

CHAPTER FOUR

DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF FILIPINO-MALAYSIAN COUPLES

4.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the participants' demographic profile. The data are presented in tables to provide information on couples' education, ethnicity, religion, occupation, years of marriage, first language, age, and languages spoken at home. The demographic profile of participants provides a background in analyzing language choice, accommodation strategies, and code switching of couples in their verbal communication in the home domain.

4.2 Couples' Demographic Profile

This chapter describes only the demographic profile and the influence on language choice. A detailed analysis on couples' language choice, accommodation strategies and code switching is provided in Chapters 5, 6, 7, and 8.

4.2.1 Education

Participants' education can be a source of additive bilingualism specifically in the Philippine and Malaysian contexts where students are taught in at least two languages: English and the national language. For instance, in the Philippines, the medium of instruction is English and Filipino while in Malaysia, it is English and Bahasa Malaysia.

Philippines and Malaysia are considered bilingual in their educational system but the degree of use of the two languages like English and the national language differs. In the Philippine context, students have to learn both Filipino and English based on the prescribed

curricula of the Department of Education Culture and Sports (DECS) for elementary and secondary levels. In the tertiary level both English and Filipino are also used as the medium of instruction. As a result, most books that are used in the classroom are written in English and Filipino. On the other hand, Malaysia’s bilingual education is a bit different. English has been used as the medium of instruction in three subjects like English, Science, and Mathematics since 2003 while Bahasa Malaysia is used for the rest of the subjects. However, in tertiary education, Bahasa Malaysia and English are used as the medium of instruction in private colleges and universities. As a result, Filipino and Malaysian participants who were exposed to bilingual education can speak more than two languages; English, ethnic language, and the national language.

The table below shows the educational background of couples who took part in the study.

Table 4.1 Educational Background of Filipino Wives and Malaysian Husbands

Education	Husband	Wife
Post Graduate	0	1 (3.33%)
Graduate	2 (6.67%)	6 (20%)
College	14 (46.67%)	18 (60%)
Some College	12 (40%)	4 (13.33%)
Secondary	1 (3.33%)	1 (3.33%)
Some Secondary	1 (3.33%)	0

Table 4.1 reveals that nine spouses completed their graduate studies: 6.67% are Malaysian husbands and 20% are Filipino wives. Forty six point sixty seven percent (46.67%) of husbands and 60% of wives completed their college degree, 40% of husbands and 13.33% of wives have some college education and 3.33% of husbands and 3.33% of wives

completed their secondary education. It is clear that a high percentage of Filipino wives are college degree holders as compared to their Malaysian husbands.

Obtaining a college degree is not unusual for Filipinos since education is highly valued in Philippine culture. Filipinos believe that education provides them with a better future. At the same time, for Filipinos to leave the country and work overseas they need minimum educational requirement, they need to be high school graduates or college graduates with minimum English language proficiency as required by the employers (Manalansan, 2008).

4.2.2 Ethnicity

In the Philippines, ethnicity is not emphasized. People are categorized according to their region of origins and not their ethnic membership. Filipinos are regionalistic people and in every region people speak different languages. Despite the regionalistic mindset of Filipinos, everyone still values the importance of the national language which is Filipino (Manalansan, 2008).

In contrast, ethnicity is a major issue in Malaysia. People are identified based on their ethnic membership such as Malay, Chinese, Indians, and other minority ethnic groups in Sabah and Sarawak. Similar to Filipinos, Malaysians speak different languages and a large number of non-Malay Malaysians might also speak the national language, Bahasa Malaysia, in varying degrees of proficiency.

Table 4.2 shows the ethnic background of couples who participated in the study.

Table 4.2 Ethnicity of Filipino-Malaysian Couples

Ethnicity	Husband	Wife
Filipino	1 (3.33%)	29 (96.67%)
Malay	10 (33.33%)	0
Malaysian Chinese	9 (30%)	1 (3.33%)
Malaysian Indian	10 (33.33%)	0

Table 4.2 shows that 29 (96.67%) of the 30 wives are Filipinos and 1 (3.33%) is a Malaysian Chinese. On the other hand, one 1 (3.33%) Filipino, 10 (33.33%) Malays, 9 (30%) Malaysian Chinese and 10 (33.33%) Malaysian Indians are husbands. The data show that most Filipinos who married Malaysians were women. This is because most Filipinos who leave the Philippines and work in Malaysia are single, widow or separated women. As of December 2004 there were 6,600 Filipino women as domestic workers deployed in Malaysia (Manalansan, 2008: 6). For them the chances of looking for a marriage partner outside while working in Malaysia might be higher.

4.2.3 Religion

According to the National Statistics Office of the Philippine (<http://www.census.gov.ph/>), 92.6% of the total population of 92,226,600 million people are Christians. The Christians in the Philippines belong to different religious denominations which include Catholics (81.0%), Protestants (7.3%), Iglesia ni Kristo (2.3%) and Aglipayans (2.0%). The Muslim population is (5.1%) and Buddhists (0.1%).

Table 4.3 shows the percentage of religious affiliations in the Philippines.

Table 4.3 Religious Affiliations in the Philippines

Religious Affiliation, Censuses			
	2000	1960	1903 ^a
Christian	92.6%	92.9	91.5
<i>Roman Catholic</i>	81.0%	83.8	91.5
<i>Protestant</i>	7.3%	2.9	
<i>Iglesia ni Kristo</i>	2.3%	1.0	
<i>Aglipayan</i>	2.0%	5.2	
Muslim	5.1%	4.9	
Buddhist	0.1%	0.1	
Others ^b	1.7%	2.1	8.5
None/DK	0.5%		

Source: The Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life. <http://pewforum.org/world-affairs/countries/?CountryID=163>

Table 4.3 shows that most Filipinos are Catholic Christians. The Christian dominance in the Philippines is reflected in the Filipino culture like celebrating Christmas, Lent season, and names of places that are patterned after the Saints (Rodell, 2002).

In contrast, Malaysia is dominated by Muslims (see Table 4.4). According to the 2009 census, Malaysia has a total population of is 28.31 million people. The 2009 census shows that approximately 63.2% of Malaysians are Muslims; 16.6% Buddhists; 9.55% Christians; 5.7% Hindus; and 2.45% follow Confucianism, Taoism, and other traditional Chinese religions (see Table 4.4).

Table 4.4 Percentage Distribution of Population by Religion and Stratum, Malaysia, 2000

Religion	Urban	Rural
Islam	53.5	72.9
Christianity	7.6	11.5
Hinduism	7.9	3.5
Buddhism	26.3	6.9
Confucianism/Taoism/Other traditional Chinese religion	3.2	1.7
Tribal/Folk	0.1	1.9
Others	0.4	0.4
No religion/Unknown	1.1	1.2
Total	100.0	100.0
Number (thousands)	13,714.9	8,483.4

Source: Population & Housing Census of Malaysia 2000 Population Distribution & Basic Demographic Characteristics (Population and Housing Census Division)

Table 4.4 shows that Islam is a major religion in Malaysia, followed by Buddhism and Christianity. The Islamic religion of Malaysia has also influenced the Malay culture which is reflected in celebrations, other cultural practices and foreign policies (Nair, 2003).

In this research most Filipino and Malaysian participants came from diverse religious affiliations. The table below shows the religious affiliations of the participants.

Table 4.5 Religion of Filipino-Malaysian Couples

Religion	Husband	Wife
Buddhist	4 (13.33%)	0
Christian	12 (40%)	20 (66.67%)
Hindu	4 ((13.33%)	0
Islam	10 (33.33%)	10 (33.33%)

Table 4.5 shows the religious affiliations of participants who took part in the study. There are 4 (13.33%) Buddhist husbands, 12 (40%) Christian husbands and 20 (66.67%) Christian

wives, 4 (13.33%) Hindu husbands, 10 (33.33%) Muslim husbands and 10 (33.33%) Muslim wives. The Muslim Filipino wives were originally Catholic Christians but converted to Islam when they married the Malays. Majority of the participants are Christians (53.34%) with the exception of those who married the Malays and converted to Islam.

4.2.4 Occupation

The participants' occupations vary from managerial position to routine unskilled manual work (see Table 4.6).

Table 4.6 Participants' Occupation

Occupation	Husband	Wife
Managers and Administrative Professionals	2 (6.67%)	2 (6.67%)
Businessman/Businesswoman	10 (33.33%)	3 (10%)
Technical, Scientific	7 (23.33%)	3 (10%)
Clerical and Secretarial	0	0
Craft and Skilled Service	5 (16.67%)	0
Personal Service (domestic work)	0	4 (13.33%)
Sales	6 (20%)	2 (6.67%)
Operative and Assembly	0	0
Routine Unskilled Manual	0	6 (20%)

Table 4.6 shows that the participants came from different employment backgrounds. Ten (10) (33.33%) husbands mainly Chinese are engaged in business and 6 (20%) wives are engaged in routine unskilled manual work. There are 2 (6.67%) husbands and 2 (6.67%) wives who work as managers and administrative professionals, 3 (10%) businesswomen; 7 (23.33%) husbands and 3 (10%) wives who work in the technical sector; 5 (16.67%) husbands are engaged in craft and skilled services, 4 (13.33%) wives are engaged in personal services (domestic work), 6 (20%) husbands and 2 (6.67%) wives are in sales.

It is evident that 30 husbands are engaged in business, technical work, and sales. On the other hand, 12 Filipino wives are engaged in routine unskilled manual and personal services. The data show that Filipino women married Malaysian men who had secured employment and stable financial capability.

4.2.5 Years of Marriage

The number of years of marriage of the participants varies. Table 4.7 shows how long the participants have been married.

Table 4.7 Years of Marriage of Filipino-Malaysian Couples

Years of Marriage	Couples
1-5 years	6 (20%)
6-10 years	7 (23.33%)
11-15 years	9 (30%)
16-20 years	7 (23.33%)
21-25 years	1 (3.33%)

Table 4.7 shows that 6 (20%) couples have been married from 1-5 years, 7 (23.33%) couples have been married from 6-10 years, 9 (30%) couples have been married from 11-15 years, 7 (23.33%) couples have been married from 16-20 years and only 1 (3.33%) couple has been married for 21-25 years. The majority of participants have been married for 11-15 years.

4.2.6 First Language Spoken by Spouses

The first language spoken by spouses in the home ranges from Malay, Chinese, English, Filipino and Indian languages. In some cultures the wife's first language is influential

however in other cultures the husband's first language becomes dominant at home (Johansson, 1991).

Table 4.8 shows the first language spoken by Filipino-Malaysian couples in the home.

Table 4.8 First Language Spoken by Filipino-Malaysian Couples

First Language	Husband	Wife
Bahasa Malaysia	10 (33.33%)	0
Chinese (Mandarin, Cantonese, Hakka, Hokkien)	8 (26.67%)	2 (6.67%)
English	4 (13.33%)	0
Filipino (Tagalog, Cebuano, Ilokano, Waray, Ilongo)	2 (6.67%)	28 (93.33%)
Indian (Tamil)	6 (20%)	0
Others	0	0

Ten 10 (33.33%) of the husbands speaks Bahasa Malaysia as their first language, 8 (26.67%) speak Chinese, 4 (13.33%) speak English, 2 (6.67%) speak Filipino, and 6 (20%) speak Tamil. Twenty eight 28 (93.33%) wives speak Filipino and other Philippine languages. It is evident that the Malay husbands' first language is Bahasa Malaysia while the Chinese husbands' first language is Chinese which can be Mandarin, Cantonese, Hakka, or Hokkien. On the other hand, Indian husbands' first language is Tamil while other Indians use English. Filipino respondents' first language is Tagalog, Cebuano, Ilokano,

Waray and Ilongo. All participants who took part in the study have varied first language background but they speak English as their second language.

4.2.7 Age

The table below shows the age of Filipino-Malaysian couples who took part in the study.

Table 4.9 Age of Filipino-Malaysian Couples

Age	Husband	Wife
25-29	2 (6.67%)	3 (10%)
30-34	7 (23.33%)	20 (66.67%)
35-39	9 (30%)	4 (13.33%)
40-44	6 (20%)	2 (6.67%)
45-49	4 (13.33%)	1 (3.33%)
50-54	2 (6.67%)	0

Malaysian husbands are older than their Filipino wives. Two 2 (6.67%) of the husbands and 3 (10%) wives are between 25-29 years old, 7 (23.33%) husbands and 20 (66.67%) wives are between 30-34 years old, 9 (30%) husbands and 4 (13.33%) wives are 35-39 years old, 6 (20%) husbands and 2 (6.67%) wives are between 40-44 years old, 4 (13.33%) husbands and 1 (3.33%) wife was between 45-49 years old and 2 (6.67%) husbands are between 50-54 years old. The data show that majority of the husbands are older than their wives.

4.3 Conclusion

The demographic profile has provided background information of couples who took part in the study. Such information shows the differences of couples in terms of education, ethnicity, religion, occupation, years of marriage, first language, and age. It further shows

that Filipino-Malaysian couples speak different first languages and dialects and English serves as the preferred language where everyone can speak.

In the next chapter (Chapter 5), the patterns of language choice and the dominance of English in Filipino-Malaysian couples' interactions are discussed.