

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Speech Community

Kapampangan, also known as Pampango, Pampangan and Pampangueño, is an Austronesian language of the Philippine type, spoken by some 900,000 people living in the central plain of Luzon, the Republic of the Philippines. The center of this speech community is the Province of Pampanga but Kapampangan is also spoken beyond the province's political boundaries. A substantial portion of the Province of Tarlac consists of Kapampangan speaking communities, and small portions of Nueva Ecija, Bulacan, and Bataan are likewise Kapampangan. In addition, of course, there are scattered enclaves elsewhere--in Manila (e.g. "barrio Kapampangan" in Paco), in Mindanao, in Honolulu, etc.).

1.1.1 Multilingualism

In the Kapampangan speech community it is still possible to find many speakers who are essentially monolingual. The more common case, however, (at least in my limited experience) was that of various degrees of bilingualism and multilingualism. While I encountered no one with a speaking ability in Spanish, I feel certain such people exist. The vast majority of my

friends and acquaintances were trilingual, speaking Kapampangan and Tagalog very skillfully and English quite well indeed or at least to some extent.

There was a noticeable difference in age levels. Teenagers seem to be quite strongly affected by Tagalog. While the adults (thirty years of age and older) speak Tagalog quite well, it does not seem to have the influence on their Kapampangan speech that it is having on the Kapampangan of the teenage group. The older barrio folk frequently comment on the "poor quality" of the teenagers' Kapampangan. (What was most noticeable to me was the latter group's unfamiliarity with lexical items from Kapampangan, substituting in their place English and Tagalog.)

By the time children reach the fourth grade, they speak Tagalog well enough to converse comfortably with newcomers in that language. The preference for Tagalog over English in this context is substantial.

1.1.2 Mass Media

No doubt the mass media is a prime mover in this developing multilingual situation. While one hears Kapampangan constantly from the barrio people, at the same time he is deluged with Tagalog at a loud volume from ubiquitous radios and even television sets.

English on the radio or television is quite secondary, and Kapampangan is limited to perhaps less than one hour a day on radio.

Informants in their forties have indicated to me that the Japanese occupation marked a turning point in the Kapampangan openness to speaking Tagalog. (This merits further investigation.)

Reading material in Kapampangan is limited largely to religious pamphlets and prayer books (and now some elementary school readers). Adult reading matter is either in Tagalog or English: magazines are most in evidence; newspapers to a lesser extent.

1.2 Localized Varieties of Kapampangan

Dialect surveying remains a task to be undertaken; preliminary information indicates the existence of two major dialects, following roughly the Rio Grande and the political district divisions of the province. In the western dialect, final -ay has frequently changed to -e, final -aw to -o, and some instances of -ayu- to -o-. Furthermore, there are minor differences of intonation (which seem to follow the rivers) and of lexicon (barrio by barrio). But none of these variations seems to prevent a high degree of mutual intelligibility.