

## **CHAPTER SEVEN**

### **ACCOMMODATION STRATEGIES AND LANGUAGE CHOICE**

#### **7.1 Introduction**

This chapter discusses the accommodation strategies used by Filipino-Malaysian couples in their communication in the home domain. This specifically examines the couples' use of accommodation strategies in relation to ethnicity and gender. Various types of accommodation strategies such as approximation, interpretability, discourse management, and interpersonal control are given emphasis to explain how Filipino-Malaysian couples accommodate each other in verbal communication (see Chapter 2, Section 2.2.1). The analysis is based on the data obtained from the interviews, recorded conversations, and the survey conducted.

#### **7.2 Approximation Accommodation Strategies in Interracial Couples' Interaction**

Approximation accommodation strategies in interracial couples' interactions occur when couples converge or diverge linguistically by using the partner's language, adjusting the speech rate or style, or recognizing and appreciating the spouse's cultural background (Harwood, Soliz & Lin, 2006 p.24). Approximation strategy is derived from the strategy in which accommodation takes place when interlocutors adjust their speech to show convergence or divergence in communication (See Chapter 2, Section 2.2.1).

##### **7.2.1 Survey Results of Approximation Strategy**

To understand the use of accommodation strategy, a survey (see Appendix C) was conducted to find out the extent of use of approximation strategies by Filipino-Malay,

Filipino-Malaysian Chinese and Filipino-Malaysian Indian couples in their interactions in the home domain. The data is obtained from the viewpoint of the participants.

**Table 7.1 Approximation Strategy of Filipino-Malay Couples**

	Never (1)	Usually not (2)	Often not (3)	Occasionally (4)	Often (5)	Usually (6)	Always (7)	Mean
1. I am eager to learn my spouse's language.	1 (5%)	1 (5%)	3 (15%)	0	0	0	15 (75%)	5.85
2. I adjust my speech style when I talk with my spouse.	2 (10%)	0	1 (5%)	0	0	4 (20%)	13 (65%)	6.00
3. I adjust my speech rate in talking with my spouse.	3 (15%)	0	2 (10%)	0	1 (5%)	2 (10%)	12 (60%)	5.50
4. I feel comfortable using my spouse's language.	8 (40%)	0	2 (10%)	0	0	0	10 (50%)	4.20
5. I use my spouse's language as recognition and appreciation of my spouse's language and culture.	13 (65%)	0	0	2 (10%)	0	0	5 (25%)	2.80

Table 7.1 shows that 75% of Filipino-Malay couples are always eager to learn their spouse's language, 65% always adjust their speech style, 60% always adjust their speech rate when communicating with their spouses. The survey is clear that couples accommodate each other by learning each other's language. However, the survey shows that 65% of the couples do not recognize or appreciate each other's culture.

As for Filipino-Malaysian Chinese, the survey shows a different result where they obtain a lower percentage of approximation strategy as compared to Filipino-Malay couples. The results are shown in Table 7.2.

**Table 7.2 Approximation Strategy of Filipino-Malaysian Chinese Couples**

	Never (1)	Usually not (2)	Often not (3)	Occasionally (4)	Often (5)	Usually (6)	Always (7)	Mean
1. I am eager to learn my spouse's language.	5 (25%)	0	0	0	5 (25%)	0	10 (50%)	5.00
2. I adjust my speech style when I talk with my spouse.	7 (35%)	2 (10%)	1 (5%)	0	1 (5%)	0	9 (45%)	4.10
3. I adjust my speech rate in talking with my spouse.	8 (40%)	3 (15%)	0	0	1 (15%)	0	8 (40%)	3.75
4. I feel comfortable using my spouse's language.	9 (45%)	3 (15%)	0	0	1 (5%)	1 (5%)	4 (20%)	3.00
5. I use my spouse's language as a form of recognition and appreciation of his/her cultural and linguistic background.	9 (45%)	2 (10%)	0	3 (15%)	0	1 (5%)	5 (25%)	3.30

Table 7.2 shows that 50% of Filipino-Malaysian Chinese couples are always eager to learn their spouse's language, 45 % always adjust their speech style and 40 % always adjust their speech rate. Again 45% of couples do not recognize and appreciate their spouses' cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

In a similar survey conducted with Filipino-Malaysian Indian couples, an opposite results are found where they obtained the lowest percentage of approximation strategy. The results are presented in Table 7.3.

**Table 7.3 Approximation Strategy of Filipino-Malaysian Indian Couples**

	Never (1)	Usually not (2)	Often not (3)	Occasionally (4)	Often (5)	Usually (6)	Always (7)	Mean
1. I am eager to learn my spouse's language.	8 (40%)	1 (5%)	7 (35%)	0	0	0	4 (20%)	2.95
2. I adjust my speech style every time I talk with my spouse.	8 (40%)	6 (30%)	1 (5%)	0	1 (5%)	2 (10%)	2 (10%)	2.70
3. I adjust my speech rate in talking with my spouse.	9 (45%)	5 (25%)	2 (10%)	0	0	2 (10%)	2 (10%)	2.55
4. I feel comfortable using my spouse's language.	6 (30%)	6 (30%)	1 (5%)	2 (10%)	0	1 (5%)	4 (20%)	3.15
5. I use my spouse's language as a form of recognition and appreciation of his/her cultural and linguistic background.	7 (35%)	6 (30%)	1 (5%)	1 (5%)	0	1 (5%)	4 (20%)	3.00

Table 7.3 shows that 40% of Filipino-Malaysian Indian couples are not eager to learn each others language, 40% of them do not adjust their speech style, 45% does not adjust the speech rate, 30% of them are not comfortable using their spouse’s language and 35% do not recognize and appreciate each other’s cultural and language background.

The findings show that Filipino-Malaysian Indian couples show a different accommodation pattern as compared to Filipino-Malay and Filipino-Malaysian Chinese couples where they do not use approximation accommodation much.

### 7.2.2 Mean Comparison of Approximation Strategy

To compare the patterns of approximation accommodation strategies, a table showing the mean results is presented in Table 7.4. The computation of mean is given below, and has been explained in Chapter 3.

**Table 7.4 Mean Comparison of Couples’ Approximation Accommodation Strategy**

	Filipino-Malay	Filipino-Malaysian Chinese	Filipino-Malaysian Indian
1. I am eager to learn my spouse’s language.	5.85	5.00	2.95
2. I adjust my speech style every time I talk with my spouse.	6.00	4.10	2.70
3. I adjust my speech rate in talking with my spouse.	5.50	3.75	2.55
4. I feel comfortable using my spouse’s language.	4.20	3.00	3.15
5. I use my spouse’s language to recognize and appreciate of his/her cultural and linguistic background.	2.80	3.30	3.00

Table 7.4 shows the mean comparison of approximation strategy used by Filipino-Malaysian couples in interactions in the home domain. The mean is computed to obtain the average points of each question (see Chapter 3). A high mean shows a more favorable perception to the questions asked.

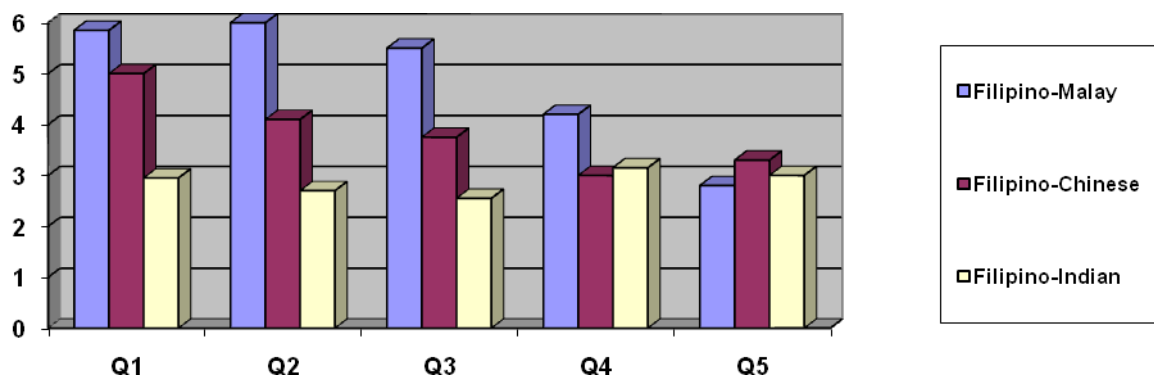
Filipino-Malay couples obtain the highest mean, followed by Filipino-Malaysian Chinese and Filipino-Malaysian Indian couples. It is clear that Filipino-Malay couples accommodate more as compared to the other couples.

The data show that Filipino-Malay couples obtain a high mean (6.00) for statement 2, *“I adjust my speech style every time I talk with my spouse”* and a low mean (2.80) for statement 5, *“I use my spouse’s language to recognize and appreciate of his/her cultural and linguistic background.”* This means that couples accommodate each other more by adjusting their speech style but they are less likely to recognize and appreciate their spouses’ language and culture.

On the other hand, Filipino-Malaysian Chinese couples obtained a high mean (5.00) for statement 1, *“I am eager to learn my spouse’s language”* and a low mean (3.00) for statement 4, *“I feel comfortable using my spouse’s language.”* This means that they accommodate more by learning each other’s language but they are less likely to feel comfortable in using their spouses’ language.

On the contrary, Filipino-Malaysian Indian couples obtain a different result as compared to Filipino-Malay and Filipino-Malaysian Chinese couples. They obtain a high mean (3.15) for statement 4, *“I feel comfortable using my spouse’s language”* and a low

mean (2.55) for statement 3, “*I adjust my speech rate in talking with my spouse.*” It is clear that Filipino-Malaysian Indian couples do not employ much approximation accommodation strategies in their interactions in the home domain (see Chart 7.1).



**Chart 7.1 Mean Comparison of Couples' Approximation Strategy**

Chart 7.1 illustrates the extent of use of approximation accommodation strategy. The chart reveals that Filipino-Malay and Filipino-Malaysian Chinese couples follow a similar pattern of accommodation where they obtain higher means for statement 1 followed by statements 2, 3 and 4. However, Filipino-Malaysian Indian couples obtained a different pattern for they had a high mean for statement 4 followed by statements 1, 5, 2 and 3. It is clear that Filipino-Malay couples use more approximation strategies as compared to Filipino-Chinese and Filipino-Indian couples.

### **7.2.3 Gender Differences in Approximation Strategy**

In interactions between Filipino wives and Malaysian husbands, gender differences are evident where the wives accommodate more than their Malaysian husbands and this is shown in Tables 7.5 and 7.6.

**Table 7.5 Approximation Strategy of Malaysian Husbands**

	Never (1)	Usually not (2)	Often not (3)	Occasion ally (4)	Often (5)	Usually (6)	Always (7)
1. I am eager to learn my spouse's language.	6 (20%)	2 (6.7%)	9 (30%)	0	2 (6.7%)	0	10 (33.3%)
2. I adjust my speech style when I talk with my spouse.	16 (53.3%)	3 (10%)	1 (3.3%)	0	0	3 (10%)	7 (23.3%)
3. I adjust my speech rate in talking with my spouse.	16 (53.3%)	2 (6.7%)	2 (6.7%)	0	1 (3.3%)	3 (10%)	7 (23.3%)
4. I feel comfortable using my spouse's language.	17 (56.7%)	4 (13.3%)	1 (3.3%)	1 (3.3%)	0	0	5 (16.7%)
5. I use my spouse's language as recognition and appreciation of my spouse's language and culture.	23 (76.7%)	3 (13.3%)	0	1 (3.3%)	0	0	3 (10%)

Table 7.5 shows that 33.3% of Malaysian husbands are eager to learn their Filipino wives' language, 53.3% do not adjust their speech, 56.7% are not comfortable using their wives' language and 76.7% do not recognize and appreciate their wives' language and culture. The results are clear that the Malaysian husbands have high percentage of not accommodating their Filipino wives. This means that husbands are less cooperative when communicating with their wives. In contrast, the Filipino wives have high percentage of accommodating their Malaysian husbands (see Table 7.6).

**Table 7.6 Approximation Strategy of Filipino Wives**

	Never (1)	Usually not (2)	Often not (3)	Occasion ally (4)	Often (5)	Usually (6)	Always (7)
1. I am eager to learn my spouse's language.	0	0	1 (3.3%)	0	3 (10%)	0	19 (63.3%)
2. I adjust my speech style when I talk with my spouse.	1 (3.3%)	5 (16.7%)	2 (6.7%)	0	2 (6.7%)	3 (10%)	17 (56.7%)
3. I adjust my speech rate in talking with my spouse.	4 (13.3%)	7 (23.3%)	2 (6.7%)	0	1 (3.3%)	3 (10%)	15 (50%)
4. I feel comfortable using my spouse's language.	6 (20%)	5 (16.7%)	2 (6.7%)	1 (3.3%)	1 (3.3%)	3 (10%)	13 (43.3%)
5. I use my spouse's language as recognition and appreciation of my spouse's language and culture.	8 (26.7%)	5 (16.7%)	1	3 (10%)	0	3 (10%)	11 (36.7%)

Sixty three point three percent (63.3%) of Filipino wives are eager to learn their husbands' language, 56.7% of them adjust their speech when communicating with their husbands, 43.3% are comfortable in using their husbands' language, and 36.7% recognize and appreciate their husbands' language and culture. The findings show that the Filipino wives are more collaborative than their Malaysian husbands who appear to be individualistic in their interactions in the home domain.

#### **7.2.4 Wives' Collaborative Behavior versus Husbands' Individualistic Attitude**

The findings of the study show that the Filipino wives accommodate their Malaysian husbands by being collaborative in interactions. In contrast, the Malaysian husbands appear to be individualistic (see Tables 7.5 and 7.6). The Filipino wives' collaborative and the Malaysian husbands' individualistic behaviors are evident in their speech rate and language choice when communicating.

The speech rate in conversation is measured in terms of speaking rate in words per minute. However in this study, speech rate is identified based on participants' perception of how fast or slow their spouses speak in interactions in the home domain.

In the interviews conducted, Filipino wives commented:-

*"FCIB: My husband talks fast every time we talk"*

*"FCCB: Sometimes I do not understand my husband because he does not talk slowly"*

*"FCMB: During the first few years I had difficulty in following the conversation because he talks fast"*

*FCIB, FCCB, FCMB: Filipino spouses (See Appendix A)*



Filipino wives encountered difficulties in understanding their Malaysian husbands' speech due to speech rate differences. Faster rate of speech may result in communication breakdown. Filipino wives commented *"Sometimes I do not understand my husband because he does not talk slowly"* and *"During the first few years I had difficulty in following the conversation because he talks fast."* This means that husbands do not mind whether their wives understand their message or not. Such an attitude depicts individualistic behavior. In contrast, the Filipino wives adjust their language and speech in order to accommodate their husbands. The Filipino wives said:-

*"FCMB: I talk slowly to him so that he can clearly understand me."*

*"FCCB: Actually, I don't talk very fast because my husband might not be able to follow."*

*"FCCB: I am always careful in using some words because I might not be understood. You know"*

*FCMB, FCCB: Filipino spouses (See Appendix A)*

In addition, the wives do not only adjust their language and speech but they also learn their husband's language. It is clear that Filipino wives adjust their language and speech so that will be understood by their husbands. They said *"I talk slowly to him so that he can clearly understand me,"* *"Actually, I don't talk very fast because my husband might not be able to follow"* and *"I am always careful in using some words because I might not be understood. You know."* This means that they showed a collaborative attitude when communicating with their husbands.

### 7.2.5 Learning the Malaysian Husbands' Language

Learning other people's language is one way of accommodating others. In the case of Filipino-Malaysian couples, they tend to accommodate each other by learning and speaking each others languages. However, the findings show that more Filipino wives accommodate by learning their Malaysian husbands' language.

The interviews conducted show that Filipinos are eager to learn Bahasa Malaysia and Chinese dialects and in fact learn these language without attending formal classes as shown in the following:-

*"FCMB: I studied Malay by watching shows on TV and I follow the English subtitles"*

*"FCMB: I learn Bahasa Malaysia from my husband"*

*"FCMB: Actually, I learn Malay from my friends and by watching TV"*

*"FCMB: My neighbors have helped me to speak Malay because they teach me"*

*"FCCB: I learn Chinese by myself"*

*"FCCB: No one teaches me Chinese, I just listen to them then I learned"*

*FCMB, FCCB: Filipino spouses (See Appendix A)*

Filipino wives learned Bahasa Malaysia and Chinese dialects by themselves. They learned without attending any language classes. Such eagerness to learn is perhaps motivated by their desire to interact with their spouses and in-laws.

Other Filipino wives learned their spouses' language because they have no other options. They said:-

*“FCCB: I need to learn because all his sisters could not communicate in English. He is the only one who can speak English.”*

*“FCCB: I learn Chinese because my parents-in-law do not speak English”*

*FCCB: Filipino spouse (See Appendix A)*

The Filipino wives’ answer *“I need to learn”* implies that there is a necessity to learn the language because none of her in-laws could speak English. It appears that there was no other choice but to learn the husband’s language which presupposes that if the in-laws could speak English then she would have not learned Bahasa Malaysia. Realistically, the wife who comes from the Philippines must adjust to her husband and in-laws; otherwise she could not interact with them and could not build a better relationship.

Filipino wives learn to imitate the way Malaysians speak the language so that they can interact with their in-laws and friends. It shows that married Filipino women do not only accommodate their Malaysian husbands but also the in-laws and other relatives. For Filipinos learning other languages like Bahasa Malaysia and Chinese is advantageous because it helps them to communicate with the local people. In contrast, Malaysian husbands are not eager to learn the Filipino language (see Chapter 7). A Malaysian husband said that he was not interested to learn the Filipino language:-

*“FCCA: Well, I would say, it’s not easy to say. I’m not interested (laugh) but sometimes it just comes. It’s not to say I don’t know. Actually, I can speak the language. It’s that I am not the person who practices it using all the time but I would definitely. I’m learning the language but I’m not using it as a medium of communication. But there are some times when I go to the Philippines where I need the language to communicate with people.”*

*FCCA: Malaysian Chinese spouse (See Appendix A)*

The Malaysian husband's answer shows that he has no interest in learning the wife's language which is Filipino because it has limited use in Malaysia. He said "*I'm not interested (laugh) sometimes it just comes*" which signals his lack of interest in learning the Filipino language. The refusal in learning the language signals that the Malaysian spouse is not interested to linguistically accommodate his Filipino wife.

Other Malaysian husbands had similar attitudes and commented:-

*"FCCA: Ah for me ah I'm actually not good in language learning even in overseas I tried to pick up some Swedish, French whatever lah. I just learn half-way through or sometimes only in the beginning then for a few weeks I just give up you know. Because I know that I find difficulty and I just lost my interest."*

*"FCIA: Well I would say, it's not easy to say. I'm not interested (laugh)."*

*"FCMA: No, but maybe in the future."*

*FCCA: Malaysian Chinese spouse; FCIA: Malaysian Indian spouse; FCMA: Malay spouse (See Appendix A)*

It is evident that Malaysian husbands do not have much interest in learning the Filipino language. Although, the subject did not directly say that he had no interest in learning the language, he implied that he was not motivated to learn the Filipino language. However, Malaysians husbands learn some Filipino words which allow them to code switch from English to Filipino. In the interviews conducted Filipino-Malaysian couples said:-

*“FCMA: I speak English and sometimes Tagalog with her”*

*“FCCA: Yeah, we communicate in Tagalog so that the rest could not understand us.”*

*“FCIB: My husband knows how to speak Tagalog and Bisaya.”*

*FCMA: Malay spouse; FCCA: Malaysian Chinese spouse; FCIB: Filipino spouse (See Appendix A)*

From the participants’ answers, some Malaysian husbands learn and use Tagalog words when communicating with their Filipino wives.

The interviews and observations conducted show that the accommodation strategy used by Filipino wives and Malaysian husbands follow a fairly similar pattern where Filipino wives accommodate more than their Malaysian husbands (see Chapter 8, Section 8.3.1). The gender and role relationships of interlocutors can be considered as determining factors to examine the accommodation strategies. The findings reveal that Filipino housewives are more accommodating than their husbands. Holmes (2008) suggests that women are more cooperative and establish solidarity in communication. As a result, they become more accommodating to build solidarity in interactions. However, men are less cooperative in an interaction (Holmes, 2008) as a result less participation in interactions is expected.

In addition, Filipino wives accommodate their Malaysian husbands because they are not in their home country. Besides, the Malaysian husbands do not need to use Filipino in Malaysia and so it does not have high utility in Malaysia.

### 7.2.6 Adjustment of Pronunciation to Accommodate Other Speakers

Adjusting the pronunciation to be understood by others is a form of accommodation. In the interviews conducted Filipino-Malaysian couples mentioned:-

*“FCCB: My husband can’t understand me if I will not imitate his accent and his pronunciation”*

*“FCCB: Even if we communicate in English sometimes we do not understand each other because of different pronunciation but now we are used to it and we speak almost similar pronunciation (laugh)”*

*FCCB: Filipino spouse (See Appendix A)*

Approximation strategies are common in Filipino-Malaysian couples’ interaction. The statement, *“My husband can’t understand me if I will not imitate his accent and his pronunciation”* means that adjustment in the speech style particularly the accent and pronunciation play an important role towards better communication between couples.

Shifting to English does not guarantee a better understanding because of some differences in the lexical, phonological, and structural features of the many varieties of English. This is revealed when the wife said *“Even if we communicate in English sometimes we do not understand each other because of different pronunciation but now we are used to it and we speak almost similar (laugh).”* It can be said that better communication can be achieved when speakers become more adjusted with each other’s use of lexical items, structure, and pattern of communication.

In the interviews conducted, a Filipino wife said that during her stay in Malaysia she had changed her pronunciation in order to accommodate the spouse. She mentioned:-

*“FCCB: I also change my pronunciation, instead of saying BAG I say BEG for GO BACK I say GO BEK. I have to adjust so he can understand”*

*FCCB: Filipino spouse (See Appendix A)*

Filipino wives speak and adjust their speech style which includes the speech rate and pronunciation to accommodate their Malaysian husbands in order for them to be understood. In contrast, the data does not indicate that the Malaysian husbands linguistically accommodate their Filipino wives.

### **7.3 Interpretability Accommodation Strategy in Interracial Couple’s Interaction**

Interpretability strategy is an accommodation strategy where a speaker accommodates the other interlocutor based on the latter’s perceived interpretive abilities. A speaker adjusts his or her speech in order to attune to the interlocutor’s level of understanding. In some cases speakers may have the tendency to over accommodate especially when one party perceives an interpretive deficit. One way of accommodating is to simplify the lexical item, syntactic structure and use the spouses’ language (see Tables 7.5, 7.6 and 7.7).

#### **7.3.1 Survey of interpretability accommodation strategy**

A survey was conducted to find out how interpretability accommodation strategy is used in interactions between Filipino and Malaysian spouses. The results of the survey are shown in Tables 7.5, 7.6, 7.7 and 7.8.

**Table 7.7 Interpretability Strategy of Filipino-Malay Couples**

	Never (1)	Usually not (2)	Often not (3)	Occasionally (4)	Often (5)	Usually (6)	Always (7)	Mean
1. I use simple vocabulary when talking with my spouse.	10 (50%)	4 (20%)	0	0	0	1 (5%)	5 (20%)	2.95
2. I use simple sentences that are understandable by my spouse.	3 (15%)	5 (25%)	1 (5%)	0	0	1 (5%)	10 (50%)	4.60
3. I simplify my point if I am not understood.	7 (35%)	2 (10%)	0	0	1 (5%)	0	10 (50%)	4.70
4. I imitate my spouse's manner of speaking.	7 (35%)	6 (30%)	1 (5%)	0	0	1 (5%)	5 (25%)	3.25

Table 7.7 shows that 50% of couples do not use simple words, however 50% of them use simple sentences. In addition, 50% of the couples simplify their points when not understood and 50 % of them change their manner of speaking when their partners are not in the right mood. Such findings show that Filipino-Malaysian couples accommodate each other by using simple sentences and simplifying their points when they are not understood. The findings further show that 35% of couples do not accommodate by talking in the same way as their spouses.

More specifically, Filipino-Malaysian Chinese couples obtain different results when compared to Filipino-Malay couples. The results of the survey are shown in Table 7.6.

**Table 7.8 Interpretability Strategies of Filipino-Malaysian Chinese Couples**

	Never (1)	Usually not (2)	Often not (3)	Occasionally (4)	Often (5)	Usually (6)	Always (7)	Mean
1. I use simple vocabulary words when communicating with my spouse.	7 (35%)	2 (10%)	1 (5%)	0	1 (5%)	0	9 (45%)	4.10
2. I use simple sentence that is understandable by my spouse.	8 (40%)	1 (5%)	1 (5%)	0	1 (5%)	1 (5%)	8 (40%)	4.00
3. I simplify my point if I am not understood.	5 (25%)	0	1 (5%)	0	3 (15%)	2 (10%)	9 (45%)	4.90
4. I imitate my spouse's manner of speaking.	15 (75%)	4 (20%)	0	0	0	0	1 (5%)	1.50



Differences between Filipino-Malay and Filipino-Malaysian Chinese couples in using interpretability strategy are evident as shown in Table 7.8. The survey shows that 45% of Filipino-Malaysian Chinese couples use simple words when communicating with their spouses, 40% of the couples use simple sentences. Forty five percent (45%) of couples simplify their points when not understood and 70% of them change their manner of speaking when their spouses are not in the right mood. It further shows that 75% of couples do not imitate the way their spouses talk.

A similar survey was conducted with Filipino-Malaysian Indian couples and the results are different when compared to Filipino-Malay and Filipino-Malaysian Chinese couples as they obtained the lowest interpretability accommodation strategy. The results of the survey are presented in Table 7.9.

**Table 7.9 Interpretability Strategy of Filipino-Malaysian Indian Couples**

	Never (1)	Usually not (2)	Often not (3)	Occasio nally (4)	Often (5)	Usually (6)	Always (7)	Mean
1. I use simple vocabulary words when communicating with my spouse.	9 (45%)	5 (25%)	1 (5%)	1 (5%)	0	2 (10%)	2 (10%)	2.60
2. I use simple sentence that is understandable by my spouse.	8 (40%)	6 (30%)	0	0	1 (5%)	1 (5%)	4 (20%)	2.95
3. I simplify my point if I am not understood.	10 (50%)	8 (40%)	0	1 (5%)	0	0	1 (5%)	1.85
4. I imitate my spouse's manner of speaking.	9 (45%)	5 (25%)	2 (10%)	1 (5%)	0	1 (5%)	2 (10%)	2.45

Table 7.9 shows that 45% of Filipino-Malaysian Indian couples do not use simple words, 40% do not use simple sentences, 50% do not simplify their points when not understood and 45% do not imitate their spouses' manner of speaking. Such results reveal that interpretability strategy is not common among Filipino-Malaysian Indian couples.

### 7.3.2 Mean Comparison of Interpretability Strategy

To compare the interpretability accommodation strategy used by Filipino-Malay, Filipino-Malaysian Chinese and Filipino-Malaysian Indian couples, a comparison of the mean results are shown in Table 7.10.

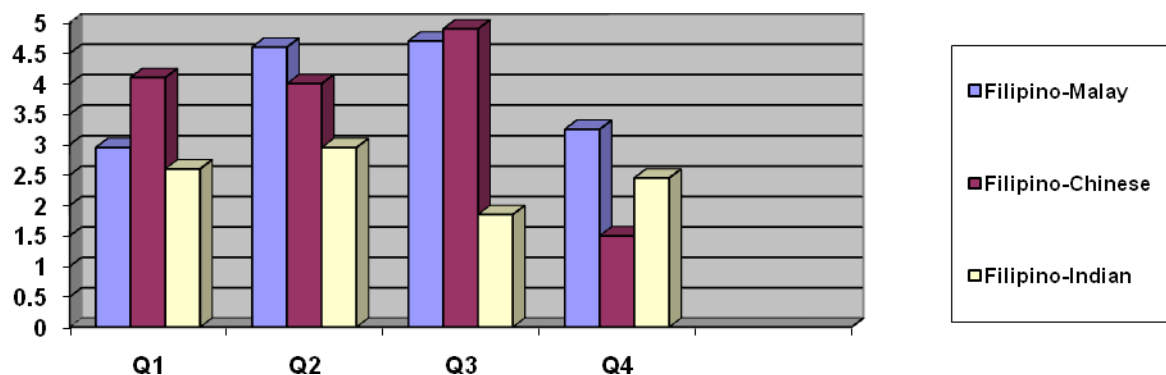
**Table 7.10 Comparison of Couples' Interpretability Accommodation Strategies**

	Filipino-Malay	Filipino-Malaysian Chinese	Filipino-Malaysian Indian
1. I use simple vocabulary words when talking with my spouse.	2.95	4.10	2.60
2. I use simple sentences that are understandable by my spouse.	4.60	4.00	2.95
3. I simplify my point if I am not understood.	4.70	4.90	1.85
4. I imitate my spouse's manner of speaking.	3.25	1.50	2.45

Table 7.10 shows the differences of interpretability strategy used by Filipino-Malaysian couples. The data show that Filipino-Malay couples obtain a mean of 4.70 for statement 3, *"I simplify my point if I am not understood"* and a low mean of 2.95 for statement 1, *"I use simple words when talking with my spouse."* Such results reveal that Filipino-Malay couples simplify their topic when they are not understood. However, they do not simplify the lexical items they used.

The Filipino-Malaysian Chinese couples obtain a high mean of 4.90 for statement 3, *"I simplify my point if I am not understood"* and a low mean of 1.50 for statement 4, *"I imitate my spouse's manner of speaking."* In contrast, Filipino-Malaysian Indian couples show a different result where a high mean of 2.95 is obtained for statement 2, *"I use simple sentences that are understandable by my spouse"* and a low mean of 1.85 for statement 3,

*“I simplify my point if I am not understood.”* The results show a different pattern of accommodation as compared to Filipino-Malay and Filipino-Malaysian Chinese couples. The lowest mean (1.85) obtained in Filipino-Malaysian Indian couples are the highest mean (4.70) obtained by Filipino-Malay and Filipino-Malaysian Chinese couples. Such differences are shown in Chart 7.2.



**Chart 7.2 Mean Comparison of Couples' Interpretability Strategy**

Chart 7.2 shows that Filipino-Malaysian couples vary in employing the interpretability strategy in their interactions in the home domain. Filipino-Malay and Filipino-Malaysian Chinese couples accommodate more using the interpretability strategy as compared to Filipino-Malaysian Indian couples. Filipino-Malay and Filipino-Malaysian Chinese couples show a pattern having a high mean in statement 3 followed by statements 2, 4 and 1 (see Table 7.10). In contrast, the Filipino-Malaysian Indian couples show a different pattern where they obtain a high mean for statement 2 and this is followed by statements 1, 4 and 3.

The interviews conducted with Filipino-Malaysian couples show that they accommodate each other by simplifying their vocabulary, syntax, and topic (sections 7.4.1, 7.4.2 and 7.4.3).

### 7.3.3 Lexical and Syntactic Accommodation

Filipino-Malaysian couples accommodate each other when they think that they are not clearly understood by their partners. Filipino wives accommodate their Malaysian husbands by using simple lexical items, simple sentences, and simplifying their topic (see Tables 7.5, 7.6 and 7.7). They also use simple sentences and simplify their message when they are not understood. Most often, Filipino wives imitate the way their partners speak like using similar vocabulary, sentence structure, using the particle “lah”, and switching from English to Bahasa Malaysia or Filipino. Below are some extracts from the recorded conversations which show how the lexical and syntactic accommodations occur in interactions.

*“Yeah lah, cannot get it, only between us (laugh.)”*  
*“In Taman Putra ada.” (There is in Taman Putra)*  
*“Yeah lah then kembali (come back) after Christmas.”*  
*“Sa labas (outside) you can see.”*  
*(See Appendix B)*

Filipino wives accommodate their Malaysian husbands by using the particle “lah.” The sentence structure “cannot get it” shows that the subject is missing or not explicitly uttered. This structure is common in Malaysian English (Pillai, 2006) but not in Philippine English. However, Filipino wives use such sentence structure.

Using Bahasa Malaysia and Filipino are also evident in these statements “*Sa labas (outside) you can see.*” and “*Yeah lah then kembali (come back) after Christmas.*” This means that the use of couples’ first language occurs through code switching in English dominated interactions.

#### **7.3.4 Language Simplification in Husband and Wife Interactions**

Couples encounter problems in communication when the message conveyed is not clear. To avoid the communication breakdown, they simplify their language by providing an explanation of the unfamiliar lexical item or by simplifying the message using simple lexis.

In the interviews conducted some couples said:-

*“FCCB: If my husband does not understand me I simplify my English so he will understand or I will give an example.”*

*“FCMB: I know the basic English only but sometimes my husband does not understand, I will just explain it.”*

*“FCCB: Yeah, he understands Filipino (laugh) Filipino pronunciation (laugh).”*

*FCCB, FCMB: Filipino spouse (See Appendix A)*

The interviews reveal that Filipino wives accommodate their Malaysian husbands by simplifying their language when they are not understood. When the Filipinos said “*If my husband does not understand me I simplify my English so he will understand or I will give an example,*” it shows that Filipino wives can be sensitive to the needs of their Malaysian husbands. As a result, adjusting their language becomes automatic if their Malaysian husbands do not understand the message. When a Filipino wife said “*I know the basic*

*English only but sometimes my husband does not understand, I will just explain it,”* it shows that the Filipino wife attempted to show that her husband was more proficient in the English.

One way of simplifying the language in interactions is by using the spouses' language when the message is not clearly understood. In the interviews conducted, Filipino wives mentioned:-

*“FCCB: When he doesn't know in English I will speak in Malay lah, because I'm not Chinese and he knows how to speak in Malay, then I will speak in Malay.”*

*“FCIB: Yeah, we simplify our language so that we can understand each other.”*

*FCCB, FCIB: Filipino spouses (See Appendix A)*

It is evident that Filipino and Malaysian spouses adjust their speech by simplifying their message through code switching from one language to the other just to be understood. In general, interpretability strategy makes the conversation clearer and more understandable.

#### **7.4 Discourse Management Strategy in Interracial Couples' Interaction**

Discourse management strategy occurs when a speaker focuses on the other person's conversational needs and is frequently discussed in terms of topic selection and face management (Harwood, Soliz, and Lin, 2006). This happens when a partner chooses a particular topic for discussion so as to avoid misunderstanding and conflict. In interracial couples' interaction when discussing traditions and practices, language is carefully observed so as to avoid misinterpretation.

### 7.4.1 Survey on Discourse Management Accommodation Strategy

A survey was conducted to find out how discourse management accommodation strategies are used in the interactions of Filipino-Malaysian couples in the home domain.

**Table 7.11 Discourse Management Strategy of Filipino-Malay Couples**

	Never (1)	Usually not (2)	Often not (3)	Occasio nally (4)	Often (5)	Usually (6)	Always (7)	Mean
1. I discuss my traditions with my spouse.	0	0	2 (10%)	0	0	3 (15%)	15 (75%)	6.65
2. I share my language and culture with my spouse.	1 (5%)	0	4 (20%)	0	0	2 (10%)	13 (65%)	6.20
3. I avoid topics that suggest disrespect to my spouse's language and culture.	3 (15%)	0	0	0	0	2 (10%)	15 (75%)	6.00
4. I am careful when choosing topics for discussion so as to avoid conflict.	3 (15%)	0	0	0	1 (5%)	4 (20%)	12 (60%)	5.80
5. I do not discuss controversial topics that will hurt my spouse.	3 (15%)	0	0	0	2 (10%)	5 (25%)	10 (50%)	5.65
6. I am careful in choosing words in order not to be misinterpreted by my spouse.	2 (10%)	0	0	0	1 (5%)	5 (25%)	12 (60%)	6.05

Table 7.11 shows that 79% of Filipino-Malay couples discuss their traditions, 65 % share their language and culture, 75% avoid topics that show disrespect to their spouses, 60% of them carefully choose some topics to avoid conflict, 50% do not discuss controversial topics and 60% carefully choose their words in order not to be misinterpreted by their spouses. The results of the survey reveal that Filipino-Malay couples use discourse management strategies when communicating with their spouse.

A similar result is obtained with Filipino-Malaysian Chinese couples. The results are shown in Table 7.12.

**Table 7.12 Discourse Management Strategy of Filipino-Malaysian Chinese Couples**

	Never (1)	Usually not (2)	Often not (3)	Occasionally (4)	Often (5)	Usually (6)	Always (7)	Mean
1. I discuss my traditions with my spouse.	0	0	2 (10%)	0	4 (20%)	0	14 (70%)	6.20
2. I share my language and culture with my spouse.	0	0	0	0	0	2 (10%)	18 (90%)	6.90
3. I avoid topics that suggest disrespect to my spouse's language and culture.	0	0	2 (10%)	0	2 (10%)	0	16 (80%)	6.40
4. I am careful when choosing topics for discussion so as to avoid conflict.	1 (5%)	0	0	1 (5%)	1 (5%)	3 (15%)	14 (70%)	6.30
5. I do not discuss controversial topics that will hurt my spouse.	0	2 (10%)	0	0	1 (5%)	2 (10%)	15 (75%)	6.30
6. I am careful in choosing words in order not to be misinterpreted by my spouse.	0	1 (5%)	0	0	2 (10%)	2 (10%)	15 (75%)	6.45

A similar pattern of accommodation is observed between Filipino-Malay and Filipino-Malaysian Chinese couples. However, Filipino-Malaysian Chinese couples have high percentage for statements 1 to 5 (see Table 7.12). The data show that Filipino and Malaysian Chinese couples use more discourse management accommodation strategies as compared to Filipino-Malay couples.

A similar survey was conducted with Filipino-Malaysian Indian couples.

**Table 7.13 Discourse Management Strategy of Filipino-Malaysian Indian Couples**

	Never (1)	Usually not (2)	Often not (3)	Occasionally (4)	Often (5)	Usually (6)	Always (7)	Mean
1. I discuss my traditions with my spouse.	4 (20%)	0	1 (5%)	0	1 (5%)	6 (30%)	8 (40%)	5.20
2. I share my language and culture with my spouse.	2 (10%)	0	0	1 (5%)	0	6 (30%)	11 (55%)	5.95
3. I avoid topics that suggest disrespect to my spouse's language and culture.	1 (5%)	1 (5%)	0	0	1 (5%)	5 (25%)	12 (60%)	6.10
4. I am careful when choosing topics for discussion so as to avoid conflict.	8 (40%)	2 (10%)	0	0	0	4 (20%)	6 (30%)	3.90
5. I do not discuss controversial topics that will hurt my spouse.	10 (50%)	1 (5%)	0	0	0	6 (30%)	3 (15%)	3.45
6. I am careful in choosing words in order not to be misinterpreted by my spouse.	7 (35%)	2 (10%)	0	0	0	6 (30%)	5 (25%)	4.10



Table 7.13 shows that 40% of couples discuss their traditions, 55% of them share their language and culture, and 60% avoid topics that show disrespect. Furthermore, the findings reveal that 40% of couples (30% Malaysian Indians) are not careful in choosing topics to avoid conflicts, 50% of them (40% Malaysian Indians) do not avoid controversial issues and 35% of the Malaysian Indian husbands do not choose their words carefully. The results show that the Malaysian Indian husbands are not sensitive of their Filipino spouses' culture, tradition and language.

#### 7.4.2 Mean Comparison of Couples' Discourse Management Strategy

To compare the results of the survey, a mean comparison of couples' discourse management strategy is shown in Table 7.12.

**Table 7.14 Comparison of Couples' Discourse Management Accommodation Strategy**

	Filipino-Malay	Filipino-Malaysian Chinese	Filipino-Malaysian Indian
1. I discuss my traditions with my spouse.	6.65	6.20	5.20
2. I share my language and culture with my spouse.	6.20	6.90	5.95
3. I avoid topics that suggest disrespect to my spouse's language and culture.	6.00	6.40	6.10
4. I am careful when choosing topics for discussion so as to avoid conflict.	5.80	6.30	3.90
5. I do not discuss controversial topics that will hurt my spouse.	5.65	6.30	3.45
6. I am careful in choosing words in order not to be misinterpreted by my spouse.	6.05	6.35	4.10

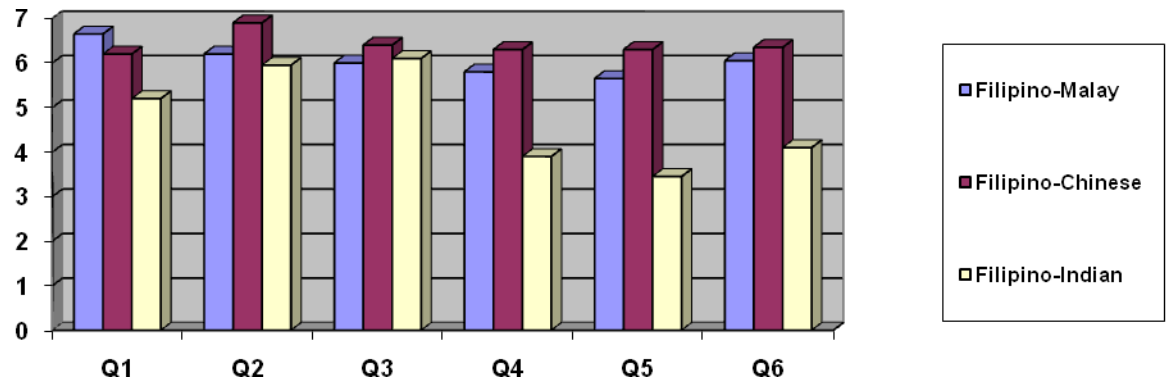
Table 7.14 shows a high mean of 6.65 obtained by Filipino-Malay couples for statement 1, "I discuss my traditions with my spouse" and a low mean of 5.65 for statement 5, "I do not

*start discussing controversial topics that will hurt my spouse.*” The results are clear that Filipino-Malay couples accommodate each other by discussing their traditions but they discuss issues that will hurt their spouses.

For Filipino-Malaysian Chinese couples, high means are obtained for statements 1 to 6 as compared to Filipino-Malay couples. A high mean of 6.90 is obtained for statement 2, *“I share my language and culture with my spouse”* and a low mean of 6.20 for statement 1, *“I discuss my traditions with my spouse.”* This contrasts with the mean of the Filipino-Malay couples where statement 1 shows the highest mean. This means that Filipino-Malaysian Chinese couples differ in accommodating their spouses as compared to the Filipino-Malay couples.

The Filipino-Malaysian Indian couples obtain a high mean of 6.10 for statement 3, *“I avoid topics that show disrespect to my spouse’s language and culture”* and a low mean of 3.45 for statement 5, *“I do not start discussing controversial topics that will hurt my spouse.”* The Filipino-Malaysian Chinese and Filipino-Malay couples obtained similar means which are lower as compared to the Filipino-Malaysian Indian couples.

The comparison of mean is provided in Chart 7.3.



**Chart 7.3 Mean Comparison of Couples' Discourse Management Strategy**

Chart 7.3 shows that Filipino-Malaysian Chinese couples obtain a high mean in statements 1 to 6, followed by Filipino-Malay couples and Filipino-Malaysian Indian couples receive the lowest mean in comparison to the other couples.

Filipino-Malaysian couples discuss their traditions, share the language and culture, and are careful in choosing their words in order not to hurt each other. However, in choosing some topics that are controversial, Malaysian spouses are not mindful of sensitive issues. However Filipino spouses are careful in uttering some statements that might upset their Malaysian spouses. They are careful when discussing anything related to religious activities because such topics are considered sensitive. Filipino spouses married to Malays are also careful when discussing topics that are considered taboo to Malaysians for instance non-halal food and other practices contrary to Islamic beliefs.

#### **7.4.3 Wives Sensitivity to Others**

Sensitivity to other speakers is important in interactions to create solidarity in interactions. In the interviews conducted, the findings show that Filipino wives are sensitive to their

Malaysian husbands' feelings so as to avoid hurting them. In the interviews conducted, Filipino wives commented:-

*"FCMB: My husband sometimes gives negative comments against the Filipino women in Malaysia but it hurts me because I am also a Filipino"*

*"FCMB: I do not speak anything against the religion (Islam) because it is very sensitive"*

*"FCMB: Malaysian men don't care. They are really different, they don't care."*

*"FCMB: I did everything just to make me a perfect housewife but nothing happens. I was really hurt for what he did but that is their culture"*

*"FCCB: I don't like when he shares the Chinese culture because he always criticizes the Philippine culture. Sometimes, I'm disappointed"*

*"FCCB: Yes, I share often but when he shares there is always a comparison between. Chinese and Filipinos. He says a lot of things against Filipino women"*

*"FCCB: He sometimes say that a lot of Filipino women are prostitutes and loud. It hurts, you know" "He directly tells me that there are Filipino prostitutes. My husband is very direct"*

*"FCIB: Alam mo (You know) he tells me that he does not like sometimes our culture. Di ko alam (I don't know) perhaps because of other Filipino women"*

*"FCIB: Yes, we both share our cultural practices. We have no problems but he is disappointed of the Philippine politics"*

*FCMB, FCCB, FCIB: Filipino spouses (See Appendix A)*

Filipino-Malaysian couples use discourse management strategy by discussing topics of historical interests as well as traditions to show appreciation and recognition of their partner's heritage (see also Harwood, Soliz and Lin, 2006).

The comments made by Filipino wives prove that they are careful in discussing topics that they believe to be sensitive which might create conflict or hurt their Malaysian

husbands. In contrast, their Malaysian husbands are not as sensitive when discussing issues that may offend their Filipino wives.

Twenty (20) Filipino wives are aware on what they say and how they phrase their messages so as not to create conflicts with others. They know when to say and when not to say things. On the contrary, only ten (10) Malaysian husbands reported that they accommodate their Malaysian Filipino wives.

Some couples commented:-

*“FCMA: We discuss things or anything and I don’t think that there is a need to select anything I want to share. There is no filtering of information.”*  
(Malaysian husband)

*“FCMB: He is very direct and blunt when saying something. He even told me to look for another man.”* (Filipino wife)

*FCMA: Malay spouse; FCMB: Filipino spouse (See Appendix A)*

The message is clear that these husbands are direct whether the topic is sensitive or not. This might be uncomfortable for couples who are sensitive to cultural issues. In the interviews, Filipino wives expressed the following.

*“FCMB: I am also affected when my husband talks about negative things about the Philippines. Of course, I’m a Filipino and it feels bad sometimes.”*

*“FCCB: I think so but it hurts me when he says something that is not supposed to be spoken. You know what I mean”*

*“FCIB: He criticizes the Philippines many times. I feel bad.”*

*FCMB, FCCB, FCIB: Filipino spouses (See Appendix A)*

Filipino wives are sensitive as far as negative issues in the Philippines or Filipinos are concerned. This shows that Filipino wives are careful in discussing topics that they think sensitive to their Malaysian Chinese partners. The findings also show that women are more careful in their linguistic choices than men. Women project an image of being sensitive to others. Such findings may prove that gender could be a factor that may influence the speaker's language choice. This claim is also supported with the findings presented in Sections 7.2.3, 7.2.4 and 7.2.5 and with previous studies of Coulmas (2005) and Holmes (2008).

#### **7.4.4 Respect for the Spouse**

As a sign of respect, Filipino spouses discuss their traditions, language and culture; avoid topics that are sensitive or controversial; and are careful in choosing words that might be misinterpreted by others.

*"FCCB: I respect my husband. We (friends) say "excuse us" and we speak in Filipino but of course if he is involved we speak English"*

*"FCMB: Yes, I shared to my husband the Filipino culture and traditions so that he will learn to understand me"*

*"FCCB: Although it's very hard to express sometimes your thoughts but I need to speak his language, I might hurt his feelings."*

*"FCMB: Yes, we do but I share the Filipino practices most of the time. However, I am careful that he might not like it or misinterpret it."*

*FCCB, FCMB: Filipino spouses (See Appendix A)*

Filipino wives accommodate their Malaysian husbands basically to show respect. As commented by a Filipino wife, *"I respect my husband. We (friends) say "excuse us" and*

*we speak in Filipino but of course if he is involved we speak English”* shows the accommodative behavior of Filipino spouses.

## **7.5 Interpersonal Control Accommodation Strategies in Interracial Couples’ Interactions**

Interpersonal control strategies occur when speakers interrupt the conversation or show a direct power claim. This kind of strategy commonly happens when one speaker tries to control the other. In a husband and wife interaction, the use of interpersonal accommodation strategy frequently occurs if one of the spouses tries to show upward power moves.

### **7.5.1 Survey of Interpersonal Control Strategy**

The findings of the survey conducted among Filipino-Malay couples on interpersonal control strategy are shown in Table 7.13.

**Table 7.15 Interpersonal Control Strategy of Filipino-Malay Couples**

	Never (1)	Usually not (2)	Often not (3)	Occasio nally (4)	Often (5)	Usually (6)	Alway s (6)	Mean
1. I am firm with my ideas when talking with my spouse.	2 (10%)	0	0	0	0	3 (15%)	15 (75%)	6.65
2. I feel that a wife needs to submit to my spouse at all times to maintain good relationship.	0	0	0	0	2 (10%)	3 (15%)	15 (75%)	6.65
3. My spouse always shows authority in every communication event.	15 (75%)	1 (5%)	0	2 (10%)	0	1 (5%)	1 (5%)	1.90
4. I interrupt my spouse if I want to say something.	10 (50%)	5 (25%)	0	1 (5%)	1 (5%)	2 (10%)	1 (5%)	2.40
5. I signal my spouse, either in words or non-verbal actions when to start and stop talking.	5 (25%)	6 (30%)	0	6 (30%)	0	2 (10%)	1 (5%)	3.00

Table 7.15 shows that 75% of Filipino-Malay couples are firm with their ideas when communicating, 75% of them believe that the wife must submit to the husband, 75% of spouses do not show authority, 50% do not interrupt their spouses and 30% occasionally signal their spouse when to start or stop the conversation. The results suggest that Filipino-Malay couples use interpersonal accommodation strategy when communicating with their spouses.

A similar survey was conducted with Filipino-Malaysian Chinese couples and the findings are shown Table 7.16.

**Table 7.16 Interpersonal Control Strategy of Filipino-Malaysian Chinese Couples**

	Never (1)	Usually not (2)	Often not (3)	Occasionally (4)	Often (5)	Usually (6)	Always (6)	Mean
1. I am firm with my ideas when talking with my spouse.	0	0	1 (5%)	0	5 (25%)	2 (10%)	12 (60%)	6.20
2. I feel that I need to submit to my spouse at all times to maintain good relationship.	0	7 (35%)	1 (5%)	0	0	1 (5%)	11 (55%)	5.00
3. My spouse always shows authority in every communication event.	14 (70%)	6 (30%)	0	0	0	0	0	1.30
4. I interrupt my spouse if I want to say something.	16 (80%)	2 (10%)	0	2 (10%)	0	0	0	1.40
5. I signal my spouse, either in words or non-verbal actions when to start and stop talking.	2 (10%)	4 (20%)	0	0	2 (10%)	0	12 (60%)	5.00

Table 7.16 shows the occurrence of interpersonal control strategy used by Filipino-Malaysian Chinese couples. The results show a similar pattern of accommodation as Filipino-Malay couples for statements 1 to 4. However, statement 5 shows a difference where Filipino-Malaysian Chinese couples obtain 60% that couples signal their spouses either verbally or non-verbally when to start and stop the conversation. From the survey, it



can be said that Filipino-Malaysian Chinese couples (mostly Malaysian husbands) have the tendency to control their spouses particularly the Filipino spouses.

A similar survey was conducted to find out further the use of interpersonal control strategies among Filipino-Malaysian Indian couples.

**Table 7.17 Interpersonal Control Strategy of Filipino-Malaysian Indian Couples**

	Never (1)	Usually not (2)	Often not (3)	Occasionally (4)	Often (5)	Usually (6)	Always (6)	Mean
1. I am firm with my ideas when talking with my spouse.	2 (10%)	0	1 (5%)	0	1 (5%)	6 (30%)	10 (50%)	5.80
2. I feel that I need to submit to my spouse at all times to maintain good relationship.	4 (20%)	0	1 (5%)	0	0	5 (25%)	10 (50%)	5.35
3. My spouse always shows authority in every communication event.	7 (35%)	8 (40%)	1 (5%)	0	2 (10%)	0	2 (10%)	2.50
4. I interrupt my spouse if I want to say something.	9 (45%)	6 (30%)	2 (10%)	0	1 (5%)	0	2 (10%)	2.30
5. I signal my spouse, either in words or non-verbal actions when to start and stop talking.	7 (35%)	5 (25%)	3 (15%)	2 (10%)	0	0	3 (15%)	2.75

Table 7.17 shows that 50% of couples are firm about their ideas, 50% agree that the wife must submit to the husband, 40% do not show any authority, and 35% do not signal their spouses when to start or stop the conversation. Such findings show that Filipino-Malaysian Indian couples (mostly Malaysian Indians) are firm about their ideas when communicating with their spouses and believe that wives must be submissive to their husbands.

### **7.5.2 Mean Comparison of Couples Interpersonal Control Strategy**

To compare the results obtained through the survey, the mean results are presented in Table 7.18.

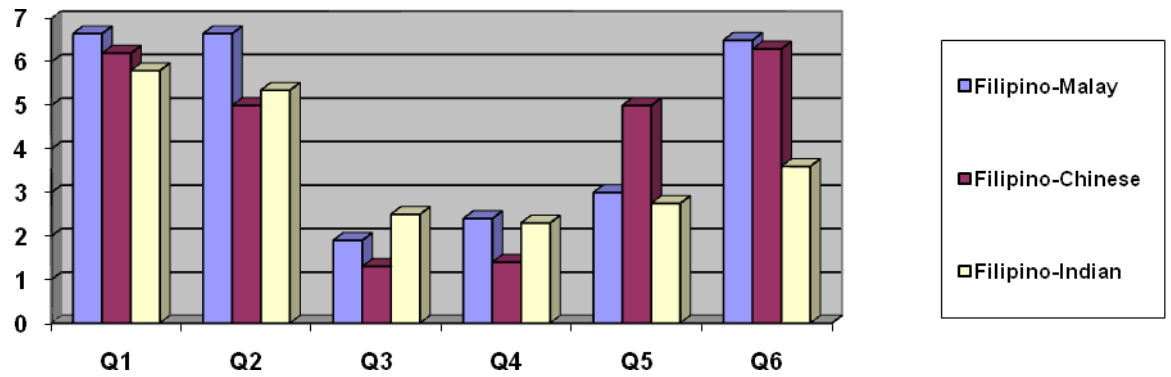
**Table 7.18 Comparison of Interpersonal Accommodation Strategy**

	Filipino-Malay	Filipino-Malaysian Chinese	Filipino-Malaysian Indian
1. I am firm with my ideas when talking with my spouse.	6.65	6.20	5.80
2. I feel that I need to submit to my spouse at all times to maintain good relationship.	6.65	5.00	5.35
3. My spouse always shows authority in every communication event.	1.90	1.30	2.50
4. I interrupt my spouse if I want to say something.	2.40	1.40	2.30
5. I signal my spouse, either in words or non-verbal actions when to start and stop talking.	3.00	5.00	2.75
6. I believe that a wife must submit to her husband.	6.50	6.30	3.60

Table 7.18 shows the mean comparison of interpersonal control accommodation strategy of Filipino-Malaysian couples. The data reveal that Filipino-Malay couples obtain the highest mean of 6.65 in statement 1, “*I am firm with my ideas when talking with my spouse*” while Filipino-Malaysian Chinese and Filipino-Malaysian Indian couples obtain a mean of only 6.20 and 5.80 respectively. The results show that Filipino-Malay and Filipino-Malaysian Indian couples (Malay and Indian husbands) are firm with their ideas when communicating with their spouses.

The lowest mean of 1.30 is obtained by Filipino-Malaysian Chinese couples in statement 3, “*My spouse always shows authority in every communication event*” (mean of 1.90 for Filipino-Malay). Such findings reveal that Filipino-Malay and Filipino-Malaysian Chinese couples are not authoritative when communicating with their spouses as compared to Filipino-Malaysian Indian couples who obtained a mean of 2.50.

Chart 7.4 illustrates the mean comparison of couples’ interpersonal control strategy.



**Chart 7.4 Mean Comparison of Couples' Interpersonal Strategy**

Chart 7.4 shows that Filipino-Malaysian couples (mostly husbands) have high means for statements 1, 2 and 3 which means that they are firm and they believe that wives must submit to their husbands and a lower mean in statements 3, 4 and 5. Such pattern of accommodation shows a slight difference in accommodating their spouses.

Power control is common in patriarchal cultures where males are considered more superior than women (Price, 2006). The authority is associated with males while females are considered subordinate. In Filipino and Malaysian cultures the role of men and women differ. Filipinos may have weaker view that women are subordinate because they enjoy equal rights and authority with men. Such equality is evident in the political situation of the Philippines where women hold high positions in the government like the president. On the other hand, in Malaysia women can be viewed as subordinate as compared to the men (Ng, 2004). As a result control and authority over their wives is evident among Malaysian men.

## **7.6 Conclusion**

The findings of the study reveal that Filipino-Malaysian couples use different types of accommodation strategies such as approximation, interpretability, discourse management and interpersonal control. In interactions between Filipino and Malaysian couples the four types of accommodation strategies are used simultaneously in one communicative event. Such strategies are used differently by couples of different ethnic backgrounds such as Filipino-Malay, Filipino-Malaysian Chinese and Filipino-Malaysian Indian couples. However, a trend shows that all Malaysian spouses use the interpersonal control accommodation strategy where they show control and authority when communicating with their Filipino spouses.

Gender issue also emerged as an essential factor that influence the accommodation strategies used by husband and wife in their interactions in the home domain. Filipino wives regardless of whether they were married to Malay, Chinese or Indian tend to be more accommodating than their husbands. Such accommodation proves that women try to establish solidarity in interactions while men tend to be less cooperative and more individualistic.

The occurrence of accommodation strategies in couples' interactions in the home domain shows that code switching is used to accommodate other speakers. Such emerging accommodation strategy is discussed in Chapter Eight. The discussion specifically focuses as to how code switching occurs in interactions between Filipino and Malaysian spouses.