
| RESEARCH ARTICLE

Kapampangan People and Their Language: A Case Study

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| ABSTRACT

This study aims to understand the Kapampangan people and their language settling at the heart of Central Luzon or Region III in the Philippines. This study attempts to address the origin of the Kapampangan people, their language and their influences on the Filipino culture as a whole. In spite of the fact that the province of Pampanga is in the midst of the Tagalog, Pangasinense and Ilocano speaking provinces, it remains united in language and, up to this date, used by the native Kapampangans. They believed that it is a member of the Malayo-Polynesian branch of the Austronesian language family and is also known as Pampango, Capampangan, Pampangueño or Amanung Sisuan. The province also declared that once Spain used it as the seat of the Spanish government in the Philippines. According to some historians, the people of Pampanga played an important role in the campaign for reforms and independence during Spanish, American and Japanese colonization. Kapampangans are very proud of their origin and language that remains the bedrock of their existence. Today, the Province of Pampanga is considered one of the fastest-growing provinces in the Philippines, notwithstanding it was devastated by the eruption of Mt. Pinatubo in 1991. Perhaps the behavior and culture of the Kapampangans that made them bounce back from nature's wrath and, in a short span of time, fully recover and on the track again. The objective of the study is to understand the Kapampangan and its language, origin and development. In particular, it seeks to answer the following: What are the sources of the Kapampangan language? What makes the language unique among other languages? What are the roles of the Kapampangan during colonization? Why the Kapampangan language is an endangered language? The finding of the study: The provincial government of Pampanga, in coordination with the Department of Education, must revive the Pampangan language in all schools in Pampanga as a medium of instruction for Kinder to Grade 12. In coordination with all the cities and towns, the provincial government of Pampanga should practice as part of their official communication the Pampangan language. The provincial government of Pampanga must create a center for Kapampangan Studies. If both Kapampangans make it compulsory to converse in Pampangan The scope of the research concentrates on the Kapampangan language. It will be presented through available records, media interviews and historical data. Social scientists, in particular, have made wide use of qualitative research methods to examine contemporary real-life situations and provide the basis for the application of ideas and extension of methods.

| KEYWORDS

Kapampangan, Colonization, Province of Pampanga, Amanung Sisuan

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1. Introduction

Many Kapampangan scholars studied the language in their able desire to understand and know more about the people and its language. Its unique origin and how this evolved from its own language in spite of being in the middle of other languages like the Tagalog, Pangasinense and Ilocano speaking people. The aim of the study is to again re-study its origin and look back from its inception as per the research of other scholars in the field of linguistics and history. It is believed that the early Kapampangan settlers along the river banks of the Rio Grande de la Pampanga in the Island of Luzon of the Philippine Archipelago were descendants of Malayan pioneers from the Malay Peninsula and from Singarak Lake of West Sumatra. These Malayan adventurers brought their advanced civilization, their unique culture, their traditions and a language of their own and founded their dynasty based on the social foundations of freedom and economic well-being. The similarities in ancient customs, clothing, religion, food and languages validate the connection between Malays and Kapampangans. However, contact with other nationalities made it

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difficult to preserve the purity of both languages and culture over the years. Bahasa Malay and culture had been influenced by people from China, Portugal, Spain, Great Britain, Netherlands, India and other foreigners. It has been a long-held theory that the ancestors of the Kapampangans came from Indonesia, perhaps in Sumatra or Java.

2. Method

The study explores the Capampangan and its language and its origin and development. In particular, it seeks to answer the following:

1. What are the sources of the Kapampangan language?
2. What makes the language unique among other languages?
3. What are the roles of the Kapampangan during colonization?
4. Why the Kapampangan language is an endangered language?

The scope of the research concentrates on the Kapampangan language. It will be presented through available records, media interviews and historical data

A case study is appropriate for this study because researchers have used the case study research method for many years across a variety of disciplines. Social scientists, in particular, have made wide use of this qualitative research method to examine contemporary real-life situations and provide the basis for the application of ideas and extension of methods. Researcher Robert K. Yin defines the case study research method as an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident. Multiple sources of evidence are used (Yin, 1984, p. 23).

3. Results and Discussion

It is very interesting to delve into the study of language, especially when it also touches the culture and behavior of the people. Kapampangans are unique in their way as the language forms part of the eight major languages of the Philippines; according to Agoncillo, 1990, there are more than a hundred languages and dialects in the Philippines, eight of which may be considered major languages. They are Tagalog (made the basis of the National Language), Iloko, Pangasinan, Pampangan, Sugbuhanon, Hiligaynon, Samarnon or Samar-Leyte, and Magindanao. This claim made the Kapampangan language into the anal of Philippine history.

3.1 Sources of Kapampangan language

The ancient Filipinos, which includes the Kapampangans according to Agoncillo, 1990, had a culture that was basically Malayan in culture and form. They had written languages that traced their origin to the Austronesian parent-stock and used them as media of daily communication and as a vehicle of their expression of their literary moods. Among the Philippine languages, Tagalog and Pampangan show a close affinity to the Malay language, whether Bahasa Indonesia or that of Malaya. The examples given below could be proof to show that, with such similarities of words used as indicated, Kapampangans must have really immigrated to Luzon island from Indonesia.

Indonesian - Kapampangan - English

Abu	- abu	- ash
aku-	- acu	- I
anak-	- anac	- child
anac laki-laki	-anac a lalaqui	- boy
angin -	angin-	wind
angkut -	yacut -	carry away
api	- api -	fire
asin	- asin	- salt
atap	- atap	- roof
babi	- babi	- pig
bangun	- mibangun	- get up
basah	- basa	- wet, wetness

batu -	batu -	stone
bistic -	bistig -	steak
bulan	- bulan -	moon, month
cincin -	singsing -	ring
cinta -	sinta -	love
datang -	datang -	arrive

3.2 Uniqueness of Capampangan language

Around circa 10th century AD – 1571 AD that is before the Spanish conquest of Lúsung Guo and coming after the creation of the Province of Pampanga in 1571, Kapampangans used their own indigenous writing system, known as *Kulitan* or *Sulat Kapampangan*, the Augustinian missionaries to studied the Kapampangan language together with its indigenous writing system.

As late as 1699, more than a hundred years after the Spanish conquest, Spanish continued to study the Kapampangan language together with its indigenous writing system, that has brought up a Romanized orthographic system introduced by the Spaniards, known as the Bacolor Orthography or *Súlat Bacúlud*, being referred as *Tutûng Kapampárgan* (English: "genuine Kapampangan") due to the great number of written volume of Kapampangan works written in this orthography, this contains 'Q and C' this includes F Ñ and LL.

What was the Kapampangan language like in the early days, before it absorbed Tagalog, Spanish, and English influences? Fortunately for us, 17th – and – 18th - century Spanish missionaries documented it for future generations when they wrote Kapampangan dictionaries and grammar books. Their purpose was actually to prepare newly arrived missionaries from Spain before they were sent to Pampanga, but they have unwittingly done all of us a big favour by preserving not just Kapampangan words in their pristine form but also valuable anthropological data about our ancestors' lifestyle, belief system, values and yes, even sex life.

3.3 Kapampangan roles during the colonization

3.3.1 Spain, America and Japan

In 1571, the Spanish conquistadores heard of the Kapampangan progressive civilization when their conquest of the Maynilad (Manila) and Tondo kingdoms was accomplished. The Spaniards came upon the Kapampangan people with a rich culture, literature and an alphabet of their own. The Kapampangans were described then to be the most warlike and prominent ethnic group in the Philippines. To defend themselves from Spanish invasion, they fortified the mouths of the rivers leading to their territories. Ancient Pampanga's territorial area used to include portions of the provinces of Bataan, Bulacan, Nueva Ecija, Pangasinan, Tarlac and Zambales in the big Island of Luzon of the Philippine Archipelago. The province derived its name from the Kapampangan words "Pangpang ilog", meaning "riverside", where the early Malayan settlements were concentrated along the Rio Grande de la Pampanga (Great Pampanga River) until such time the adventurous Malayan settlers expanded their domain into the hinterlands of the Kapampangan region.

Pampanga was the first province on the island of Luzon inaugurated by the Spaniards. It was founded on December 11, 1571, in the same year, the City of Manila was established by Spanish Governor Miguel Lopez de Legaspi as the seat of the national government. For governmental control and taxation purposes, the Spanish authorities subdivided the province into towns (pueblos), which were further subdivided into districts (barrios) and, in some cases, into royal and private estates.

In the year 1762, after the fall of Manila to the English invaders, Governor-General Simon de Anda retreated and made Bacolor the seat of the Spanish Government. It was the seat of government from October 6, 1762, to May 30, 1764, and practically served as the Capital of the Philippines. Thru a decree of the King of Spain on November 9, 1765, Bacolor became "Villa de Bacolor", one of the only three villas in the Philippines and was granted a Special Coat of Arms. Simon de Anda organized an army of natives with which he finally recaptured Manila from the British invaders.

Again in 1660-1661, the Kapampangans who suffered the most from the two Spanish systems of taxation called Polo and Vandala, under the command of a master-of-camp of the King of Spain, Francisco Maniago of Masicu, staged rebellions against Spanish authorities. The Kapampangans joined the revolution against Spain and against the United States of America more than two centuries later. Pampanga was one of the first eight Philippine provinces that initiated the Philippine Revolution against Spain. The rebels organized a provincial government with Don Tiburcio Hilario as revolutionary governor. Monetary contributions were collected from wealthy Kapampangans. Don Manuel Escaler of Apalit was one of the biggest financial contributors to the treasury of the Philippine Revolution. The more than two centuries of Spanish rule that turned extremely abusive, corrupt, and exploitative

drove Kapampangans, by nature a hospitable and peace-loving people, to even organize their own provincial government headed by a revolutionary governor.

Many Kapampangans joined up in the struggle for Philippine Independence, and many of their leaders were arrested, tortured or executed by the Spanish authorities. It was in what is now Angeles City where the seat of the short-lived Philippine Republic was established by General Emilio Aguinaldo.

In World War II, the Kapampangans answered the call of duty to their motherland, and with their Filipino brothers and American allies, they fought the Japanese Imperial Forces in Bataan and in Corregidor. After the temporary defeat of the Allied Forces in the Philippines, an armed resistance group called Hukbalahap (Nation's Army Against Japan) was organized by Pampanga peasant leaders led by Luis Taruc and Casto Alejandrino in order to fight the Japanese Imperial Forces until the liberation of the Philippines by the Allied Forces led by General Douglas MacArthur who made good his famous promise, "I shall return" when he escaped to Australia before the invading Japanese Imperial Forces set foot on Philippine soil.

3.3.2 Endangering Kapampangan language

The threat of the extinction of the language is the most concern of many Kapampangans, just like any other language, which basically permeated by the injection of the sister language the "Tagalog" by the adoption of the government to unite all the Filipinos by one dialect. The interest of the government perhaps is to gain solidarity among Filipinos and rallied them to continuous progress and not to divide the people. Let us not forget that each culture of Filipinos has its own root and rich history. The modern Kapampangans, needless to state that they, overlook or set aside the importance of language to the younger Kapampangans people. The sister language Tagalog continue to invade the very heart of the Kapampangans rich historical foundation and little by little continue to change its alphabets and now threaten its existence. One study commented that the total Philippine population are: Tagalog 29 percent, Cebuano Bisayan 21.17 percent, Ilocano 9.31 percent, Hiligaynon Bisayan 9.11 percent, Bicolano 5.69 percent, Waray Bisayan 3.81 percent, **Kapampangan 2.9 percent** and Pangasinan 1.01 percent. Language experts are agreed that languages spoken by less than 300,000 persons are endangered. They can become extinct soon enough. They see that within 20 years, both Kapampangan and Pangasinan will no longer be spoken by a native speaker. "In practical terms, it will remove the check-and-balance which has promoted freedom at various times in history. As Nick Joaquin noted in *The Aquinos of Tarlac*, Tagalogs and Kapam-pangans, who occupy the Luzon heartland, have, together, kept stability in the islands. The disappearance of Kapampangans will put the most strategic parts of Luzon entirely in the hands of one group, leaving the field more susceptible to dictators. History has shown that Kapampangans have stood for liberty at key points in history, from Macabebe to King Soliman, who fought the Spaniards at Bankusay in 1571, to revolutionaries who secured two rays (for Pampanga and Tarlac) out of eight in the flag.

This can be gleaned when one happens to visit the store, supermarkets, malls, schools in Pampanga; the medium of discourse is Tagalog, even for both native-speaking Kapampangans. This is very alarming for the Kapampangans, who promotes the preservation of the local language; if they do not do something, the predictions will become true in the future about the extinction of the Pampangan language.

In 2004 Dr. Jose P. Dacudao, founder and president of the Save Our Languages Through Federalism (Solfed), Inc. Foundation, made a presentation to oppose the language bill filed in the House of Representatives to make Filipino (otherwise also called Pilipino at various times) the medium of instruction in all schools. One of his points was that enactment of the bill would mean the death of the other Filipino languages. Solfed again presented to Congress its opposition when in the Thirteenth Congress the bill was again revived.

It is not to discount the noble interest of the leaders in trying to unite the Filipinos by one language, because according to some experts, it is also the source of disagreement and misunderstanding among the people as Agoncillo, 1990, puts it, there was no sense of national unity. As a consequence, there was a wide communication gap between the Filipinos of Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao. There was a multitude of major and minor ethnolinguistic groups but no lingua franca, much less a national language, to communicate and bind one another. In doing the unification, some languages are affected and even threatened by extinction.

4. Conclusion

The objective of the study is to understand the Kapampangan and its language, origin and development. In particular, it seeks to answer the following: What are the sources of the Kapampangan language? What makes the language unique among other languages? What are the roles of the Kapampangan during colonization? Why the Kapampangan language is an endangered language? The finding of the study: The provincial government of Pampanga, in coordination with the Department of Education, must revive the Pampangan language in all schools in Pampanga as a medium of instruction for Kinder to Grade 12. In coordination with all the cities and towns, the provincial government of Pampanga should practice as part of their official communication the Pampangan language. The provincial government of Pampanga must create a center for Kapampangan Studies. If both Kapampangans make it compulsory to converse in Pampangan

The scope and delimitations of the research concentrates on the Kapampangan language. It will be presented through available records, media interviews and historical data.

The study is deemed significant to the people of Pampanga to become aware of the historical data about the Kapampangan language.

Philippine languages must be preserved for future generations. It is the foundation and identity of Philippine society. Let us not destroy the bedrock of Filipino identity, the very heart of the Philippine culture, by forcing one language, or we propose solidarity among Filipinos by losing one or two or all the languages. The government introduced a law which is R.A. 10157, "An Act Institutionalizing the Kindergarten Education into the Basic Education System and Appropriating funds therefor", to wit: SEC. 4. *Institutionalization of Kindergarten Education.* – *Kindergarten education is hereby institutionalized as part of basic education, and for the school year 2011-2012 shall be implemented partially, and thereafter, it shall be made mandatory and compulsory for entrance to Grade 1 and SEC. 5. Medium of Instruction.* – *The State shall hereby adopt the mother tongue-based multilingual education (MTB-MLE) method. The learner's mother tongue shall be the primary medium of instruction for teaching and learning at the kindergarten level.* The law recognizes the importance of having Filipino children learn their local language for their better understanding and comprehension. It is my observation that language may be learned by the learners in school if it is included in the curricula. This will result in multi-language acquisition. This means that the original language will stay as a cornerstone of the person and acquiring another language by means of communication with other people like Tagalog and English or Spanish. This will result in the protection of the language like the Pampangan language of the Kapampangan and other ethnic languages in the Philippines. Kapampangan parents should be zealous about teaching their children the language, just like their parents who took the cuddle to teach them to learn the Pampangan language. If they want to preserve the Pampangan language to pass on to future Kapampangan generations, the duty lies on their shoulders.

Attention may also be invited to the researchers and scholars of public administration, political science and linguistics to conduct a parallel study that supports and enhance the assumption about the need to study the origin of the Kapampangan language.

5. Recommendations

The following are to be observed in order not to endanger the Kapampangan language:

1. In coordination with the Department of Education, the provincial government of Pampanga must revive the Pampangan language in all schools in Pampanga as a medium of instruction for Kinder to Grade 12.
2. The provincial government of Pampanga, in coordination with all the cities and towns, should practice as part of their official communication the Pampangan language.
3. The provincial government of Pampanga must create a center for Kapampangan Studies.
4. If both Kapampangans make it compulsory to converse in Pampangan

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