journalist Behn F. Hortaleza Jr. as saying that Pangasinenses know that their language is dying:

Rare is the Pangasinense today who readily brandishes his native tongue in front of total strangers. He is likelier to use Pilipino or Iluko when trying to strike up a conversation in a crowded bus bound for Manila or Baguio or in a neighborhood dance outside of Central Pangasinan or in most offices where he may find himself transacting business sometime.

Ravano himself opines that these habits of language use could simply be a result of the Pangasinense's "penchant or say, uncanny ability, for assimilation, that is to absorb himself into the cultural tradition of another place. . . . his proclivity to belong, to survive against all odds." Whether Pangasinenses explicitly realize that substantial contraction in their usage of Pangasinan puts their language at risk, the effect is the same.

The Pangasinan Writers Association and the Pangasinan Council for Culture and the Arts were both formed in 2003 with the goals of creating a Pangasinan Studies Center at one of Pangasinan's universities and of documenting Pangasinan's cultural heritage. In addition, an Association for the Preservation and Revitalization of the Pangasinan Language, Ulupan na

Pansiansia’y Salitan Pangasinan, has been formed. Its publication, *Balon Silew* (New Light), publishes contemporary literature in Pangasinan.

The founding of these groups and publications shows a growing realization on the part of some forward-looking native speakers that use of Pangasinan is declining, and that this constitutes a risk to the language, culture, and community.

### Migration out of Pangasinan

In addition to reduction in language dominance resulting from heavy immigration as summarized above (“Migration into Pangasinan”), there have been considerable losses in Pangasinan speakers as a result of their own outmigration from the province. Pangasinan had some of the earliest American-run public elementary, middle, and high schools in the country. As such, the province saw graduates migrate to Manila for jobs in government, business, and politics early in the twentieth century. By the 1930s Pangasinenses were well represented in Manila, in government, academia, and business. In addition, in the 1920s many Pangasinenses migrated to Hawaii and the west coast of the U.S. as agricultural workers. After 1947 Pangasinenses expanded their migration to Hawaii, Guam, and the U.S., as well as internally to Manila, Baguio, Cagayan Valley, and the Mindanao agricultural frontiers. Many also went abroad for undergraduate studies and advanced degrees. Others were recruited into the U.S. Navy. By the early 1960s Pangasinenses had joined the exploding labor and professional migrations to the Middle East, Western Europe, and North America. Many migrants did not return to their natal places. Pangasinense-Ilocano intermarriage had already become commonplace by the 1960s, but since then increased mobility within and outside the Philippines has resulted in intermarriages with other ethnolinguistic groups as well. In the late 1970s a huge labor migration of Filipinas (including many Pangasinenses) began. Along with ongoing migration to the Middle East, and increasing migration to Europe (in particular to Italy, Greece, and Spain), substantial migration to Southeast and East Asia began, and continues today. Fuwa and Anderson (2006, 114–15) provide a brief view of emigration from barangay Sisya.

### Urbanization and Exogamy

The Philippines as a whole continues to urbanize rapidly. In 2000 almost half (48.05 percent) of Filipinos resided in urban areas. As mentioned above, changes in environment can cause changes in language use. Movement to urban centers places strong pressure on migrants to become bilingual in the dominant language of the urban area. In a study of 31 barangays of the city of Dagupan, for example, Dumaran (1980) mentions that mixed use of Pangasinan, Filipino, and English occurred more often among city residents than noncity residents.

Pangasinan’s urban population numbered 52.41 percent in 2000, significantly higher than the national average. This strong trend toward urban development has two implications for language. First, Pangasinenses are being drawn to promising employment opportunities in which ways of life may be more closely associated with a different language. Second, urban migration selectively draws more single persons than families. Increasingly, single people find their spouses among persons of different native languages. It is now commonplace for a couple who are native speakers of different languages to communicate in Filipino. As a result, the primary home language of their children becomes Filipino, and attrition of the parents’ languages occurs.

## Changing Trends in Language Use among Pangasinan Speakers

As we have seen in the preceding sections, Pangasinan has become a language closely flanked by other languages. Immigration, outmigration, increasing urbanization, and growing rates of interethnic marriage mean that Pangasinan, rather than being the dominant language in the province, is one of several languages from which its speakers choose, depending on the context and the interlocutors.

Within the large, ethnolinguistically intermingled barangay in which J. Anderson has collected anthropological data for forty-five years (Anderson 1962, 1964, 1975; see also Fuwa 1996), some Pangasinenses in the 1960s could not speak Ilocano. This was especially true of rural landowning families. At present Pangasinanes are nearly always fluent (or native) speakers of Ilocano, which has become the regional lingua franca. Both Pangasinan and Ilocano are used at song and dance contests, traditional rituals, marriages, funerals, indigenous healings, and house-blessings.

In the same barangay, during the 1960s, Filipino was rarely heard except in school contexts. However, on visits in 2002 and 2005, J. Anderson heard young people speaking to each other in Filipino as much as in their native Pangasinan or Ilocano. One of our consultants, whose parents are Pangasinense and Ilocano respectively, grew up continually shifting between the two languages, and feels that neither is dominant; both are equally his native languages. He also is very comfortable in Filipino, which he spoke most of the time after going to Manila for college. Thus, it is clear that Ilocano and Filipino are moving into some of the communicative settings in which Pangasinan used to be the sole language of use.

Fabregas's 1982 study in the Pangasinan heartland cities of Calasiao and Dagupan examined the use of Pangasinan, Filipino, and English in a range of occupations. At that time, persons in all occupations had command of Pangasinan, English, Filipino, and limited Ilocano, in that order. However, while professionals (e.g., doctors and lawyers) and semiprofessionals used English, Filipino, and Pangasinan in their work settings, nonprofessionals (e.g., laborers) used Pangasinan and Filipino, but very little English in their work settings. Semi- and nonprofessionals used Pangasinan and Filipino equally in formal and informal situations, but professionals used Pangasinan and Filipino only in informal situations. All groups used English in formal circumstances. These findings confirm the relationship of upward mobility with increased use of prestige languages, beginning in formal interactions, but potentially growing over time to a larger number of settings.

In 2007 the authors interviewed members of the organization United Pangasinanes of America (UPA), based in San Francisco, California (<http://www.upai.org/home.html>), about language use within the organization. The UPA is an expatriate charitable association with strong links to Pangasinan province, whose mission is "to promote the charitable, educational and cultural interests of the Filipino-Americans of Pangasinan descent in an atmosphere of unity, cooperation and concern for one another." Our consultants opined that most UPA members speak Pangasinan, although a minority speak only Ilocano. For official business of the organization, English is used. For casual conversations and at social functions, Tagalog, Pangasinan, or Ilocano are used, depending on who is present. Tagalog is used in order to accommodate those who may have limited command of Pangasinan. Pangasinan (or Ilocano) may be used in conversations in which all the members present are from Pangasinan (or Ilocano)-speaking regions of the province and Pangasinan (or Ilocano) is their first language. The prevailing

attitude is that, as a matter of politeness, members use the most inclusive language, even reverting to English as necessary.

The multilingual communicative abilities of today's Pangasinenses might beg the question of whether the Pangasinan language is needed at all, in any setting. We asked UPA members, "Why is Pangasinan important to you? Is there anything you can do with Pangasinan that you can't do with English or Tagalog?" Responses included the following:

- "We can do it all in English. But Pangasinan makes us feel closer. Why should we speak English with those from Pangasinan? It's as though you're keeping your distance. We were raised with Pangasinan. It makes us feel at ease. It makes us feel comfortable."
- "Because we'll get lost if we forget our roots."
- "We don't want to lose who we are."
- "Because we yearn to have our own dialect among these larger groups."
- "Because it gives us a short cut. Words in Pangasinan have emotional meanings. People feel closer to each other when they speak it—a feeling of belonging to one group."
- "Because you have more trust and rapport with a person when you speak Pangasinan. So we look for every opportunity to speak it. It makes us feel good."

The views quoted above reflect a very high level of English mastery. Even so, these speakers still feel the desire to use Pangasinan in intimate, affective, solidarity-building settings. A. R. Ravanzo articulates a similar sentiment in "Pangasinan: a Dying Dialect?": "when a Pangasinense expresses, say, a philosophical idea, he uses English. When he wants to show he's one with other Filipinos, Tagalog is his medium, but when he's in love, no tongue is better than Pangasinan."

In fact, when multilingual speakers talk about their native language, they often allude to the powerful evocations of mood, intention, and feeling that can be created with one's native language as compared with a second language. John E. Southall, a Welsh literary scholar, writes,

If there is one thing more than another, noticeable about Welsh [. . .], that is: its realistic power. Under its influence the sky lowers more darkly, the lightning flashes more vividly, the thunder rolls more heavily, the tempest-tossed ocean dashes itself against the rugged rocks more awfully and more grandly, the brook murmurs more sweetly, the lark pours forth a clearer note, and springs up to the heavens more lightly, the peaceful[ness] and the calm of nature, the light and the shade, the stupendous and the vast, as well as the minute and the insignificant seem to be brought out in bolder relief. (In Fishman 1997, 290–91)

Useyno Gey Cosaan, a Wolof (Senegal) poet, further writes, "This tongue of mine I use to appreciate taste; how can one taste with someone else's tongue?" (ibid., 292).

### Is Pangasinan an Endangered Language?

A colleague, who contributes critical documentation on an endangered language having only a few hundred speakers, asked us, "With over a million speakers, how can Pangasinan be endangered?" In this article, we have seen that although not acutely moribund at present, Pangasinan shows

increasing evidence of attrition, both in its population of speakers and in the number of communicative settings in which it is used. As such, it is in a precarious position. However, there is also evidence that when communicating identity and affect, native speakers still consider Pangasinan to be their most effective tool. If the language continues to serve these vital communicative purposes, and if the community explicitly recognizes this, Pangasinan need not remain endangered.

The article mentioned above entitled, “More on National Language Month,” has the subtitle “Resistance to Pilipino/Tagalog can be attributed to regionalism.” In most cases, though, it is arguably not regionalism that makes speakers want to continue using their mother tongue, but the simple fact that no second language can serve all of the nuanced communicative purposes that people require of language.

### **Conclusion: Toward an Optimal Language Scenario**

As we conclude we draw on Wright’s (2004) comprehensive coverage of language use in Europe during different historical eras, and her well-reasoned speculative analysis of how globalization may create an opening for language revitalization in the current century.

#### Prenationalism, Nationalism, Postnationalism

Wright (2004) discusses language use in connection with Europe’s historical development from its medieval (prenational) period, through the rise of sovereign nation-states, to the current postnational era in which supranational entities exist. She points out that multilayered, hierarchical allegiances characterized the medieval situation; a person was loyal to the pope or the Holy Roman Emperor at the highest level, followed by king, regional ruler, feudal lord, and so on, at lower levels of organization. This hierarchical organization supported dialect continua in which neighboring communities could interact easily, while those at greater distances communicated with increasing difficulty. There was no need for an emperor to share a common language with subjects, because loyalty could be guaranteed through local rulers at lower levels. It was at intermediate levels of the hierarchy that multilingualism was required, in order to communicate with both superiors and subordinates.

By contrast, when sovereign nations developed, they (in principle) were equal in rank rather than hierarchically arranged. (Even an appearance of equality was important: an obvious power differential might motivate a stronger nation to invade a weaker one.) A state’s authority and the inviolability of its borders depended on a doctrine of unity expressed in the maxim, “One Nation, One People, One Language.” Under this organizational configuration, large separations in language and culture were created at national borders, while nation-internal differences were suppressed. Europe became a mosaic of linguistic communities with discrete edges at national borders, rather than a gradually changing continuum of language varieties.

In the present postnational era, levels of allegiance both larger and smaller than the nation state are again emerging. At the largest level, transnational political and economic organizations exist. More important for our purposes here, at the other end of the scale ethnic groups are now reasserting their right to exist within the larger nations that contain them.

### Group Identity and Individual Self-Actualization

The historical perspective outlined above is relevant to our present discussion because people are multifaceted; they are simultaneously individualistic and group-oriented. A person's self-realization may involve pursuing new ambitions that extend beyond the traditional sphere of the community. Nonetheless, that same community forms the secure foundation that gives the person "identity, stability and belonging" (ibid., 245), and that even provides the affirmation of his or her individualistic ambitions. In the current era, it is likely that for most people, an optimal balance between healthy self-actualization and healthy affinity with community will involve bilingualism (or multilingualism). The small community language will serve best as the locus of social and cultural roots (e.g., emotions, closeness, greetings, jokes, festivals, life-markers). Language(s) of larger spheres will serve best for fulfillment of individual ambitions that extend beyond the community.

Based on her analysis of historical evidence, Wright (2004) predicts that it will be local-*global* bilingualism that creates durable linguistic situations, rather than local-*national* bilingualism. She argues that the global language is less likely than a national language to compete directly with a mother tongue for the same communicative functions. However, in the Philippine context, we can envision stable situations that may involve several overlapping "layers" of language use. Thus, for Pangasinenses, Philippine English is a logical tool for communication over the Internet, for formal science education (in which a large infrastructure of technical terminology has already been built in English), and for use by expatriates worldwide. Filipino is a language of the nation's laws, political institutions, and large business. Ilocano may be used as the regional lingua franca when traveling in northern Luzon. Pangasinan is the natural code for use in the more intimate settings of home, family, religion, funerals, healings, and so on.

In connection with the use of different languages to serve different communicative goals, Grin (1999) suggests that rather than regarding Global English as a threat, communities should view it, along with literacy and numeracy, as a necessary tool for gaining access to knowledge. As such, some adaptation to Global English will be required of everyone, including native speakers of regional varieties of English.

Admittedly, a linguistic solution that parcels out communicative functions to different languages may evolve into a situation where no single language in the multilingual person's repertoire is as rich as one language would be if used for every single communicative purpose. However, in the present day, monolingual solutions are not realistic. If communities abandon their language to become monolingual in Global English, Wright predicts that a permanently dispossessed class will emerge, with the attendant purposelessness and alienation experienced by those who adopt the values of a dominant culture, but who remain orphaned by it, with no real chance to live the "good life" to which the dominant culture teaches them to aspire. However, a return to monolingualism in the local language will dangerously isolate a community, and seriously constrain the individualistic ambitions of its members. Only the bi- or multilingual solution combines the individual's need for social and cultural grounding with the need to be able to transcend some cultural limits.

In summary, it is ironic that the present era of globalization may allow for better maintenance of language diversity than the era of nationalism did. Moreover, although the idea of a national language taking a back seat to smaller local languages in certain settings may have seemed "unpatriotic" several decades ago, one of the truths of our times is that nations no longer enjoy "sole sovereignty" in all matters. For Pangasinan, this means that if speakers choose to maintain their language, culture, and connection with previous generations, they may not only



forfeit some use of Filipino, Ilocano, and English in many communicative settings, but also forfeit some use of Pangasinan in others.

Although Pangasinan currently shows some of the warning signs of language endangerment, it need not remain endangered if native speakers take charge of the roles they want Pangasinan to play in their lives. Pangasinan (and all smaller languages) will not be used for every communicative action its speakers take, but the positive trade-off will be greater access to the outside world. Commanding both local and global speech varieties will allow Pangasinenses to move around in the world, and to remain rooted in a healthy sense of identity.

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