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Family-School-Community Partnerships in Safeguarding Heritage Language

Leticia C. Pagkalinawan

Dept. of Indo-Pacific Languages & Literatures, University of Hawaii at Manoa
1080 Karratti Lane Apt. 4, Honolulu, Hawaii 96822, USA
leticiap@hawaii.edu

Introduction and Background of Study

Based on UNESCO 2003 report, 43% of the world's 7000 languages are threatened or endangered; 50% of the world's languages are losing speakers; 90% of the world's languages may be replaced by the end of the 21st century. As of now, 635 languages are known to be extinct, and 227 of these languages became extinct since 1960. Moreover, 100 (including isolates) of the 420 language families in the world have no surviving members. 414 of these endangered languages have fewer than 10 speakers. 135 of these 414 endangered languages are listed with no known speakers and may therefore be extinct. The other 48 languages that are not included in the set of 414 are listed as "awakening" or "dormant," which means that they have no known speakers but revival efforts are underway (Campbell, Heaton, Okura, Simpson, Smith & Van Way, 2013). On average, a language is lost about every three months, and this is indeed a very alarming reality. If language will continuously diminish, speakers of these languages may also experience the loss of their original ethnic and cultural identity. (Bernard, 1992; Hale, 1998).

For this reason, heritage languages should be preserved and safeguarded to prevent from being lost. When language dies, future generations may lose the ability to completely understand their culture. Without their own language, teachings, customs, oral traditions and others, inherited knowledge can no longer be transmitted among native speakers (Fishman, 1996; Kirkness, 1996). Hence, language preservation must be upheld by every individual, family, school, and community. Every effort must be made to preserve, protect, promote and maintain their own indigenous/heritage languages.

The family, school and community play a very important role in language preservation. They can create productive partnerships to safeguard the existence of heritage languages. The home serves as the venue for the parents to transmit their cultural practices and beliefs to their children. It makes their home language alive. Similarly, school is an institution designed to provide learning opportunities for the students. This also includes the opportunity to learn their own language and culture. Schools can also provide students with opportunities to maintain their heritage and cultural identity (Fishman, 2001). In the same manner, community also provides strong support for family and school to strengthen home languages. As Jackson and Davis stated (2000, p.26), "*Families do not succeed without community support, and communities do not succeed without support from families.*" For generations, an individual's community served an essential role in terms of offering camaraderie and acting as a support system. People who speak the same language and understand culture create a strong community. In this community, they feel a sense of identity, belonging and connectedness. This motivates the people to create more activities and programs that would strengthen their language and culture (Davis, 2000).

This study investigates the role of family, school and community in safeguarding home languages and how they create partnerships in preserving heritage languages, specifically, the languages of Filipino immigrants in Hawaii.

Purpose of the Study

This study was conducted for five important reasons. First, to determine the attitudes of most Filipinos towards their own native language and what causes these attitudes. In this way, positive attitudes can be maintained and strengthened, while negative attitudes can be considered as a basis for creating programs that would develop language appreciation and language use among Filipinos.

People of Filipino descent is said to be the largest ethnic group in Hawaii. In fact, in 2010 Census, Filipinos make up a large and growing part of the State of Hawaii's population.

The table below shows the ranking of non-English languages spoken at home in Hawaii.

Table 1
Ranking of Non-English Languages Spoken at Home

Language	%	Language	%
Tagalog	17.7	Vietnamese	2.3
Japanese	16.7	French	1.8
Ilocano	15.0	German	1.2
Chinese	9.5	Tongan	1.1
Spanish	8.4	Bisayan	1.0
Korean	6.0	Thai	0.5
Other Pacific Languages	4.2	Others	4.8
Samoan	3.6		

Source: US Census Bureau 2006-2008 American Community Survey of Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS); calculations by the Hawaii State Dept. of Business, Economic Development and Tourism

Table 1 shows that among the languages spoken in Hawaii, the Filipino language group, consisted of Tagalog, Ilocano, and Visayan, comprises roughly 35 percent, not to mention the other Filipino languages that may be included in the 4.8 percent such as Bicol and Pampango. The large number of Filipino population in Hawaii makes Hawaii a "home state" of Filipinos in the US.

Secondly, as an instructor of Filipino language and Philippine literature, the results of this study can provide valuable insights to improve her teaching styles and strategies, and make language learning fun and interesting for the students. Consequently, more Filipino students will be encouraged to study the Filipino language and culture.

Thirdly, to provide opportunities to reach out to all Filipinos outside of their home native land, by helping them discover and appreciate their cultural heritage through research and teaching of Filipino language.

Fourth, to encourage the family, school, and community to work together in safeguarding their languages by creating programs that would strengthen, enhance, and promote the use of heritage languages among heritage speakers, not only the Filipinos in Hawaii but also among other ethnic groups in the island.

Lastly, to provide basis for language planning and creating government language policies that protect, support, and strengthen the indigenous languages in Hawaii.

Statement of the Problem

This study is a descriptive analysis on the role of family, school and community in safeguarding the Filipino heritage languages in Hawaii.

Specifically, this study attempts to answer the following questions:

- a) What are the status of Filipino heritage languages in Hawaii in terms of:
 - i. Language preference;
 - ii. Language proficiency; and
 - iii. Language use in various places?
- b) What are the challenges and issues related to the preservation of Filipino languages in Hawaii?
- c) How do family, school, and community work together to safeguard the weakening and loss of Filipino heritage languages in Hawaii.

Theoretical Framework

This study is based on the following theories and concepts formulated by various researchers and writers which have an important impact and implications to the current study.

Language Endangerment

A language is in danger when its speakers cease to use it and pass it on from one generation to the next, which resulted to the loss of new speakers, either adults or children. If a language loses all its native speakers, it becomes a dead language. (Wamalwa & Oluoch, 2013). Thus, language endangerment may happen if there is no transmission of the language to the young generations (Krauss, 2007).

In addition, language endangerment may also be the result of external forces such as military, economic, religious, cultural or educational subjugation, or by internal forces such as the community's negative attitude towards its own language. Crawford (1995, Hymes, 2010) believes that language endangerment and death does not happen in privileged communities. Many indigenous people associate their disadvantaged social position with their culture and believe that their languages are not worth retaining. Such people abandon their languages and culture with the hope of overcoming discrimination, to secure a livelihood, and enhance social mobility, or to assimilate to the global marketplace (UNESCO 2003; Batibo, 2005).

Language Preservation and Language Maintenance

Language preservation and language maintenance are used interchangeably in some studies. In this study, both language preservation and language maintenance will be used to describe the process of preventing language loss and death.

Language preservation is the effort to prevent languages from lost. A language is at risk of being lost when it is no longer taught to younger generations (Fishman 1991; Kirkness 1996; Krauss, 2007). On the other hand, Batibo (2005: 102) defines language maintenance as a situation in which a language maintains its vitality, even under pressure. It is strong enough to contain any pressure that may be coming from a dominant language. Moreover, the number of speakers remains relatively stable and they maintain a strong allegiance to their language.

Related Literature and Studies

Role of Family in Language Preservation

Duckyoung (2013) investigated the parents' attitudes toward their language maintenance and their efforts in maintaining Korean. The findings revealed that parents utilized multiple strategies to maintain their heritage language. This includes talking to their children in heritage language, teaching it to their children, enrolling their children in heritage language class, and providing resources, such as tutors, books, and trips to the home country.

Enstice (2016) explored the relationship between first generation Latino parent perspectives of bilingualism, home language maintenance and loss, and the intersection of culture and identity in an elementary school community. The results showed that participants perceived home language maintenance as an important goal in terms of family communication and relationship building, cultural preservation, and a better future in the professional world. The group also showed home language maintenance strategies that contributed to an additive bilingual environment in the home, highlighting the "Spanish Only" rule within the home space, which was perceived to be the most effective method.

Remennick (2016) explored how the macro-level sociolinguistic processes in Israel - the increasing ethnic power of Russian speakers during the 1990s and the ensuing higher status of the Russian language - have shaped intra-familial linguistic patterns among former Soviet Jewish immigrants. Findings revealed that the language choice of bilingual immigrants and the use of Russian between immigrant parents and children are shaped by their dominant sociolinguistic milieu, core cultural values, and the perceived status of this minority language in Israel.

The current study also explored the perceptions, opinions, and attitudes of family members in using Filipino heritage language/s at home.

The Role of School in Language Preservation

Rogers' review (2016) on "Robert Calfee And Melanie Sperling: On Mixed Methods. Approaches to Language and Literacy Research" confirms the importance of using mixed methods and approaches in teaching language in the classroom. He believes that language springs from the basic principle "that classroom teaching and curriculum have to engage with students' own experiences and discourses, which are increasingly defined by cultural and sub-cultural diversity and different language backgrounds and practices that come with this diversity" (Hull and Nelson 2009, p. 203).

Rudin (2016) designed a language renewal program at the Macy, Nebraska Public School. The purpose of this program is to preserve Omaha, a native of American Indian language and a candidate for language extinction. Findings showed that many teachers at the school believe that the program has led to better attitudes and academic performance for at least some students. The program may enhance Omaha cultural survival and enrich the educational experience of the children.

Ure's study (2016) on using mother tongue in education gives positive results. She came up with three reasons for using mother tongue in education including preservation of cultural traditions, development of creative thought, and links between school and home.

Cantoni (1997) presented the need for systematic and school-wide support for the students who use their indigenous languages in school. In the same manner, students who do not learn the languages at home will be given appropriate instruction in the same languages.

The Role of Community in Language Preservation

The following studies describe the roles of community in language preservation:

In Burnay's study (1997; 2012) on "Personal Thoughts on Indigenous Language Stabilization," she argued the need to develop the right strategies for identifying the different size of language communities in connection to the amount and variety of language use. She also presented ways on how the community work in partnerships with the family and school to stabilize indigenous/heritage languages.

Kelleher (2010) emphasized in her paper that although language loss can be devastating to a community, it need not be inevitable. Many dedicated people throughout the world have accepted the challenge of reversing language loss in their communities so that their languages may still be spoken by future generations. In the United States, hundreds of programs have been created to revitalize indigenous languages.

Hinton (2001) describes the many different methods that such programs use, from informal gatherings, to bilingual classes in schools, to immersion programs in schools and camps.

Batibo's study (2008) expresses frustration on the government's lack of recognition towards most African languages such as the Naro language. Most African language policies tend to favor the ex-colonial languages and the major indigenous languages. Consequently, speakers of the minority languages find it difficult to use them in public domains such as primary education, local administration or customary courts because the use of this language is not included in the national policies. Due to the action of ACALAN (Academy of Languages), African government was forced to review their language policies, of which many of them were made during the time of colonization (ACALAN, 2008, Batibo, 2008).

Partnerships of Family, School in Community in Language Preservation

The following studies describe the partnerships of family, school and community in safeguarding heritage languages.

McCarty, Watahomigie, Yamamoto and Zepeda (1997) presented one model for connecting school, community and university resources to strengthen indigenous languages. This is the American Indian Language Development (AILDI). The study provided recommendations for developing similar institutes and suggested specific strategies for strengthening indigenous language.

Olena's study (2016) gives an in-depth view at the heritage language maintenance and loss among the children of immigrant professionals from Eastern Europe residing in the USA. Based on semi-structured interviews with 50 married mothers and fathers, she explored the following: (1) parental attitudes related to heritage language transmission to their children; (2) parental efforts to transmit heritage language; (3) barriers to heritage transmission and maintenance; and (4) parental adjustments in response to children's diminishing heritage language skills.

Seong Man and Mela (2007) found out that Korean immigrant parents are very positive toward their children's heritage language maintenance. Korean parents believe that their children's high level of proficiency in the Korean language would help their children keep their cultural identity as Koreans, ensure them better future economic opportunities, and give them more chances to communicate with their grandparents efficiently.

Methodology

This study makes use of an eclectic approach in gathering of data. Interview and survey comprise the main source of data collection. Observation and field notes also provided very significant data.

Participants are all pure Filipino and Filipino heritage. The term “Filipino” refers to have parents who are both Filipino, while Filipino heritage participants have either a Filipino mother or vice-versa. Participants are mixed of working parents, unmarried professionals, working and non-working students. Most of the participants have been in the US from 5 to 15 years, and some are born and raised in the US.

Out of 45 participants that were selected randomly, only 30 responded to the survey, and only 12 agreed to be interviewed. Interview lasted for 20 to 30 minutes. Questions asked during the interviews were: “How do you strengthen your heritage language in your own family?” “How do your school and community support the preservation and maintenance of your heritage language?” “What are your perceptions regarding family-school, and community partnerships in safeguarding your heritage languages.

There are 3 stages of this study, and these are:

1. *Preparation Stage:*

The preparation stage consists of the selection and coordination with the prospective participants and the design of survey-checklist. Personal information taken from the survey-checklist was withheld and did not use in the study

2. *Data Gathering Stage:*

The actual conduct of study takes place in this stage. All collected data came from audio recording of participants’ talk during the interview, observation, survey-checklist, observation, library work, and from the researcher’s personal notes or journal.

3. *Data Analysis Stage:*

The data collected during the interviews were transcribed and analyzed. Numerical figures were tallied; frequencies and percentiles were computed. Data taken from observation, field notes and other sources were analyzed and were given intelligible interpretations. Findings reveal the (1) status of Philippine heritage languages in Hawaii in terms of language preference, language proficiency and places where these languages are used; (2) the issues and challenges in preserving the Philippine heritage languages in Hawaii; (3) the role of family, school and community in language preservation; and (4) the way family, school, and community create productive partnerships in safeguarding the Philippine heritage languages in Hawaii.

Findings

The status of Filipinos in Hawaii

Language preference. Language preference refers to the kind of language the participants preferred use when talking to other Filipinos.

Table 2
Language Preference of Filipinos When Talking to Other Filipinos

Language Preference	Number of Respondents	Percentage	Rank
English	7	23%	2
Ilocano	5	16%	3
Tagalog	4	13%	4
Bisaya	1	3%	5
Mixed (English with home language/s)	12	43%	1
Total:	30	100	

Table 2 shows that participants, when talking with fellow Filipinos, 43% of them preferred mixed of English with their heritage language/s. Mostly are English and Tagalog, English and Ilocano, or English and Tagalog and Ilocano. The other participants preferred complete English with 23%, Ilocano and Tagalog with 16% and 13% respectively, and Visayan (Waray) with 3% only.

Language speaking proficiency. Language speaking proficiency refers to the ability to understand and respond appropriately to the given questions, give instructions and express feelings and opinions in the target language.

Participants have rated their heritage language proficiency from 1 to 5 based on the following descriptions:

- | | | |
|---------------------|------------------------|--------------------|
| 5 - Very Proficient | 3 - Average Proficient | 1 - Not Proficient |
| 4 - Proficient | 2 - Less Proficient | |

Table 3
Language Proficiency of Participants Based Personal Assessment

Proficiency in Heritage Language	No. of Responses	Percentage	Rank
5 - Very Proficient	5	15%	3
4 - Proficient	8	26.6%	2
3 - Average Proficient	10	33.3%	4
2 - Less profient	5	15%	1
1 - Not proficient	2	6.6%	5
Total:	30	100	

Table 3 demonstrates participants' personal assessment of their heritage language speaking proficiency. The data shows that almost three-fourth (3/4) of the total number of participants rated themselves as average to proficient and very proficient in speaking their heritage language/s. Five participants said that they are less proficient and only one said of not being proficient at all.

The reasons of self-rate level of heritage language speaking proficiency. The 23 participants who responded from average to very proficiency enumerated some possible reasons that enhance their heritage language proficiency. The following reasons are listed down based on most responses to least responses.

- Their heritage language is the language spoken at home most of the time.
- Watching Filipino/Tagalog shows in The Filipino channel (TFC).

- Co-workers speaks the same heritage language/s.
- Attending Filipino /or Ilocano courses in community colleges or university.
- Neighborhood speaks the same heritage language.
- Attendance and participation to the cultural activities organized by the Filipino communities such as Filipino fiesta, Independence Day Celebration, Filipino movies, picnics, Filipino Christmas Celebration, Santacruzán, etc.
- Attendance and participation to the cultural activities organized by the Filipino/Tagalog and Ilocano classes such as picnics, dramafests, movie showings, etc.
- Regular visits to the Philippines.

Various Places Where Filipino Heritage Language/s is Spoken

Table 4

Distribution of the Use of Heritage Language/s in Various Places

Different Places Where HL is spoken	No. of Responses	Percentage	Rank
1. Home	22	73%	1
2. School	13	43.3%	2
3 Church	7	23.3%	4
4 Work Place	10	33.3%	3
5. Community (neighborhood)	9	30%	5
6 Market/Mall	3	10%	6
7. Restaurant/Food Court	1	3.3%	7.33
8. Recreation Center	1	3.3%	7.33
9. Others (Bus stop)	1	3.3%	7.33

Based on the distribution of the use of heritage language/s in various places as shown in Table 4, most participants said that they speak their heritage language/s at home. More than half of them agreed that school gives them opportunities to speak their heritage language/s, 50% confirmed that they are able to use their heritage language/s in their work place. Those nine participants who live in Filipino neighborhood speak their heritage language/s almost all the time, and 7 participants speak their heritage language/s in the church. Filipinos are very religious people and for that reason, it is common to find Filipinos serving in the church. Meanwhile, 10 % of the participants also mentioned market/mall, and the least number of participants rated recreation center, restaurant and bus stop with 3.3%.

Challenges and Issues in Preserving Heritage/s as Perceived by the Participants

Most of the participants agreed that home is the best place to preserve and maintain heritage language/s. The home is an agent where cultural practices and beliefs are learned and fostered. Parents should act as transmitters of language and culture. However, due to financial hardships, parents are forced to work and left their children under the care of their parents or relatives. This resulting to less communication and supervision given to their children. Despite this, children still learn their language through their grandparents, and /or relatives. Participants A (2 participants) were born and raised in the US and yet they appeared to have an average and above average level of speaking proficiency. According to them, they owed it from their grandmother who served as their nanny from the time they were born. Participant B (another working working-parent) argued that even he has lesser time for

family bonding, he set a strict rule in the family that forces them to be proficient of their language. He restricted his family members to use any languages except their own native language at home. His family migrated in the US when their children were about 7.9 and 11 years old. After almost 18 years in the US, their children remain fluent in their language. Unfortunately, Participants C (2 parent-participants) denied the necessity of their children to become fluent of their heritage language. Similarly, Participant D (another parent-participant) never taught their children to learn their native language when they migrated to Hawaii. Instead, she pushed their children to speak good English. She only used Tagalog or Ilocano when talking to her Filipino friends or co-workers. She doesn't see the relevance and the benefits of becoming proficient in their language because most Filipinos in the US speak and understand English, and even when they go to the Philippines, their relatives also speak English with them. In contrast, Participant E wished that her children could speak good Filipino language and that's the reason why she sent all of them to school that teaches Filipino language and literature. But despite that, their children never learn the language. They seemed to be disinterested and instead, they shifted to what they think a "more prestigious language" to learn such as Spanish, Japanese and French. Moreover, Participant F believes that by learning her parents' language, she can also discover her cultural identity, develop cultural awareness and nationalism, and create a link with her Filipino brothers and sisters all over the world by sharing the same language and culture. However, she expressed frustrations with some Filipinos in Hawaii who try to disassociate themselves with their language and their Filipino roots. They seem to feel inferior of their race because the first group of Filipinos who migrated to Hawaii was planters, farmers, poor, and uneducated. Speaking their language would make them like those early Filipino migrants who endured hardships, discriminations, and harassment. They feared that they may also experience the same thing from their friends and from non-Filipino peers. On the other hand, Participant G verbalized his frustrations about the way most Filipinos promote Philippine languages. They only focus on promoting the Tagalog and Ilocano languages, while neglecting the speakers of other Philippine languages such as Visayan and Bicol, who also contributed to the whole Filipino population of Hawaii as well as in other places in the US. Due to the lack of support from people in the community and from the Hawaii government, speakers of these languages/s lose the chance of learning and speaking their heritage language/s, which may later result to their language loss. He suggested that aside from the majority languages in Hawaii, which is Ilocano and Tagalog, other Philippine languages such as Bicol, Pampango, Visayan, should be given equal treatment and enough exposures. In this way, the 3rd and 4th generations of speakers of these languages may still learn their language and cultural heritage.

Family-School-Community Partnerships in Safeguarding Heritage Languages

Table 2 demonstrates the connecting bond between family, school and community in safeguarding heritage language/s. Based on the overall responses, all participants agreed that family, school, and community can work together to preserve heritage language/s and safeguard the loss of endangered languages. The family provides an avenue for learning values, beliefs, cultural practices and language. The school, which is considered as second home and extension of family, nurtures the positive values and practices learned at home. Understanding the different cultural background and ethnic language/s of the students, make easier for the teachers to relate with them and better address their needs. In turn, teachers can create lessons and classroom activities that could facilitate better understanding of their cultural heritage including their own indigenous languages. On the other hand, community can provide support by cultural activities and financial resources, support services,

collaboration and monitoring. They can create programs and events that enhance cultural awareness and language appreciation. This is the way family, school and community should work together to help Filipinos and other ethnic groups preserve, promote, protect, and maintain their heritage language/s.

Conclusion

Based on the analysis of data, the following conclusions were drawn:

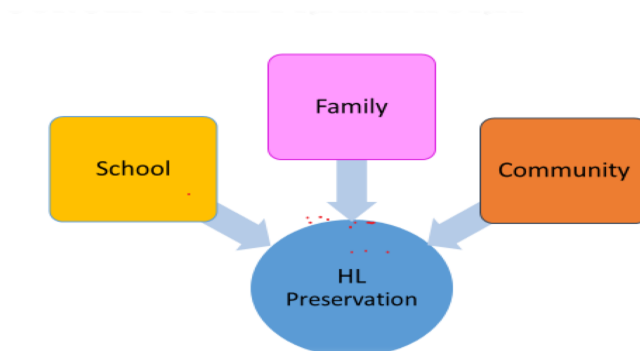


Figure 1. Family-School-Community Partnerships in Safeguarding Heritage Languages

- Most Filipinos in Hawaii prefer to speak mixed languages (English and their heritage language/s) in talking with fellow Filipinos.
- Participants who rated themselves proficient to very proficient in heritage language/s believe that they acquired their proficiency by mingling themselves with more people who speak the same language such as at home, by attending cultural events, watching the TFC (The Filipino Channel), and at work place.
- Filipino heritage languages, specifically Ilocano and Tagalog, are far from being endangered and loss in Hawaii because these languages are spoken by many Filipinos, mostly at home and in various places in Hawaii.
- Although there are parents and children of young generations may seem to be disinterested in their heritage language/s, but there are still plenty of them who wanted to learn their cultural background and heritage language/s.
- The home is the best place to learn, maintain and strengthen Filipino heritage language/s. School and community also provide support for developing cultural awareness and appreciation of heritage language/s.
- Other Philippine languages other than Ilocano and Tagalog are endangered of being lost because only few speak those language, while most support for creating classes and cultural activities are given to Tagalog and Ilocano speakers only.
- Family, school, and community work together in some many ways to preserve and revitalize heritage languages.

Recommendations

- Encourage more Filipinos to speak their heritage language/s when they talk to other fellow Filipinos who come from the same ethnic group.
- Parents should set a good example of a true Filipino who always upholds good Filipino values and practices, and loves to learn and speaks his native language.

- Attend and participate in many cultural events such as watching Filipino movies, Filipino fiestas and Christmas celebrations, and others, and make these activities known to all Filipinos in Hawaii, if possible.
- Local newspapers in Hawaii should allot some pages that are written in different heritage languages. Likewise, encourage more Filipinos to write reading materials in Filipino, Ilocano or in other Philippine language.
- To have more community colleges and universities that offer Filipino, Ilocano and Visayan languages.
- Further studies should be made concerning speakers of other Philippine languages from other islands of Hawaii.
- Conduct an in-depth study of language preservation and language loss in young children, around 5 to 12 years.

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