

TRENDS IN PHILIPPINE LINGUISTICS

Papers of the
First Philippine Linguistics Congress

1978

FOREWORD

Indeed it seems like "better late than never" as this set of ten papers finally gets published five years after they were read at the First Philippine Linguistics Congress in May 1978. But the five years since, rather than diminish the import of the papers, have even proven their value as baseline references for theoretical and applied linguistics in the Philippines.

The First Philippine Linguistics Congress was organized primarily for such — the presentation of linguistic studies which reflect scientific research to date and upon which linguists working on Philippine languages could build conceptually towards more incisive and more comprehensive studies. With the Second Congress the tradition was set, and now, the holding of the Congress has become a continuing commitment of the Department of Linguistics and Asian Languages of UP to the growth of Philippine Linguistics.

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Dean Nemenzo and friends, I want to take on the statement of Dean Nemenzo that we are now in the College of Arts and Sciences. Being an old timer and an old-fashioned student of disciplines, the College of Arts and Sciences (College of Liberal Arts in another terminology) is the University. But until recently all kinds of units are being added to it which have nothing to do with university studies.

Now, I want to congratulate the organizing members of this Linguistic Conference, but I doubt if they made the right choice of a keynote speaker. I have been retired for more than fifteen years, and I am many years behind the trends in Philippine linguistics.

I suppose when we speak of trends we cannot avoid thinking of where the trends came from. That path I still remember. Linguistics is very new in the Philippines. As a matter of fact, until the turn of the century the discipline was a part of philology. And until now the approach of some scholars is still philologically oriented. The beginnings of Philippine linguistics we owe to the good old *padres* who wrote vocabularies, dictionaries, manuals, grammars, exercises, and so forth of the different Philippine languages. These Spanish missionaries were trained when the Old World was enjoying the bounties of Renaissance when emphasis in the disciplines was on the "classical" languages. And their writings on Philippine languages bore the stamp of this orientation, first based on Latin and later on Spanish. Some of you may be familiar with this.

There may be a few things, however, with which you are not acquainted. For instance, as early as 1876 Hendrik Kern, the famous Dutch Orientalist and one of the pioneers in Malayo-Polynesian linguistics, wrote on a composition and comparison of what are called ligatures of Tagalog and Kawi, also known as Old Javanese or literary Javanese. His paper entitled *Over zogenaamde verbindingsklanken in het tagala en wat daarmee overeenkomt in't Kawi* was published in the *Bijdragen*, pages 138-157. Before that, during the years 1836-39, the famous German scholar, Wilhelm von Humboldt, wrote a three-volume work on the Kawi language of Java *Ueber die Kawi Sprache auf der*