

**Filipino Language and Filipino Philosophy
from the Perspective of Four Professors from the South:
Interviews with Leonardo Mercado, Ryan Maboloc,
Ruby Suazo, and Jeffrey Ocay**

Francis Kenneth P. Raterta
De La Salle University

Joseph P. Paña
De La Salle University

Jett C. Quebec
Visayas State University

Guinaldo C. Fernandez, Jr.
Visayas State University

Abstract

The use of the Filipino national language in the Philippine educational system has varied effects in the linguistically diverse Philippines. In the realm of Philosophy, advocating for the Filipino national language as a strategy in philosophizing and developing Filipino philosophy may sound politically correct, especially if done in the Tagalog-speaking areas. However, such advocacy may mean differently in non-Tagalog-speaking areas. The advocates of the Filipino language for Filipino philosophy trace their principles to such renowned Filipino philosophers as Ferriols, the first one to use the Filipino language as a medium of philosophical-educational instruction, and Quito, the first one to use the same language in writing and publishing philosophical works. This paper, consisting of interviews, takes a look at the same advocacy from the perspective of four Philosophy professors Mercado, Maboloc, Suazo and Ocay. The intention of this interview paper is to show that the relationship between language and Filipino philosophy is still a problematic issue that needs to be philosophically explored further. The voices of these four professors must also be heard and taken into consideration by anyone with the tendency to pontificate for simplistic principle that Filipino language should be used in philosophizing and developing Filipino philosophy.

Keywords: Filipino, Language, Philosophy

Introduction

Existing literatures can easily support any claim about the value and desirability of education and intellectual discourses done in the mother language; as such would eliminate the

burdensome need to master another language; as such would flow naturally because they are based on the same language that the stakeholders are using at home, at work and at play; as such would guarantee a tighter match between the linguistic categories and the lifeworld of the stakeholders; and as such would circumvent the cumbersome internal processes of translating outgoing and incoming utterances. However, existing literature cannot support a claim about the value and desirability of education and intellectual discourses done in a non-colonial regional or national language that is distinct from the mother tongue. A non-colonial regional or national language that is not the mother tongue for a community of speakers could still be construed as a foreign language by such speakers.

Advocating for the Filipino language as a strategy in philosophizing and developing Filipino philosophy may sound politically correct, especially if done in the Tagalog-speaking areas such as Metro Manila. Emerita Quito could be the most renowned Filipino philosopher who actually does such advocacy.¹ In her book *State of Filipino Philosophy*, she noted that there are indeed two streams of theorizing about Filipino philosophy: one insisted on using only the Filipino language in order to fully capture and express the Filipino spirit; while the other argued that philosophy need not be restricted by any language and utilized the existing colonial English language.² Although Quito can speak and write in several languages, she has the contention that the use of the Filipino language in the thrust to fully develop an indigenous Filipino Philosophy is a necessity. For Quito, a Filipino philosophy can emerge even from the people from the margins, and thus, can be developed through time. This philosophy can be appreciated more by the Filipino people most especially when expressed in the Filipino language. For Quito, the use of the Filipino national language is not only intended for the purpose of developing a Filipino philosophy but also for the cultural and economic development of the Filipino nation. She further contends that the use of the Filipino language could serve as an instrument to cleanse the Filipino minds of their severely rooted tendency to be inferior to foreign ideas. This thrust then could inspire a number of Filipino thinkers in theorizing for the future of a truly nationalist Filipino nation.³

Although Quito was a Kapampangan, she was schooled in Manila, and taught and wrote in Manila. Her advocacy, supported and re-articulated by other renowned Filipino philosophers as Romualdo Abulad and Florentino Timbreza, could sweep under the rug the reality that such advocacy may mean differently in non-Tagalog-speaking areas such as Cebu and the Cebuano-speaking localities in Visayas and Mindanao. If Quito was the first Filipino who use the Filipino language in writing and publishing philosophical works, another renowned Filipino philosopher Roque Ferriols came a few years ahead of her in using the same language as a medium of philosophical-educational instruction. But Ferriols was more subtle than Quito in pushing for not just the monolithic Filipino language but also the other Filipino mother languages, especially the major ones⁴. He believed that these languages will not only cut through the linguistic curtain that

¹ Liwanag, Leslie Anne. "Ang Pilosopiya Ni Emerita S. Quito." *KRITIKE: An Online Journal of Philosophy* 10, no. 1 (June 2016). Accessed February 6, 2018. http://www.kritike.org/journal/issue_18/liwanag_june2016.pdf.

² Quito, Emerita. *The State of Philosophy in the Philippines*. Manila, Philippines: De La Salle University Press, 1983.

³ Demeterio, Feorillo Petronillo A., III. "Rereading Emerita Quito's Thoughts Concerning the Underdevelopment of Filipino Philosophy." *Philosophy and Cultural Theory* Page. October 1998. Accessed February 6, 2018. <https://sites.google.com/site/feorillodemeterio/re-readingemeritaquito>.

⁴ Calano, Mark Joseph. "Patakarang Pilosopical: Pambungad Sa Pamimilosopiya Ni Roquie Ferriols." *Scientia: The Research Journal of the College of Arts and Sciences of San Beda College*, 2013, 98-113.

divided the elite Anglophonic Filipinos from the mass of mother language-, or regional language, or even national language-speaking Filipinos, but more so will catalyze the emergence of a distinctively Filipino way of philosophizing and of conceptualizing the Filipino worldview.⁵ Ferriols' preference to use the Filipino language, instead of another Filipino mother language, was the result of his being born and situated in a Filipino-speaking locality. In fact, Ferriols staunchly defended his supposedly "inferior" variety of Filipino, which he called "Sampalokese," against the purist proponents of the supposedly "standard" Filipino, which he called Bulakanese.⁶

This paper, consisting of four interviews, takes a look at the advocacy for Filipino language as a strategy in philosophizing and developing Filipino philosophy from the perspective of four Philosophy professors from the south, Leonardo Mercado of the University of Santo Tomas, Ryan Maboloc of Ateneo de Davao University, Ruby Suazo of the University of San Carlos, and Jeffry Ocay of Eastern Visayas State University. The intention of this interview paper is to show that the relationship between language and Filipino philosophy is still a problematic issue that needs to be philosophically explored further. The voices of these four Philosophy professors must also be heard and taken into consideration by anyone with the tendency to pontificate for simplistic principle that Filipino language should be used in philosophizing and developing Filipino philosophy.

Transcripts of the Interviews

Interview with Leonardo Mercado

Fr. Leonardo Mercado was a Cebuano Catholic priest of the Society of the Divine Word. He acquired his Bachelor and Master's degrees from Christ the King Mission Seminary in Quezon City and earned his Doctor of Philosophy in Philosophy degree from the University of Santo Tomas where he wrote his dissertation entitled Elements of Filipino Philosophy. Mercado also obtained a degree in Theology and was ordained priest of the Society of the Divine Word in 1964 in Rome, Italy. Upon his return to the Philippines, Mercado was assigned and taught at the Divine Word University of Tacloban. He had also taught Philosophy in various universities and seminaries around the country. He also served as a Director of the Missiological and Research Office that were composed of different religious congregations. Father Mercado passed away in October 14, 2020. However, his legacy in the thrust to recognize an emerging Filipino Philosophy will forever be regarded as a great contribution to the study and teaching of Philosophy in the Philippines.

Paña: A number of the leading Filipino philosophers, such as Quito, Ferriols, Timbreza and Abulad, are insisting that the use of the Filipino language is a way of enriching and developing Filipino philosophy. What is your take on this idea?

Mercado: I agree with them but still it depends on the audience. I believe we can develop Filipino philosophy using any other language (i.e. Nakem in Ilocano, Buot in Bisaya).

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ De Leon, E. "Ang Pilosopiya at Pamimilosopiya Ni Roque J. Ferriols, S.J.: Tungo Sa Isang Kritikal Na Pamimilosopiyang Filipino." KRITIKE: An Online Journal of Philosophy 9, no. 2 (December 2015). Accessed February 6, 2018. http://www.kritike.org/journal/issue_17/de_leon_december2015.pdf.

Paña: Do you lecture or write using the Filipino language?

Mercado: I can lecture using the Filipino language, it's okay. But the whole thing is, throughout my experience in UST, in Tagaytay, the audience, the occasion, would always demand the use of English language. I would use Tagalog depending on my audience. But I am more comfortable in writing using English language. I have been trained in English.

Paña: Do you think it will be easier for more Filipinos to read our writings if these are written in the Filipino language?

Mercado: Again, it depends on the readers. Some audience preferred Tagalog, some would prefer English. Some are both (Tagalog and English).

Paña: Do you lecture or write using the Cebuano language?

Mercado: I had no case to lecture in Bisaya because my audience demands English language. I am here in Manila, the classroom setting is always English. Given a chance, I would lecture in Bisaya, as I said, it depends on the group of audience. When it comes to writing, I can write also in Bisaya although I have been trained in English. And as a discipline, English is different from colloquial. However, if someone invited me to give a lecture or talk in Bisaya in a philosophical conference, I would, I'll try. So far, we only use Tagalog or English in our conferences.

Paña: How can we as philosophers help in solving the problem that we do not have an acceptable national language that we can use in philosophizing and even in educating our youth?

Mercado: Whatever language that is best in conveying information, then, it must be taken as such. I agree that somehow using Mother tongue, children may learn faster. My idea is language also evolved so let the people use their preferred language. Let the educator use the language that is suited to his/her students.

Paña: Do you still have some other things you might want to say?

Mercado: My writings are based on my audience. In my lectures abroad, I used English. It depends on the occasions. In the Philippines, we have three most used local languages "Tagalog, Ilocano, and Bisaya". In scholarly conferences, the more advanced is I think Ilocano, they have yearly "Nakem" conference in Hawaii. So why can't Cebuano scholars organize a conference and lecture in Bisaya? Let them have a Bisaya conference on "Buot" (Nakem in Ilocano). The term can be theological, religious, ethical, or sociological. Lastly, Filipino philosophy can be developed in any languages. We can use Ilocano, Bisaya, Tagalog or English in philosophizing.

Interview with Dr. Ryan Maboloc

Christopher Ryan B. Maboloc, PhD, is Associate Professor of Philosophy at Ateneo de Davao University and the former chairperson of the Department of Philosophy. Dr. Maboloc holds a doctorate in philosophy from the University of San Carlos (maxima cum laude), in Cebu City. He obtained his Erasmus Mundus Master's in Applied Ethics degree from Linkoping University in Sweden and the Norwegian University of Science and Technology in Trondheim, Norway. He

completed his Master's in Philosophy from the Ateneo de Manila University. He graduated AB Philosophy, cum laude, at the Ateneo de Davao University. He was twice the EM Representative for Applied Ethics, and was a delegate to the 2007 Erasmus Mundus GA in Brussels, Belgium. Dr. Maboloc was trained in Democracy and Governance at the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung in Bonn and Berlin, Germany.

He has delivered important papers internationally. The first is on the ethics of genetic engineering during the 2014 Eubios Bioethics Conference at Chulalongkorn University in Bangkok, Thailand, the second, on cognitive disability and social justice during the 2016 Intensive Bioethics Training at Perdana University in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, and the third on equal dignity and social inclusion during the 2017 Bioethics Round Table at Kumamoto University in Japan. His publications include articles in the following journals: *Techné: Research in Philosophy and Technology*, *Journal of Human Values*, the *Philosophical Quarterly of Israel*, *Prajna Vihara: Journal of Philosophy*, the *Eubios Journal of the Asian Bioethics Association*, and *Budhi: Journal of Ideas and Culture*. He is a Peer-Reviewer for *Public Health Ethics* and *Techne: Research in Philosophy and Technology*. He is a member of the editorial boards of several local journals. He also contributes social and political commentaries to the *Philippine Daily Inquirer*.⁷

In this part of the paper, Guiraldo Fernandez, one of the authors of the article had the opportunity to ask Dr. Maboloc on his take on Filipino Language and Philosophy.

Fernandez: A number of influential Filipino professors from the capital are insisting to use the Filipino Language (in their case, Tagalog) as a way of cultivating the richness of Filipino Philosophy. What is your take on this?

Maboloc: It should not be the case. Language is universal. If they insist on Tagalog, which they disguise as Filipino, then that would just be another form of linguistic hegemony. We must move on to more important problems than waste time on a pseudo-problem.

Fernandez: Do you lecture or write using the Filipino language?

Maboloc: No (considering that Dr. Maboloc had earlier stated that Tagalog is referred to as Filipino from Philosophy professors from the capital).

Fernandez: Do you think it will be easier for more Filipinos to read our writings if these are written in the Filipino language? Why?

Maboloc: No. Thinking is a question of intellectual aptitude. It has nothing to do with any privileged language or grammatical prowess. If a student wants to express his thoughts in his own native tongue, it's okay. But we cannot demand that they should speak in a native language.

Fernandez: Do you lecture or write using the Visayan Language?

Maboloc: No (and it is discernible in the many articles that Dr. Maboloc has published in reputable peer-reviewed internationally and nationally circulated journals)

⁷ Dr. Maboloc's bionote is taken from his linkedin account.

Fernandez: How can we as Philosophy professors, instructors, or students help in solving the problem that we do not have an acceptable national language that we can use in philosophizing and even in educating our youth? Please elaborate.

Maboloc: There is no such thing as a national language for philosophy. Heidegger is german and wrote in german but we don't say his philosophy is german. It is the same with Sartre, Camus, Kant, etc. Thinking is about the wiring in our neural systems, biological and genetic.

Interview with Dr. Ruby Suazo

Dr. Ruby Suazo is a professor of philosophy at the University of San Carlos, Cebu City. He acquired his bachelor and master's degree from Christ the King Mission Seminary in Quezon City and earned his Doctor of Philosophy in Philosophy degree from the University of San Carlos in Cebu City. He has published articles mainly on Paul Ricoeur, Political Philosophy and Filipino Philosophy both nationally and internationally. He is the current president of the Philosophical Association of the Visayas and Mindanao (PHAVISMINDA) and is presently the managing editor of the PHAVISMINDA Journal, a journal jointly published by the Philosophical Association of the Visayas and Mindanao (PHAVISMINDA) and the Department of Philosophy, University of San Carlos.

Raterta: A number of the leading Filipino philosophers, such as Quito, Ferriols, Timbreza and Abulad, are insisting that the use of the Filipino language is a way of enriching and developing Filipino philosophy. What is your take on this idea?

Suazo: I do not agree with this position as I have a concern about the expression "The Filipino language". The discourse on "the Filipino language" is polarizing as it is very emotional and political. If the doing away of the English language is reflective of what Lisandro Claudio labeled as a result of the Diliman Consensus's desire "to purge the national narrative of its Western heritage". . . Filipino or Tagalog, for that matter, is also the language of our internal colonizer—the people from lowland Luzon who wreak havoc in the mountains of the Cordilleras and the vast land of Mindanao. If you are going to replace "the Filipino language" with "a Filipino language," that is to refer to any of the more than 70 languages spoken in the entire archipelago, then I may consider my position. My position in insisting to write in English is anchored on what I argued in my previous paper as to the functions of language. I argued then that the main function of English could be as a medium of communication that has the potential of unifying the Filipino people. That instead of insisting in having a national language, we should just agree to have official languages like Singapore.

Raterta: You mean, we can actually develop Filipino philosophy by using the English language?

Suazo: If the issue is how to enrich and develop Filipino philosophy, the insistence of what language to use is immaterial. Filipino philosophy is not an ontology that we have to search for. Instead, Filipino philosophy is a process! Thus, whether it is done in Filipino or in English does not matter. What matters most is the fervent desire of the Filipino thinker to dig up the root of our issues so that we can properly address them. In fact, I adhere to a

definition of Napoleon Mabaquiao on Filipino philosophy, saying "Ang isang Pilosopiya ay Pilipino kung ang kamalayang taglay ng namimilosopiya ay Pilipino." He also explained that "ang identidad ng kamalayan ay nagiging Pilipino kung ang layunin nito ay para sa kapakanan ng mga Pilipino". . . .

Raterta: Do you lecture or write using the Filipino language?

Suazo: As to my lecture, the language I use depends on my audience. If my audience are composed of schooled individuals and they come from different linguistic aggrupation, I lecture in English. Most often, we have students who are Filipinos but whose mother tongue is English. Thus, I do not lecture using the Filipino language. If my audience have a little schooling only and most likely could not understand English well, I lecture in Cebuano, not in Filipino. This usually happens in out-of-school engagements, most especially when I give lectures to people in the barangay.

Raterta: Do you think it will be easier for more Filipinos to read our writings if these are written in the Filipino language?

Suazo: If the concern is "easier for 'more' Filipinos," then I believe there are more Filipinos who can understand the Filipino language due to the influence of the television. It is similar with Filipinos understanding English. If they have some schooling, that is at least elementary level graduate, I believe they can understand English. But whether they can converse in English or even in Filipino is a different thing. In some private schools that I know in Cebu, one of their poorest subjects is Filipino, yet they are more proficient in English.

Raterta: How can we as philosophers help in solving the problem that we do not have an acceptable national language that we can use in philosophizing and even in educating our youth?

Suazo: We should stop in insisting the use of Filipino language as the language of Filipino philosophy. The use of the English language is still doing well. Let us stick to it. Not having a national language is not really the issue. Lack of clarity of purpose of why a Filipino is philosophizing is the root of the problem. The kind of philosophizing we are conducting in the country does not respond to our need. It is just a reflection of the academic nature of philosophy in the country, which is just a philosophy in the classroom. . . . At the turn of the nineteenth century, there was already a vibrant philosophizing that happened. Agpalo, in tracing the history of Political Science in the Philippines, found its roots from the Fathers of the Propaganda Movement and of the Revolution. He observes that they approached politics philosophically and normatively, "a major orientation of the tradition of Europe, which was the principal source of their political ideas." That is the kind of philosophizing that we should pursue in the Philippines. . . .

Raterta: Do you want to add something more to what you have already said, as a way of wrapping up our interview?

Suazo: Just one thing. Let us not make language an issue in our endeavor "to enrich and develop Filipino philosophy." Instead, let us emulate what Rizal, Jacinto, and Mabini did during the early years of our republic. They reflected on their situation, and through their discourses, attempted to deal with their problems which resulted to their moral teachings,

which Cesar Adib Majul wrote to have "attempted to weld the Filipinos into more of a community."

Interview with Dr. Jeffrey Ocay

Dr. Jeffrey Ocay is a Professor of Philosophy at Eastern Visayas State University in Tacloban City, Leyte. He has two Bachelor's degrees, Philosophy and Political Science, which he obtained from Holy Name University in Tagbilaran City. Aside from that, Dr. Ocay is also a holder of two master's degrees, one in Philosophy from the University of San Carlos, and another in History from Silliman University. He obtained his doctoral degree in Philosophy from Macquarie University, Sydney, Australia and a post-doctorate from Goethe University Frankfurt am Main, Frankfurt, Germany. Dr. Ocay previously served as Chair of the Philosophy Department and Associate Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at Silliman University. Dr. Ocay also currently serves as a Senior Fellow of the Philippine Public Safety College, Associate Professorial Lecturer of The University of Santo Tomas Graduate School, and Adjunct Lecturer of the Department of Philosophy, Ateneo de Manila University.

Transcript of Ocay's Interview

Raterta: A number of the leading Filipino philosophers, such as Quito, Ferriols, Timbreza and Abulad, are insisting that the use of the Filipino language is a way of enriching and developing Filipino philosophy. What is your take on this idea?

Ocay: While there is no question that using Filipino language (and I understand we mean Tagalog here) in doing philosophy in the Philippines may have practical implications, I think there is no need to force-fit this idea on people's mind. I think it's wise to remember that our manner of thinking and way of behaving are always shaped and reshaped by a specific socio-cultural context. As we can see, we cannot get out of this context for it is in this context that we draw meaning, make sense of the world around us, and articulate our thoughts. As Hegel said, philosophers are products of their own time. Hence, any attempt to transcend one's own time is to lose the opportunity to take advantage of what is available at the moment in order, in this case, to do philosophy more meaningfully.

Raterta: Can you please elaborate more on your point.

Ocay: . . . the vociferous call for the use of Tagalog language in doing philosophy in the Philippines may appear counterintuitive. On the one hand, doing so would mean imposing some kind of an alien standard on an ethnically and linguistically diverse Filipino nation. It is no less than an intrusion on the part of the recipient local culture. While it is true that the Tagalog language allows the ethnically and linguistically diverse Filipino nation to understand each other, I don't think it can meaningfully contribute in doing philosophy in the Philippines for the reason already given. On the other hand, we are already in an age where the exchange of thoughts and ideas is global in nature. And it is for this simple reason that I don't write for Filipino audience alone. I write for global audience. I write for the victims of social injustices around the world.

Raterta: Do you lecture or write using the Filipino language?

Ocay: No. Admittedly, just as many Filipino philosophers out there, I am a product of a time where English is the most convenient and efficient language to use in doing philosophy. And I don't see the use of English language in this case as an instance of western colonization. In fact, as is well known at least in the Philippine context, Renato Constantino, who had been one of the staunchest critics of US imperialism, used English in his writings to critique the repressive system imposed by the West.

Raterta: Do you think it will be easier for more Filipinos to read our writings if these are written in the Filipino language?

Ocay: Given the fact that most Filipinos were educated using the English language, it's hard for me to see why it will be easier for more Filipinos to read philosophy in Tagalog, especially for scholars in the South who can hardly speak Tagalog.

Raterta: Do you lecture or write using the Cebuano language?

Ocay: No.

Raterta: Can you please elaborate why not?

Ocay: I can write and lecture in my own dialect if I want to. However, the context keeps me from doing so. We have to remember that as scholars, we write and lecture for a specific readership and audience. For this reason, we need to consider the context, in addition to identifying the megatrends and recent debates in the particular scholarship in which we are writing in order to make sure that we have a wide readership. Now, if I write about Critical Theory, which, as is well known, is not a familiar terrain for most Filipino scholars, do you think it is practical for me to use the Cebuano language? Also, Silliman is an international university and, in fact, we normally have many international students in our class. Hence, we need to use English in our class discussion all the time.

Raterta: How can we as philosophers help in solving the problem that we do not have an acceptable national language that we can use in philosophizing and even in educating our youth?

Ocay: Again, I don't see this as a problem at all. If we want to convey something to our fellowmen, then we may write in a dialect that they may easily understand. And it doesn't necessarily have to be Tagalog. Hence, if the audience is the people of Iloilo, then it might be appropriate to write in Hiligaynon.

Raterta: Do you want to add something more to what you have already said, as a way of wrapping up our interview?

Ocay: My final random thought on this issue is that if one is happy, comfortable, and productive writing in a particular language (be it Tagalog, or Cebuano, or English), then let's leave her alone. I think no one has the right to preach him a sermon. Indeed, I don't see the need to insist on the use of Tagalog language in doing philosophy in the Philippines.

Discussions

“Arguments about language are usually arguments about politics, disguised and channeled through one of our most distinctive markers of identity.”

- Author: Robert Lane Greene

Language mirrors who and what we are; it provides to a certain extent a glimpse of our so-called personal blueprint. Language reflects Identity. What is identity? Identity, simply put, is who you are; individuality; the condition of being a particular person. In the social sciences, identity is defined as how persons identify themselves as members of a specific group; in psychology, it refers to an individuals' self-esteem or self-image.⁸ What then is the role of language in relation to identity? Language is a vital ingredient in the appreciation of cultural identity. It is the manner by which we communicate our individuality, uniqueness and genuinity. “Language – both code and content – is a complicated dance between internal and external interpretations of our identity”.⁹ Language not only outlines the boundaries of identity, it also establishes clear parameters of what should be or should not be included, who belongs or not, accomplishment or disappointment.¹⁰

The thoughts given by four professors from the south on whether Filipino Philosophy should be done in Filipino or not is definitely something to reflect upon. The interview with the four Philosophy professors can be divided into three general points: 1) their thoughts on the use the Filipino Language (in their case, Tagalog) as a way of cultivating the richness of Filipino Philosophy. 2) Their thoughts whether or not it would be easier for more Filipinos to read philosophical writings if these are written in the Filipino language. 3) Their thoughts on how Filipinos as Philosophy professors, instructors, or students help in solving the problem that Filipinos do not have an acceptable national language that can be used in philosophizing and even in educating our youth.

With regards the four Philosophy professors' thoughts on the use the Filipino Language in doing Philosophy as well as cultivating the richness of Filipino Philosophy in the country, three of them – Maboloc, Suazo, and Oca -- seem to agree in one common thing, that there is "No Need" to use the Filipino language in the method of philosophizing and, for that matter, cultivating an emerging Filipino Philosophy. For one, these three Philosophy professors understand Filipino Language as the "Tagalog" language which people in the Nation's capital practically use as a medium of communication. For Maboloc, language is universal and that insisting the use of Tagalog in the realm of Philosophy in the Philippines would just be another form of establishing a monopoly of language in the discipline. Suazo adds that using Tagalog in Philosophizing and teaching Philosophy in the country is like accepting a language imposed by an internal colonizer. He further reiterated his position of the importance to write and teach Philosophy in English since such language could be a medium of communication that has the potential of unifying the Filipino people.

⁸ Joshua Fishman, ed., *Handbook of Language and Ethnicity*. (Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, 1999).

⁹ Kari Gibson, “English Only Court Cases Involving the US Workplace: The Myths of Language Use and the Homogenization of Bilingual Workers Identities,” *Second Language Studies* 22, no. 2 (2004): pp. 1-60.

¹⁰ Benjamin Baez, “Learning to Forget: Reflections on Identity and Language,” *Journal of Latinos and Education* 1, no. 2 (2002): pp. 123-132.

Ocay also argues that there is no need to force-fit the use of Filipino (Tagalog) in the teaching of Philosophy or in people's mind. Filipinos' manner of thinking and ways of behaving are always shaped and reshaped by specific socio-cultural context. He seems to agree with Maboloc and Suazo that forcing the use of Tagalog in doing Philosophy in non-Tagalog speaking communities may seem to be a form of interference in the receiving local culture even if Filipino (Tagalog) may allow the ethnically and linguistically diverse Filipinos to understand each other. Mercado, the oldest among the four Filipino Philosophy professors, in terms of age and experience in teaching and Philosophizing, has different stand with those of the younger professors. He seems to agree with the influential Philosophy Professors in the capital. He also adds that a Filipino Philosophy can be developed using other languages in the archipelago such as Nakem in Ilocano and Buot in Bisaya.¹¹

Nevertheless, when asked whether or not he lectures or writes in the Filipino language, Mercado answers that he could even if he is trained in English and is more comfortable using the language. Yet, he has manifested that in his teaching experience at the University of Santo Tomas (UST) and in Tagaytay, the audience and the occasion have always demanded on the use of the English language. It is note taking in this aspect that most students at UST and Tagaytay are Tagalog Speakers. Hence, one would not find it difficult to decipher that Maboloc, Suazo, and Ocay have directly answered that they do not teach and write Philosophy in Filipino (Tagalog) considering that they are teaching in big universities in the south with whom most of the people speak Visayan (which also has different forms of variations). Suazo agrees with Mercado that he lectures and writes in English since his audience have demanded it and that most of the university students in the south are more inclined to use English in academic discussions than Filipino (Tagalog). Ocay has also expressed that he does not teach and write in Filipino (Tagalog) since he is a product of a time where English is the language widely used in the realm of Philosophy in many Philippine universities, especially in the South.

In relation to their thoughts whether or not it would be easier for more Filipinos to read philosophical writings if these are written in the Filipino language, the four Philosophy professors have diverse views on the matter. For Mercado, he reiterated his position that it all depends on the readers since some would prefer Tagalog, some would prefer English, and some may prefer other languages. Maboloc answered that is not the case since thinking is a question of intellectual aptitude, and as academics, it would not be advisable to force a form of language to one's readers or students. Suazo's take on the matter is that in the realm of the academe, Philosophical writings in English could be more understandable for people in the realm of Philosophy in the southern part of the country. He then shared his observation that in many private schools and universities in Cebu, students' grades are poorest in Filipino courses/subjects. Hence, it would be quite difficult to Philosophical writings in Tagalog in said part of the country. Ocay also shares this thought. The fact that most Filipinos are educated using the English language, it would be difficult to see if most Filipinos would be more comfortable reading Philosophical writings in Filipino (Tagalog).

Lastly, with regards to their thoughts on how Filipinos as Philosophy professors, instructors, or students help in solving the problem that Filipinos do not have an acceptable national language that can be used in philosophizing and even in educating our youth, Mercado has stressed that any language that would enable a person to convey a message to an audience must be taken

¹¹ Fr. Mercado's take in this matter is not surprising considering that he wrote two books in the realm of Filipino Philosophy in the 1970s – *Elements of Filipino Philosophy* and *Elements of Filipino Ethics*.

as such. As language always has that penchant to evolve, people might as well use their most preferred language. For Mercado, an educator must use a language that is best suited to his students while he also recognize the fact that young children may learn faster with the use of the Mother Tongue. For Maboloc, thinking is about the wiring in one's neural systems, biological and genetic. Hence, there is no such thing as national language for Philosophy. He cites that Heidegger is German and wrote in German but people don't say his philosophy is German. It is the same with Sartre, Camus, Kant, etc.

For Suazo, Filipinos should stop in insisting the use of Filipino language as the language of Filipino philosophy. The use of the English language is still doing well. . Not having a national language is not really the issue. Lack of clarity of purpose of why a Filipino is philosophizing is the root of the problem. The kind of philosophizing Filipinos are conducting in the country does not respond to their need. It is just a reflection of the academic nature of philosophy in the country, which is just a philosophy in the classroom. Language, in the first place, should not be an issue in doing Philosophy in the Philippines. Nevertheless, Ocay never sees such as a problem. He has asserted that if one wants to express something, that person may write in a language, or even dialect, that they may easily understand. And it doesn't necessarily have to be Tagalog. Hence, if the audience is the people of Iloilo, then it might be appropriate to write in Hiligaynon. If the audience is the people in the Eastern part of Leyte, then Waray would be more appropriate and understandable. Ocay further adds that if a person is happy, comfortable, and productive writing or teaching in a particular language, then it is just right and proper to leave him or her to that. There is no need to insist on the use of Tagalog in doing Philosophy in the Philippines.

Conclusions

Philosophy in the Philippines should be delivered as it is, Filipinized (in any of the different Filipino Languages, including English). The assertion that it should be communicated using the Filipino Language (in this case Tagalog) is an outright infringement of Filipino identity. Inclusivity outweighs the attempt for commonality here; the strengthening of the core should be of paramount importance.

The four Philosophy professors from the southern part of the country have consistently agreed that there is no need for Filipino Philosophy instructors and professors to enforce the Filipino language (in this case Tagalog) in doing Philosophy in the country. They are one in their contention that the diversity of the socio-political circumstances of the country are the building blocks of Philosophy here; this is what makes it authentic and relevant. The genuineness nay uniqueness of our Philosophy is embedded in this diversity, which constitutes our identity.

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