



UNIVERSITÀ DI NAPOLI  
**L'ORIENTALE**

**DOTTORATO IN ASIA AFRICA E MEDITERRANEO**

Schema per redazione progetto di ricerca dottorato

**PHD PROGRAMME IN ASIAN, AFRICAN AND MEDITERRANEAN STUDIES**

Form for presentation of Research Project

1 - Titolo del Progetto di Ricerca/Title of Research Project

Multilingual Practices Among Filipino Migrants and Their Families in Southern Italy:  
Language Attitudes, Maintenance, and Identity Construction

2 - Settore scientifico-disciplinare a cui si riferisce il progetto/ Academic discipline to  
which your project is related

Philology-Linguistics-Literature

3 - Abstract del progetto/Project abstract 5000 caratteri – 5000 characters

The proposed research project aims to document the linguistic practices of first and second generation Filipino immigrants in Southern Italy. In doing so, the study hopes to gain deeper insights into the speakers' attitudes towards the languages in their repertoire and the processes and factors involved in determining the language choices of Filipino immigrants in Italy. These linguistic choices and behavior contribute to their identity construction and presentation of selves. They also reflect the sociopolitical and economic structures as well as ideologies held within the society that they move around in (Rosa & Trivedi, 2017).

"First generation immigrants" are defined in the proposed study as people who are born outside of their host country, and the "second generation" as their offspring who are born and experience their developmental years in the host country. Rumbaut (1976 cited in Rumbaut, 2004) also identified a "1.5 generation" group which refers to foreign-born immigrants who immigrated to their host country at a very young age and therefore experienced much of their developmental years in the host countries. The language attitudes and behaviors of each group will be considered in turn in the proposed study to identify similarities and differences as well as the factors and experiences that influence members from each group.

The proposed study also aims to contribute to the literature on language use among migrant populations of which little has been written that is specific to the language practices among members of the Filipino community residing in Italy. This despite Italy being in the top ten destinations for international migrants (International Organization for Migration, 2019), with the Filipino community being the eighth largest immigrant community in the country, and the Philippines being in the top four,

following China, India and Bangladesh in terms of the country of origin among Asian immigrants in Italy (Tuttitalia, 2023). It is expected that such a study could provide insights that might inform language-related policies that could facilitate their integration in Italian society, as well as reveal implications to the maintenance of heritage languages and of linguistic and cultural diversity at large.

Three methods of data collection are planned to be carried out in three phases. The initial phase will focus on gathering self-reported attitudes towards the (non-)maintenance of their native/heritage languages and their linguistic experiences and behaviors via a survey or questionnaire. Through this initial survey, it is hoped that we would be able to identify people who would be willing to participate in the second phase, where semi-structured interviews will be conducted to probe further into their answers and their experiences. In the third phase, which will likely form the bulk of the study, participant observation and collection of naturalistic data will be conducted in order to document the actual linguistic behavior of first and second generation Filipino immigrants. By directly observing actual practices and recording communicative events, it is hoped that questions such as "what languages serve what functions in which domains of interaction?" could be answered. The study also aims to observe and describe possible structural patterns borne out of language contact and the communicative strategies employed by immigrants as multilingual speakers.

As much as possible—since this study will undoubtedly look into the development and implementation of family language policies in answering questions related to language maintenance, transmission, and shift—the proposed study will take a cue from recommendations given by Bose et al (2023) to reconsider the concept of "family" and the role that digital communication, particularly among geographically-dispersed families, in documenting language practices among members of a familial unit. Based on this, another angle that could be explored in this proposed research project is how the language attitudes and practices of family members who are left behind in the Philippines, particularly the children of Filipino migrants, are affected by having one or both parents living and working in Italy.

#### 4 - Stato dell'arte/State of the art 5000 caratteri – 5000 characters

There is an increasing number of studies that address the role of language in shaping, mediating, and regulating migration processes (Canagarajah, 2017) and diasporic phenomena (Rosa & Trivedi, 2017). However, despite the fact that the Philippines ranks ninth in the list of top countries of origins of international migrants according to the World Migration Report released in 2020, studies on Filipino migrants largely focus on social, political, and economic issues, and these are conducted by researchers who mainly work in the fields of sociology and political science (e.g., Tigno, 2009; Nagasaka, 2015; Rodriguez, 2016; and Ambrosini, Bonizzoni & Molli, 2021) and the issue of language use, attitudes, and maintenance rarely take center stage in these studies. Bose et al. (2023) also report in their survey of studies on family language policies among migrant communities published from 2004 to 2022 that a huge proportion (about one-third of all the studies) focused on Chinese, Korean, and Russian migrants, and that there is a noticeable lack of studies concerning members of other large migrant groups.

Studies on language practices among Filipino migrants, however, do exist, but the setting of most of these studies are in the US (e.g., Tseng & Fuligni, 2000; Axel, 2011; and Cariño, 2020) or in neighboring Asian countries (e.g., Yamamoto, 2008;

Dumanig, David & Shanmuganathan, 2013; Lin, 2019; and Gu & Tong, 2019). This is understandable given that the United States has the highest number of registered Filipino emigrants as of 2020 (Commission on Filipino Overseas, 2023), and it also has a long history with the Philippines having been one of its colonizers for 48 years and continues to exert a strong influence in Philippine politics, economy, and culture. Meanwhile the biggest proportion of overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) go to neighboring Asian countries with Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates and Hong Kong being the top destinations for OFWs in 2021 (Philippine Statistics Authority, 2022).

According Axel (2011), most of the studies that investigate language practices among Filipino migrants follow the themes of heritage language maintenance and language attrition, particularly among second or third generation Filipino migrants. The assimilation or acculturation of members of these groups are studied by observing different variables, including language and cultural maintenance and/or attrition, and seeing how these affect participants' self-esteem and relationship with other members of their family and/or community (Axel, 2011, pp. 2-3). The studies conducted by Yamamoto (2005) and Dumanig, David, & Shanmuganathan (2013), for example, explored how family language policies are formed based on the language choices of family members which are mostly based on the languages' perceived pragmatic utility. In the calculations of parents in these studies, Filipino and other Philippine languages always rank lower compared to the language dominant in their community and English, which is perceived as an international language "useful in communicating with a wide range of people, and that proficiency in English allows their children to move to other countries" (Yamamoto, p. 597).

One study that has Italy as its locale was conducted by Mazzaferro (2018), who focused on Filipino youths' translanguaging practices in communicating with family members and their peers and shows how such practices reveal the dynamic construction and (re)negotiation of identities and ideologies that they undergo. Contrary to the aforementioned studies, Mazzaferro highlights the agentivity of young Filipinos who are often portrayed as "passive receivers of both linguistic and cultural practices and values" (p. 102).

The proposed study intends to build on the findings of these previous studies on the language practices, maintenance and shift among Filipino migrants who remain under-represented in the literature despite being one of the largest sources of international workers.

#### 5 – Bibliografia/Bibliography 5000 caratteri – 5000 characters

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6 - Descrizione del progetto/Description of the Project 15.000 caratteri 15000 characters

**IT** Va indicato per quale dei tre curricula si intende concorrere.

**EN** Please indicate for which curriculum you intend to apply

**IT** Indicare se, in alternativa, si intende concorrere per una delle 6 borse PNRR DM. N.118/2023, nel qual caso va indicata la tematica di riferimento, Le relative tematiche sono consultabili nell'Allegato A.

**EN** Please indicate if you intend to apply, rather than for a curriculum, for one of the 6 grants funded by Next Generation EU – National Recovery and Resilience Plan, M.D. 118/2023, in which case you need to indicate for which research topic, The research topics may be consulted in Attachment A (Allegato A).

I am applying for one of the research grants funded by the Next Generation EU - National Recovery and Resilience Plan, M.D. 118/2023, specifically the research project titled "Le pratiche linguistiche della comunità filippina in Italia. Il caso studio dei filippini in Campania." As such, the research project that I am proposing intends to document the language practices of members of the Filipino immigrant community in Southern Italy. The proposed study particularly seeks to identify and describe the language attitudes and experiences of Filipino immigrants, which factor in the (re)construction or (re)negotiation of their identities, the development and implementation of their implicit or explicit language policies within their households, as well as in their assimilation and acculturation into Italian society. The language practices and attitudes of speakers not only reflect individual beliefs and experiences, but are also products of persisting sociopolitical and economic frameworks and ideologies held and transmitted in society. Thus, the proposed research project not only aims to gain a deeper understanding of sociolinguistic issues pertinent to multilingual transnationals and language maintenance, but in so doing it also seeks to gain insights into the general world order that we live in. In short, the proposed project will be adding to the literature which seeks to answer the question, which follows Fishman (1965/2000), "Who speaks what language to whom and when, and what motivations lead them to do so?"

The Philippines is home to over a hundred indigenous languages, thus most of its inhabitants are multilingual speakers. Its centuries of experience under colonial rule has resulted in a complex sociolinguistic situation where languages exist in diglossic relationship. Its historical development as an independent nation in an increasingly globalized world has also produced various forces that has led to many of its indigenous languages to become threatened or endangered as many Filipinos choose to shift to languages that prove to be more economically and politically advantageous for their speakers. The Philippines is also among the top countries of origins of migrant workers (International Organization for Migration, 2019). While migration contributes to the enrichment and diversification of cultures and ethnicities as people from diverse backgrounds come into contact and engage in cultural and knowledge exchanges, it has also been shown that the trajectories of many migrants often lead to the loss of language, culture, traditional customs, and disconnection from one's roots, which can all lead to a decline in mental health and overall well-being (Bhugra & Becker, 2005). According to Krumm & Plutzar (2008), whether or not multilingual migrants continue to develop their multilingualism depends on several factors including "psychosocial situation, opportunities for language learning, quality of language contact in respect of linguistic complexity and affective level, future options, and so forth." (p. 2). It is important to note, however, that the situation and language-related policies of the receiving or host country are not the sole determinants of the fate of the languages that migrant bring with them, but are also influenced by the linguistic situation and language policies of the countries where

migrants come from. Reported motivations behind language choices and practices should therefore be properly contextualized based on the situations in both the receiving country and in the country of origin of immigrants.

The family domain has long been identified as an important locus for language transmission and maintenance (Fishman 1965/2000), and some studies have been done which explore the policies and linguistic choices by members of families where one or both parents are Filipino migrants (see Yamamoto, 2008; Dumanig, David & Shanmuganathan, 2013; Lin, 2019; and Gu & Tong, 2019). Still, little has been done so far to understand the sociolinguistic situation of Filipino immigrants in Italy. Therefore, in connection with overarching question previously raised on language practices and the motivations behind these practices of members of the Filipino immigrant community in Italy, the proposed study will also look at the possible fates of the Philippine languages brought by said immigrants in terms of whether they are still being transmitted and maintained in succeeding generations, along with the cultural values and traditions intertwined in these languages. In relation to this, the proposed study will also strive to identify what possible agents or factors contribute to the maintenance, loss or attrition of language within a family or community, and how these affect the identity construction of first and second generation Filipino immigrants in the chosen research locale.

### **Proposed Methodology**

In order to answer the questions raised in the previous section, as mentioned in section 3, three methods of data collection are intended to be used in this study. A survey will be administered to gather data on target participants' language profiles, relevant life experiences, self-reported attitudes and motivations behind their linguistic choices. Semi-structured interviews with willing participants will also be conducted to delve deeper into their responses and to ask questions that might not have been covered in the survey questionnaire. Finally, participant observation will be conducted in order to document actual language use among family or community members. This ethnographic approach will also be done to validate the self-reported data provided in the first two phases of the study.

The recorded language use in naturalistic communicative events could also be used to look for regular structural features and patterns of codeswitching or translanguaging. As most Filipino immigrants enter Italy as multilingual speakers with knowledge of at least two to three language, the communicative strategies that they use in engaging with different types of speakers and in different social domains.

The study will focus on first and second generation Filipino immigrants in Italy. While it is proposed that language maintenance, attrition, and shift will primarily be explored through family language policies and practices, at present I remain open to the possibility of following willing participants who are of various social backgrounds and situations in order to possibly present a holistic picture of the nature of language use of Filipino immigrants residing in Italy. Following this same goal, the proposed study will also be concerned with making sure that the use of digital communication systems among members of the migrant community and communication between members of geographically dispersed family members be explored as well, since these have not yet been well-studied in previous related literature, particularly among members of the Filipino migrant community.



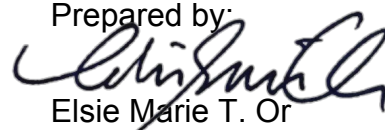
7 - Risultati attesi e ricadute applicative/ Expected results and application effects (max 3000 caratteri/max 3000 characters)

Krumm and Plutzar (2008) writes that the process of assimilation of immigrants into the host country's society comes with a "complete adaptation to the language, behaviour and values of the receiving society, with the consequential loss of the language(s) of origin" (p. 1). This is especially true for immigrants who speak relatively "weaker" languages, that is, weaker in the sense that the languages they use natively have limited use in international functions. As Fishman(1989) notes, most countries might have a designated national language, which, seen from the perspective of speakers of languages that are not designated as national languages (what Fishman referred to as "sub-national languages") in the states that they reside in, seem to be in enviable positions and are ascribed with power and prestige. Yet, on the global stage, we can see that not all national languages are equal. For Filipino immigrants, given the complex sociolinguistic situation of their country of origin which is partly influenced by its colonial experiences, it is no wonder that previous studies report that majority of second generation immigrants already become strongly dominant in the language of the receiving society. Cariño (2020), for instance, reports that among Asian immigrants in the US, Filipino second-generation immigrants have the highest number (76.3%) of English-only speakers compared to Hispanics and other Asian immigrants (Alba, 2004 cited in Cariño, 2020, p. 1).

There is a push, however, at least in Europe, in promoting a "plurilingual habitus" and moving away from the monolingual ideology among European individuals and institutions (Gogolin, 2002; Phillipson, 2003). This would entail creating a society where the assimilation of immigrants is not the goal, but rather their integration in the receiving society. Krumm and Plutzar (2008) explains that the difference between assimilation and integration is in how the process of integration emphasizes openness on both sides—migrants and the receiving society—to co-creating a new common ground where the already formed identity of migrants are respected and allowed to expand with the provision of resources for maintaining their linguistic and cultural heritage even as they acquire new ones. Doing this then allows migrants to keep their linguistic rights, which is part of their human rights, intact. At the same time, the process of integration should also allow the receiving country to be linguistically and culturally enriched. To achieve this, language policies and social programs must be planned and developed based on knowledge and a deeper understanding of actual lived experiences of migrants. This is where the proposed study aims to contribute insights by documenting the case of the Filipino immigrants in Italy and highlighting their sociolinguistic situation and the language-related issues that they contend with in their everyday lives.

It is also hoped that the findings of this study will contribute to the literature on bilingualism/multilingualism and language contact by providing insights on the communicative strategies that Filipino immigrants employ, which would depend on different contextual factors, as well as insights on how their translingual practices might contribute to their identity (re)construction.

Prepared by:



Elsie Marie T. Or