LANGUAGE AS PARAMETER FOR STATUS QUO

by:
Maria Ariza C. Roque
Teacher II, Bataan School of Fisheries - SHS

“We dream of Filipinos who passionately love their country . . .” This is one of the most famous opening lines of the Department of Education’s vision. The passion and love of country may mean many ways. There would be the complicated ones like fighting for the right of the Filipinos.

News about territorial disputes or racial discrimination or inhumane treatment of our fellow Filipinos working abroad may be good examples for such. But there are also the simple and subtle type of loving the country. One of which is patronizing the proper use of the language. Every time the month of August would come, the country celebrates the “Buwan ng Wika” (National Filipino Language Month). This is in the hopes of fostering the love of the country through the use of the native language.

It is a known fact that the DepEd establishes the development of the language usage. But not only is Filipino the main focus of the development but also the foreign language commonly taught to all nations, the English language. The DepEd has devised multiple means and ways on enhancing the capacity of every learner to master the use of both Filipino and English. Teachers providing varied drills for teaching both languages are remarkable. But the rivalry of the two languages will encompass not only the four walls of the school but will transcend to the mainstream society as well.

We have had news documentaries of “conyo” language or commonly known as the language of the Manileños where English and Filipino are mixed up in one single sentence. However, one striking observation is that majority of the language used is English rather than Filipino. Why so?
The society has developed the misconception that if a Filipino can speak English, then the person is considered literate and is given high regards in the public. As for those who cannot speak the second language, they are considered less educated much worse branded as the lower level of the masses.

Since when did language become a status symbol for an individual? History may be to be blamed for such an occurrence. Since time immemorial, the Philippine islands have been constantly conquered and enslaved by the foreign race. With this historical feature of the nation, the native who come to master the foreign language are able to communicate better with the colonizers; thus, receiving special treatments and favors in assisting them as translators. This brought the sense that if the natives could communicate with the foreigners then they are considered as belonging to the higher level of the societal strata, but of course still considered as inferior by the colonizing country. Through the passage of time, even if the country has escaped the clutches of colonization, the remnants of the past still lingers in the present. The mind-set that has been into practice and has become accustomed to everyone is not that easily forgotten. Until today, if a person can speak a foreign language fluently, listeners would be in awe and amazement. Giving comments are very good even applauding at some point but that must not be the case. Language is just a means of delivering ideas and messages not a parameter for establishing a status quo. The Filipino language is a very rich language that possesses it very own unique heritage and culture. Nations can still thrive and grow by holding tight to their native language. Very good examples of such are the Asian communities. Countries belonging to the orient seas held tight to their language and yet still rose successfully in economic stability. Why can’t we emulate such examples?

Yes, English language is an important language to master but that does not mean that we are to undermine our own national language. If that would be the case then I guess we are no different from the ancestors who thought poorly of our Filipino personality.
References: