



A Case Study on Attitudes and Motivation among Filipino-Germans towards Language

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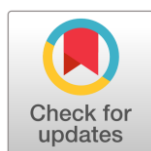
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Abstract: Acquiring two languages such as English and Cebuano during migration is an interesting challenge for nine young Filipino-German migrants living in Dumaguete City, Philippines which is dubbed as one of the best places to retire in the world. Attitudes and motivation play a significant part in learning the second language with the consequence of forgetting the mother tongue due to its non-use. The respondents are divided into short-term migrants who migrated less than five years and long-term migrants who moved to Dumaguete for more than five years and beyond. In the motivation and attitude study, only the short-term migrants answered *neutral* for attitude towards German people and attitude towards Filipino people. The rest of the categories yielded *moderately agree* answers. Finally, majority of the short-term migrants believed that speakers of other languages perceived them as German speakers while people in the community thought that long-term migrants speak Cebuano, English fluently but actually attrited in their native language.

Keywords: First Language Attrition, Second Language Acquisition.

Introduction

Attitude and motivation are principal drivers in acquiring a second language and these two factors in later time help the L1 speakers sustain the slow and meticulous progression of language acquisition. Without these two aspects, monolinguals may encounter obstacles in acquiring the new language(s) (Oroujlou & Vahedi, 2011).

Ellis (1985) states that language attitudes are the speaker's behaviors from various languages towards other languages or from their native language. As such, the speaker's positive or negative attitude may

depend on the simplicity or difficulty of the language (Richards, 1985). Hence, gauging language maintenance and learning is greatly shaped by how migrants deal with the host community and their own community. These interactions whether positive or negative can be seen when they socialize with people in the organizations they have joined, attend church, and their day to day association with their relatives, friends, or strangers. On the basis of assumption, attitudes and motivation as well as the social networks interact with the constructions of the migrants' identity.

Lightbown *et al.*, (2000) deciphers two types of motivation: integrative motivation (learner embraces a language to be able to communicate to the people and immerse with the culture) and instrumental motivation (learner sees language as valuable and efficient to get a good job, pass the language test, and read the newspaper, as well as other related tasks involving communication. Both integrative and instrumental motivation have an impact on each other. As it is seen, integrative motivation is associated as a foreign language while instrumental motivation is viewed as a function of second language.

In connection with attitudes and motivation as a prime mover of acquiring a second language such as English and Cebuano, the respondents learn English through the academe while Cebuano is acquired through everyday conversations with relatives, friends, and people in public places such as the malls and markets. Their use of German is now limited to their immediate family members especially to their father. In instances when the father dies, the children's use of German is further affected until it ultimately becomes their alternate or, even, their third language. In homes where the German father is absent from the start, the Filipina mother may employ the second language, which is either English or Cebuano or may use the two languages simultaneously if her English is limited. Obviously, as the children get more and more fluent in English and Cebuano language/s, their first language - German - recedes further in their memory for lack of use.

Research Design

This questionnaire, attitude and motivation of Dr. Monika Schmid (2010) has five parts. In the first four, the respondents were asked to evaluate if they strongly disagree, moderately disagree, neutral, moderately agree, and strongly agree. The last

part entails what language(s) play(s) for which role they take.

Research Environment

The research study was conducted in Dumaguete City, a hub of foreign nationals who decided to settle for good in the Philippines. Known as the City of Gentle People, this retiree destination attracts a majority of Germans who are married to Filipina and have Filipino-German children.

Respondents of the Study

Nine Filipino-Germans with Filipino mothers and German fathers who were born in Germany migrated at a certain age to Dumaguete City in the Philippines. They were chosen through snowballing process and were classified as short-term migrants composed of AJS, CSK, JRS, and RJS while long-term migrants were AMR, BMH, LOL, OMD, and RAS.

Summary and Findings

The respondents gave a positive outcome to how they associate with Germans in the Philippines and Germans in general as well their attitudes towards Filipinos and learning a foreign language. Despite of the duality of cultures, the respondents clearly identified how they would behave in specific situations with these individuals

The over-all results of the respondents' attitudes towards German people living in the Philippines were neutral for short-term migrants and moderately agree for long-term respondents. They found Germans sociable, warm-hearted, and creative people. The hospitality shown by these Germans parallels how Filipinos welcome their guests in their respective homes. By bonding with these Germans, the respondents further explained that they felt at home since such moments like these would provide a mirror image of their

Germaness and knit their stories back home. They affirmed that the dominance of the Filipino culture overlaps the German influence, making migrants to often embrace the traditions in the new environment. Some long-term migrants like BMH, LOL, OMD stayed in the Philippines for so long could no longer distinguish the difference for each culture.

There was also an indication that the more they would know of Germans in the Philippines, the more important it would be for them to make their German remain good. Having good speaking abilities in their mother tongue allowed them to exchange ideas and in the process of the conversation, the respondents valued the importance of their first language. The information they will get from the German nationals will fill in the gap that had been lost during the immersion into the Filipino culture.

The respondents were also divided if their German heritage would be an important part of their Filipino identity. The identity of a person is shaped by personal encounters enabling the individual to experience a cultural immersion. With this, the migrants pondered

whether they still maintain their German identity, now that they metamorphosed into the Filipino way of life. In here there is an identity negotiation which takes place when the speaker bargains with society concerning his or her identity. Linguistic behavior must be taken into consideration, as Elias (2008) puts it if it is correct, two things are considered by the individual to select the dominating L2 over their local traditional language. First, that they classify with the L2 identity as they perceive it is in their advantage to use the L2 over their native language. Second, that they are trying adapt into the culture in which the L2 is dominant.

Your Attitude Towards Foreign Languages

Indeed, it is amazing for the respondents to travel to a foreign country and be able to speak the language of the people. Being a bilingual for the respondents will always give them confidence when they speak the language.

Table 1. Attitude and Motivation of the Respondents Towards Language

	Mean Short-Term Migrants (AJS, CSK, JRS, & RJS)	Mean Long-Term Migrants (AMR, BMH, LOL, OMD, & RAS)
1. Your attitude towards German People in the Philippines	3.14 (Neutral)	3.8 (Moderately Agree)
2. Your attitude towards foreign languages	4.26 (Moderately Agree)	4.28 (Moderately Agree)
3. Your attitude towards Filipinos	3.3 (Neutral)	3.9 (Moderately Agree)
4. Your attitude towards German people	3.6 (Moderately Agree)	3.73 (Moderately Agree)

It provides comfort knowing that if something unfortunate may happen, one can

explain the need for help and no longer will require someone to translate the language for them. It will allow them to meet new people and may develop life-long friendships through time. Along the way, they discover new culture and become open-minded of the culture and tradition they will experience. Respondents will also have a higher chance of studying or living overseas as well as employability. In addition to that, being a bilingual allows them to enhance their travel experience, develop confidence, as well as impress other people. As shown in table 1 the collective answer for both groups was *moderately agree*. Majority of the respondents preferred to read the literature of a foreign language in the original language rather than a translation. This would give the respondents a first-hand experience of the language knowing that some aspects in the literary work would be lost during translation. This only would happen if they already had a basic of the language.

However, it was not important for the respondents whether they could get hold and read a newspaper and magazine in another language. First, the respondents were passive since it would take time acquiring a new language and reading materials such as newspapers and magazines while the others pointed out that understanding another language would be interesting. Reading foreign news would provide understanding of the culture at the same time keeping them abreast of what would be going on.

It became advantageous for the majority of the respondents to learn a lot of foreign languages. Being prolific in many languages will provide deep understanding of culture since the world has become competitive producing global citizens who could converse in several languages. Communication involves a lot of negotiations, and thus to acquire one but many will provide employment opportunities, foster understanding, and enhance cognitive development among speakers. They also

expressed interest in studying a foreign language to be an enjoyable experience. Language acquisition starts by memorizing formulaic chunks such as “hi”, “hello” and so on until the learner acquires large volume of vocabulary. It would enhance the cognitive development of the learner and therefore the person feels like going into a journey the moment they started learning English and Cebuano during their first year of migration to the Philippines.

In a related study, *Attitudes towards German language and culture: Reflections from Turkey* by Simsek, Selvi, and Uzum (2007) express that the attitude of the students to foreign languages have a tendency to be positive, demonstrating that the majority of the students believed that knowing a foreign language is among the fundamentals of their lives and create a strong demand to speak a language other than their native language.

It further signifies that German participants were inclined to learn a foreign language because they knew it would improve their personalities, increase their self-esteem, and contribute in their critical and holistic thinking. Meanwhile, another student replied that he finds it captivating and pleasing to learn new languages and also a good method to discover another culture and people.

Even if English is an international language it pays to speak the local language to make sure that communication is made understood. If the local people can't speak English, misunderstanding may take place and communication immediately breaks down. Almost all the respondents agreed to learn the language of the new place even if they could get along well in English. Majority of them agreed to acquire the local language of the people. Likewise, by meeting and listening to people of other languages will allow them to assess and respond to what they hear which is the best way to learn and acquire the new language.

Your Attitudes Towards Filipinos

In general, the short-term migrants were divided on Filipinos' attitudes, stating they were not very interested while the other short-term and all long-term migrants replied that Filipinos have favorable attitudes.

Majority of the respondents felt it would not matter to evaluate if Filipinos are considerate of the feelings of others. The respondents have seen the good traits of the Filipinos being a collective people and the hospitality of Pinoy is further demonstrated in gatherings and parties where Filipinos show heart-warming generosity. When Filipinos welcome guests to stay in their homes, they offer the best that they can to match the services like the hotels in their own humble ways. Aside from this, the respondents liked the attitudes of Pinoys since they are resilient and family oriented. However, they also disagreed that Filipinos are trustworthy and dependable. This is a case to case basis where respondents may experience at some time in their lives --- unworthiness and dependence of Filipinos.

The respondents additionally agreed that Filipinos are cheerful, agreeable, and good humored. The remaining migrants also strongly agreed the character traits of Filipinos. Whatever unfortunate circumstance that takes its toll among Filipino, these individuals are resilient and still can manage to be cheerful and can still even make a joke in the midst of disaster.

When a comment is given, "Filipinos are very kind and generous people" most of the short-term respondents gave a "neutral" reply that for them it was not important or significant while the remaining long-term respondents moderately agreed.

Nearly all respondents came to agree that learning English and Cebuano is really great even if the grammatical structure of the two languages is so different from the other. Learning both languages allowed community

acceptance for them as they continue to speak and assimilate with the locals. For them, learning a new language easier when they are more motivated since motivation is the key to acquire the level of proficiency where the learners are eager to understand the culture of the target language, associate, and assimilate with the people using the language.

Your Attitudes Towards German People

Since they are Germans, the respondents felt comfortable towards their own fellowmen's attitudes answering *neutral* as shown in table 10 and that it was no big deal for them as to how respondents interact with them. They agreed that German people are very sociable, warm-hearted, and creative people. Any opportunity to meet and talk to their German counterparts in Negros allows them to feel like they are back in Germany. In the course of their conversations, they will exchange details that become crucial as to whether the respondents will go back to their home country or not. It is simply a matter of validation of how things are going on in Germany, changes perhaps and the usual chitchats.

When it comes to judging whether Germans are considerate of the feelings of others, the respondents provided varied replies. First, they answered *neutral*, second collective answer *moderately disagreed* and third, *moderately agreed*. This involves a lot of interpersonal experiences and interactions between the respondents and the Germans to make a good evaluation. Regardless the length of stay in the Philippines or in Germany the respondents were divided on this issue.

Majority of them believed that they establish a favorable relationship toward Germans. One will always have a soft side when one meets people of the same nationality. The respondents find Germans as efficient, hardworking, and efficient people as

well as organized and so respondents find no reason of not liking them.

Like Filipinos, Germans are seen by the respondents as trustworthy, dependable, reliable, principled, and truthful to themselves and to others. Germans in addition are cheerful, agreeable with a light hearted spirit.

When asked if Germans are very kind and generous people, most of them answered *neutral* then followed by an agreement. Their answers varied since it entails a lot of subjectivity on a case to case experience.

Which Language(s) Play(s) Which Role for You?

Based from table 2, short-term migrants used more of German in their task

performance and employed English in their everyday interactions in school and in the community, contrary to long-term migrants who frequently used English and then also switched to Cebuano when necessary.

Short-term migrants replied they think mostly in German and then followed by all languages while long-term migrants preferred English. Short term migrants continued to maintain their German by speaking their native language with their parents. Slowly, they are acquiring English in school and Cebuano from friends and the town people. Long-term migrants however substituted German with English since the latter language would be more useful in school and in the community as well.

Table 2. The Respondents' Choice of Language(s) and How it is/are Important to them

Languages	Group 1 (Short Term Migrants)	Group 2 (Long Term Migrants)	Sub Total
Only German	11. %	3%	14%
Mostly German	8.49 %	3%	11.49 %
Only English	2 %	10%	12 %
Mostly English	4%	17 %	21%
Only Cebuano	0	0	0
Mostly Cebuano	1%	8%	9%
German & English	11%	1%	12%
German & Cebuano	0	2%	2%
English & Cebuano	3 %	6	9%
All Languages	3%	5	8%
Sub Total	43 %	55%	98% 2% of questions were unanswered

Short-term migrants dreamed in German and sometimes in English while long term migrants had it in English and Cebuano. The mental map of short-term migrants is in German and thus, their subconscious is in German too while long-term migrants think more in English and Cebuano as well.

The short-term migrants counted in German and then a little of English while long term migrants counted in English except for AMR who continues to speak German with her family. The first group on the other hand prayed in German but the siblings did not answer. The long-term migrants prayed in English except for AMR who prayed in German.

The dominant language spoken by the short-term migrants was in German and then followed by a combination of German and English because for them it was easy and comfortable. Long term migrants on the other hand, preferred Cebuano and the next preferred language was English because they stayed in Negros for a long time and had fully acquired those languages.

To acquire a large volume of vocabulary is impressive and as such short-term migrants had more of German lexicon and a bit of English while long term migrants did have high storage of English words. Long term migrants acquired most English words in school being the medium of instruction as well as the short-term migrants who at that time of their primary years stayed in Germany and thus, earned their German vocabulary in school as well.

It was only in German where short-term migrants did not have any pronunciation problems. Long-term migrants answered that it was only English they could speak well while AMR answered that speaking in German had no pronunciation blunders for her. Strangely too, LOL claimed she did not have any pronunciation errors in all languages.

Short-term migrants used German and English intuitively while long-term migrants preferred English and Cebuano as well as all languages. Long-term migrants also had a second preference and that was English. This indicates the level of language acquisition they have for each respective language.

Short-term migrants found German and English as languages that had plenty of dialects while long-term migrants selected English and Cebuano. The more words a respondent will acquire, the more he or she learns the regional variety of language characterized by structures of grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation as well.

The languages short-term migrants could decipher what would be right or wrong would be German and then followed by English. The ability to distinguish the structure of grammar of a language is a result of the length of time the migrants learned German.

Long-term migrants meanwhile gave three language preferences: mostly English, mostly Cebuano and all languages. Short-term migrants explained they are capable of providing the same meaning of a language into another through German and English while JRS believed she could translate these three languages. Long-term migrants expressed they could translate English and Cebuano while AMR could do it in German so would RAS translate German and English. For them translation is a door of work opportunities for the respondents.

It would be in German and English where most short-term migrants could understand and make jokes while only CSK declared she could do it in all three languages. Long-term migrants on the other hand said, they could comprehend and tell funny lines both in English and Cebuano, and also in all languages.

In English, Cebuano, and German would be the languages used when short term

migrants swear while long term migrants would swear in English and Cebuano. In addition, short-term migrants had strong emotional ties mainly in German while CSK revealed that she had attachments in all languages. Long-term migrants seemed to be connected to German, English, and Cebuano.

Most of the languages spoken by friends of short-term migrants were English and Cebuano while long term migrants had pals who spoke in English, Cebuano as well as Germans.

The frequent languages used by both migrants in a day to day basis were English, Cebuano, and German. All languages are being used because these migrants require to trigger one language for a few minutes or even seconds and another one in the next few moments. The linguistic consequences that bilinguals and L2-learners cannot retain their languages completely separate at all times, and structures of the deactivated language frequently appear in the language the speaker planned to use (Daller & Sakel, 2012).

Majority of the short-term migrants believed that speakers of other languages perceived them as German speakers while people in the community thought that long-term migrants speak Cebuano, English and German fluently. These migrants who stayed in Negros blended so well in the community and so locals and foreigners perceived them that way.

Conclusion

The short-term migrants collectively were neutral for attitude towards German people and attitude towards Filipino people while the remaining categories of the questionnaire resulted to *moderately agree*. This further demonstrates that positive attitude and motivation towards English and Cebuano languages among monolinguals will allow them to acquire second language acquisition faster and profoundly.

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