English Language Education

Isabel Pefianco Martin *Editor*

# Reconceptualizing English Education in a Multilingual Society

## English in the Philippines

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Volume 13

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Editor

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## English in the Philippines

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*Para kay Onnie*

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# Part I
# Introduction

# Chapter 1
# Reconceptualizing English Education in Multilingual Philippines

**Isabel Pefianco Martin**

**Abstract** What does it mean to *reconceptualize*? In the task of conceptualizing, we *form* an idea. In *reconceptualizing*, do we *re-form* this idea? Do we change it, alter it?

This book aims to do that—to re-form, change, alter, and reconceptualize English education so that it becomes relevant and appropriate to multilingual societies. When English arrived in the Philippines, a substantial number of Philippine languages were already in vibrant use. When English arrived, the Philippines was already a multilingual society. Why then do Filipinos teach and learn the language as if no other Philippine language existed? This book presents various perspectives concerning the English language and its place in Philippine education. The perspectives are premised on notions about English that are either unknown or unacceptable to education stakeholders in the country.

**Keywords** English in the Philippines · Reconceptualizing English Education · English in multilingual contexts · English education · English in Southeast Asia

## English in the Philippines

What does it mean to *reconceptualize*? In the task of conceptualizing, we *form* an idea. In *reconceptualizing*, do we *re-form* this idea? Do we change it, alter it?

This book aims to do that—to re-form, change, alter, and reconceptualize English education so that it becomes relevant and appropriate to multilingual societies. When English arrived in the Philippines, a substantial number of Philippine languages were already in vibrant use. When English arrived, the Philippines was already a multilingual society. Why then do Filipinos teach and learn the language as if no other Philippine language existed? This book presents various perspectives concerning the English language and its place in Philippine education. The perspec-

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tives are premised on notions about English that are either unknown or unacceptable to education stakeholders in the country.

One concept that eludes education policy and practice in the Philippines is language variation. English behaves like any other language—it changes. English has already changed and it continues to change. Anyone who does not accept the reality of language variation should not teach English. This is because teaching a changing language can be very challenging. In the context of a changing English, notions of what is "proper," "correct," and "standard" are not fixed. Variation occurs at many levels—as registers, functions, features, conventions, etc. There is variation in sound, word meanings, and grammar rules. What is considered as appropriate in one situation may not apply in another. Variation, which is the natural behavior of any language, must inform education policy and practice.

Secondly, English *is* a Philippine language. Many Filipinos speak it as a mother tongue. As a postcolonial language, English has taken root in the country, and the roots are wide and deep. Schneider reminds us that the remarkable spread of English throughout the world has resulted in a language that is "diversified, developing into homegrown forms and uses in many locations. It has also become an indigenized language, even a mother tongue, in several countries around the globe" (Schneider 2007, p. 1). English in the Philippines is in a state of "functional nativeness," which Kachru describes as "one of the most creative identity-marking processes in multilingual societies" (Kachru 2005, p. 213). Whether they accept it or not, Filipino teachers of English are already using Philippine English in their classroom. They are already teaching it.

Thirdly, other Philippine languages may coexist with English. In fact, in multilingual societies, the mother tongues are necessary tools in carrying out effective literacy and language education. Mother tongues should never be displaced in education systems. While it is true that the promotion of English has led to the marginalization of non-dominant languages, this trajectory should be resisted. Like the mythical nine-headed monster Hydra, English may cause great damage to non-English language cultures (Rapatahana and Bunce 2012). However, enlightened educational policies and practices may also position English as a language that supports human agency. English must be promoted as a language that is empowered and empowering.

Finally, English in the Philippines fulfills two functions—identity and communication. The Philippine variety of English marks its speakers as Filipino. You can tell from the way Filipinos speak that Filipinos are Filipinos, not Americans, not Singaporeans, not Japanese. Other than marker of Filipino identity, English also serves as the language Filipinos use to communicate with other multilinguals, especially in Asia. English is in fact the lingua franca of Asia. Filipinos stand with their Asian neighbors in owning the language and using it to connect with each other and the rest of the world.

These realities about English in the Philippines are either hidden to education stakeholders or denied by them because, consciously or unconsciously, they subscribe to the myths promoted by the monolingual paradigm. These myths and misbeliefs have time and again been exposed by linguists (Phillipson 1992; Kachru

2005; Martin 2010), yet the discourse persists in creating an insidious force that threatens the success of literacy projects, as well as weakens non-dominant languages. It is this discourse of monolingualism and its dominance in multilingual Philippines that this book rejects.

## Contributions to This Volume

The chapters in the book are divided into two parts. The first part presents the English language alongside issues of policy, ideology, and identity. The section opens with the chapter of Andy Kirkpatrick, who looks at the features, roles, and implications of English in multilingual settings. Who owns English?—Kirkpatrick asks. The question does not afford an easy answer. What exactly determines ownership of English or any language? Even with the Kachruvian concentric circles of Englishes (Kachru 2005, p. 14), which promote the legitimation of varieties of the language, the notion of ownership of English remains complex on many levels.

Another question that Kirkpatrick poses is this—Who is a native speaker? We traditionally view the native language as that language which we first acquire as a child. However, as pointed out earlier, English is also functionally native to the Filipinos. I have in mind the Filipinos who acquire a non-English language as a child and then pick up and later study English in school, eventually moving into local and international domains where English is dominant. For these Filipinos, English carries both the identity and communication functions of the language. Further, Kirkpatrick tells us that English "has become Asia-centric, rather than Anglo-centric." Thus, the English taught in the Philippines must be "one that is relevant to the children. It should be taught as a language of multilingual and multicultural Philippines and as a regional lingua franca, using a lingua franca approach" (Kirkpatrick, Chap. 2, this volume).

How has the Philippines managed the education of its citizens? Frances Paola G. Doplon addresses this question as she describes Philippine language education policy from 2001 to 2009. This period represents the governance of President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo[1] whose leadership was seen to be driven mainly by economic interests. And because economic growth was the impetus behind the education system, English reigned supreme among other languages in this system. The current mother tongue-based multilingual education (MTBMLE) policy, implemented by Arroyo's successor Benigno Simeon Aquino III, has yet to prove its promise of promoting equality among the Philippine languages. MTBMLE is challenged by the longevity and potency of its predecessor, the bilingual education policy (BEP), which spanned four decades of implementation—from the 1970s until 2013 when the Enhanced Basic Education Act was passed, mandating the use of mother tongues in basic education.

[1]Arroyo, an economist, was president from 2001 to 2010. She served two terms, the first term being the remainder of Joseph Estrada's term after he was impeached in 2001.

In a review of the BEP, Gonzalez (1996) reported that the education policy did not significantly improve student achievement nor did the policy affect the students' love of country—two goals identified by policymakers in justifying the BEP. Gonzalez further concluded in the context of the BEP, "success in Philippine academic achievement depends on being in Manila and studying in an excellent private school that charges high tuition" (p. 338). In addition, the BEP did little to improve English language proficiency among the Filipino students as Benton (1996) claimed in another evaluation of the policy. According to Benton, "bilingual education (made) it more difficult for the ordinary Filipino to obtain an adequate command of English, and through this the possibility of sharing the benefits for which this linguistic proficiency is a pre-requisite" (p. 319). Thus, by marginalizing the ordinary Filipino, the BEP further entrenched the place of English as a prestige language, making it all the more inaccessible. In Doplon's chapter, we see how the policy has "systematically pitted languages against each other" through government pronouncements and directives, as well as through teaching practices and materials (Doplon, Chap. 3, this volume).

The implementation of MTBMLE in Philippine basic education is a small victory for Filipino linguists because it opens opportunities for non-English mother tongues to flourish. Other than promoting the Philippine languages, MTBMLE also aims to improve learning outcomes in mathematics, science, social studies, as well as in the Filipino and English subjects. MTBMLE is supported by the results of the Lubuagan experiment, through the First Language Component Bridging Program of the Department of Education and SIL Philippines at Lubuagan, Kalinga-Apayao (Northern Philippines). The Lubuagan experience has demonstrated that children who were taught in the mother tongue performed much better in tests compared to their counterparts who studied using English and Filipino (Dumatog and Dekker 2003).

Whether or not the success of the Lubuagan experiment can be reproduced in the current MTBMLE policy as implemented by government remains to be seen. The task of ensuring the effectivity of the policy continues to challenge stakeholders. In fact, Priscilla Tan Cruz and Ahmar Mahboob, in their contribution to this volume, assert that the MTBMLE policy stands to fail because the attitudes that support multilingualism are not present. They have found through a survey that Filipinos do not regard mother tongues as important or necessary in education. Mother tongues are positioned in the Filipino mind-set along "horizontal discourses," which "construe the formative meanings of community life," as opposed to "vertical discourses," which lend themselves to more specialized content such as science and mathematics (Cruz and Mahboob, Chap. 4, this volume). Cruz and Mahboob argue that only a "principles-based approach to language policy involving collaboration, relevance, evidence, alignment, transparency, and empowerment" will ensure the success of MTBMLE.

The average Filipino, if asked what her mother tongue is, will not likely assign the English language. And why should she? In her mind, the language belongs to the Americans who introduced it through public education in the 1900s. Many are unmindful of the fact that there is a significant number of Filipinos who were born in an English-speaking community in the Philippines or were raised by their fami-

lies and schools to speak only the English language. In 1969, Teodoro Llamzon had already pointed to this reality when he published his pioneering book *Standard Filipino English* (Llamzon 1969). Using Bloomfield's (1933) definition of native language as the first language one learns, Llamzon claims that Filipinos "love to speak English… Filipinos, for the most part, feel at home in English. They speak it naturally" (Llamzon 1969, pp. 90–91). This is the issue that Michelle Paterno tackles in her chapter, which she titles "Anguish as Mother Tongue." Paterno asks the question "Can't English be a language of identity for Filipinos?" She laments the fact that the use of English in the country is perceived to be anti-Filipino. According to Paterno (Chap. 5, this volume), "…There seems to be a conflation of the concepts of mother tongue, native language and Filipino. …for some Filipinos, English should not and cannot be regarded as a mother tongue. One can speak English but to embrace it as a mother tongue is a betrayal of one's nationality."

The success of any education policy depends on the teachers who deliver it. Classroom teachers ultimately make or break education programs. However, teachers also face the dominant discourses that reject multilingualism and multilingual education. This reality is at the core of Ruanni Tupas's chapter on teacher ideology in English language education. Taking the viewpoint of teachers, Tupas offers three "trajectories" to reconceptualizing English education in the country. These three approaches are summed up into the following imperatives: *Change What English to Teach*, *Change How to Teach English*, and *Change How to Think About English.* According to Tupas (Chap. 6, this volume), "A focus on teacher ideology exposes the many pernicious language ideologies that continue to permeate everyday and institutional discourse in the country, especially ideologies against multilingual education."

Part II of this book looks into education practice—on teaching English, as well as teaching *in* English. The section opens with Alejandro Bernardo tackling the contentious issue of teaching grammar. English teachers take different positions in the teaching of grammar. However, there is a general consensus among the more enlightened ones that knowledge of grammar alone is not an indication of language proficiency. Public school teacher Marilyn Braganza shares this sentiment in the following anecdote:

> Like many English teachers, I accept that I am a perfectionist who is often strict in observing rules. Wrong spelling is wrong! Subject and verb disagreement? Also wrong! But judging written work is not the same as judging young people. In teaching a language, successful communication is still the ultimate goal. When once a naughty boy who tried to impress his English teacher exclaimed, 'I was absent Ma'am because my stomach was ouch," I congratulated him for communicating his message successfully. Letting him feel that he was understood was the best motivation for learning. (Branganza 2009, p. 15).

In Chap. 7, Bernardo argues that teaching grammar in the Philippines must take an endocentric approach. This means utilizing both General American English (GAE) and Philippine English (PE) so that ELT observes the "formal study of and reference to the highly acceptable grammatical features of both varieties in the attempt to teach and learn the grammar of English" (Bernardo, Chap. 7, this volume). Bernardo supports his argument with a corpus-based syllabus and lesson plans that take an inductive approach to grammar teaching. Noteworthy is a module presenting the

features of Philippine English, which offers students the opportunity to reflect on questions such as *What is Philippine English?*, *How is it different from other varieties of English?*, and *Is Philippine English a standard or substandard English?* Lessons such as those that Bernardo describes promote awareness about linguistic diversity, as well as send the message that language is not a fixed, monocultural code.

Students continue to be oppressed by practices that suppress non-English mother tongues. Sadly, the implementation of the English Only Policy (EOP) persists despite the current MTBMLE directive. Schoolteacher Richard John D. Lanzona reports about a job interview in which he was informed that EOP was observed in the school he was applying to. The interviewer said, "We want our students to be internationally competitive so we want them to be fluent in English. We should get rid of Filipino language while they are in school. Is that okay with you sir?" (Choose Philippines 2016). Because Lanzona was a teacher of the Filipino language, it was *not* okay with him.

Neither should English teachers be happy with any EOP. The experienced English teacher knows that teaching English does not have to be in English only. This is the argument made in the contribution of Devi Benedicte I. Paez, who documents one teacher's use of Filipino in ELT. For Paez, using Filipino in teaching English marks a teacher's attempt to resist anti-multilingualism discourses. The practice is also an indication of a teacher's desire to ensure relevance in her teaching. In Paez's chapter, a sixth grade public school teacher of English confesses: "Kung hindi ko ituro sa Filipino [ang English], mawawalan ng saysay ang tinuturo ko. Wala pong makakaintindi." (If I do not teach English in Filipino, what I teach will have no meaning. No one will understand me.)

Teaching mathematics in an EOP context will likewise be problematic. Maria Luz Elena N. Canilao makes this argument in her study of two multilingual math classes. According to Canilao (Chap. 9, this volume), "For many children, learning mathematics is a complex task. Learning mathematics in English may even be more complicated for them if it is not their first language." In international measures of mathematics and science proficiency, the Philippines has performed poorly. In fact, the country has not participated in the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS), which was conducted in 2011 (The Manila Times 2014). Poor performance in math and science tests, as well as low learning outcomes in these subjects, is linked to language of instruction. Although English is a mother tongue to many Filipinos, as we have established earlier in this introduction, the majority of Filipinos, many of whom belong to the lower socioeconomic strata of society, still regard the language as foreign. Thus, studying math and science in an EOP situation will prove detrimental to their mastery of these subjects.

In higher education, English remains the dominant language of instruction. Many colleges and universities offer speech communication courses that aim to develop oral skills in English. Gene Segarra Navera, in his chapter in this volume, asserts that these courses are directed by a technicist framework that "puts premium on the development of practical skills and technical know-how deemed necessary in order to carry out a set of tasks in a specialized field" (Navera, Chap. 10, this volume).

In other words, the main goal of speech communication education is the development of language skills that are marketable, i.e., skills that guarantee employment for the graduates. At the outset, such goal may be seen as pragmatic and therefore desirable. However, as Navera points out, a technicist-driven English language education may also be limited and limiting. The English language is not simply a tool or instrument for economic gain; it is much more than that.

Paolo Niño Valdez and Neslie Carol Tan, like Navera, approach English language learning not as a neutral cognitive task but as a process that is conditioned by forces beyond individual control. These are the forces of globalization, which must be understood as processes in which "inequality, not uniformity, organizes the flows across the 'globe'" (Blommaert 2009, p. 564). In the Philippines, overseas Filipino workers (or OFWs) are most vulnerable to the inequalities embedded in globalization. Valdez and Tan, in their chapter, take the case of young Filipinos studying to become maritime professionals abroad. They are the future OFWs, whose regular remittances represent a major contribution to the Philippine economy. The government admits that OFW remittances are a key factor in the resilience of the economy (Gavilan 2015). Thus, it is invested in the education of future OFWs. Valdez and Tan remind stakeholders that the English education of these future maritime professionals must "not be confined to the training of docile bodies responsible for earning revenue, but should contribute to personal, community, and national development" (Valdez and Tan, Chap. 11, this volume).

The last chapter of this section on education focuses on a neglected topic in English language education research—testing and assessment. It is my contribution to the ongoing conversation about reconceptualizing English language education in the Philippines. While most studies about language testing are concerned with the psychometric dimensions of tests, very few, if any, investigate bias and fairness. Language use is a complex phenomenon that tests cannot accurately measure. Despite this, we continually develop and utilize tests to inform policies and practices. However, we must also account for the fairness of these instruments. We must ask the questions that non-inner circle users of English are not allowed by dominant discourses to ask, for example, why must Philippine colleges and universities require TOEFL or IELTS exams for admission purposes? Why are Filipinos tested on knowledge of American idioms? Why is the use of the plural forms *jewelries* and *furnitures* considered incorrect? In my chapter on the social dimension of language testing in the Philippines, I address the issues concomitant to these questions.

This book culminates in a synthesis chapter by Mario Saraceni, who reminds us that the Philippine experience of English language education is not unique. Many other societies that are postcolonial and multilingual have similar experiences. In the Philippines, according to Saraceni, "…linguistic and ethnic diversity intersect with ideological concerns related to identity and the politics of nation building. Therefore, any investigation on the forms and functions of English in the Philippines will also deal with matters that are relevant in many other parts of the world" (Saraceni, Chap. 13, this volume).

## Concluding Words

> The story of English in the Philippines is a compelling tale, and one that deserves international recognition, … involving as it does narratives of colonialism and postcolonialism, of hybrid language and literature, as well as contemporary histories of politics and globalization. (Bolton and Bautista 2008, p. 2).

This compelling tale of English in the Philippines must be told against the backdrop of multilingualism. The story of English in the Philippines must also include a reformulation of the teaching and learning of the language. But in order to reconceptualize English education, hard questions must be asked:

What is English?
Who owns it?
Who is a native speaker of English?
Can English be a language of identity for non-native speakers?
Does the promotion of English marginalize non-dominant languages?
Has government contributed to the promotion of the monolingual discourse?
Can mother tongues support the teaching and learning of English?
Should English be the only language for teaching and learning content?
How may the teaching and learning of English raise awareness about linguistic diversity?
How may the teaching and learning of English promote human agency and counter-discourses?

These are some of the questions raised in the chapters of the book. The authors have approached the issues in their own individual ways. But whatever position each one takes, the reality remains—the Philippines is a multilingual paradise and English is only *one* language in that paradise. English education, in order to be relevant and appropriate, must resist the dominance of discourses that prevent Filipinos from enjoying the full benefits of linguistic and cultural diversity.

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# Part II
# English: Policy, Ideology, and Identity

# Chapter 2
# English in Multilingual Settings: Features, Roles and Implications

**Andy Kirkpatrick**

**Abstract** In this chapter I first consider how complex it is to define a variety of English in multilingual settings such as the Philippines and then how complex it is to define a native speaker in such settings. This will include a discussion on the ownership of English in contexts where English is used by multilinguals for whom English is an additional language. I then present examples of how English is being adapted by multilinguals in the region, focussing on the Philippines, and also discuss how it is being used as a lingua franca in the region, using data drawn from the Asian Corpus of English (ACE). Examples include a study on the use or non-use of tense markings by first-language speakers of Malay. The findings raise interesting issues about the role of the speakers' first language on their English. I conclude with some considerations for the teaching of English in the multilingual Philippines.

**Keywords** Varieties of English · Ownership of English · Multilinguals · Multilingual education · English as a Lingua Franca

## Who Owns English?

English is no longer a language solely owned by native speakers. The number of English users who are not native speakers of the language and who have learned it as an additional language vastly outnumbers the number of native speakers. These multilingual users of English have shaped and adapted English so that it comes to reflect the cultural norms and values of their speakers. Contact with the other languages these multilingual users speak has also had an influence on English, although, as will be illustrated below, the extent to which language contact is a cause for language change is a matter of debate. But, in any event, we now routinely talk about different varieties of English, from American English to Zambian English. Kachru's

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'three circles' paradigm (Kachru 1985) has been particularly influential in capturing distinctions between these new varieties of English and the more traditional older varieties. Inner circle Englishes refer to those Englishes spoken in traditional centres of use, such as the United Kingdom and the United States. Outer circle Englishes are those that have developed in colonial and postcolonial settings and where they continue to play some form of institutional role. In India, for example, English remains an associate official language. In the Philippines it is an official language, along with the national language, Filipino.

Kachru's third circle, the expanding circle, referred to those places where English remained a foreign language, most likely to be encountered only in the classroom rather than in the society as a whole. As we shall see, many of the countries of Asia that were classified in the expanding circle, such as Cambodia, China, Japan, Korea, Laos, Thailand and Vietnam, have seen an increase in the roles of English so that English can now be frequently encountered outside the classroom in these countries.

It is important to note that the outer circle Englishes are the products of trade and exploitation colonies (Mufwene 2008), such as was the case across much of Africa and Asia. The Englishes of settlement colonies, such as the United States and Australia, are classified as inner circle varieties. The phases through which these postcolonial varieties of English pass have been described in Schneider's 'dynamic model' (Schneider 2007). He posits five phases of development, namely, foundation, exonormative stabilisation (where the standard is an external variety of English such as British or American), nativisation (where the variety becomes localised), endonormative stabilisation (where the local variety becomes accepted as the standard) and finally differentiation (where subvarieties develop) (2010, p. 381). While the dynamic theory is inherently attractive, it is sometimes difficult to decide at which stage to place a particular variety. For example, there is some debate about where to place Philippine English (Martin 2014), but it is probably somewhere between nativisation and endonormative stabilisation. But as Martin (2014) points out, to discuss Philippine English as a singular 'it' is itself highly problematic. She argues that the Philippines is home to all three varieties as classified in Kachru's circles. The educated elite speak an inner circle variety of Filipino English. The outer circle variety is used by educated Filipinos who 'are aware of Philippine English as a distinct and legitimate variety, use both standard and non-standard forms, but are either powerless to support these languages and/or are ambivalent about promoting them' (2014, p. 55). Filipinos who belong to the expanding circle are those who have to use English but whose low level of education means that their English is not of a high proficiency and for whom 'using English may become a painful, humiliating experience' (2014, p. 56).

This brief introduction serves to show how complex the seemingly simple notion of 'variety of English' is and how important it is to take sociolinguistic and demographic issues into account when analysing or describing the use of English in these contexts (Mahboob and Liang 2014). This is further illustrated in the quote below with the author, Stone, making a comment on the quote. Stone first cites a Filipina teacher who has been engaged in a 'before and after' activity in a professional

development course training teachers for the mother tongue-based multilingual education (MTBMLE) policy recently introduced in the Philippines. She is describing a drawing that shows how she, as a native speaker of a local language, T'boli,[1] might have felt had MTBMLE been implemented when she was a child, rather than the strict Tagalog/English bilingual education policy which was actually in effect at the time. She says:

> Here is our teacher and my classmates, and it's me, not at the corner anymore, because I can express myself and I can mingle with them. Maybe instructions for me is now easy to understand […] maybe I felt that I was not alone anymore, I felt the spirit of belongingness. (Stone 2013, p. 178)

What is interesting here in the context of recognising and defining varieties are the comments that Stone, a native speaker of English, feels compelled to make in a footnote to the above quote. She notes:

> This non-standard use of English is common among the teachers due to their lack of exposure to the language, and the fact that their own teachers had limited English skills. You will notice this in the teachers' quotes throughout the document. (2013, p. 186, fn. viii).

I think this is worth mentioning because I could only see one possible non-standard form in the teacher's quote and that is the use of a singular verb 'is' with a plural subject 'instructions' to give 'instructions for me is now easy'. But, given that this is a sample of spoken English where this type of 'error' is common, even among so-called native speakers, it seems curious that the author feels the need to draw attention to the teacher's use of non-standard English. Here we have a multilingual teacher who speaks *at least* three languages (T'boli, Tagalog/Filipino, English) being classified, by a native speaker, as a speaker of non-standard English on the strength of a single 'error' in a stretch of spoken English. While one or two non-standard forms occur in the English of the other multilingual teachers reported on here, they are rare and are certainly not characteristic of their use of English. This underlines how important it is for multilingual users of English to take ownership of their use of English. This issue crops up in a discussion among language education experts and language teachers. In this extract[2](1), F is a Filipina; A is an American, a native speaker of English; and T is Thai. They are discussing how the adoption of the MTBMLE in the Philippines will affect the curriculum.

(1)

F: Sorry in designing the stages of a trilingual program with we've got to consider curriculum adaptation really.

[1] The T'boli language is mainly spoken in South Cotabato, a province of Mindanao.

[2] The extracts in this chapter come from the Asian Corpus of English (ACE), a corpus of naturally occurring English as a lingua franca used by Asian multilinguals. ACE can be accessed at http://corpus.ied.edu.hk/ace/

A: Exactly and so now my question is if you think about the current curriculum in your home countries how is if we're going to really implement MTBMLE how is that going to affect the way the curriculum is written right now? Does it matter? What are we gonna do with the curriculum? Is the curriculum fine and cannot be used straight into an MTBMLE program or what do we have to do?

F: We have got to localize them? Lo- localize the curriculum [….] erm maybe aside from localizing the curriculum curriculum we need to localize also the instructional materials and suggest some activities in line or in line with the mother tongue based multilingual education.

A: Good point... a lot of teachers will say you know I agree wholeheartedly with MTBMLE. The problem is I don't know how to do it. I don't know what to do in the classroom. How do I teach in the mother tongue and sometimes that's because their own educational experience was always in the foreign language. They went to teacher training school and they were taught to teach foreign languages. They don't know how to get back to that and so they need specific in-services to help them develop strategies and understanding how you start teaching in the in the mother tongue and bridging to the other languages.

T: **Yeah in designing curriculum we need to have the native speaker okay the person the native speaker to come along to sit with you to design it because we do not know and it is only them who knows what they need for the language** and we also need to know to be sensitive to the teaching of the teach you know of whatev- the content of the curriculum. You need to know at what level you are teaching it okay and how much to give. You do not just go on and on you must know how much to give and at what level.

F: Exactly and that has to be determined locally based on the needs and the situation at the local level because it will be very different in every place……

In this discussion on the implications of adopting MTBMLE for the curriculum, everyone agrees that this means that the curriculum needs to be localised. This would demand local expertise in the design of the curriculum, and the Thai speaker (in bold) argues that 'in designing curriculum we need to have the native speaker'. By 'native speaker' here, she means a native speaker of the particular language being used in MTBMLE. In the context of the teaching of local languages of the Philippines, consulting a native speaker of the relevant language would seem simple common sense. It is important to add, however, that the native speaker here is to be an informant not only of the language but also of the culture encoded in the language. However, it is not so easy to determine who is a native speaker when it comes

to English. Which variety of English? What cultures does the variety encode? The problems associated with determining a native speaker of English are considered in the next section.

## Who Is a Native Speaker?

The increase in the number of multilinguals who are currently using English means that the term 'native speaker' is proving extremely difficult to define in an adequate way (e.g. Davies 1991; Braine 1999). This is further complicated by the fact that the majority of the world's population is multilingual. Asia is the world's most multilingual continent, with more than 700 languages being spoken in Indonesia alone. Although the precise number of languages spoken in the Philippines is open to dispute, the authoritative Ethnologue lists 180 languages for the Philippines (Lewis 2009). Given this multilingual diversity, it is often very difficult for people to be able to nominate their first language (L1) or mother tongue. People with 'dynamic L1s' (Kirkpatrick 2007) are common. One example is of a girl of 11 who left Sicily for Australia when her parents emigrated there. When she left, her L1 was Sicilian and her L2 (second language) was standard Italian. Now, after 50 years in Australia, she lists her L1 as English, her L2 as standard Italian and her L3 (third language) as Sicilian. Thus her original L1 has become her L3, and her L1 is a language she only started really learning when she was a teenager (2007, p. 8). But her case is simple compared with the case of the female Bruneian English teacher (B) in the extract below (2). She is in conversation with fellow English teachers, a Filipina (F), a Thai male (T) and a Vietnamese female (V). In the course of their conversation, the discussion switches to languages, and the Filipina asks whether Bahasa (Malay) is the Bruneian's first language.

(2)

F: But your first language is Bahasa
B: No I
F: Malay
T: Malay
B: My first language when I am fam- when I am at home
F: In the family
B: In the family are actually dialects Chinese dialects
V: Oh
T: Chinese dialects
B: I speak a few languages which well er I speak to my father in a different dialect I speak to my mother in a different dialect so that is when I'm at the age of one

F: You're growing up
B: To three one to four so two dialects growing up at the same time and at the same time our neighbours spoke Malay we live in an area where there were there are a lot of Malays there were a lot of Malays living in the area as well
F: Your father is Chinese?
B: My father is Chinese my mother is Chinese I am so but we spoke I spoke dialect Chinese and when my my brother and my sister went to school they went to a Chinese school so they learned mandarin from a Chinese school which I didn't know that became like a secret language between them and my mother if they decided not to tell me or my younger sister something but eventually we picked up mandarin and my mother couldn't use that as a secret language anymore so we picked up mandarin and ehm that was when I was about four we picked up mandarin and er we spoke less of the dialects but I still spoke one a different dialect to my father which is Hakka I spoke I spoke Fuzhou a different dialect with with my mother so I can still I er still speak dialect to my father right now but I speak mandarin to my mother right now

The conversation moves on to how she learned languages at school. The Filipina then asks:

F: So what would you say is your what is your er first language now?
B: Definitely English
T: English
B: Now I mean English has become
T: English
B: I think in English
V: So you have so you have your mother tongue your father tongue
B: Brother tongue sister tongue
F + T: Brother tongue sister tongue
B: And the language I use most so
V: Brother tongue
B: When it comes to my mother tongue and my first language I can't
T: How many languages
B: Compare now

In this conversation, the Bruneian teacher recounts that the first languages she learned to speak were Chinese dialects but that, over time, these have gradually been replaced (but not completely so) by Malay, Mandarin and English. When asked to nominate her first language, she unhesitatingly names English. The interactants then enjoy a 'riff' on the use of the term 'mother tongue' and playfully talk about father, sister and brother tongues. The Bruneian concludes that she can't really 'compare' her mother tongue and first language.

The point to be stressed here is that multilinguals of the type exemplified here are common and far more common than monolingual native speakers. Yet we continue to judge speaker performance against monolingual native speaker norms. As many scholars have noted, this is not only unjust, it is also plainly wrong (Garcia 2009). Multilinguals need to be benchmarked against successful multilinguals. In the context of the Philippines, English speakers need to be benchmarked against successful multilingual Filipinos whose linguistic repertoires, in addition to English, would typically include Tagalog/Filipino and other languages of the Philippines.

In addition to language standards and how these differ depending on the variety of English, the cultures associated with the variety of English need to be considered. A conventionally viewed advantage of the native speaker of English as a language teacher is that she or he can act as a guide to the target culture (but see Llurda 2005). At first glance, this seems no more than common sense, in the same way that consulting a teacher of the local language being used in MTBMLE seems common sense. But with English having developed a wide number of different varieties across the world, these different Englishes encode different cultures. For example, Philippine English encodes the cultures of the Philippines (Bautista 1997). This can be realised in different ways. Vocabulary items borrowed from local languages appear in Philippine English so that people can discuss and refer to local items and phenomena. Certain grammatical and discourse markers may be transferred to Philippine English to give its speakers the cultural flavour of being a Filipino. Filipino pragmatic norms and cultural values will be encoded in Philippine English.

Bautista (1997, pp. 49–72) (see also Butler 2002, pp. 163–4) summarises the processes through which a new lexicon develops. They include:

> Extensions or adaptations of meaning; shifts in parts of speech; preservation of items that have become obsolete in other varieties; new coinages of various things, including neologisms, abbreviations and clippings; hybrid forms where a word from a local language combines with a word from English; and wholesale borrowing from local languages.

The same processes occur in all varieties of English, including inner circle varieties. As Butler points out, 'The expression of our culture in our kind of English is one part of our national inheritance' (2002, p. 164). This then means that the best guide to English culture cannot necessarily be generalised as a native speaker of a traditional variety of English such as British or American. Rather, we need to consider who might be the best cultural and linguistic guides to specific varieties of English.

English is now an Asian language, comprising many separate varieties yet also acting as a lingua franca for Asian multilinguals. In this context it has become Asiacentric, rather than Anglocentric. Thus, the best guide to Philippine English will be a Filipino. In turn, this means that Filipinos, provided of course that they are suitably trained and qualified, are the most appropriate English teachers for Filipino schools and children. This is even more so, as the MTBMLE policy comes into effect. Children who are becoming multilingual can only benefit from having multilingual teachers who are aware of how languages interact. Multilingual teachers provide *role*, *cultural* and *linguistic* models for the children. The importance of judging multilinguals against multilinguals becomes even more evident when we consider the roles that English is now playing in the region.

## English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) in Southeast Asia

The most striking role of English in Southeast Asia concerns its adoption as the sole official working language of the ten nations which make up the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN). I have discussed this in detail elsewhere (e.g. Kirkpatrick 2010) and here just repeat two quotes from a Cambodian government minister. The first quote recognises the importance of English for representing Cambodia's interests at ASEAN meetings. The second, which is related to the first, recognises English as a regional language of communication rather than as a language of the United Kingdom or of the United States. Both were originally recorded by Clayton.

(1)
If we don't know English, how can we participate? We need to know English so that we can defend our interests. You know, ASEAN is not some kissy-kissy brotherhood. The countries are fiercely competitive, and a strong knowledge of English will help us protect our interests. (2006, pp. 230–1)
(2)
You know, when we use English we don't think about the United States or England. We only think about the need to communicate. (2006, p. 233)

The thinking encapsulated in these quotes shows that English, when used as a lingua franca in ASEAN, needs to be adapted in ways that reflect the speakers' values and interests and that English is being used as an Asian language by Asian multilinguals within an Asia-centric cultural milieu. These developments have important linguistic, sociocultural, language policy and pedagogical implications, and it is therefore important that we understand how English is being used as a lingua franca in these settings. Such an understanding can only be developed through collecting a corpus and analysing the data. This is why a team has collected the Asian Corpus of English (ACE), which comprises about 100 hours of naturally occurring data of English used as a lingua franca by Asian multilinguals.[3] The discussions (1) and (2) above come from ACE, as do the extracts below.

The corpus has only recently been completed and released, so few studies have yet been undertaken. Here, however, I review some of those that have, referring to related studies where relevant. The findings here are relevant to the teaching of English in multilingual societies, such as the Philippines.

The first study relates to phonology. In an early study, Deterding and Kirkpatrick (2006) showed that despite the different linguistic backgrounds of the speakers, a number of shared phonological features could be identified. These included dental

[3] The Asian Corpus of English was collected by several teams across Asia based at Ateneo de Manila University, Chukyo University (Japan), Guangxi University (China), the Hong Kong Institute of Education, Griffith University (Australia), Nanyang Technological University (Singapore), SEAMEO RETRAC (Ho Chi Minh City), the University of Brunei and the University of Malaya. ACE is freely available for researchers at http://corpus.ied.edu.hk/ace/

fricative TH being realised as [t], reduced initial aspiration, bisyllabic triphthongs, stressed pronouns, heavy end stress and a lack of reduced vowels (and therefore the relative lack of the schwa sound) (2006, p. 395). Although there were occasional misunderstandings, these were most often caused by idiosyncratic pronunciations of individual speakers. None were caused by the use of any of the shared features identified above. The authors concluded:

> We have no evidence that any of the shared pronunciation features…which we identified above have contributed to a break-down in communication. In fact, it seems likely that some of the features, particularly the avoidance of reduced vowels in unstressed syllables and also the clear bisyllabic enunciation of triphthongs, actually enhance understanding…. (Deterding and Kirkpatrick 2006, p. 395).

One possible implication for the English language curriculum in multilingual settings such as the Philippines is that, as many Asian varieties of English have a tendency towards syllable rather than stress timing, a cause for the lack of reduced vowels, it would seem unnecessary therefore to try and coach syllable timing out of students and to replace this with stress timing, especially as a lack of reduced vowels appears to enhance rather than hinder mutual intelligibility.

The presence of shared phonological features leads to the question of the existence of universals across varieties of English. Chambers (2004) proposed seven candidates for vernacular universals, including default singular or subject verb non-concord and copular absence or deletion (2004, p. 129). Kortmann (2010), reporting on a wide-ranging study of non-standard features over 46 different varieties of English, noted that zero past tense forms of regular verbs occurred in 10 of the 11 bilingual (L2) varieties (2010, p. 408), making this feature one of the most common non-standard forms in L2 varieties of English.

The cause of these non-standard forms is the subject of intense debate. Kortmann and Szmrecsanyi (2004) argue that it is variety type, whether the variety is an L1 variety, an L2 variety or a pidgin or creole. If that is so, to what extent is language contact and the influence of the speaker's L1 relevant? In a comparison of the use of certain non-standard forms in Singaporean and Indian English, Sharma (2009) argues that it is the typology of the substrates – the speakers' L1s – that is the cause of the differences in the use of the progressive and copula omission across the two varieties. For example, Indian speakers had the lowest rate of copula deletion, and Singaporean speakers had the highest, because, in Sharma's view, Hindi requires the copula in environments similar to British English, while Malay does not have the copula. Ansaldo also proposes that the influence of the substrates is crucial and that their influence can be determined by adopting his 'typological matrix approach' (2009, p. 145).

Using a subset of data from ACE, Kirkpatrick and Subhan (2014) examined the marking of tense forms by Malaysian speakers whose L1 was a variety of Malay. They hypothesised that, as Malay did not mark for tense, speakers of English who had Malay as an L1 would not mark for tense when using English. They thus hypothesise that the substrate, Malay, would influence their English. In the 16-h sample involving 43 extracts, there were 11 speakers who had Malay as a first language. The results showed that the hypothesis was not confirmed. They reported:

> The total number of instances where either singular present tense '-s' or simple past tense could have been marked is 413. Of these possible instances of tense marking, 306 instances are marked and 107 are not. However, if the relative formality of the interactions is taken into account, we note that, in more *informal* interactions, such as informal conversations, the relative number of marked versus unmarked instances of these tenses is 153 marked against 100 unmarked. In stark contrast, however, in more *formal* interactions, such as preparing motions for a debate, there is a significant drop in the number of unmarked verbs, as there are only 7 instances of non-marking compared with 152 of marking. (2014, p. 394)

They concluded that it was the level of formality that was the key variable in determining the use or non-use of marking, but that, even then, marked uses outnumbered unmarked uses by a factor of 3:2. It would be unsafe to conclude, therefore, that non-marking of tense forms was characteristic of the English used by these L1 speakers of Malay. Indeed, non-standard marking of tense forms, common in the vernacular Englishes of native speakers (Britain 2010), is far more characteristic of L1 vernaculars than of the English of these L1 Malay speakers. The authors concluded that substrate influence was not evident, at least in the marking or non-marking of tense forms. Similar results reporting a lack of substrate influence on the use or non-uses of grammatical features have recently been recorded by Hall et al. (2013) and Van Rooy (2013). Meierkord (2012) also reports a comparatively low use of non-standard syntactic forms in her data of speakers of English as a lingua franca. The different findings reported by different researchers concerning the influence of the substrate on morphosyntactic forms may be that the relative levels of formality have not been given enough credence. But we also recall Thomason's note of caution when assigning possible causes for language change: 'in most cases, no cause can be firmly established and because of the real possibility that multiple causes are responsible for a particular change' (2010, p. 31).

Where there is evidence of substrate influence from this subset of ACE data is with discourse markers in informal contexts (Kirkpatrick and Subhan 2014). In the extract (3) below, Speaker 1 (S1) is a female Chinese Malaysian who also speaks Malay. The discourse markers transferred from Malay and/or Chinese[4] are underlined. The use of an unmarked verb form 'ask' is in italics. The dotted lines indicate that a few lines of conversation have been omitted here.

(3)

S1: Ah eh the men getting girls pregnant then about 25 years below ah than I *ask* a lot of people lah then I *ask* my friends so my first three of my friend when I first *ask* ah they say oh I'll ask her to abort the baby

S2: Laugh

………………………………………………………………………

[4] Deciding on which language these discourse markers are transferred from is difficult, as both Chinese and Malay use discourse markers of this type, and more than one language may be responsible (see also McLellan 2012).

S1: Then he **said** erm if the if I **was** younger lah and then I **would** think about leaving school lah I say why give it to your mother or father to take care lah I **might have done** that lah cos my parents then he **said** then he **said** no lah the most important time for a child **is** 4 years mah and I want to bond with my child. (2014, p. 396)

S1 uses the discourse maker 'lah' six times and 'ma' on one occasion. A possible reason for her use of these discourse markers is to signal solidarity and informality with S2. They are Malaysians, and their English has been adapted to reflect their Malaysian identities. Despite the informality of the context, it is noteworthy that there is no copula deletion here and, with the exception of 'ask', no use of non-standard tense forms. We cannot be sure, however, that the non-marking of 'ask' can be explained by substrate influence from Malay or Chinese. A phonological reason is possible, as the final triple consonant cluster /skt/ of 'asked' is difficult to sound. Indeed, native speakers of British English would be unlikely to sound this final /skt/ in this context.

It also appears that 'foreigners' may adopt features of the local variety of English, including discourse markers. In the extract (4) below, F is a Filipino male and V is a Vietnamese female. At the time of the recording, they were both residents of Malaysia. The discourse markers are in italics.

(4)

F: Your phone is from Vietnam right
V: Yes
F: You bought it in Vietnam
V: But how
F: Oh you Malaysian already huh
V: Yeah localized *mah* (laughter) anyway er how do you change
F: You
V: I cannot change it
F: This one should automatically check whether the warranty is valid or not er that's why you cannot put a check in there
V: Yeah
F: It should automatically check
V: Yeah
F: Ah remove this *lah* caller own device and Malaysia can you change

In this extract both the Filipino and the Vietnamese have adopted features of Malaysian English in their use of the discourse markers, *lah* and *mah*, respectively. It may be that the Vietnamese is not only saying that she has localised the phone but that she herself has become localised to Malaysia as indicated by her use of *mah* and the general laughter that follows this.

It would appear, therefore, that while substrate influence can be seen at certain levels of language, for example, through the use of lexis, phonological features and discourse markers transferred from the L1, its influence on morphosyntax may not be high as previously thought and that the levels of formality and the sociolinguistic context must be taken into account.

## Conclusion and Implications

In this chapter I have noted how difficult it is to define both a variety of English and a native speaker of English in multilingual contexts such as the Philippines. The Philippines is home to several varieties of English and to, literally, tens of millions of people who are multilingual with a range of proficiency in a range of languages. The Englishes spoken have been adapted from the original exonormative variety, largely American English, in that they have borrowed lexis and other linguistic features from local languages so that the speakers of these Englishes can adequately express their cultural values and norms.

I have also noted that a major role of English in the region is as a lingua franca (ELF), particularly now that English has been made the sole official language of ASEAN. The roles for English have been even further extended in this regard with the establishment of the Asian Economic Community in 2015. In other words, Filipino English speakers may use English for a variety of reasons both intranationally and internationally (see Meierkord 2012). This means that English has become a language of the Philippines which has been adapted by Filipinos to mirror and reflect their own lived experiences. It has been adapted by multilinguals to fit the cultures of the Philippines. This is the language that needs to be taught in the curriculum. It should be taught as a language of the Philippines, alongside the other languages of education. It should not be taught as a 'foreign' language using native speakers as the models.

Successful multilingual Filipinos should provide the models. Trained local multilingual teachers should be the teachers. It is even more important that these teachers receive adequate and in-depth training in teaching in multilingual environments, given the new MTBMLE policy. Ideally, the primary school should focus on developing literacy and fluency in the chosen local language or mother tongue and the national language, Filipino. The focus should only shift to English once children have achieved fluency and literacy in their mother tongue and Filipino. One area where research is almost unanimous is in the benefits of teaching children through the language they are most familiar with and not introducing other languages as languages of instruction until the children have enough proficiency in that language to be able to learn new concepts through it (Benson and Kosonen 2013). This means, in the context of the Philippines, that the mother tongue should remain the language of instruction until the child has adequate proficiency in Filipino to be able to learn concepts through Filipino. By the same token, English should be delayed as a language of instruction until that child has literacy and fluency in both the mother tongue and Filipino and has adequate knowledge of English to be able to learn new concepts through it.

Finally, the English taught should be one that is relevant to the children. It should be taught as a language of multilingual and multicultural Philippines and as a regional lingua franca, using a lingua franca approach (Kirkpatrick 2012). The local and regional roles of English should be reflected in the curriculum and materials. It should also be stressed that this English, while reflecting the cultures of its speakers in many ways, may not use as many non-standard syntactic forms as previously

proposed. It is hoped that data from the Asian Corpus of English (ACE) will be helpful in analysing this and related features and, therefore, in supplying materials for the curriculum. It follows naturally from the points raised above that multilingual Filipinos who have received appropriate training in teaching in multilingual environments will make the most appropriate teachers for the children.

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# Chapter 3
# The Supremacy of English in Philippine Language Education Policy

**Frances Paola G. Doplon**

**Abstract** This chapter presents a critical description of language education policies in the Philippines from 2001 to 2009. During this period in Philippine education history, the privileging of the English language was evident in government pronouncements, directives, practices, and teaching materials. The chapter discusses five archival documents from the period, and they point to the facilitation of linguistic imperialism (Phillipson 1992), which promotes unsafe beliefs about English language teaching. In the end, this chapter makes a case for the continued use of the Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education (MTBMLE) in Philippine education.

**Keywords** Language education · Language planning and policy · Linguistic imperialism

## Introduction

With over 7,107 islands, the Philippines is naturally rich in multilingual diversity as it is home to more than 170 languages. Given this variety of native tongues, how has the country managed the education of its citizens? While conventional wisdom dictates that learning in one's own language is sound pedagogical practice, the history of language policies in the country will show that a well-grounded policy has not always been adopted.

The country's path to nationhood is a rather complex one. As a colony of Spain from 1521 to 1898, the country had no concrete language education policy since evangelization was the priority of its colonizers. Parish priests were concerned about education and focused on children studying religion. There was no national education system in place until 1863. For centuries, Filipinos were kept away from the Spanish language as a "way of maintaining social distance, of keeping the *indio* in his place" (Constantino 1978, p. 35). Only a small minority of the local elite

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learned the language of the colonizers. These local elite eventually led the revolution against Spain.

In 1898, the Americans gained control of the country. Shortly after, public education was introduced, and with this came the promotion of English, the language of the new colonizers. American efforts were so successful that English use became extensive in the domains of government, education, service, science and technology, business, mass media, and information technology. English was made available through an effective public school system. Thus, the privilege associated with the language made English highly coveted.

Before the United States granted the Philippines its independence in 1946, a commonwealth government was created as part of the transition. This government, led by Manuel Quezon, sought to establish a national language. Quezon, a Tagalog speaker, declared Tagalog as the national language. Tagalog was later renamed to Filipino to emphasize its national status. At that point, English was still an official language, but the elevation of Tagalog drew contention among other language groups in the country.

The years of Philippine self-governance continued, and the language education policies in the years to come reflected a balancing act where scales tilted slowly toward one language. Philippine linguist and educator Bonifacio Sibayan believed that "the influence of the English language on the sociolinguistic, socioeconomic, and cultural life of the Filipino is so great that there is no foreseeable end to it" (2000, p. 250).

The Philippines' complicated history and fiercely contested national language had led to a long-standing debate when it comes to language. Perhaps the most comprehensive description comes from Filipino linguist Ruanni Tupas (2007) who identifies three groups caught in an ideological conflict: (1) the advocates of English, (2) the advocates of Tagalog who feel that the increased use of English is unpatriotic, (3) and the non-Tagalog speakers who despise the imposition of Tagalog as a national language (known as the Filipino language) and prefer English as an alternative neutral language. While it is convenient to point to regional allegiances to be the root of the problem, Tupas suggests that these conflicting ideologies represent a problem of class rather than simple ethnic rivalry.

## Arroyo's Strong Republic: A Case Study in Language Policy

In the years 2001–2009, the Philippines was under the administration of Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo. Her predecessor, Joseph Estrada, was deposed after a tumultuous and unfinished impeachment trial for plunder, a series of mass protests, and finally a defection of military leaders (Bowring 2016). As vice-president, Arroyo took over the Office of the President in 2001.

President Arroyo's administration was anchored on the vision of building a "Strong Republic" or *Matatag na Republika*. In her first State of the Nation Address, she declared key components to her national agenda, which would serve as a com-

pass for the rest of her presidency. The foremost component was "an economic philosophy of free enterprise appropriate to the 21st century. Pagnenegosyo upang dumami ang trabaho (Business in order to increase the number of jobs)…" (Arroyo 2001). The words in her first address to the nation reflected the direction of Philippine education in years to come:

> We will promote fast-growing industries where high-value jobs are most plentiful. One of them is information and communications technology, or ICT. Our *English literacy*, our aptitude, and skills give us a competitive edge in ICT. Filipino workers are ranked number one in the field, number one among knowledge workers. And analysts point to two developing countries as the likely world centers for software development and data management in this decade: India and the Philippines. We will live up to that forecast.
>
> As a first step, let us declare that technology is the foundation of future economic development, as China did in 1998. ICT will jumpstart our old stalling economy and make it leapfrog into the new economy. (Arroyo 2001)

In her speech, Arroyo insisted on the Philippines's potential in information and communications technology as the basis of economic progress. What did she believe to be the basis of Filipino ICT competence? First on her list was the Filipinos' English literacy.

Four years earlier, a 1997 report by the National Information Technology Council pushed forward the country's potential in the information technology (IT) industry. With the year 2000 on the horizon, more attention was given toward developments in computer technology. The Philippines had a growing number of IT schools and courses. In its report, the council urged the agencies in the country to take advantage of the momentum:

> The principal strengths of the Philippine I.T. industry include a well-educated, price-competitive labor force, *English proficiency*, growing track record of successful I.T. work, fast-growing telecom infrastructure, government interest in the industry, less regulation than some neighbors, good capabilities for dealing with foreign partners, and strong entrepreneurship. (National Information Technology Council 1997)

True enough, the first outsourcing facility in the country opened in 1999 at a former American airbase in Central Luzon (British Philippine Outsourcing Council 2013). It was the beginning of a business opportunity that soon brought thousands of jobs and millions in revenue.

Multinational companies responded to the demand to address the high cost of personnel by transferring customer call centers and other outsourced businesses to countries such as India and the Philippines. With cheaper labor, English proficiency, and affordable telecommunication infrastructure, the Philippines was considered one of the big key players in the outsourcing industry. A report by the British Philippine Outsourcing Council (2013) articulates the belief in the inextricable bond between English and ICT:

> Philippines is a popular call centre site, owing to its abundant English speakers that are college graduates and Americanized when it comes to English accent and cultural affinities. The Philippines is said to be the best outsourcing site outside North America since the accent of Filipinos is nearer to that of American consumers as compared to other ethnicities.

With these developments in the social and economic context of the Philippines, the Arroyo administration set a directed educational agenda. The boom of business process outsourcing in the Philippines also demanded for basic education to cater to the growing market.

In later years, there was fear that a decline in English proficiency would lead to the weakening of the industry in the country. A feature in *The Economist* (2004) expressed the longtime nationwide concern for the decline of English proficiency in the Philippines as an issue fueled by economic reasons:

> Once it claimed to have more English speakers than all but two other countries, and it has exported millions of them. But these days Filipinos are less boastful. Three decades of decline in the share of Filipinos who speak the language, and the deteriorating proficiency of those who can manage some English, have eroded one of the country's advantages in the global economy.

Furthermore, the article from *The Economist* (2004) highlighted the woes of call centers, which reportedly rejected nine out of ten applicants due to the poor command of the English language.

It was against this background that the following language education policies were formulated. From 2001 to 2009, there were 13 mandates on language education policy issued by the Department of Education and the Office of the President (see, Table 3.1).

**Table 3.1** List of mandates

| Official name/date | Issuing agency | Salient points |
|---|---|---|
| Two books a year per student | Department of Education | Required students in all levels to present evidence of having read at least one book in the *vernacular* and one book in *English* before being promoted to the next level |
| July 23, 2001 | | Department of Education (2010) |
| The 2002 basic education curriculum | Department of Education | Added civic education subjects to the list of subjects taught in English. Only Filipino and social science are taught in Filipino |
| August 29, 2002 | | Department of Education (2002) |
| Establishing the policy to strengthen the use of the English language as a medium of instruction in the educational system | Office of the President | Reinforced English as the medium of instruction in the primary and secondary levels in light of "technology-driven sectors of the economy" |
| May 17, 2003 | | Office of the President (2003) |
| Implementing guidelines on the model of excellence (MOE) schools program | Department of Education | Defined standards for a model school, including programs such as speak English campaign, daily oral language, word of the day, etc. |
| August 24, 2004 | | Department of Education (2004) |

(continued)

**Table 3.1** (continued)

| Official name/date | Issuing agency | Salient points |
|---|---|---|
| Remedial instruction programs in high school | Department of Education | Recommended remedial instruction for students scoring below 30% in the National Achievement Test |
| June 2, 2005 | | Department of Education (2005a) |
| Policy guidelines in the implementation of the secondary education program of the 2002 BEC for SY 2005–2006 | Department of Education | Acknowledged the difficulties faced by students and teachers when it comes to using English as a medium of instruction |
| July 1, 2005 | | Recommended more English programs |
| | | Department of Education (2005b) |
| Basic education sector reform agenda | Department of Education | Introduced National Language and literacy reform #2: Create better learning environments to support language and literacy education of students |
| December 6, 2005 | | Department of Education (2005c) |
| Implementing rules and regulations on executive order no. 210 | Department of Education | Specified time allocations for medium of instruction |
| August 22, 2006 | | Department of Education (2006a) |
| Turning around low performance in English: A priority program for 2008 January 29, 2008 | Department of Education | Introduced English language intervention programs for both teachers and students to address low achievement test scores |
| | | Department of Education (2006b) |
| Comprehensive school health and nutrition package for project: Turning around low performance in English | Department of Education | Introduced health programs such as feeding and deworming in order to aid students in project TURN intervention programs |
| May 5, 2008 | | Department of Education (2008c) |
| Addendum to implementing rules and regulations on executive order no 210, establishing the policy to strengthen the use of the English language as a medium of instruction in the educational system | Department of Education | Acknowledged the value of mother tongues in learning and in learning English |
| | | Allowed for the use of mother tongues as auxiliary languages |
| August 27, 2008 | | Department of Education (2008d) |
| Special program in foreign language | Department of Education | Offered a Spanish foreign language program for students who are competent in English |
| December 11, 2008 | | Department of Education (2008e) |
| Institutionalizing mother tongue-based multilingual education | Department of Education | Legitimized the use of the mother tongue as medium of instruction from preschool until at least third grade |
| July 14, 2009 | | Department of Education (2009) |

A quick scan of the language education policies reveals an astounding prioritization of English language learning. These policies catered to the country's specific economic and intellectual needs. However, no matter how discreet, they also reinforced a hierarchy of power with English at the apex.

## Linguistic Imperialism in Language Policy: An Illustration

The dominance of English in Philippine language education policies is illustrative of linguistic imperialism, a concept which linguist Robert Phillipson introduced in his groundbreaking work in 1992. In his book, Phillipson traces the roots of imperialism to the promotion of English by Christians in the 1600s and emphasizes the role of language policy in maintaining its domineering status. He further describes linguistic imperialism as the "absence of a level linguistic playing field, the unfair privileging of those who use one language and those who use it more" (Phillipson 2006, p. 357). It is "linguistic dominance in the sense of the maintenance of injustice and inequality by means of language policies" (Phillipson 2009, p. 5). Since its inception, linguistic imperialism has attracted bothersome attention and controversy. Nonetheless, it has raised awareness on various language practices and policies and placed the English language under an even more critical lens.

When it comes to the English language teaching (ELT) profession, Phillipson identifies the five tenets in teaching English that he considers to be fallacies because of the ideological and pedagogical questions that they raise in linguistically diverse communities.

*English is best taught monolingually*. This monolingual fallacy refers to English as the only permitted language in the classroom. While it may not be practiced fully, it points to the creation of an imagined monolingual community. According to Phillipson "the ethos of monolingualism implies the rejection of the experience of other languages, meaning the exclusion of the child's most intense existential experience" (Phillipson 1992, p. 198).

*The ideal teacher of English is a native speaker.* This native speaker fallacy implies that ESL and EFL teachers are not as successful because the only valid standard of English is that of a native speaker. Phillipson (1992) asserts that the dependence on Western English language norms exacerbates relations of imperialism between the center and the periphery.

*The earlier English is taught, the better the results.* This is based on the critical period hypothesis (Lenneberg 1964; Bickerton 1981), which points to early childhood as the ideal window for language learning. However, this early start fallacy often frowns upon English language learning at a later age. Moreover, the interdependence theory (Cummins 1979) states that a strong second language proficiency depends on a strong first language proficiency. Thus, an early start to learning English in a nonnative context may even be counterproductive.

*The more English is taught, the better the results.* This maximum exposure fallacy ensures that students are exposed to as many English materials, programs, and exercises as possible, thus, opening more opportunities for the massive English teaching business. This tenet has been contested by language acquisition researchers who assert that there is no correlation between the quantity of second language input and academic success (Cummins 1979).

*If other languages are used much, the standards of English will drop*. This is a belief in a subtractive fallacy, where learning a language negatively affects proficiency in another. It must be noted that the fallacy entails a misguided belief that English will be corrupted by the other language, but never the other way around. To provide contrary evidence, Phillipson (1992) cites the case of Scandinavia where the increased use of English has not led to the decrease in proficiency in local languages, even if English had replaced them in some domains.

These tenets are deemed unsafe because they become the pillars of legitimate educational policies that favor English. As a result, the ELT profession serves the cause of the British and American empire, threatens other languages, and promulgates social injustice.

For purposes of illustrating linguistic imperialism in Philippine language education, this section will discuss the following policies: Executive Order 210 (2003), Model of Excellence School Program (2004), Policy Guidelines for the 2002 Basic Education Curriculum (2005), Project TURN (2008), and Special Program in Foreign Language (2008).

*Executive Order 210* In 2003, President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo issued Executive Order 210, which called for the strengthening of the use of the English language (Office of the President 2003). Although the policy did not depart substantially from existing policy, the fact that the president herself had made this mandate into an executive order caused alarm within certain sectors. It was such a highly controversial executive order that it received reactions of praise and criticism from the public, including a lawsuit filed in the Supreme Court. The petitioners, which consisted of national artists and education leaders, claimed that EO 210 is unconstitutional. They cited Article XIV of the 1987 Constitution, which declares Filipino as the national language and mandates the government "to initiate and sustain [its] use …as a medium of official communication and as language of instruction in the educational system" (Tupas 2007).

Moreover, this policy upheld the tenet that the earlier English is taught, the better. This is evident in the mandate to teach English as early as the first grade. This directive might even be a counterproductive to learning the English language itself since average first grade students are only 6 years old and still developing their first language, the foundation of learning a succeeding language.

Furthermore, the executive order demonstrates the belief that the more learners are exposed to English, the better it would be for them to learn that language. President Arroyo ordered for more subjects to be taught in English. Previously, the subjects English Language, Math, and Science were taught in English. The policy

**Table 3.2** Allocation of subjects per medium of instruction (Department of Education 2006b)

| Medium of instruction | Subject | First year | Second year | Third year | Fourth year |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Minutes per week | | | |
| English | English | 300 | 300 | 300 | 300 |
| | Science | 360 | 360 | 360 | 360 |
| | Mathematics | 300 | 300 | 300 | 300 |
| | Technology and livelihood | 240 | 240 | 240 | 240 |
| | Music, arts, PE, health | 240 | 240 | 240 | 240 |
| | Citizenship training | – | – | – | 50 |
| Filipino | Filipino | 240 | 240 | 240 | 240 |
| | Social studies | 240 | 240 | 240 | 240 |
| | Values education | 120 | 120 | 180 | 180 |

has added that subjects in civic education such as Arts and Physical Education be included as well. Only the Filipino Language and Social Science were left to the local language. The act of assigning languages to such subjects posed sociopolitical risks. Ramanathan (2005) believes that assigning English to upper-level domains while assigning the vernacular to lower-level domains creates a divide where certain realms of knowledge are reserved only for those who are proficient in English. Hence, the privileged association of the language is propagated even further.

Executive Order 210 is also symptomatic of another fallacy: the belief that learning another language is detrimental to another. This exclusivist policy points to a belief in the subtractive fallacy since opportunity for speaking another language other than English is essentially viewed as a threat. The Implementing Rules and Regulations of Executive Order 210 specified "the percentage of time allotment for learning areas conducted in the English language should not be less than 70% of the total time allotment for all learning areas in all year levels" (Department of Education 2006b). A table was even included as reference for the exact minute allotment (Table 3.2).

The inclusion of this table reveals a scrupulous approach to the language learning in the classroom. This directive outlawed and denied code switching, a practice common in the Philippine classrooms (Martin 2006; Valdez 2010). The prescription of the number of minutes points to an uncompromising spirit behind this directive. This shows an attitude of protectionism, where all non-English languages were marginalized in school.

In summary, EO 210 envisioned a community that excluded local languages. Because of its failure to adhere to marks of a linguistically diverse environment, the hegemony of English is clearly seen in this policy.

*Model of Excellence Program* In 2004, the Department of Education introduced the "Model of Excellence Program." This order is of particular interest because it is where the Education Department articulated the character of an ideal school in the Philippines. All schools are "encouraged to adapt any of the teaching methods, techniques, and strategies as applicable" (Department of Education 2004).

This included 54 guidelines, which contained obligatory statements such as "should" and "must" in its text.

The order mandated every Model of Excellence School to have the following signs written in English. The first sign is the mission and vision, "Fighting Poverty …One Page at a Time." The second is the campus signage, "A National Model of Excellence." While it could be argued that these signs could have been written in the regional language or in Filipino, the fact that these are written in English implies that it is the language chosen to represent poverty alleviation and academic excellence.

Aside from the signs, the department order also required the entire model school to speak in English:

> *Speak English Campaign.* In order to give pupils greater opportunities to hear and speak the language, all teachers on campus should speak, except for designated periods for Filipino and Makabayan (civic education subjects), in the English language. This should be particularly observed in the library and in the computer learning center. Code-switching (use of the vernacular language simultaneously with the English language) is not allowed at any level at an MOE school. Teachers should speak in straight English at all times, except for mandated periods when they should speak in Filipino. (Department of Education 2004)

This provision points to the monolingual fallacy which Phillipson (1992) refers to as the prevalence of English as the only language permitted in the ESL or EFL classroom. This created an unrealistic situation that envisioned the school as a monolingual "straight English"-speaking community, detached from the multilingual and multicultural reality. Even conversations outside the classroom, such as in the cafeteria or in the hallways, were to be in English. Neuner (2002) contends that when a community simulates a native English-speaking community rather than a lingua franca environment, students encounter difficulties. Furthermore, this aspect of the policy has serious implications on the creation of social distance (Schuman 1978) between the home context of the child and his school context. This is likely to influence his perception of his own language, which may be acceptable elsewhere but not regarded highly in school (Corson 2001).

The Model of Excellence guidelines also required the following daily activities:

> *Daily Oral Language.* In order to enhance proficiency in English, grammar lessons should be given every day, although it should be minimized to the context of communicative approach to language learning. Five to ten minutes of each English period should be devoted to daily oral language. Pupils should orally correct errors in sentences written beforehand on the board or otherwise posted by the teacher.
>
> *Word of the Day.* In order to ensure that each graduate of elementary school learns the two thousand basic words of the English language, each pupil should learn at least one word a day, taken from a standard list supplied by Books for the Barrios. Teachers should devote at least 5 min of each English lesson to activities related to the Word of the Day. (Department of Education 2004)

Daily oral practice is centered on error-correction exercises. This scheme, aimed at accuracy rather than fluency, is symptomatic of a prescriptive approach to language learning.

In addition, students are required to learn a word from a list of "two thousand basic words of the English language." While some words are from local culture, (i.e. narra, durian, and tamaraw), there are words that are outside the students' context.

For instance, how can a 10-year-old Filipino student distinguish between teak, oak, and cedar? These words are included in the list of "basic words," but those trees do not grow in Philippine soil. The word of the day scheme includes vocabulary, which is proper to those who speak English in the center, not to students who are located in the periphery.

Both daily activities reflect the native speaker fallacy. Phillipson (1992) says this does not only exist with the presence of a native speaker teacher but, more importantly, the kinds of standards required in English language teaching. With this belief, the target is to speak as one from the center, from North America, Britain, and Australia, rather than as a successful second language or foreign language speaker whose mother tongue is not English.

Finally, it must be noted that the Model of Excellence Program made no mention of Filipino or any of the local languages. Thus, it is assumed that reading, writing, listening, and speaking were to be solely in English. It is also worth mentioning that 9 out of 54 guidelines mandated are concerned with the English language. This is second only to Information and Computer Technology, which has 11. The absence of any directive on other languages, and the thrust on English, has led to the inference that English is the prioritized language in this Model of Excellence Program.

*Policy Guidelines for the Basic Education Curriculum* The DepEd Order "Policy Guidelines in the Implementation of the Secondary Education Program of the 2002 BEC for SY 2005–2006" (Department of Education 2005b) contained the evaluation of what was then a newly implemented Basic Education Curriculum. Among the findings of the evaluation were commentaries on the use of the English language as medium of instruction:

> Students are having difficulties using English as learning medium. School heads and teachers recognize the difficulties the students face in learning English as a language and at the same time using it as a medium of instruction. As such they have resorted to various ways of increasing the English proficiency of students like holding essay contests, English campaigns, public speaking competitions and the like. The problem, however, has remained unabated.
>
> In English medium classes, both teachers and students usually shift to the local language to ensure that they understand each other. The fall-back language is usually Taglish, which students in non-Tagalog provinces are ill at ease.
>
> BEC advocates the development of creative, critical thinkers and problem solvers. Teachers find this difficult to achieve in English medium classes where students have poor oral, aural, reading, and writing skills.
>
> In these classes, teachers are prone to resort to simple recall, recognition and leading questions to minimize questions that demand complex reasoning, explanations, elaborations, analysis, synthesis and evaluation, which students find frustrating and even exasperating. (Department of Education 2005b)

This evaluation revealed that the Department of Education was cognizant of the problems that English brought as medium of instruction. The previous section discussed how the government infiltrated the Basic Education Program with additional English programs and practices, and these findings confirm that greater exposure to the language did not lead to greater proficiency.

Aside from the ineffectiveness of the programs, the findings described how the English language policies have backfired on the promise of quality education. Teachers resorted to watering down lessons in order to ensure student involvement. Activities that involved higher-order thinking skills were limited because students grapple with the language of instruction and cannot fully express their complex process of reasoning through the English language.

After recognizing problem areas caused by language, the department order provided a set of recommendations:

> *Voluntary participation in English remedial sessions facilitated by volunteer students.* Facilitators are selected in the basis of their English proficiency and are given special training on how to facilitate group learning.
>
> *Proficient English students from higher levels, mentoring students from the lower levels.* The participation in the project of both mentors and learners is voluntary but the school provides an incentive system to support the project.
>
> *Holding regular English writing and impromptu speaking contests using criterion-referenced evaluation.* To encourage wide participation, multiple winners, not only the best, are proclaimed. At the end of the semester, the classes with the biggest number of winners are given citations.
>
> *Using the results of achievement tests for the previous years, the school conducts frequency and error analysis of English competencies that students failed to master*. Remedial measures are instituted and continuously evaluated for their effectiveness in producing the desired change in achievement. (Department of Education 2005b)

Surprisingly, the perceived solution is the same mindset that led to the problem in the first place: more exposure to the English language! This time, the burden of making students learn English was passed on to volunteer students who are proficient in the language. With the large number of students struggling with English, this was a tall order, even for merit students. In general, the recommendations aimed to lower the affective filter with its new remediation tactics. However, they are still rooted in the belief in maximum exposure, which had been evaluated by this same directive as ineffective.

What is disturbing about the evaluation is that it treats the English language as an indispensable requirement for learning. In spite of having clearly described how English negatively affected the quality of instruction, it never considered replacing the language or supplementing it with local language. Thus, the evaluation glosses over the real problem, which is the learning of content. While the medium of instruction is only a dependent variable in the process of teaching and learning, the Department of Education treats English as an independent and even an untouchable variable.

*Project TURN* Another intriguing program is Turning Around Low Performance in English Program or Project TURN (Department of Education 2008a), which was named as the Education Department's flagship program for 2008. The official press release read:

> Recognizing the importance of English proficiency as an important building block in learning, the Department of Education has placed it as one of its priority programs for 2008 focusing on schools with low mastery level in the 2007 National Achievement Test (NAT).

> NAT measures what the students understand and can do. It covers Mathematics, English, Science, Filipino and Hekasi (civic education). To be given priority for urgent interventions are schools that obtained a mean percentage score (MPS) of 34 and below. (Department of Education 2008a).

With this project, the Department of Education targeted the schools that performed the least in the combined five subject areas of the NAT. Again, the perceived magic bullet is English, "an important building block." Dubbed as a priority program, it clearly shows the belief that the problem of Philippine education is a problem of English proficiency.

Project TURN has three components: assessment for teachers, intervention for teachers, and intervention for students (Department of Education 2008a). The following excerpt shows the specific steps involved in the program:

> *Assessment*
>
> Teachers English Proficiency Test. This will be administered to all teachers in elementary and secondary levels teaching English, Science, Mathematics and other subjects taught in English.
>
> *Intervention Package for Teachers*
>
> Training of teachers in: i) oral and written communication, ii) teaching beginning, developmental and remedial reading, iv) communicative language teaching and (v) authentic assessment in communication.
>
> *Intervention Package for Students*
>
> Provision of supplementary reading materials.
>
> Medical, dental, and food for school/feeding assistance.
>
> (Department of Education 2008b)

The scale of support for learning a language was unprecedented. As the top priority of the Department of Education, Project TURN cost 121 million pesos and involved 11,265 schools (Department of Education 2008c).

The first component of Project TURN was an assessment test for all teachers who teach in English, including those who teach Math, Science, Physical Education, Arts, etc. (Department of Education 2008b). This assessment assumed that the students' low grades in English are related to teachers' proficiency. In 2005, the Education Department conducted an assessment test for its high school teachers. Results revealed that only one out of every five teachers is proficient in English (GMA News 2008). Unfortunately for these teachers who are experts in their respective content areas, they are assumed to be ineffective because of a foreign language barrier, even if they are teaching in a public school in their home country.

The second component of Project TURN aimed to solve the problem anticipated by the teachers' assessment (Department of Education 2008b). Since teachers have not been trained to teach in English, they will be trained in English communication. However, this intervention went above and beyond since they would also be trained in communicative language teaching and even assessment. There seemed to be a belief that all teachers must become bonafide English teachers.

The first two components of Project TURN are focused on the teachers, not only of English but of all English-medium subjects. This does not only reflect a belief in

the maximum exposure tenet (Phillipson 1992) but also in the belief that if teachers' proficiency in English will improve, so could the proficiency of the students. However, this is questionable since subject teachers are not the designated English language teachers. Furthermore, in the average EFL classroom, each speaks a type of English that is not perfect but rather a work in progress. If the exposure of one EFL speaker to a fellow classmate is not seen as a threat, then why is a subject teacher's less perfect English seen as one? Why does communicative competence have no bearing? Perhaps this is a variation of the subtractive belief (Phillipson 1992), which states that learning one language will lead to the corruption of another. In this case, there may be a belief that students' exposure to inaccurate English leads to the deterioration of their own.

*Special Program in Foreign Language* The 2008 Special Foreign Language Program of the Department of Education was "for students who have displayed competence in English and are capable of learning another foreign language." The metric for students' readiness to learn a foreign language is their English competence. Perhaps the logic behind this is that one needs to be competent in the second language before proceeding to a third. Then again, why does English have to hold the key? A majority of Filipinos born outside the Tagalog region can speak three or more languages. Thus, they are capable of learning languages. This is a manifestation of the gatekeeper status of English (Pennycook 1994).

The preference for English is even more evident in the Department of Education's requirements for hiring special language teachers:

Criteria for Selection of Teachers (Department of Education 2008e).

1. Must at least possess a bachelor's degree in English
2. Has been a permanent teacher for at least 3 years
3. Has a performance rating of very satisfactory (VS) or better
4. Not more than 60 years old
5. Can communicate adequately in English and Filipino
6. Willing to participate in and complete a certificate program in 4 months from January to May 2009
7. Must be willing to finish the crash course in Spanish

Phillipson's (1992) linguistic imperialism theory is not only limited to how English is taught in the classroom or to the ELT fallacies. This program assumes another dubious principle in English language teaching: If you know English, you can do anything.

Conventional wisdom dictates that the requirement for teaching the Spanish language is a good command of Español. Oddly, the fundamental prerequisite for teaching Spanish was a bachelor's degree in English, as if mastery of the English language would be akin to mastery of languages. One need not even be familiar with the target language since the department would be sending successful applicants to a short course. The only requirement with the Spanish language was a crash-course competence in Spanish, which at the time of one's application would have still been unknown. This, indeed, is an unmistakable manifestation of how deep English linguistic imperialism is embedded in both Philippine culture and in the culture of education in the Philippines.

## The Results of Policy: Quality of Education

What happened to Filipino learners as a result of years of language education policy? Although many factors affect quality of education, the facts will speak for themselves.

The National Achievement Test (NAT) is an annual examination administered by the National Education Testing and Research Center to public and private school students at the primary and secondary levels. The passing score is 75%, which denotes the mastery of the subject, while scores between 50% and 75% are considered near passing. Its test results are key indicators of student competency and provide insight for educators and policy makers on what needs to be done to improve the system (Department of Education 2010) (Tables 3.3, and 3.4).

The exam results had been nothing short of dismal. Scores were below 75% and often below 50% (Department of Education 2010). The achievement scores for both elementary and high school levels provided a bleak outlook with scores that generally fell under the low mastery category. The excessive focus on English has concurred with these failures in education. These scores beg the question: What was the

**Table 3.3** Elementary level: National Achievement Test mean percentage scores by subject

| Subject | SY 2004–2005 | SY 2005–2006 | SY 2006–2007 | SY 2007–2008 | SY 2008–2009 | SY 2009–2010 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Achievement rate | 58.73 | 54.66 | 59.94 | 44.33 | 46.64 | 49.26 |
| Mathematics | 59.10 | 53.66 | 60.29 | 47.82 | 39.05 | 42.85 |
| Science | 54.12 | 46.77 | 51.58 | 37.98 | 41.99 | 46.71 |
| English | 59.15 | 54.05 | 60.78 | 47.73 | 51.78 | 53.46 |
| Social science | 59.55 | 58.12 | 61.05 | 40.51 | 48.89 | 47.64 |
| Filipino | 61.75 | 60.68 | 66.02 | 47.62 | 51.48 | 55.63 |

Source: Department of Education (2010) Fact Sheet

**Table 3.4** Secondary level: National Achievement Test mean percentage scores by subject[1]

| Subject | SY 2004–2005 | SY 2005–2006 | SY 2006–2007 | SY 2007–2008 | SY 2008–2009 | SY 2009–2010 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Achievement rate | 44.33 | 46.64 | 46.64 | 49.26 | 46.71 | 45.56 |
| Mathematics | 47.82 | 39.05 | 39.05 | 42.85 | 38.03 | 39.64 |
| Science | 37.98 | 41.99 | 41.99 | 46.71 | 42.11 | 43.80 |
| English | 47.73 | 51.78 | 51.78 | 53.46 | 52.90 | 46.95 |
| Filipino | 40.51 | 48.89 | 48.89 | 47.64 | 51.05 | 58.08 |
| Social science | 47.62 | 51.48 | 51.48 | 55.63 | 49.44 | 39.32 |

Source: Department of Education (2010) Fact Sheet
[1]National Achievement Test (NAT), for secondary level, was given in first year in SY 2002–2003, in fourth year in SY 2003–2004 to SY 2005–2006, and in second year from SY 2006–2007 onward

role of language policy in the development of these outcomes? More importantly: How did all these impact the self-esteem and identity of the Filipino learner?

## Lessons from History: Shifting Language Education Policy

While the previous section highlighted a specific direction in language policy, it must be noted that the latter years of the Arroyo administration saw an introduction of two mandates that lead to a different path. In 2005, the Department of Education launched the Basic Education Sector Reform Agenda (BESRA), a set of principles and guidelines pointing toward a new direction in Philippine education. BESRA was a game changer that introduced key reforms that are starting to be implemented at the present. In 2009, Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education (MTBMLE) was institutionalized by the department. This action was made possible through one of BESRA's key reform agenda (Table 3.5).

The MTBMLE program emphasizes the role of the mother tongue in the acquisition of other languages. The presence of this policy provides for a more linguistically diverse period of early schooling. The policy relies on the mother tongue as a scaffold for learning; therefore, the approach to language learning is clearly additive. It also challenges persistent beliefs Phillipson identified as ELT fallacies. The introduction of local languages at the forefront of learning is a powerful, transformative action.

In spite of its efforts to promote linguistic diversity, a critique of the policy is that the mother tongue is only a means to an end and not an end in itself. It is a scaffold but not the primary language of learning. This first language will be blanketed by a second and a third language. The mother tongue is used for the first 3 years and gradually replaced by Filipino as the medium of instruction in civic education subjects and by English in Math and Science. Local languages still play second fiddle to English.

While the policy follows the blueprint provided by BESRA (Department of Education 2006a), a close reading of the document on the institutionalization of MTBMLE (Department of Education 2009) reveals its openness to modification for a more equitable and inclusive language education policy. The policy states that the first language will be used as medium of instruction until "*at least* grade three." This means that the first language *can* be used in the succeeding levels. The policy also states that English and Filipino will be introduced as subjects "no earlier than grade two." This means that the introduction of such subjects, even English, can be moved, if deemed necessary, to succeeding levels. Finally, it states that English, Filipino, or other languages shall be the medium of instruction "no earlier than grade three." While the directive pertains to the starting point, it also means that the medium of instruction can continue to be the mother tongue after the second grade or until it is deemed fit. It is this flexibility that opens up the field for the true multilingual education.

**Table 3.5** Comparison of language policies

| | 1987 Bilingual Education Policy | 2003 Executive Order 210 | 2009 MTB-MLE from BESRA recommendation |
|---|---|---|---|
| Mother tongue | Auxiliary language of instruction | Auxiliary language of instruction | At kindergarten or first grade, used in formal literacy instruction |
| | | | Until second grade, medium of instruction |
| | | | From fourth grade onward, auxiliary language of instruction |
| Filipino | Medium of instruction for civic studies | From first grade onward, taught as a subject | From first grade onward, taught as a subject |
| | From first grade onward, taught as a subject | Medium of instruction for civic studies | From second grade, used in formal literacy instruction |
| | | Until second grade, medium of instruction for math and science | From third grade onward, medium of instruction for civic studies |
| English | From first grade onward, taught as a subject | From first grade onward, taught as a subject | From first grade onward, taught as a subject |
| | Medium of instruction for math and science | From second grade onward, used in formal literacy instruction | From third grade onward, used in formal literacy instruction |
| | | From third grade onward, medium of instruction for civic studies | From fourth grade onward, medium of instruction in math and science |
| Other languages | None | None | For Muslim schools: From first grade onward, oral language development in Arabic |
| | | | For Muslim schools: From fourth grade onward, Arabic literacy is taught |
| | | | For Muslim schools: From seventh grade onward, medium of instruction in an elective subject |
| | | | From ninth grade onward, Philippine regional languages and/or foreign languages are taught as an elective subject |

## Conclusion

This chapter illustrates how language education policies of the Philippines have systematically pitted languages against each other. Directives privileging English belittled the function, capacity, and significance of local languages. They have not only systematically devalued the national language but all 170 languages in the country.

Policies have been generally characterized by a strong preference for English language learning at the expense of learning local languages, learning in local languages, and learning in general. However, the institutionalization of multilingual education policies points to a changing landscape in terms of language policy ideology. Nonetheless, the extent of such policies has yet to be seen because, in terms of implementation, they are only at the beginning—only time will tell.

That being said, the language education policies in the Philippines reveal conflicted ideologies as a result of the country's complex history and path to nationhood. On the one hand, there is clear evidence of the persistence of English linguistic imperialism. This ideology has impinged on individual and collective identity and culture so much that a future where basic education students graduate from local language medium schools seems like an impossibility. On the other hand, there is a sense of restlessness from certain sectors who ask the questions: How can we resist? How can we empower local culture? How can we fulfill the promise of multilingual diversity? With that, there is reason to hope.

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# Chapter 4
# Critiquing Mother Tongue-Based Language-in-Education Policies: A Focus on the Philippines

**Priscilla Angela T. Cruz and Ahmar Mahboob**

**Abstract** This chapter is an examination of the possible impact attitudes to language have on the success of multilingual education policies. We argue that if these attitudes are not addressed, mother tongue-based policies in education may inadvertently maintain the hegemony of English rather than empower local languages and communities. Furthermore, we argue for the need to consider language allocation, affiliation, and variation in policies which will affect pedagogical practices. In addition, we problematize how multilingual contexts with a strong level of English use lead to variations in language whose place must be considered where schooling is concerned. Finally, we consider these policies in terms of the principles-based approach (Mahboob and Tilakaratna 2012) to language policy. Without using the PBA as a guide, any language policy may just be created without its stakeholders fully understanding what it means. In the end, language policies in a multilingual society that is dominated by English cannot be so simple as insisting on a multilingual system of education. Rather, various issues must be considered to ensure that these policies do help toward changing society instead of just maintaining power relationships that limit the access of various sectors to different social, economic, and semantic resources.

**Keywords** Language policy · Multilingualism · Mother-tongue-based education · Pedagogy

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## Introduction

In this chapter, we problematize language-in-education policies that consider a multilingual system of education against attitudes to language that can impact on the (non)success of these policies. We argue that, without addressing perceptions toward the role/s of different languages across various uses, multilingual policies in education may reinforce the hegemony of the English language rather than raise the status of local languages. This can happen because of a lack of understanding of how languages work and function, particularly with respect to vertical discursiveness (Bernstein 1996) and notions of how power is inscribed in different uses of language. Furthermore, we argue that any multilingual language policy should consider how English and other languages connect to language allocation and affiliation, which, if not considered, can lead to schooling maintaining power relations in an unequal society (Apple 2004) rather than changing them. In addition, we consider how multilingual contexts with a strong level of English use lead to variations in language whose place must be considered where schooling is concerned. Finally, we consider these policies in terms of the principles-based approach (PBA) to language policy (Mahboob and Tilakaratna 2012).

Without using the PBA as a guide, any language policy may be created without its stakeholders fully understanding what it means. Language policies in a multilingual society that is dominated by English cannot be so simple as insisting on a multilingual system of education. Rather, various issues must be considered to ensure that these policies do help toward changing society instead of just maintaining power relationships that limit the access of various sectors to different social, economic, and semantic resources.

In exploring these issues, this chapter focuses on one country, the Philippines. It attempts to evaluate the policy on mother tongue-based education in the Philippines in light of a survey on language attitudes in the country. Using the survey results as a backdrop, this chapter then discusses issues with our understandings of language in the context of education. The paper then adopts PBA language policy (Mahboob and Tilakaratna 2012), which is keenly attuned toward an understanding of how languages gain power across modes and contexts of communication. The paper critiques current policies and points out that these policies risk maintaining the hegemony of English and disenfranchising local languages. As such, this chapter is an attempt toward raising significant questions for a study of language policy and practice around the world as well as toward adding to theoretical and practical work on language policy and planning in the Philippines.

## The Survey

Conducted in 2011 and distributed through social media, this language attitude survey was built around some questions that were designed to reveal how Filipinos perceive the languages that figure in their lives, particularly where literacy and

education are concerned. As the Philippines is a multilingual country, quite a number of Filipinos speak at least three languages. These are their mother tongues, or the language of their communities; Tagalog, which formed the basis for the national language of Filipino; and English, which has gained a prominent position in the domains of politics, business, and education in the country. It is the intersection of these languages that frames this survey, which had a total of 232 respondents. These respondents mostly come from major city centers such as Manila, while some come from the various provinces of the Philippines and still others abroad. Nineteen mother tongues were listed. These were Tagalog, Aklanon, Bicolano, Bisaya, Cebuano, Chavacano/Spanish creole, Chinese, English, Hiligaynon, Ibaloi, Ilokano, Ilonggo, Itawis, Ivatan, Kapampangan, Pangasinan, Spanish, Waray-Waray, and Korean. Most respondents spoke at least two languages but quite a number also spoke three or four. These respondents also identified themselves as either employed or studying. Those who were employed mostly cited jobs related to education, business, or health. This section will briefly present the results of the survey (for a more thorough discussion of this survey and its results, see Mahboob and Cruz 2013). Four questions were asked. Each question and its results will be presented.

Participants were first asked to rate their proficiency in English, Tagalog, and non-Tagalog mother tongues. The results, which include all participants who responded to this item, are in Fig. 4.1.

These results reveal that most of the participants assess themselves to be generally proficient in all three languages. However, proficiency in English is slightly

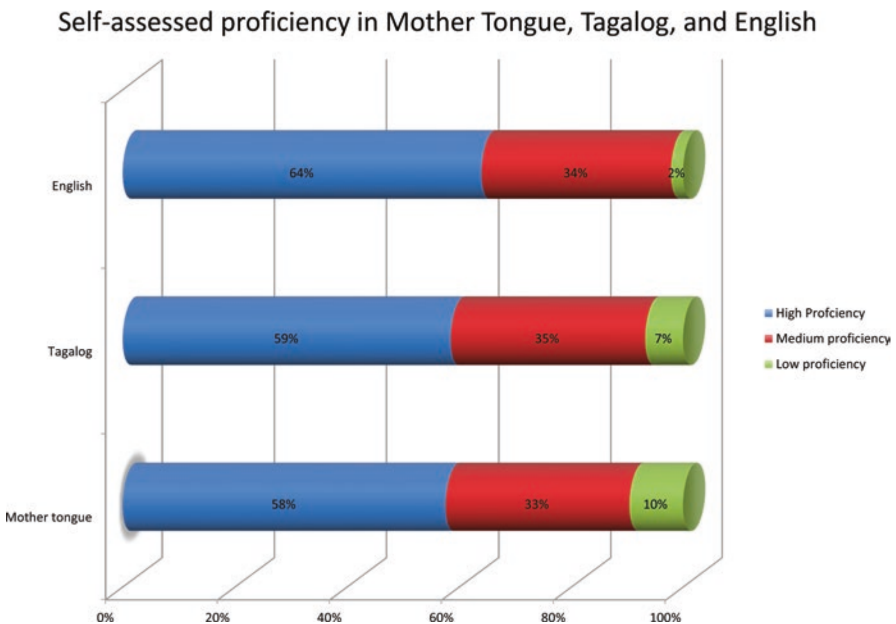


**Fig. 4.1** Self-assessed proficiency in English, Tagalog, and mother tongue

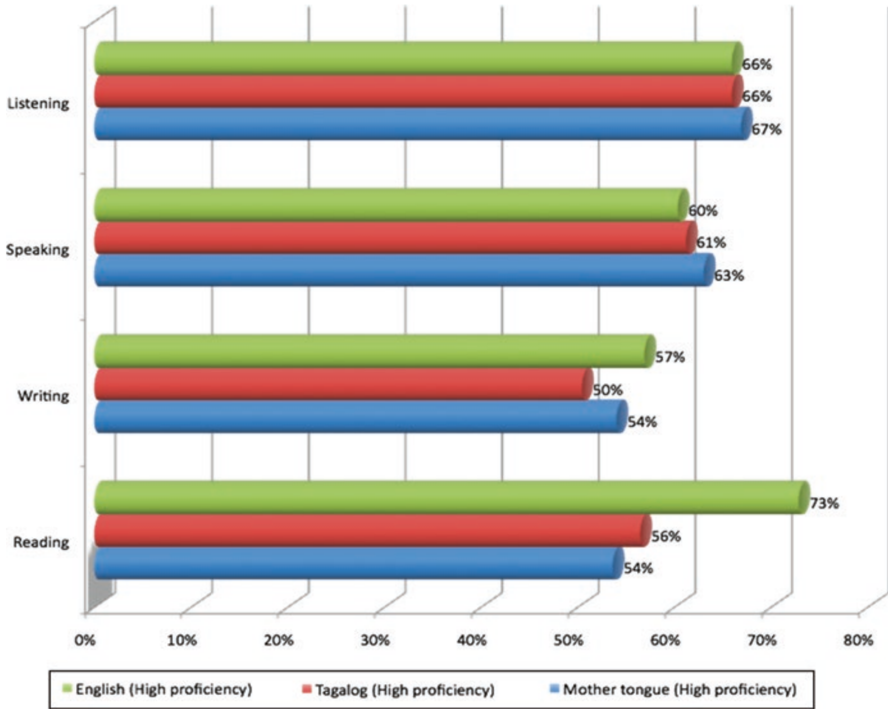


**Fig. 4.2** Distribution of proficiency across four skills

higher than in Tagalog and mother tongues. These results also suggest that the higher participants rated their proficiency in English, the greater the chance, although the numbers are small, of a lower proficiency in Tagalog and mother tongues. At least 10% of the respondents assess themselves as low proficient in their mother tongues, while only 2% claim a poor proficiency in English. This may suggest that for these respondents, English is the more dominant language even in the home, which is usually where local tongues are spoken. These results can be interpreted to mean that in the Philippines, English can function as a mother tongue.

In the second item, participants were asked to rate their proficiency in Tagalog, English, and mother tongues across the four macro-skills of listening, speaking, writing, and reading. The results are in Fig. 4.2.

These results show that the respondents generally assessed themselves as highly proficient in listening and speaking where English, Tagalog, and mother tongues are concerned. However, where writing and reading are concerned, they mostly assessed themselves as highly proficient in English, suggesting that when it comes to literacy and the more academically oriented language skills, English is the dominant language. So, to the respondents, the language of literacy is English.

In the third item, participants were asked to identify which languages should be taught as subjects in school. Figure 4.3 summarizes the results.

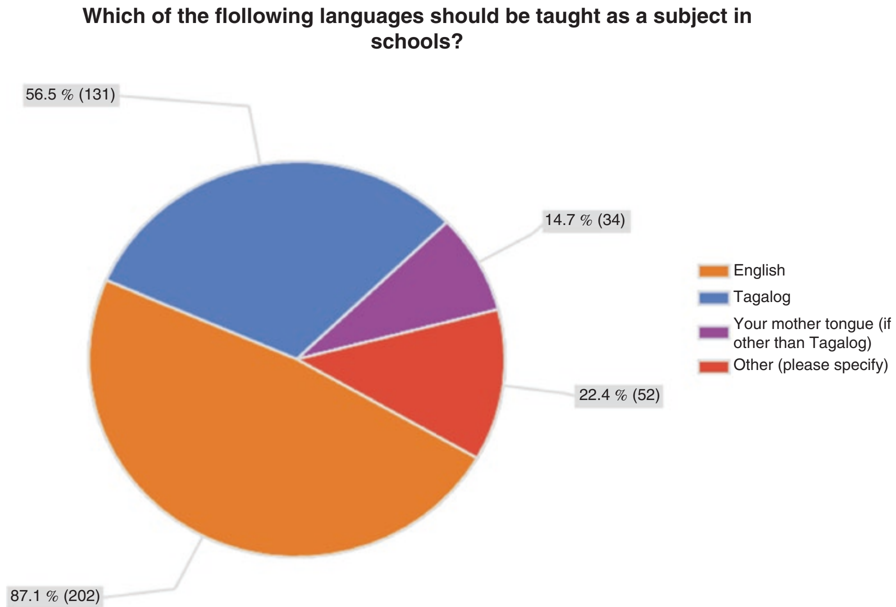


**Fig. 4.3** Language preference in educational contexts
Other languages identified were vernaculars (mother tongues), Spanish, Chinese, Korean, French, Japanese, Fookien, and German

These results show that English is the most important language that should be taught in schools. Tagalog ranks second, while mother tongues are almost set aside. These results are suggestive of a generally poor attitude toward the place of local languages in schooling.

Finally, participants were asked to rate which languages should be used as medium of instruction in elementary, secondary, and university education. The results are in Fig. 4.4.

These results indicate that the respondents prefer English over any other language as a medium of instruction whether in primary, high school, or university education. Tagalog, mother tongues, and other languages figure a bit more in primary school but are not as important in high school and all but disappear in university. These results suggest a perspective toward languages that is skewed toward the role of English in the potentially "larger" world of higher education and, consequently, the economic and social opportunities that higher education can bring.

The survey reveals some general trends about attitudes toward languages in the Philippines. Figures 4.1 and 4.2 suggest that, although there is a similar level of fluency where English, Tagalog, and mother tongues are concerned, this fluency is largely linked to listening and speaking but not the more academic skills of reading and writing. Furthermore, Figs. 4.3 and 4.4 reveal a pervading attitude that supports

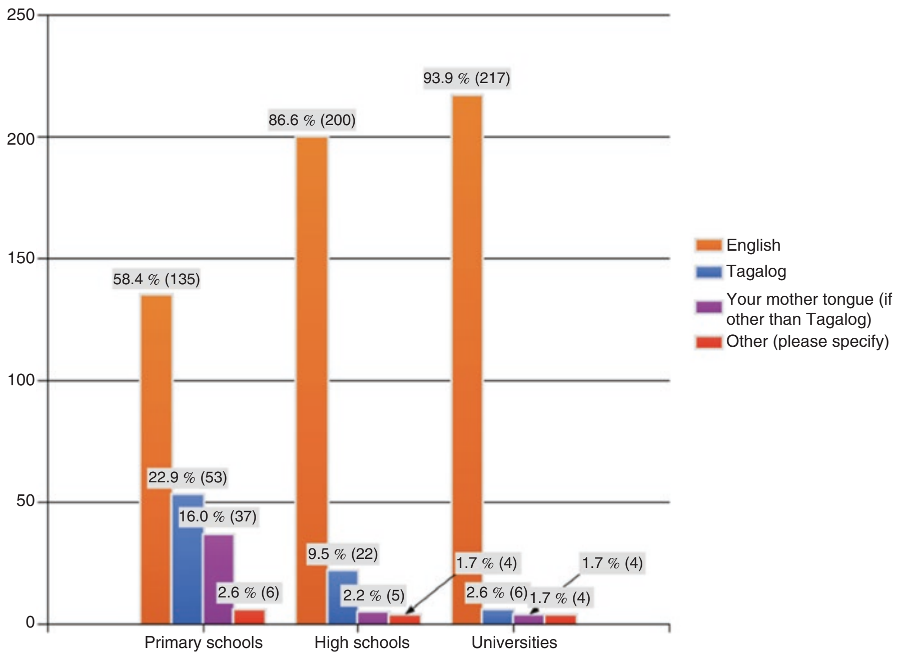


**Fig. 4.4** Medium of instruction preference
Other languages identified were multilingual (10), Spanish (2), and French (1)

the strong position of English in schools both as a medium of instruction and as a subject. For a country that is poised to institutionalize local languages in the school system, these results may be indicative of a potentially poor reaction to these policies.

It is necessary to consider the weaknesses of the survey here. As it was distributed online, it can be assumed that respondents were only those from the middle to upper classes who have access to the Internet. Furthermore, as the survey was conducted in English, the results may not reflect the attitudes of less educated Filipinos. However, the respondents, as mentioned, all enjoy school and work opportunities. This demographic suggests that to those who enjoy certain economic and social privileges, *English* is the most important language. As this demographic, which includes stakeholders who possess some social and economic power, prefers English, then they may not see the value of local languages nor the value of mother tongue-based education. In the next section, we frame these results within discussions on the roles of different languages in education.

## Language in Education

When it comes to deciding on what language is deemed appropriate for education, one aspect that needs to be considered is what Bernstein (1975) has identified as *uncommonsense* knowledge. This is the knowledge that is transmitted through schooling, which is "freed from the particular, the local, through the various languages of the sciences or forms of reflexiveness of the arts which make possible either the creation or the discovery of new realities" (Bernstein 1975, p. 90). Uncommonsense knowledge is different from, but can be related to, *commonsense knowledge*, which is "everyday, community knowledge" (p. 90). So, the question which underlies language-in-education policy initiatives is *In what language is uncommonsense knowledge best taught for the maximum benefit of the students*?

In countries with a strong national language such as Japan, China, and Korea and even the English "native speaker" countries such as the UK, Australia, and the USA, the answer is obvious: uncommonsense knowledge is best taught in the national language, which is also probably the mother tongue of students[1] and the language that dominates the major cultural, economic, and political transactions of the country. The situation in postcolonial and multilingual countries such as the Philippines, however, is vastly different. In the first place, the Philippines is a country with between 120 and 300 indigenous languages (Gonzalez 1998, p. 489). Of these languages, Tagalog, largely spoken in the National Capital Region of the Philippines, was "by fiat" (Hidalgo 1998, p. 24) instituted as the national language and renamed into *Filipino*. English, due to American colonial policies (discussed in Mahboob and Cruz 2013) and maintained as the language of major sociopolitical domains (Gonzalez 2004), in turn, is yet another dominant language which holds a place in the country's bilingual educational system (the two languages being Tagalog-based Filipino and English). English is also the language that has been associated with the economic and social elite of the Philippines (Gonzalez 2009). In this situation of multiple languages where some languages are more empowered than others, what language is best to transmit uncommonsense knowledge is harder to identify.

In her essay, "What is mother tongue-based multilingual education," Dekker (2010) explains that this educational policy is one that involves "a curriculum and teaching methodology that enables learners to participate well in education through the use of their *first* language" (Dekker 2010, p. 23, emphasis ours). So, a child's first language, whether English, Filipino, or any of the other languages of the Philippines, is the best language by which to teach the uncommonsense knowledge of schooling. Dekker's own work with schools in the Philippines attests to the

[1] It can be said, though, that global immigration patterns are causing a disjunct between the national language and the mother tongues of students. An example may be Spanish and Filipino in immigrant families in the USA. These families may speak and pass on their mother tongues at home but speak a national language such as English outside the home. Or, they could also use two or more languages at home. Thus, students from immigrant families may be considered to have two or more mother tongues where one or the other is also the language of schooling. The situation of immigrant families, though, is not the concern of this paper.

effectiveness of mother tongue-based education. Her research, conducted in 2007–2008, has shown impressive results with students educated in the first languages doing comparatively better than those who were educated following the country's policy of Filipino and English as the languages of schooling. Because uncommonsense knowledge is transmitted through the language of commonsense, the assumption is that students can learn better and do better in standardized exams than those who were not taught in their mother tongues (Walter et al. 2010). Dekker furthermore argues that mother tongue education facilitates better and faster learning of another language (Dekker 2010). So, following these studies, Dekker argues that the best language by which to learn uncommonsense is the mother tongue (whatever it might be). While there is evidence to support the relationship between the language of schooling and the ability to learn, there are a number of issues that need to be considered, especially in countries like the Philippines where languages are not equally developed and have varying levels of power.

The issue of what language to teach uncommonsense knowledge is related to language allocation and language affiliation (Martin 2010a, b; Mahboob 2011). Language allocation refers to the sum of semantic resources that a child has been "given," or "allocated," so to speak. So, a child whose mother tongue is English has been allocated English. If he/she goes to an English medium of instruction school, then uncommonsense knowledge is taught and learned in the language that was allocated to him/her. Where mother tongue-based educational initiatives are concerned, it is necessary to "match" the language of uncommonsense knowledge with what language/s students have been allocated. The research in Nolasco et al. (2010) shows how students suffer if they are made to learn uncommonsense in a non-allocated language; hence, this moves toward mother tongue-based education. However, not all languages are equally developed, nor do they possess the same sociocultural and economic capital, so mother tongue-based education is not only a question of using "home" languages in schools. Rather, it also involves how languages accrue power.

The survey results suggest that to the respondents, mother tongues may not matter as much as English in education. Two explanations for this can be observed. One, these respondents may consider English to be their mother tongue. In which case, English would really be the preferred language for uncommonsense. Second, these respondents are equally comfortable with English and/or their mother tongues but feel that English should be the language of schooling. In which case, they have no problem with learning in English. What does this imply? First, as these respondents are comfortable with English, they might allocate English to their children. In which case, they will go to English-mother tongue schools. Note that the respondents were mostly gainfully employed in notable industries, so there is a big chance that they can afford what they would consider a worthwhile investment in an English-based education. Second, mother tongues and even Tagalog do not have as much value in education to them. So, they will choose the schools which use the language they value. As they may allocate English to their children, these children will also prefer learning uncommonsense in English. A possible effect of this is that there may be a break in society between English-mother tongue schools and other

**Fig. 4.5** The complementarity of vertical and horizontal discourses (Martin 2008, p. 53)

| Vertical discourse | Horizontal discourse |
|---|---|
| Scientific | Artistic |
| Technical | Accessible |
| Logical | Rhetorical |
| Rational | Humane |
| Objective | Subjective |
| Authoritative | Communal |
| Institutional | Local |

schools which feature Tagalog or other Philippine languages as mother tongues. As these respondents are gainfully employed, they represent the middle to upper classes of Philippine society who have benefitted from being allocated and learning uncommonsense in English. So, one way by which a language gains power is through its users who live and work in "powerful" positions.

Why is the preference for English so marked among those who enjoy a certain level of social and economic prestige? In another article, we discussed the historical roots of this preference for English which stems from American colonial policies as well as government and social initiatives that have linked the language with employment (Mahboob and Cruz 2013). However, another dimension that can be considered here is the effect of history, society, and politics in the ability of the languages of the Philippines to package uncommonsense. The power of a language may lie in its ability to construe uncommonsense through the varied discourses of the "genres of power" (Martin 1997a).

To understand what gives a language the ability to package uncommonsense, we draw from the work of Bernstein on vertical discourses. These are defined as discourses that "take the form of a coherent, explicit, systematically principled structure hierarchically organized, *or* it takes the form of a series of specialized languages with specialized modes of interrogation and specialized criteria for the production of texts" (Bernstein 1996, p. 171). This discourse is contrasted with horizontal discourses, which are "local, segmentally organized, context specific and dependent strategies for maximizing encounters with persons and habitat" (Bernstein 1996, p. 171). Vertical discourses are the specialized discourses of uncommonsense, while horizontal discourses are "everyday, oral or commonsense" (Bernstein 1996, p. 170). J. Martin further differentiates the two by closely examining their complementarity:

Figure 4.5 illustrates that the two discourses are differentiated through their language features, where vertical ones are more, among other things, "objective, rational, and institutional," while horizontal ones are more "subjective, humane, and communal." Both discourses play a role in schooling. Horizontal discourses can construe the formative meanings of community life, such as what happens in values education or in subjects that link topics such as science and economics with social life and morals. Vertical discourses, on the other hand, construe the meanings of more "specialized" content, such as science, maths, and even potentially some areas

of the humanities and social sciences like the rules of grammar. Whatever language/s dominate schooling, the languages that are powerful are those that have the ability to construe the meanings of both discourses.

A language develops the ability to construe vertical and horizontal discourses through the confluence of users and uses. If a language is used for an authoritative vertical discourse by a “powerful” user, this may lead to it developing vertical discursiveness (such as a noted local scientist writing a scientific paper in Tagalog). However, if a “powerful” user uses a language for the subjective, rhetorical purposes of a horizontal discourse (such as the president of the Philippines, who addresses Filipinos in Tagalog to construe shared communal meanings), then that language develops horizontal discursiveness but not necessarily vertical discursiveness. A possible explanation for why the survey respondents preferred English as the language of schooling is the perception that Tagalog and other Philippine languages may not have developed vertical discursiveness. This problem of local languages developing vertical discursiveness was already articulated by Gonzalez in 1998 when he pointed out that that there is “the lack of resolve of the system to really cultivate Filipino as a language of scholarly discourse (beyond mere rhetoric) through a systematic and funded program of training and cultivation” (Gonzalez 1998, p. 520). So, vertical discourses have yet to be developed in Tagalog and other local languages. A more recent manifestation of this problem is in I. Martin’s recent paper on language and the law in the Philippines. In that paper, she points out that English is still largely the language of the courts, which leads to a whole new set of problems including disregarding the rights of individuals who do not speak English (Martin 2012).

The need to develop the vertical discursiveness of local languages implies several things for mother tongue-based education. First, without vertical discursiveness, Tagalog and local languages will remain the languages of the home, of commonsense, to be used in community life but not in professional life. Gonzalez (1998) described this situation as Filipinos “speaking English with *superiors* and *peers* and speaking Filipino among *friends* and *household help*” (p. 518; emphasis ours). Gonzalez (2004) furthermore points out that “discussions at the upper management level, especially at the board level, are all in English” (p. 11). Although teachers do use Tagalog and other local languages to teach, they do so in order to package the “content” of the lessons, which are usually in English into the more accessible vernacular (Gonzalez 1998). In other words, they do so to bridge uncommonsense and commonsense. These acts do not necessarily develop vertical discursiveness in the local languages, and as Gonzalez (1998) has pointed out, the language of vertically discursive higher-order thinking skills is still English. The perceived link between English and vertical discursiveness is also manifested in the survey results, which suggest that English is the language of literacy. The position, then, of Tagalog and other local languages in education remains limited, which is perhaps why the survey respondents perceived English to be the language of schooling. The survey respondents also identified Tagalog and local languages to have the strongest role to play in primary education, suggesting that as students are apprenticed into the “larger” world where vertical discourses start to play a stronger role, the role of these languages starts to dwindle and all but fade in university where students become more

and more aware of what discourses are necessary to succeed economically. This is now an issue of language affiliation (Martin 2010a, b).

As much as Filipinos may be allocated Tagalog and other local languages, the lack of vertical discursiveness of these languages implies a limited role for them in various communities of practice (Wenger 1998). As users of a language seek to be part of a community, they *affiliate* with that community through the discourses (whether horizontal or vertical) of that community (Knight 2010). So, if a Filipino seeks to be part of a local subculture, for instance, he/she will try to acquire the language of that subculture. Similarly, a Filipino who seeks to join a global community of language researchers will also try to learn the discourses, or the discursive styles, of that community. As Tagalog and other local languages are more associated with the horizontal meanings of local life, those who seek to affiliate with more global communities (which also promise economic and social success) will choose English. This may lead those who can afford it to invest in “English-mother tongue schools” for their children, while those who cannot remain in Tagalog or vernacular mother tongue schools where there is the risk of not fully developing the higher-order cognitive skills that are necessary for an economically favorable and upwardly mobile working position.

Mahboob (2015) provides another way of discussing these issues. Mahboob’s model (2015) of language variation (Fig. 4.6) is useful for visualizing how languages work across vertical and horizontal domains. It is a model that represents language variation across planes of users, uses, and modes of communication. It is useful as a means of framing discussions on mother tongue education policies in a

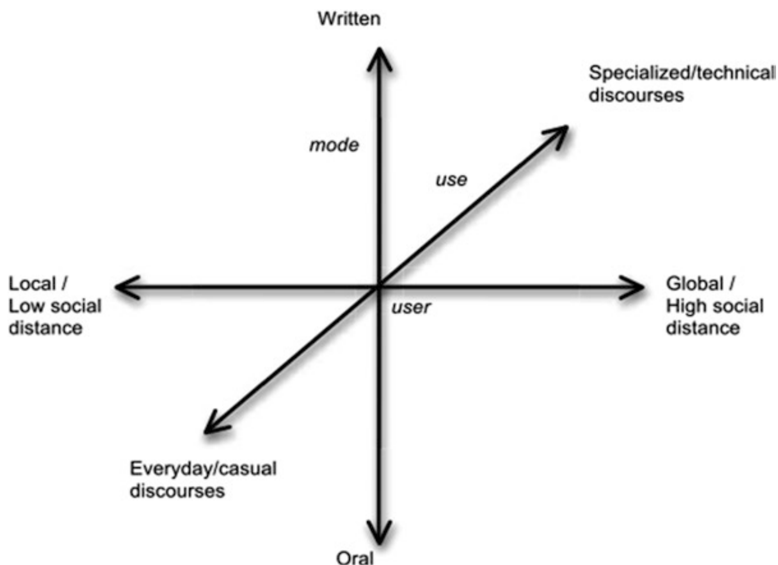


**Fig. 4.6** Mahboob’s three-dimensional framework of language variation

multilingual country as it can provide a picture of what potentially differentiates language allocation from language affiliation.

This model represents language variation as occurring across the planes of users, uses, and modes of communication. Users engaged in discourses of low social distance will employ a range of more everyday, casual, oral, written, and/or multimodal modes. These are the planes of languages that are used in the home, with friends, and in other forms of casual exchange. It can be assumed that these planes involve the mother tongues of language allocation. In the Philippines, these can be anywhere from the more casual (localized) varieties of English, Tagalog, and other Philippine languages or a combination of these languages. These are the horizontal discourses of commonsense which mother tongue education attempts to bridge with the uncommonsense specialized, global, and written ones. These everyday discourses are more oral; however, there are also some written varieties, such as those that might appear in e-mail and text exchanges between friends and family. It can also be assumed that as students start schooling, they begin with these everyday discourses, but their teachers slowly apprentice them into more vertical, global, technicalized, and written ones. No one is really a "native speaker" of these more vertical discourses; for example, the modes of scientific and business communication are very different from the more everyday "native speaker" discourses. So, if people wish to affiliate with these communities, then they have to learn these discourse varieties. Ideally, it is these varieties that students learn in school, and they become more and more adept at switching discourse styles depending on the user, use, and mode varieties that different contexts require. The question now is also whether a mother tongue language has the varieties that allow for this switching of discourses. As the survey results indicate a strong desire for English in schools, what is suggested is that to the respondents, English *is* the language that is capable of this switch.

In addition, this language variation model can also be useful in terms of plotting discourse roles not just within language varieties but across the different languages of the Philippines. Survey results more heavily favor (although not by much) the position of Tagalog and mother tongues in the younger years of elementary education, suggesting that it is these languages that realize (Martin and White 2005) the discourses of this point of student development. However, as the results show, these languages all but disappear in higher education, which is again also an indication of the limited roles that these languages play in more global, specialized, and written discourses. The planes of higher education in the language variation model are those that involve these discourses. As the survey results show, English is perceived to be the language of these discourses. What is suggested here is that people perceive English to be the language that has evolved the discourses that figure in the communities that individuals may wish to affiliate with in order to reap whatever benefits these communities can potentially provide.

This is not to say, of course, that Tagalog and other Philippine languages are not capable of evolving specialized discourses. However, language evolution and development across users, uses, and modes take time, money, and effort. As I. Martin's (2012) work has shown, the legal system of the Philippines is not yet capable (or open) to developing local languages for specialized uses in legal contexts. This is just one field of language use. Evolving local languages to figure in the full ranges of discourses, from local, casual, oral ones to global, specialized, written ones, requires their use across any and all fields. For now, of the languages of the Philippines, it is only English that has developed to this extent. In other words, language-in-education policies are not just a question of choosing to involve mother tongues. It also becomes an issue of developing these mother tongues so they become capable of realizing vertical, specialized discourses. If they are not developed, then they stay as languages of casual discourses, while English retains its position as the language of power as well as of economic and social success.

It is useful to consider the types of language change here. Martin (1997b) has written of three types of language change across three time frames. These are *logogenesis*, *ontogenesis*, and *phylogenesis*. Logogenesis is language change in the short time frame of a text. It refers to the unfolding of discourse and is typically the concern of discourse analysts. In the classroom, understanding a text's logogenetic unfolding is what reading and listening activities are about. Producing spoken or written output, in turn, involves mastering the logogenesis of texts given specific parameters of users, uses, and modes. Ontogenesis, on the other hand, refers to the development of language in an individual. This is one of the most important concerns of language pedagogy as it involves how control over language changes and/or improves in individuals as they learn to use and control more and more language variants given specific configurations of user, use, and mode. Language learning programs should ideally develop ontogenesis so students can confidently shift from horizontal to vertical discourse practices depending on context. Assessment programs, subsequently, should also measure the development of ontogenesis. Phylogenesis is the longest time frame of language change. Martin (1997a) defines this as "expansion of the culture" or "evolution" (p. 9). Phylogenesis is language change in terms of culture. It provides for an individual's ontogenetic development and also goes toward determining the logogenesis of texts that individuals produce. Conversely, logogenesis can also influence ontogenesis and phylogenesis as individuals relate with their social worlds as much as their social worlds relate to them. However, any change in any of these three processes takes time. To what extent a language is capable of these types of change is a matter of development across users, uses, and modes. Tagalog and other Philippine mother tongues may provide for the logogenesis of certain types of text and remain involved in some types of ontogenesis and phylogenesis. However, it must be considered to what extent these languages have managed evolution in terms of users, uses, and modes in order to appear valuable to the stakeholders of the language education enterprise.

## MTBMLE and the Principles-Based Approach to Language Policy

The results of the survey are not very favorable for mother tongue-based multilingual education (MTBMLE). This is not to say that we are against mother tongue-based education. In fact, we agree that using mother tongues in schooling is highly beneficial. However, as Cooper (1989) has articulated, language policy and planning does not necessarily lead to the changes that new policies hope to engender. This can be true for mother tongue-based initiatives. If Tagalog and local languages remain less powerful than English, then mother tongue-based education may lead to retaining the status quo, where the rich, who have been allocated English, remain rich, while the poor, who have not been allocated much English, remain poor. In this section of the paper, we will offer possible suggestions for a principles-based approach to language policy (Mahboob and Tilakaratna 2012) that empowers all users and all languages, whether English, Tagalog, or other mother tongues.

In their paper on a principles-based approach (PBA) to language policy, Mahboob and Tilakaratna (2012) articulate six principles by which to approach language policy. These principles are summed up by the acronym CREATE, which stands for the principles of *collaboration*, *relevance*, *evidence*, *alignment*, *transparency*, *and empowerment*. Each principle will be discussed in turn as well as how each one can be applied in a context that hopes to encourage mother tongue-based education despite the dominance of English.

### *Collaboration*

As the first principle of the PBA, *collaboration* refers to all stakeholders (whether parents, teachers, students, industry partners) being given the chance to influence the design of the policy and how it will be applied. Where mother tongue education in the Philippines is concerned, this principle can go toward building a consensus among all involved, so the attitudes manifested through the survey results change. Among other things, this principle means working toward valuing local languages. For example, industries can collaborate with academic institutions in terms of building vertical discursiveness for Tagalog and local languages. Also, as collaboration encourages dialogue between all stakeholders, it can go a long way toward educating these various industries on the value of Tagalog and mother tongues. As such, these languages will be empowered as they are used in more and more powerful domains. With collaboration, the situation Gonzalez (2004) noted which sees the use of English in the boardrooms while local languages are relegated to the malls

and marketplaces can be potentially reversed. With this reversal, local languages can whittle away at the power that English (and its users) holds.

## *Relevance*

This principle is about making sure that all aspects of the policy, including pedagogic materials, are relevant to the goals of the policy and contexts in which the policy will be applied. The use of mother tongues in schooling stems from House Bill 3719, filed at the House of Representatives by Philippine congressman Magtanggol Gunigundo I. This bill, known as the "The Multilingual Education and Literacy Act of 2008" (Nolasco 2008), has the goal of "develop[ing] the children's cognitive, academic and linguistic skills in their L1 and gradually transfer this knowledge in the nationally prescribed languages, English and Filipino" (Gunigundo 2010, p. 79). Mother tongue education in the Philippines then has the goal of "transferring" skills learned in the mother tongues onto the more dominant languages of English and Filipino. The principle of relevance, combined with collaboration, assures the stakeholders that using mother tongues in education does not necessarily lead to an "English-deprived future" (Martin 2010a, b, p. 126). Rather, using mother tongues is *relevant* to the goal of acquiring English.

The principle of relevance is important where practice and materials design are concerned. With the principle of collaboration in place, curriculum designers, in collaboration with educational linguists, can design and develop materials that are suited to the goal of the policy. In this case, these are materials that facilitate the transferring of skills from one language to the other. In addition, best practices can be shared which show how mother tongues help in the learning of other tongues. Furthermore, as local languages become more empowered through educational materials in these languages, the relevance of the policy can also be easily communicated to the various stakeholders.

A caveat: if the goal of mother tongue-based education is to facilitate transferring skills into the dominant languages of English and Filipino, then this could be problematic in terms of developing vertical discursiveness for local languages (even Filipino). This goal maintains the hegemony of English which dominates higher-order cognitive skills through its vertical discourses. The principle of relevance can then also be applied in different ways. Rather than just encouraging the transference of skills to more powerful languages, mother tongue-based education can also examine how it is *relevant* to the goal of empowering local languages. For, as this paper has argued, without empowering local languages by encouraging the development of vertical discursiveness, mother tongue policies may remain *irrelevant* to the unarticulated goals of Filipinos, which is to acquire the language/s that lead to economic and social privilege.

## *Evidence*

Basing a policy on the principle of evidence ensures that it is supported by data and analysis rather than only experience. Evidence has been cited related to the effectivity of mother tongue policies, especially where young learners are concerned (see Nolasco 2008; Walter et al. 2010; Bingayen et al. 2010). These learners would, of course, learn better in the languages they had been allocated as opposed to languages that they do not know much about. However, it would be interesting to find evidence, or at least an explanation for, why skills are transferred from a first language to a second or third. The success of mother tongue-based policies is largely experiential. More evidence for *how* mother tongues facilitate learning skills in additional languages is necessary. In other words, the principle of evidence ensures that a policy is always rigorously investigated on whether it fulfills its goals to the satisfaction of all stakeholders.

## *Alignment*

This principle *aligns* a policy internally, in terms of, for instance, whether textbooks and classroom practices are aligned with the goals of the policy and, externally, in terms of whether the policy is aligned with social forces that may affect it. This principle can be applied through both language allocation and language affiliation. Alignment can work with language allocation by ensuring that all materials and classroom practices exploit and build on whatever languages children bring to school. This ensures the movement from commonsense to uncommonsense. One way to look at this is via Martin's work (2013) on "semantic waves" which begin with the specialized terms of uncommonsense. These specialized terms are then repackaged into the more everyday ones of commonsense then packaged again into similar or related terms of uncommonsense. In this way, knowledge can be built by acquiring the vocabulary of a particular field which can be understood through the realities of everyday. These specialized terminologies are, in turn, built through collaboration.

As for language affiliation, Mahboob and Tilakaratna (2012) caution that there are "sociopolitical and other elements" that can affect the success of a policy. As this paper has discussed, some of these elements include a social and historical preference for English as well as the desire to affiliate with socially and economically successful English communities. Through the principle of alignment, users can be assured that English will still play a role in schooling. Or, even better, these same users can start to see the value of local languages as the latter are used more and more in important social domains. In this respect, the principle of collaboration is very important.

It is necessary to revisit vertical discursiveness here. Survey results indicate a rather negative attitude toward mother tongue education. To the respondents, mother tongues and Tagalog may not necessarily meet their language needs, especially where global, specialized, and vertical discourses are concerned. The principle of alignment can help mitigate this attitude by ensuring that teaching materials and

resources are aligned with the goals of the policy and the language-learning goals of the users themselves. Mother tongue education seeks to empower learners to do better in school by using whatever language they have been allocated. However, the attitudes toward languages shown in the survey point to affiliation, which involves goals among the respondents that mother tongue education may not meet. Hence, allocation and affiliation are *not* aligned, which will potentially affect that success of the policy. Aligning teaching materials and resources with what people may want to affiliate with will help the success of this policy. With the principle of collaboration in play, mother tongue materials can be developed across different users, uses, and modes in order to show how this educational policy can also align with the personal goals of the users themselves.

## *Transparency*

This principle "requires that all policy objectives, goals, and outcomes be visible, easily accessible, and justifiable to all stakeholders" (Mahboob and Tilakaratna 2012, p. 16). Evidence for the success of mother tongue-based education has already been made transparent. However, equally important would be transparency in terms of other evidence which might show the problematic aspects of the policy, for example, whether the policy leads to disempowering local languages and its users while inadvertently promoting the hegemony of English (which the survey suggests). If outcomes are made transparent and all stakeholders are informed through strong evidence, then the policy can be changed or adjusted to ensure equal benefits for everyone.

This principle also involves transparent practices when applying the policy. This means, for instance, sharing resources across regions of the country so best practices are available to all. It can also govern assessment practices, so it is very clear what students are examined and graded for. Furthermore, transparency helps toward addressing issues of corruption. How funds are allocated for the policy can be made clear so all areas of the country can equally benefit from them and resources are equally shared. In the Philippines, where the capital of Manila receives much attention while the more outlying provinces are ignored, transparency can help a lot in ensuring the adequate distribution of resources and funds.

## *Empowerment*

Finally, this principle means that any language policy should have, as its ultimate goal, "the empowerment of local communities, teachers, and students through collaborative, relevant, evidence-based, and transparent practices" (Mahboob and Tilakaratna 2012, p. 16). Where mother tongue-based education is concerned, this means empowering local communities, teachers, and students by empowering their languages. As this paper has argued, empowering these languages is not just a

question of using them in schools but also allowing them to accrue power through their use in powerful domains. Once local languages are empowered, many will be open to their use in schools as they will also allow their users to affiliate with powerful communities. With this goal, the languages of the Philippines will be equal and opportunities for their uses also fairly distributed. The negative attitude toward local languages that was manifested through the survey results can be addressed, and mother tongue-based pedagogy can be helpful for all.

## Conclusion

In this paper, we argued that as much as mother tongue-based education may be beneficial, it carries limitations that involve the attitudes of people toward language. To support our arguments, we presented the results of a survey on language attitudes in the Philippines. We pointed out that the results of the survey suggest a strong attitude against Tagalog and other local languages but support a positive attitude toward English. We discussed that these results could have stemmed from the minimal development of vertical discursiveness of Tagalog and other Philippine languages. We argue that without the development of vertical discursiveness, these languages remain disempowered and the hegemony of English will be maintained. From this perspective, mother tongue-based educational policies may not succeed. We also argued that without a PBA language policy, mother tongue-based education risks further dividing Philippine society along linguistic lines that privilege those who have English and relegating those who do not to marginal positions. A PBA language policy, involving collaboration, relevance, evidence, alignment, transparency, and empowerment, will help make any language policy beneficial for all.

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# Chapter 5
# Anguish as Mother Tongue: English in a Multilingual Context

**Michelle G. Paterno**

**Abstract** Until fairly recently, the Philippines was adopting a bilingual policy that utilized both English and Filipino as media of instruction in schools. The government's recent shift in policy regarding the use of mother tongue instruction is indicative of its recognition of the positive and empowering benefits of using local languages to facilitate learner development. While this move may be beneficial and practical for many, the notion of mother tongue instruction can also be a problematic one given the multicultural context of the Philippines. The issue is complicated further when the idea of English as a possible mother tongue clashes against the dominant local language and its collocations of nationalism. In this paper, I wish to explore the assertion of English as a mother tongue in a postcolonial context. If English is already so widespread in the Philippines, why is there so much resistance in claiming it as a mother tongue? At what point does the use of English as a mother tongue become a tool for empowerment or disempowerment especially in terms of drawing up the boundaries that define our national identity? By discussing the issues underlying the politics of and attitudes toward language and identity in the Philippines, I hope to reflect more critically on how we may shift attitudes in order to better address these problems within our pedagogical practices.

**Keywords** English as mother tongue · Language and identity · English in postcolonial contexts

## Introduction

In June 2012, the Department of Education (DepEd) instituted a landmark policy when it implemented Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education (MTBMLE) in schools nationwide. The move marked a radical shift from the deeply entrenched bilingual education policy that had dominated the Philippine education system since

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the 1970s. While the MTBMLE seems a step in the right direction, it also tends to oversimplify what exactly is meant by the term "mother tongue" within the Philippine context. For one thing, it assumes that one's mother tongue must coincide with one of the local languages of the Philippines. In fact, the implementing guidelines of the Department of Education states that all kindergarten and primary classes will be taught in the child's mother tongue which "include the eight major languages and four others (Tagalog, Kapangpangan, Pangasinense, Iloko, Bikol, Cebuano, Hiligaynon, Waray, Tausug, Maguindanaon, Maranao, and Chabacano)" (Department of Education [DepEd] Order No. 16, s. 2012). The list was further expanded to include seven more languages of Ybanag, Ivatan, Sambal, Aklanon, Kinaray-a, Yakan, and Surigaonon (DepEd Order No. 28, s. 2013) last July 2013.

The list does not include English as a possible mother tongue for some Filipino students, in spite of the evidence that point to this fact. As part of the legacy of the American colonial process, English has become very much entrenched in the education and way of life of Filipinos. Today, the Philippines is one of the most vibrant English language societies in the region with many of its southeast neighbors coming in to learn English due to the high level of proficiency of its people.

As early as 1969, Llamzon (in Gonzales 1989) cited the widespread use of English as a home language among students particularly those from upper middle-class urban backgrounds. This is based on the findings of the Catholic Educational Association of the Philippines (CEAP) survey which notes that as many as 51% of the respondents claimed English as their first language (Gonzales 1989).

The notion of English as an L1 is further confirmed by the 2010 Census on Population and Language done by the National Statistics Office (NSO) which showed that English is considered a home language in some 15, 619 households in the country. Like the 1969 CEAP Survey, the current figure represents a mere fraction, less than 1%, of the nation's 64 million population. However, because it represents the nation's socioeconomic elite, it bears considering what implications it may hold for the country's privileged class to be more fluent in English than Filipino or other local languages.

The role of English in the Philippines is also evident through its widespread use in various domains, including media, education, the transportation and justice system, business, and so on. While the use of Filipino remains widespread, English is identified as a preferred language when it comes to engaging and interacting with people in both formal and informal contexts (Borlongan 2009), especially when it comes to choosing a medium of instruction in schools (Mahboob and Cruz 2013), presumably for the economic and material advantages it brings.

Given such a context, it should come as no surprise that English has evolved further from merely being a preferred language for some Filipinos to becoming an actual mother tongue. Such an assertion, however, is often regarded with excessive negativity and in extreme cases, may even be regarded as a betrayal of one's Filipino identity. Such a belief underscores the volatile position of English underlying the politics of language, education, and identity issues in the Philippines.

Certainly, the plausibility of English as a mother tongue in non-native contexts is not a unique position as evident in the cases of Singapore, Malaysia, Africa, and other postcolonial societies (as I discuss later in the paper). However, I do believe that in the Philippine context, the display of hostility toward such an assertion makes it clear that there is an internal need to reconcile these issues within and among ourselves. My goal in this paper is to cite a concrete example that situates the language-identity debate in the Philippine context. By examining the various commentaries and subjecting them to critical discussion, I hope to engage other Filipinos into accepting and developing more positive attitudes and practices toward language choices and identities and advocating other educators, particularly in the metropolitan areas, to reflect more critically on their own pedagogical practices involving language teaching.

## The Case of James Soriano: English as a Mother Tongue

A few years ago, a short but audacious essay entitled *Language, Learning, Identity, Privilege* by James Soriano (2011) appeared in one of Metro Manila's broadsheets (and its corresponding website). I will print it here entirely:

> English is the language of learning. I've known this since before I could go to school. As a toddler, my first study materials were a set of flash cards that my mother used to teach me the English alphabet.
>
> My mother made home conducive to learning English: all my storybooks and coloring books were in English, and so were the cartoons I watched and the music I listened to. She required me to speak English at home. She even hired tutors to help me learn to read and write in English.
>
> In school I learned to think in English. We used English to learn about numbers, equations and variables. With it we learned about observation and inference, the moon and the stars, monsoons and photosynthesis. With it we learned about shapes and colors, about meter and rhythm. I learned about God in English, and I prayed to Him in English.
>
> Filipino, on the other hand, was always the 'other' subject — almost a special subject like PE or Home Economics, except that it was graded the same way as Science, Math, Religion, and English. My classmates and I used to complain about Filipino all the time. Filipino was a chore, like washing the dishes; it was not the language of learning. It was the language we used to speak to the people who washed our dishes.
>
> We used to think learning Filipino was important because it was practical: Filipino was the language of the world outside the classroom. It was the language of the streets: it was how you spoke to the tindera when you went to the tindahan, what you used to tell your katulong that you had an utos, and how you texted manong when you needed "sundo na."[1]

[1] The quote uses several local terms such as "tindera" (saleslady), "tindahan" (shop), "katulong" (helper), "utos" (command), "manong" (term of respect used for an older male person), and "sundo na" (to be picked up by a car or driver). The use of code switching within the syntax of Soriano's text is also intentional to parody a subvariety of English language commonly associated with more elitist Filipinos.

> These skills were required to survive in the outside world, because we are forced to relate with the tinderas and the manongs and the katulongs of this world. If we wanted to communicate to these people — or otherwise avoid being mugged on the jeepney — we needed to learn Filipino.
>
> That being said though, I was proud of my proficiency with the language. Filipino was the language I used to speak with my cousins and uncles and grandparents in the province, so I never had much trouble reciting.
>
> It was the reading and writing that was tedious and difficult. I spoke Filipino, but only when I was in a different world like the streets or the province; it did not come naturally to me. English was more natural; I read, wrote and thought in English. And so, in much of the same way that I learned German later on, I learned Filipino in terms of English. In this way I survived Filipino in high school, albeit with too many sentences that had the preposition 'ay.'
>
> It was really only in university that I began to grasp Filipino in terms of language and not just dialect. Filipino was not merely a peculiar variety of language, derived and continuously borrowing from the English and Spanish alphabets; it was its own system, with its own grammar, semantics, sounds, even symbols.
>
> But more significantly, it was its own way of reading, writing, and thinking. There are ideas and concepts unique to Filipino that can never be translated into another. Try translating bayanihan, tagay, kilig or diskarte.
>
> Only recently have I begun to grasp Filipino as the language of identity: the language of emotion, experience, and even of learning. And with this comes the realization that I do, in fact, smell worse than a malansang isda [rotten fish]. My own language is foreign to me: I speak, think, read and write primarily in English. To borrow the terminology of Fr. Bulatao, I am a split-level Filipino.
>
> But perhaps this is not so bad in a society of rotten beef and stinking fish. For while Filipino may be the language of identity, it is the language of the streets. It might have the capacity to be the language of learning, but it is not the language of the learned.
>
> It is neither the language of the classroom and the laboratory, nor the language of the boardroom, the court room, or the operating room. It is not the language of privilege. I may be disconnected from my being Filipino, but with a tongue of privilege I will always have my connections.
>
> So I have my education to thank for making English my mother language.

Within hours of the article's online posting, netizens left a flurry of reactions on the comments section, lambasting the writer for his seeming contempt of the Filipino language. Many were incensed and vented mercilessly online. One irate reader gab21 (2011) writes "for someone who appears to be (or tries to appear) "sophisticated" and "educated," you, sir, lack TACTFULNESS, so much that you appear more like a boorish braggart." Others, such as Yuan Hermoso (2011), taunted "kung ayaw mo sa salitang filipino (sic) or Pilipinas, layas! [if you do not like the Filipino language or the Philippines, get out!]" or resorted to quiet sarcasm by saying "the language of the learned can easily be used as the language of the arrogant or even the ignorant" (Ilonggobyblood 2011). Four years after the original posts, some readers still comment on the article and other readers blog on the issue.

Because Soriano's (2011) article was originally published in August, which in the Philippines is celebrated as National Language Month, his article seemed all the more insolent to the public. To many, the writer, James Soriano, represented the

very antithesis of what it means to be Filipino. They claim that he is an elitist insulated from the socioeconomic realities of the majority of Filipinos. Jose Bariring (2011) calls him "a typical Filipino snob born into a privileged family."

Although some of the more sober comments noted the sad ring of truth within the article, these ideas were virtually drowned out by the public's overwhelming resentment of Soriano on account of his mother tongue. The broadsheet where Soriano's article appeared eventually had to close its comment section to prevent the flood of reactions from clogging the site, but this certainly did not stop netizens from posting the article on personal blogs and other forms of social media where the tirades and net bashing continued. Assuming that Soriano had willfully intended to stir up a hornet's nest with his article, he could not have chosen a more barbed issue with which to bait the public (see also Martin 2014 for a discussion on Soriano and the issue of the use of English in the Philippines).

According to the 1953 UNESCO report, one's mother tongue is "the language which a person acquires in his early years and which naturally becomes his natural instrument of thought and communication" (p. 46). Given his socioeconomic background, early exposure and constant association with the English language, it is therefore quite understandable for Soriano and others like him to claim English as a mother tongue, but this reality need not be incompatible with his identity as a Filipino, as some would have us believe. In truth, if there is anything that the case of James Soriano brings to the surface, it is that it forces us to question our own assumptions and biases regarding the relationship between language and identity and subject it to more careful scrutiny.

The question of identity and language has certainly been explored significantly in the literature. Norton (1997), for instance, speaks of a learner's "investment" as opposed to mere motivation in language learning precisely because the latter is closely linked to one's social identity so an investment in one is a means of securing the other. This makes language an important symbolic resource through which we construct ourselves as part of our social interactional activities. In other words, our sense of identity derives in part from our ability to integrate ourselves with the knowledge and behavior expected of participants of a particular community, and this sense of shared meanings is negotiated through language. However, because identities are often unstable constructs, it is possible to speak of polyphonous, shifting, or multiple identities (Mishler 2006) to reflect how we position ourselves relative to our shifting contexts, and this too can be seen in our use of language.

More recently, Nunan and Choi's (2010) anthology shares the narrative accounts of various ELT scholars and teachers who have also had to wrestle individual questions of identity wrought by issues of language and social biases. Each of the twenty-eight narratives, at some point, has had to face the question of whether it is possible to separate the notions of culture and identity, language and culture, and, ultimately, language and identity. In the end, the collective effort of the writers' experiences is an exercise in *reflexivity* to articulate efforts to challenge or define notions related to language and identity.

In similar fashion, this chapter, too, is a reflexive attempt to problematize assumptions regarding the role of English within the context of Philippine identity.

## English in the Philippine Context

First introduced to the islands in 1901, English became a medium of instruction in schools and has since become deeply entrenched in the Philippine way of life. Unlike the Spaniards, who believed that education was reserved for the elite and used Spanish to isolate the masses from gaining access to various domains of power, the Americans democratized the system by introducing a public school system that enabled Filipinos to gain access to literacy and eventually other modes of communication and control.

Although the American policy stipulated the use of local languages in the teaching of primary levels, the unavailability of resources, both in terms of teachers and materials, led to the predominant use of English (Sibayan 2000) in the classroom. Together with punitive practices that included fining students for their failure to adhere to an English-only policy in school (an exercise that remains in force in some schools even up to the present), English eventually outgrew the confines of the educational sector to secure a foothold in government, media, commerce, and so on.

Over the years, despite the numerous shifts in the educational policies of the government, the role of English within the local educational system has remained largely constant. Since the 1935 constitution, English has been designated an official language of the islands and has been used as a medium of instruction across all levels. With the creation and adoption of Pilipino (later changed to Filipino) as the country's national language, the country adopted a bilingual policy of education in 1974 that effectively designated Filipino as the language for teaching social studies, music, arts, home economics, and character formation. English, on the other hand, was used to teach the core literacy subjects of mathematics, science, and, of course, English.

Such a divide in the allocation of subject areas for both English and Filipino effectively split the functions of the two languages into two – the former for more global purposes and the latter for more local ones (Mahboob and Cruz 2013). More than that, however, the split helped foster attitudes toward these two languages by privileging the former with its promise of connectivity to a bigger and wider world of influence and power while marginalizing the other as being confined to less significant and pettier concerns – indeed, what Soriano refers to when he says "the language of the streets."

To this day, English is the language used in boardrooms and courthouses, in mass media, and in institutions of higher learning. Our countless overseas workers are sought not only for their skills but more so for their proficiency in English. In 2002, amidst fears that the BEP had sufficiently weakened the marketability of Filipino

workers abroad, then President Gloria Arroyo pushed for a shift to a more English-oriented curriculum in order to improve what were perceived to be declining levels of English proficiency. Such a move paved the way for House Bill 5619, otherwise known as the Gullas bill after the congressman who initiated it, which sought to ensure maximum exposure of the children to the English language (Nolasco 2008) to ensure the development of their proficiency levels. Although the bill was eventually shelved in favor of the MTBMLE, such moves demonstrate the government's biases with regard to the use of English in the educational sector.

Alongside these developments in language policy, there was also economic pressure on the educational sector to create graduates who could be gainfully employed abroad as well as an influx of business process outsourcing (BPO) industries that were set up to take advantage of the high level of English proficiency in the country. These factors helped emphasize further the marketability and desirability of English as a marker of socioeconomic mobility.

Aided by language policy and bolstered by perceptions of prestige, it is not surprising that some Filipinos, particularly the elite, gravitated toward the learning and assimilation of English. Over time, the use of English had become so predominant in the home that children were learning to speak it even before they received any kind of formal training in school. As such, Gonzales (1989), culling from reports and various survey sources from as early as 1969–1986, confirmed that "there is indeed a small English-as-a-first-language community in the Philippines" (p. 360) particularly among middle and high social economic status (SES) households. It is a trend that he predicted would continue, especially among other urban centers in the country. In a recent, albeit limited survey among middle-class metropolitan respondents, Borlongan (2009) reports that whereas English was used predominantly in more formal contexts in the past, it is now gaining ground as the current and preferred language even in intimate and less formal contexts. In fact, English is the preferred language in 26 out of 34 domains and activities including, but are not limited to, listening and reading media, popular literature, books, as well as writing technical reports. She also reports an almost equal split between English and Filipino as the preferred home language. This suggests that Gonzales' observations several years ago continue to hold true today.

It is because English as a first language seems to have taken root among the more privileged sectors of Philippine society that reactions for and against Soriano's article have been not only along linguistic divides but also socioeconomic ones. If anything, the controversy has helped expose the very ambivalent attitude Filipinos have toward English and the precarious relationship of language and identity.

## Language and Identity

In defining the concept of identity, Norton (1997, p. 410) refers to it in terms of "how people understand their relationship to the world, how that relationship is constructed across time and space, and how people understand their possibilities for

the future." Implicit within this definition is the role of language as the "the place where actual and possible forms of social organization... are defined and contested, (and) the place where our sense of ourselves, our subjectivity, is constructed" (Weedon 1996).

The influence of poststructuralist theorists, such as Derrida, Bakhtin, and Foucault, has altered current perceptions of identity. Today, what was once considered a consistent, unchanging, and fixed position is now regarded as being diverse, contradictory, dynamic, multiple, and decentered. Individuals can and do position themselves differently depending on who they are talking to at particular instances and contexts. Individuals, particularly in postcolonial situations (such as the Philippines), are in a constant negotiation process between their present selves and the weight of their accumulated past in order to determine who they are at present and how they see themselves in the future (Block 2011). As such, the debate stirred up by Soriano's article is precisely indicative of the more fluid and often unstable position of identity, which is more relational than fixed and represents something that is (re)shaped through struggle, engagement, and negotiation, as Norton (1997) has suggested.

One's individual identity, however, is a facet of a much broader construct. When we speak of national identity, we refer to an individual's affinity for or attachment toward a whole. As a social construct, Andersen (1991) defines the concept more clearly when he speaks of it in terms of an "imagined political community." He uses the term *imagined* because members have no direct knowledge of one another and "yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion" (p. 49). On the other hand, it is also a "community" because "regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail..., the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship" (p. 50). What links an individual to a particular community, indeed what allows a community to exercise so much emotional legitimacy over an individual, is language.

Unfortunately, no matter how useful Andersen definitions are, it is also clear that such "imaginings" have their limits. The boundaries of a cultural identity, for instance, are made particularly vulnerable when certain conditions establish who can be included and excluded within a particular community. This fragility is sometimes what renders communities deceitful. In other words, because it is so often associated with notions of cohesion, boundedness, meaningful relationships, and a sense of harmony, it is difficult to see communities as being capable of being repressive toward its own members. And yet it does happen as in the Soriano case. As such, there is a need to question the kind imagined community being constructed as a basis for national identity and what role the English language plays within that construction. For if language is a means of constructing ourselves and our communities, then why should a sense of ownership over English force others to make someone feel guilty about who he is? The answer lies in the persistence of certain linguistic myths in the Philippines.

## Soriano's Pandora Box: The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly

Soriano's article is akin to Pandora's box in that it unleashed a box load of ugliness in both the real and virtual worlds. In the end, however, true to its mythological roots, it also provides us with some vestige for critical reflection that may, hopefully, offer something good and transformative in the way we see ourselves.

In the Philippines, English is often seen as a double-edged sword; people tend to regard it with a somewhat schizophrenic double standard. On the one hand, many Filipinos take pride in being lauded the most proficient country in Business English, outpacing even the USA, according to a 2012 survey by GlobalEnglish. But at the same time, someone who takes pride in his own English proficiency is seen as an imperialist. In school, Filipinos do not only prefer to learn *through* English, they also want to learn to speak better *in* English compared to the national language or other local vernaculars (Mahboob and Cruz 2013). And yet, when someone displays his mastery of English or speaks it too exclusively, he is branded as "burgis," a Tagalog term for the word "bourgeoisie" with all its connotations of class superiority and snobbery. Because of all this, one's mastery of English can be regarded as being empowering and alienating at the same time.

In Soriano's case, many of the negative attitudes against him are largely the result of linguistic myths that continue to proliferate even against better judgment. The first myth is the insistence (or persistence) of the belief that nationalism can only be expressed through a (local) national language (in this case, Filipino). In addition, there is the idea that because English is a colonizer's language and not our own, it is a betrayal of one's roots and disconnects one from one's cultural heritage. Such attitudes point to the presence of continued prejudice against English and the persistence of a colonial attitude among some Filipinos.

Among my own students in a private university, reactions to the Soriano article reiterate on a microlevel how English is perceived. One student wrote: "The author is very fluent in English and English is his mother tongue *although* he is Filipino." Another said: "He is more proud of English than his native language" and "(It is sad how) he grew up learning English *instead of his native language*" (emphasis supplied).

Clearly, these responses indicate certain preconceived notions regarding the link between language and identity. For one thing, there seems to be a conflation of the concepts of mother tongue, native language, and Filipino. Moreover, it becomes clear that for some Filipinos, English should not and cannot be regarded as a mother tongue. One can speak English but to embrace it as a mother tongue is a betrayal of one's nationality.

The problem with English is further concretized when we consider how children of the more exclusive private schools in Metro Manila, where English is the main medium of instruction, fare in their academic work. It is not uncommon for parents

to lament their child's performance in subjects such as Filipino and Araling Panlipunan (Social Studies), both of which are taught using Filipino, even as they do well in Math and Science, which are taught in English. While some parents may view this as an inconvenience, more zealous ones may see it as a grave injustice given the tacit notion that proficiency in the Filipino language is a natural assumption for all natural born Filipino citizens. Instead of lamenting it, however, I think it would be more prudent to address the issue beginning with our pedagogical practices involving the teaching and learning of Filipino, but this can only happen if we recognize the reality of English as a MT to begin with. As teachers of language, perhaps we need to ask ourselves if it were such a terrible idea to use English to teach Filipino. After all, how is this any different from using Kapampangan or Iloko to teach English or Filipino under the MTB-MLE scheme?

A big part of the problem lies with the fact that attitudes toward English have been shaped not only by history and economics, as previously discussed, but also by social factors, the most notable of which is a sense of guilt caused by a sentimental attachment to Filipino as a national language.

The Bilingual Education Policy (BEP) of 1974 articulates quite specifically that Filipino is intended to be the "linguistic symbol of national unity and identity" (Espiritu). But what the provision conveniently ignores is how Filipino, which is essentially based on the Tagalog language, is not even the dominant language of the majority of Filipinos. This makes it quite presumptuous, to say the least, to then claim it as a symbol of "national unity and identity."

Over time, this homogenous conceptualization of identity was adopted and reinforced by other social institutions. In my own class in university, for instance, one student admitted that "when I was young, I was very fluent in English but when my parents noticed this, they immediately stopped me from watching English TV shows and began speaking to me in Filipino, so that I would not be like other kids who could not speak Filipino."

During the 60s and 70s, there was a strong sense of historical conditioning stemming from nationalist arguments which blamed English and the colonial educational system for The miseducation of the Filipinos. Renato Constantino (1970, p. 24) writes:

> (Filipinos were being made to learn) not only a new language but also a new way of life, alien to their traditions and yet a caricature of their model. This was the beginning of their education. At the same time, it was the beginning of their mis-education, for they learned no longer as Filipinos but as colonials.

While such an argument may have been truthful 50 years ago, I would argue that things were very much different then. Before, the Americans used the educational system to disseminate their colonial agenda under a policy of assimilation. To use and flaunt one's English then was, therefore, seen as political statement of kowtowing to the linguistic imperialist practices of the USA.

Today, however, things are much different. Economically, English remains one of the core strengths our business process outsourcing (BPO) industries as well as our overseas Filipino workers (OFWs), who remain among the staunchest national-

ists of our country. Politically, there are so much code-switching and language appropriations happening with English words and phrases that some of our meanings might not be comprehensible to users of English in the USA or UK. In literature, we have a vibrant field of writers, poets, and scholars who are writing in English.

All these show that English is no longer simply a colonizer's language and we need not fear being 'mis-educated' in any way because we are showing off new ways of using English in a context that is unequivocally Filipino. As poet Gemino Abad (1997, p. 170) has stated it, '[t]he English is now ours. We have colonized it too'.

Unfortunately, such an attitude, while common enough in the academe and educated contexts, has yet to filter down and permeate the attitudes of a much wider populace. It is true that as early as the late 1960s, the notion of a Standard Philippine English (SPE), with its own unique syntax, structures, and idioms (Bautista 2000; Gonzales 1989), was already being recognized as an emerging variety of English, but it was met with resistance and its legitimacy was often questioned by linguistic purists (see Llamzon 2000). Today, in spite of the growing recognition for the legitimacy of SPE, there still prevails among teachers and users a sense of ambivalence or powerlessness in overcoming certain linguistic biases (Martin 2014) resulting in the continued rejection of varieties of English outside of American and British standard versions.

By proclaiming English as his mother tongue, Soriano is actually asserting a rather significant statement regarding his ownership of a once borrowed tongue. However, his declaration is stymied by backward attitudes from our own countrymen who are now, lamentably, the source of our own 'mis-education'.

In her study of the Filipino Bilingual, Pascasio (2005, p. 142) further notes the lack of a one-to- one correspondence between language and ethnicity: "A person can shift his ethnic identity especially if he is multilingual….there is (now) additive conscientiousness of the average Filipino that he is a member of a larger polity and nation, that in addition to being Ilocano, Bisayan, or Bicolano he is also Filipino." If this is the case, then there should be no reason that English should be excluded from the list of languages that one uses to express one's ethnicity, especially since many scholars have established English as a localized and even Asian language (Higgins 2009; Honna 2005). There is no reason for ethnicity to be tied down to vernacular languages alone. To insist on a fixed and homogenous model of identity is completely unrealistic and possibly even dangerous.

The persistence of such prejudice against English as mother tongue indicates that for a number of Filipinos, identity remains very relational but also highly insular. In spite of the emergence of world Englishes and the seeming "nativization of English" in many parts of the Asia-Pacific, many Filipinos still regard English as a first world language and adhere strictly to American, British, or Australian standards.

Another issue that surfaces in many of the anti-Soriano comments center around his arrogance and inability to express himself comfortably in Filipino. For many, this clearly indicates how English has displaced Soriano from his cultural roots and his Filipino heritage. While I agree that Soriano was indeed guilty of such careless statements, I think that there is also something to be said of the people who accuse

him for his disconnection. For one thing, his lack of proficiency in Filipino as a language makes him no different from a Bisayan, Cebuano, or other users of the local language who would be equally hard-pressed to appreciate the literature and cultural values expressed in the Filipino language or even to articulate themselves using Filipino, which is essentially Tagalog-based. The truth is, the decision to base the Filipino language on Tagalog was largely the result of the political maneuverings on the part of the government leaders of the 30s, who were mostly from Tagalog-speaking regions. Therefore, the choice to conflate issues of nationality with issues of language is very much politically motivated instead of something inherent to the language itself. As a result, there is no real basis for implying an umbilical cord linking national language and identity.

In other words, those who accuse Soriano of being anti-Filipino for admitting to English as an L1 are themselves falling into the same trap that the only way to counter this so-called linguistic imperialism is to promote the national language (Filipino). To do so would be to succumb to a kind of "reverse imperialism" (see Holborow 1992) that is equally oppressive in its orientation as seen in the kind of cyberbullying that took place when Soriano's article was released.

Without doubt, the case of Soriano, which is the case of the non-native speaker of English, is hardly unique. Other center- and periphery-based writers, scholars, and theorists have reflected on their experiences and the many ways in which language choices position them in advantageous or disadvantageous ways.

For instance, in explaining the language-identity debate in Nigeria, Bisong (1995) relates the experience of African writer Achebe who asks "Is it right that a man should abandon his mother tongue for someone else's? It looks like a dreadful betrayal and produces a guilty feeling. But for me, there is no other choice. I have been given this language and I intend to use it." Later on, Achebe adds "I feel that the English language will be able to carry the weight of my African experience. But it will have to be a new English, still in communion with its ancestral home but altered to suit its African surroundings" (p. 129).

In Singapore, it is the local variety of Singapore English (Singlish) that is considered the "real mother tongue" of some Singaporeans in spite of the presence of other more "official" languages of (British) English, Tamil, Mandarin, and Malay (Lim 2009). The same can be said in India, Malaysia, and other postcolonial countries around the world. While English may have started as a colonial language, it has since evolved and become functionally native (Kachru 1998), rooted in the local experiences of its users.

But such an evolution also comes at a price. As Kachru (1998, p. 103) himself has stated, by becoming an Asian language, the English language is now a medium that allows for the articulation of local identities even if it "continues to elicit a unique love-hate relationship (among its users)." Perhaps one day such tensions will dissipate naturally or settle into a more agreeable position. Or perhaps not.

## Mother Tongue and Language Identity in the 21st Century

Language in postcolonial contexts like the Philippines is always going to be a sensitive topic – a raw nerve – and it is always going to include a political dimension. But with the implementation of the MTBMLE program in the Philippines, issues surrounding the language debate in the country are currently being restructured. By expanding the number of languages used as a medium of instruction, the new policy recognizes the equal status of the various languages in the country with Tagalog/Filipino, an issue that has been a bone of contention among many non-Tagalog users ever since the bilingual education program was first established. By doing so, the policy displaces the central and official position of Filipino and English and opens the door to other local vernaculars to enable other Filipinos to find their voices, so to speak (Tupas 2011).

In my opinion, this policy is a crucial step, especially for the majority of Filipino students across the nation, for whom Filipino is not a mother tongue. But what of those whose mother tongue is English? The guidelines simply say that the learners' mother tongue (L1) [which excludes English] shall be used as a medium of instruction (MOI) in all domains from kindergarten through grade 3 except Filipino (L2) and English (L3). So, if we wish to help Soriano and others like him, the answer is plain enough: unless some interventions are made, and made soon, simply introducing Filipino alongside English subjects will not necessarily make children learn Filipino any better than Soriano learned his and therein lies the root of the problem.

With the revised educational policy on mother tongue instruction, we are recognizing, to our credit and however slowly, that some Filipinos will not "naturally" acknowledge Filipino as a mother tongue. Perhaps we only need to stretch ourselves a little further to acknowledge that there is also nothing wrong if some Filipinos acknowledge English as a mother tongue. By recognizing the equal status of the various non-Tagalog languages, it might also be more possible to argue for and eventually push for the recognition of English as another mother tongue language, on equal footing with the other languages in the country instead of the colonial language that it is continued to be perceived. But that remains to be seen.

A more fundamental need at the moment is to recognize, without prejudice or hostility, that English is a mother tongue for some Filipinos. Therefore, it is time to reorient what we think a mother tongue can mean but, at the same time, orient the likes of James Soriano and other Filipinos as well to recognize that we cannot remain bigoted given the plurality of our heritage. We need to find a middle ground that will help bridge the learning of both languages simultaneously instead of driving a wedge between them. In this regard, the MTBMLE policy has its heart in the right place. But a policy in and of itself remains ineffective unless coupled by a

more flexible attitude that allows its implementation attuned to the socioeconomic reality of all kind of learners – otherwise, we run the risk of marginalizing a very crucial segment of our country's society.

Without a doubt, I am not saying we should abandon one language in favor of the other because nothing is more dangerous to our national development than a socioeconomic elite that is linguistically monolithic. To be certain, our elite cannot ignore the influence and the use of English in both the local and global setting, but neither can it persist in thinking, it has no need for Filipino except to use it as a "language of the streets." That would be foolhardy and reckless. As Filipino educators, it is our responsibility not to perpetuate more Sorianos into our system but to look for ways of ensuring that these students become more proficient in both English and our other local languages. Making nationalist claims is no excuse for having a poor command of English, but crowing about internationalization does not justify substandard Filipino either. We need to be proficient and competent in both.

Certainly what remains clear is that both the English and Filipino languages are here to stay. We cannot turn back the clock and unlearn our English any more than we can ignore the evolution and spread of Filipino from its Tagalog roots.

But what many of us need to understand is that using the English language is not going to make us less Filipinos, and it certainly will not contribute to the eradication of our cultural roots unless we allow it to. Perhaps we have been viewing the problem from the wrong side of the lens by not allowing a more positive wash back to take effect between our languages. After all, if our local languages can be used to facilitate the learning of English, then surely the use of English can also be used to learn local languages more effectively. As Crystal (2003, p. 25) asserts "(if) English can facilitate the process of universal dispossession and loss, *so it can be turned around and made to facilitate the contrary process of universal empowerment and gain*" (emphasis supplied).

What we need, then, is to strengthen our students' proficiency in our languages by using the students' mother tongue, even if that mother tongue happens to be English. We need to take courage that ours is not a unique position because there are others who have deliberated on the same questions and have resolved not to let the issue of English perpetuate the processing of "othering" in society (Lin 2010).

Now more than ever, we need to attend to what Kachru (1982) calls an "attitudinal readjustment" and relax some of our preconceived notions governing language and identity. As non-native users, we must learn to dissociate English from its colonial past and reconceptualize it together with other related concepts of culture, language community, society, and nation.

For one thing, we need to, once and for all, do away with such ignorant practices as an English-only policy in our classrooms. Such a policy is detrimental to all kinds of Filipinos, whether one considers oneself a native English speaker or not. For one thing, because the policy emphasizes the privileged status of English, it fails to encourage the desire to cultivate greater proficiency in Filipino and other languages. If anything, it only serves to widen the socioeconomic divide further by encouraging a sense of entitlement among more proficient users of English. In addition, the

policy exposes and even magnifies the insecurity of less proficient speakers and promotes a feeling of inadequacy.

In place of the English-only policy, perhaps what we need is to encourage and adopt a more dynamic model of code switching that allows us to use the strengths of one language to learn another. At present, the composition of our classrooms can be quite diverse, but this diversity need not be seen as an impediment but rather another opportunity for expanding our teaching repertoire. More importantly, to act in purely monolingual or even bilingual terms given the multicultural backgrounds of our students is unrealistic and counterproductive.

The reality of English as a mother tongue in the Philippines has become more and more pronounced, especially in the last few decades. As such, we need to exert a more mindful effort to confront the issue realistically because it will only continue to gnaw at our national consciousness and fester unnecessary division. We already lay claim to more than 170 languages on these islands, none of which have impeded our sense of national identity in the past. Adding one more language now only expands our abilities to reconstitute ourselves in novel ways. Yes, English may not be endemic to our region but returning to Andersen's words, "the concrete formation of contemporary nation-states is by no means isomorphic with the determinate reach of particular ...languages" (1991, p. 46)

In the end, the task of reversing attitudes is always an uphill battle, and it is not something that will come undone anytime soon. But this is no reason not to educate our students (who will hopefully grow up to become a more educated and tolerant public) about the role and place that languages, both local and national, play given assertions and questions of identity. This implies incorporating within our traditional lessons of language structure and use discussions regarding the sociocultural functions of language and the complex issues attendant to it.

At present, fostering a false sense of identity by enforcing a forged language in the service of a mother tongue is more damaging to both the individual and the national psyche. However, through our willingness to expand our definitions of what constitutes a mother tongue, it becomes more plausible for us to lessen our English-anguish and perhaps reimagine a more inclusive definition of what it means to be Filipino.

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# Chapter 6
# Teacher Ideology in English Language Education

**Ruanni Tupas**

**Abstract** There are at least three theoretical routes in reconceptualizing English language education in the world today and, more specifically, in multilingual Philippines. The first – change what English to teach – is to describe, acknowledge, and endorse the multilinguality of English in the country. The second – change how to teach English – is to locate English language education within the broader educational landscape of the country which in recent years has, to some extent, reconfigured the languages of instruction in favor of the "mother tongues," especially in the elementary level. The third theoretical route – change how to think about English (and other languages, for that matter) – is to describe, evaluate, and critique the broad ideologies and ideological structures of English language education in the country. This assumes that the teaching of English is intricately linked with discourses, ideologies, and unequal relations between languages beyond the formal confines of the classroom. Thus, reconceptualizing English language education puts the spotlight on the role of teacher ideology in the process. We cannot change the way we teach English if we do not change the way we think about English and its role in the Philippines and the world. Here, English language education is not only about the form(s) of English but, more importantly, about the content of education itself, and this thus has implications for the content of English language teacher training, textbooks and other teaching and learning materials, and everyday classroom talk.

**Keywords** English language education · Ideology · Politics of English · Unequal Englishes

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## Introduction

There are at least three theoretical routes in reconceptualizing English language education in the world today and, more specifically, in "multilingual" Philippines. We will call them *change what English to teach*, *change how to teach English*, and *change how to think about English*.

The first – *change what English to teach* – is to describe, acknowledge, and endorse the multilinguality of English in the country; in practical terms, this means embracing the multilingual and multicultural nature of English in the classroom, from Philippine English words to rhetorical structures. The second – *change how to teach English* – is to locate English language education within the broader educational landscape of the country which in recent years has, to some extent, reconfigured the languages of instruction in favor of the "mother tongues," especially in the elementary level. This means describing, acknowledging, and endorsing the role of the mother tongues in improving literacy; in practical terms, this means embracing the mother tongues as useful cultural resources in English language instruction. In other words, the first route explores the role of multilingual education or multilingualism in the teaching of English; the second route explores the role of the teaching of English in strengthening multilingual education or multilingualism.

The third theoretical route – *change how to think about English* – is to describe, evaluate, and critique the broad ideologies and ideological structures of English language education in the country. This assumes that the teaching of English is intricately linked with discourses and relations between languages beyond the formal confines of the classroom. These include ideologies about the superiority of English, especially its "standard" forms, as evidenced by burgeoning attempts to claim English-only spaces in school and the unremitting calls to arrest the perceived decline in standards of English proficiency of Filipino students. But these also include ideologies against pluralism, diversity, and/or multilingualism, again as evidenced by recent rules that punish those who use "vernacular" languages in school. This means sensitizing both teachers and students of English into these damaging discourses and how their teaching and learning could, in fact, be complicit with the ideological structures that make the articulation of such discourses possible. In practical terms, this requires not only the teaching of English in the classroom but the teaching about English and its role in education and society; this too has implications for teacher education: how critical engagements with discourses and ideologies about and against English are necessary in training "good" and "ethically responsible" English teachers.

Thus, this chapter discusses the significant role of teacher ideology in English language education. As mentioned above, in reconceptualizing English language education around the world, a great deal of attention is directed toward actual classroom pedagogies, especially in today's context where the multilingual imperative in reviewing English and the teaching of it is almost always given among many teachers and scholars. Following Trueba and Bartolomé (2000), however, this chapter argues that "the need for clarity of political beliefs, practices, and commitments is as important as the actual pedagogical strategies used in instruction" (p. 278). A focus on teacher ideology exposes the many pernicious language ideologies that

continue to permeate every day and institutional discourse in the country, especially ideologies against multilingual education. As will hopefully become clear in the rest of the chapter, a focus on teacher ideology can envision English language education as serving, rather than being served by, multilingual education.

The first section of this chapter discusses inequalities of multilingualism, arguing essentially that multilinguistic ecologies are characterized by a hierarchy of languages and their speakers. The second section tracks the different ways English language education is and has been reconceptualized, arguing that the notion of inequalities of multilingualism must inform the new or alternative framing of the teaching and learning of English. The third section shows how clarity of politics and ideology can help English language teachers act upon and transform sociopolitical structures and processes that shape classroom practice and ideology.

## Inequalities of Multilingualism

The writing of this chapter, and the production of this volume in general, emerges against the backdrop of heightening discourses and practices against multilingualism in the country. The Philippines recently saw the institutionalization of "Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education" (MTBMLE) through Department of Education (DepEd) Order No. 74 s. 2009. This has paved the way – although still with limited success – for the use of mother tongues as medium of instruction in the lower primary years of education, thus challenging the stranglehold of bilingual education (in English and Filipino) in the country which has been in place since 1974. Ironically, however, the current period has also seen the rise of the English-only ideology across the country, with many schools instituting and creating English-only policies and zones, respectively, thus requiring students to speak English only (and discouraging or banning the use of other local languages) in a social environment that is deeply "multilingual." These recent reincarnations of linguicism (Phillipson 1992) accomplish more than simply getting students to speak English only – they continue to perpetuate deeply rooted biases against the local languages such as messages that portray these languages as inferior and insignificant in the lives of Filipino schoolchildren. Time and again, scholars have questioned the currency of the theory of English linguistic imperialism (Davies 1996; Brutt-Griffler 1998; Li 2002) which evidences policies and practices that promote and perpetuate the hegemony of English and thus sustain the many social inequalities that are engendered by such hegemony. But how are we to account for the prevalence of damaging ideologies and practices that continue to devalue the local languages in the country? These cannot be simply swept aside in the name of the so-called postcolonial agency of the Filipino people. Filipinos indeed have consistently resisted English and (neo)colonialism since the beginning of the Philippine-American War in 1898 (Schirmer and Shalom 1987), but such resistance is not diametrically opposed to the continuing structures of linguistic imperialism. In other words, enactments of resistance and agency do not mean inequalities of English do not exist anymore (Tupas 2004).

One case in point is a recent controversy involving a secondary school in Ilocos Norte which expelled three of its students for speaking Ilocano, the local language, sometime in July 2013 (Geronimo 2013). The students, according to the school, violated its English-only rule, so it was just right and fair that they be meted out the penalty of expulsion. For a few weeks, this incident created quite a stir in the country with relevant state and political institutions, including the Department of Education and the Commission on Human Rights, criticizing or condemning what they felt was an injustice done on the students. The Ilocos region, like most if not all of the regions in the Philippines, is hugely multilingual so students enter classrooms and schools with various levels of competence in the local language(s) which then fight for space in the formal school context where English and Filipino (the national language) are used to varying degrees as media of instruction.

Responses to the incident, however, were far from uniform and sympathetic to the students' plight. In fact, a huge amount of discourse on the expulsion case centered on the students' failure to abide by the school policy which they and their parents would have accepted upon their decision to choose the school over other schools in the community. The students and their parents, in other words, were free to choose another school if they found the English-only policy objectionable. The same discourse defended the school on grounds that it has every right to impose an English-only rule on the students, especially because it is meant to benefit the students themselves. English, after all, in a refrain of arguments about English as a global language around the world (Timmis 2002; Li 2002), is the language of money, jobs, social mobility, and globalization. The school's legal counsel defended the policy by arguing that it is merely aimed to "globally prepare" students (Pimentel 2013). In other words, to follow this line of argumentation, there is nothing wrong with the English-only policy. There is, in fact, nothing wrong with the local languages themselves, except that for allegedly purely pragmatic reasons, the exclusive use of English in the school premises is the right thing to do.

Thus, on the surface the discourse or ideology of pragmatism that perpetuates the symbolic and material power of English in and outside school does not seem to show any outward animosity toward multilingualism, or diversity for that matter. Such a stance toward English divests itself of any ideological investment, thus making it appears neutral and harmless. English-only policies in many institutions all over the country are justified on the same grounds as well, which essentially explains the absence of strong sustained and critical counter-discourses against such policies. English-only policies were a key feature of colonial rule decades or centuries ago (Phillipson 1992), yet their recent forms and manifestations – albeit as a response to newer demands of global capital such as the training of cheaper bodies for offshore call center work (e.g., Rahman 2009) – evidence the continuing presence of structures and practices of linguistic imperialism.

Going back to the case of three students expelled from school in Ilocos Norte, it can be seen that the English-only policy was deeply entangled with deep-rooted but subtle hatred toward multilingualism and cultural diversity. In the school's handbook, for example (see Geronimo 2013), the use of the local language as a violation of the school policy is placed alongside other school violations as well, namely,

littering, using chain accessories for males, wearing of earrings for males, and speaking bad words inside the campus. So indeed, while English linguistic pragmatism sounds inoffensive on the surface, its ideological tentacles go deep down into the core of the multilingual lives of people. Speaking the vernacular is likened to littering and other instances of "misbehavior." Pernicious linguistic ideologies sustain the pragmatic arguments in favor of English-only policies. Cosmetic support of multilingualism and multilingual education does not diminish the insidiousness of ideologies and practices against it.

In essence, the point of this section is to underscore the need to acknowledge the centrality of inequalities of multilingualism in any attempt to reconceptualize English language education. Multilingual ecologies embed the teaching of English in most parts of the world (this point is pretty much an accepted fact in the current research literature – see Hornberger and Link 2012; Creese and Blackledge 2010), but such ecologies are characterized not only by competing languages but by the symbolic and material dominance of some languages over other languages. If we do not address such inequalities, for example, in terms of gaining greater political and ideological clarity in our work as English language teachers, reconceptualizing English language education cannot move forward meaningfully. This paper argues that the key to pushing the agenda of reconceptualizing English language education is to provide spaces of critical engagement with the pernicious ideologies against multilingualism. Filipino perceptions about and attitudes toward their own languages and cultural practices then and now (Mahboob and Cruz 2013) have been consistently negative or pessimistic, choosing instead to align themselves with the dreams and aspirations of their colonizers, especially the Americans (Constantino 1970; Canieso-Doronila 1996). There is, therefore, a need to tackle, unpack, engage, and/or transform the ideologies we hold about English and local languages in the country in order for a reconceptualized English language education to avoid perpetuating the hegemonic position of English in the country. Consequently, what we need "are widespread initiatives that will attempt to change the way Filipinos perceive their own languages" (Mahboob and Cruz 2013, p. 17) with the hope that these initiatives will redound to opening up broader opportunities for social mobility and enhanced learning among Filipino children who otherwise might have been disadvantaged by past and recent language ideologies, perceptions, and attitudes despite supposedly substantial changes in policies on the use of languages in education in recent years.

## Trajectories in Reconceptualizing English Language Education

As mentioned above, there are at least three ways to reconceptualize English language education. These are not mutually exclusive; in fact, they sustain and affirm each other's trajectory, except that there is a need to highlight more centrally and strongly the pervasive ideologies against multilingualism and diversity which continue to pervade work and practice in English language education.

**Change What English to Teach** The first of these trajectories – *change what English to teach* – focuses on democratizing the form and shape of the English language itself, arguing that the pedagogical norms of English must open up to local appropriations and changes. The focus is on the "English language" of English language education and is broadly framed within the sociolinguistics of English language spread which has accumulated solid evidence of the changing nature of English (Lowenberg 1986; Kachru 1985). There are at present different theoretical lenses through which the nature of English is described and explained. *World Englishes* or WE (Kachru 1985, 1992; Bhatt 2001) argues that English as it has spread around the world has undergone localization and indigenization and therefore has taken on different sounds and shapes because of the cultural influences of different groups of speakers and learners of English. As a result, English has splintered into many Englishes and continues to do so especially among users of the language in the expanding circle countries like China (Xie 2014), Japan (Kay 1995), and Korea (Shim 1999). *English as a Lingua Franca* or ELF (Jenkins 2000; Seidlhofer 2001; Prodromou 2008) argues that English as it is used in international communication between native speakers of languages other than English has also taken on a different form because of contributions from speakers coming from different cultures and language groups. Unlike *World Englishes*, however, which draws on local (read: typically "national") realities and experiences, ELF has a more regional and global reach and is interested more in (re)locating the norms of language use within interactions between speakers of English in international contexts. *English as an International Language* or EIL (McKay 2002), on the other hand, argues that English is both local and global as it is used in communication between individuals from different countries and within one country (p. 5). In the words of McKay, English is "one that is no longer linked to a single culture or nation but serves both global and local needs" (p. 24).

Conceptual differences aside, these theoretical lenses share common core beliefs and assumptions on the nature of English today. For example, they all agree that English is a pluricentric language which is a view that is "more inclusive, pluralistic, and accepting than the traditional, monolithic view of English in which there is one correct, standard way of using English that all speakers must strive for" (Matsuda 2003, p. 727). They also problematize several key concepts and practices in the teaching and learning of English, including the notions of Standard English (e.g., McKay 2002), the native speaker (e.g., Kachru 1992), authenticity (e.g., Kramsch and Sullivan 1996), and ownership (e.g., Widdowson 1994), arguing that these concepts have contributed to the marginalization and devaluing of so-called "nonstandard" forms of English, as well as of speakers who are allegedly "nonnative" speakers of English. These concepts privilege the English of the so-called inner circle or norm-providing countries (Kachru 1985, 1992), especially the UK and the USA, thus casting both culturally inappropriate and racist aspersions on the Englishes of speakers (mainly nonwhite, "nonnative" speakers) outside these inner circle countries (Holliday 1994). Therefore, the political imperative of this trajectory is to push for the acknowledgment and legitimization of the different Englishes around the world in the English language classroom. The key challenge is how to

open up English language curricula to these Englishes as scholars and teachers grapple with the key question of which pedagogical norms to use in teaching and learning of English (Kirkpatrick 2007, 2010; Matsuda 2003, 2012).

**Change How to Teach English** The second trajectory – *change how to teach English* – also draws on local or changing contexts for pedagogical inspiration. The methods in the teaching of English around the world have traditionally been drawn from "Western" contexts and realities, but these have been found to be at least culturally inappropriate if used in classrooms which do not follow "Western" modes of teaching, learning, and thinking or to have disastrously impacted the identities and life chances of many schoolchildren around the world. The focus is on "education" in English language education. If the first trajectory is primarily concerned with what English to teach, the second deals with how to teach it.

The broad political context of this trajectory is characterized by ideological tension in English language classrooms around the world. The pedagogy of English is embedded in deeply multilingual ecologies, yet dominant methods and approaches to teaching English continue to be anchored in the cultural realities of inner circle countries, again such as the UK and the USA (Holliday 1994; Kumaravadivelu 1994; Pennycook 1989). Thus, according to Hélot and Ó Laoire (2011), "There is still a lingering tendency in most classrooms to approach the teaching and learning of languages as if monolingualism is the norm" (p. xi). Consequently, this frames classroom practice within an English-only monolingualist ideology which ignores and denigrates the presence of other languages other than English.

However, monolingualist ideology and practice in English language classrooms have been challenged quite vigorously by recent research on the role of the mother tongues in the teaching and learning of English. In cognitive (Cook 2001; Barac and Bialystok 2011), sociocognitive (Widdowson 2003), sociopolitical (Auerbach 1993), and pedagogical (Walter and Dekker 2011) terms, it has been argued and shown that mother tongue-mediated teaching and learning of English are appropriate and effective. In other words, mother tongues as multilingual resources have, in fact, aided the teaching and learning of English (and other content subjects for that matter) more efficiently and constructively, especially if their use is systematic, selective, and judicious (Butzkamm 2003, p. 36). Even more recently, sociolinguistic descriptions of classroom linguistic ecologies have yielded data-driven possibilities of reconstituted language pedagogies which take as their central tenet the positive contributions of all languages which teachers and learners bring into the English classroom (Lin and Martin 2005), including "the overlapping of languages in the student and teacher rather than enforcing the separation of languages for learning and teaching" (Creese and Blackledge 2010, p. 112). These descriptions have paved the way for development, as well as the legitimization, of translingual, multilingual, or ecological pedagogies in English language classrooms (Canagarajah 2013; Lin and Martin 2005; Creese and Blackledge 2010; Hornberger 2002; Hornberger and Link (2012).

These two trajectories share similar political lenses – the first highlights the multilingual (or plural or heterogeneous) nature of English, and the second highlights the need to explore local multilingual pedagogies to teach English. Together these

two trajectories conceptually embed English language education in the multilingual ecologies of the local contexts of teaching and learning and, in the process, problematize a wide array of concepts and practices in English language education which have been found to be culturally inimical to effective teaching and learning of English in many parts of the world. Reconceptualizing English language education typically draws on these trajectories which thus should be recognized and applauded for having destabilized dominant concepts and practices in the field.

**Change How to Think About English** The third trajectory – change how to think about English – complements but also transcends the first two trajectories. The focus is on how inequalities of multilingualism give life and shape to English language education. It embraces the plurality or heterogeneity of English and English language pedagogy but contends that this by itself does not guarantee a more democratic or progressive redistribution of languages (and other resources that accrue to these languages) in society. Singapore has been referred to as a "multilingual society" (Pakir 2001, p. 341), yet its linguistic ecology is English-dominant with the language "imbued with status and power" (p. 343) and other languages, especially the nonofficial ones, losing ground dramatically in terms of their use and influence (Gupta and Siew 1995). Similarly, Malaysia has been consistently characterized as a "multicultural and multilingual society" (David and Govindasamy 2003, p. 224), but this obscures the fact that Malay occupies a hegemonic position among the other 100 or so languages in the country. The Philippines too is a "multilingual society" (Hidalgo 1998, p. 23) but, as aptly described by Lorente (2013), for many decades the country has been in the "grip of English." In other words, if mapped onto specific politically and socially differentiated landscapes, multilingualism is a picture of unequal and overlapping languages where "speakers do not necessarily have comparative competencies in the different languages that make up their multilingual repertoire" (Rajagopalan 2010, p. 188).

Thus, turning a blind eye to the inequalities of multilingualism that embed the teaching and learning of English can perpetuate the hegemony of English as well as affirm age-old biases against other languages in the local ecology of teaching and learning. To change how we think about English is not just about how we think of English as a newly mangled language, but also about how English of any form can and continues to sustain different forms of inequality in society, including "inequality…maintained in the school system through language allocation" (Mahboob and Cruz 2013, p. 14).

Therefore, in reconceptualizing English language education, it is not enough to ask what English to teach or how it should be taught, but it is politically imperative as well to ask whether or not alternative visions of English language education can lead to the transformation of ideologies about English and local languages, and policies and practices associated with them, which in turn can help address inequalities of multilingualism in and outside the school. To put it in another way, if our vision is to teach English with local cultural influences, and/or teach it using "appropriate educational strategies" (Dekker and Young 2005, p. 182) drawn from multilingual resources inside and outside the classroom, does such a vision help transform the

material and symbolic power of English in the country? Or does it continue to be embedded within well-entrenched destructive ideologies against multilingualism or diversity? English language education in this sense (and all of education for that matter) demands, to borrow Trueba and Bartolomé's (2000) words again, "political and ideological clarity" (p. 278). Such clarity refers to how all stakeholders gain deeper understanding of structures and conditions that shape their lives and how to transform them (political clarity) and how all stakeholders also acknowledge that all existing relationships between the macro and the micro forces of education are never neutral; in fact, they privilege one social group over others (ideological clarity). Trueba and Bartolomé (2000) also argue more specifically, as referred to earlier in the introduction, that political and ideological clarity in the work of teachers (and English language teachers for the purposes of this chapter) is as important as the day-to-day pedagogies that they deploy in the classroom. Thus, how then should English language education *not* turn a blind eye to inequalities of multilingualism?

## The Role of Teacher Ideology in English Language Education

The key point then is this: reconceptualizing English language education demands that educators "'name' ideology for what it is" (Trueba and Bartolomé 2000, p. 280). Indeed, teacher ideology must be at the center of English language education. It is not enough to articulate our own beliefs and attitudes; it is important that we examine them in the light of their interconnectedness with broader ideologies circulating in society and in the world as well. For example, a pragmatic or instrumentalist view of language does not mean it is not an ideological view; in fact, such a view connects its proponents to the demands of capitalist globalization and neoliberal education where the focus of teaching and learning is essentially for profitability and marketability (Pennycook 1997; Wee 2003). Similarly, it is not enough to say that parents, students, and teachers overwhelmingly prefer English to all other languages in society as medium of instruction. "Preferences" or "choices" (Timmis 2002) are themselves socially shaped (Tupas 2010, 2006), so what looks like purely individual choices can, in fact, also be linked with broad socioeconomic and political forces. Tollefson's (1991) classic example is one case in point: a taxi driver in the Philippines prefers English as medium of instruction so he "chooses" to send his children to an English-medium school in order to help them escape poverty and enjoy a better life. However, precisely because they are poor, the taxi driver can only afford to send his children to a school which provides less-than-ideal instruction in English because the teachers are not well-paid and are graduates themselves of low-quality schools. Thus, while the taxi driver signifies his strong support for English as medium of instruction because of his belief that English will give his children a better life, his "choice" to send his children to school where English is taught, as well as used in teaching other content courses, has in fact prevented his children from escaping poverty. The low level of proficiency in English they have achieved in school was just enough for them to take on menial jobs with

salaries perhaps on the same level as that of taxi drivers. This is not an isolated example. McKay (2002) describes the more general aspect of this reproductive nature of learning English – "the growing relationship between English proficiency and economic resources" (p. 24) – in relation to the rest of the world:

> In many countries around the world English is being learned only by those who can afford instruction in it. Not being able to afford such instruction can close many doors, particularly with regard to accessing higher education. (p. 24)

We see here thus that the symbolic power of English and the role of the language in perpetuating and sustaining unequal relations of power in society are reproduced at the level of the so-called individual choice. It is important to understand how seemingly personal choices are, in fact, conditioned choices thrust upon us by forces largely beyond our control. This does not take away the agentive or personal elements of any of our decisions, but the point here is to recognize how our decisions are deeply imbricated in larger structures of relations in society, such as, in Bourdieu's sense (1990), the power of dominant social groups to circulate and legitimize discourses and ideologies which help perpetuate their dominant position in society and impose them upon other groups in the guise of these discourses and ideologies supposedly working for everyone's welfare. There is "truth" to the belief that English is the language of power and success, but not everyone who subscribes to it becomes powerful and successful. Some, if not most, of those who subscribe to this "truth" (like the taxi driver above) may, in fact, be disempowered by it.

A focus on examining and articulating teacher ideology would not only help teachers draw up links between their own "personal" beliefs and attitudes, on the one hand, and broad socioeconomic and political phenomena, on the other hand, but, more importantly, also help them act upon these ideological entanglements in order to address existing inequities inside and outside the classroom. For example, Tupas (2001) argues that a critical understanding of the politics and ideologies that intersect with the teaching and learning of English, globalization, and domestic work in Singapore could result in grammar lessons for Filipino domestic helpers which could also highlight their plight as "workers of the world" (Lorente 2012). Valdez (2012), demonstrating political and ideological clarity in his work as an English teacher, uses poster-making activities in an EAP (English for Academic Purposes) class to open conversations on gender-mediated inequalities in the world, and in the Philippines more specifically. Similarly, teachers who have achieved greater clarity in their understanding of ideologies that accrue to the teaching of "Standard English" have carved out new ideological spaces in their teaching – teach "Standard English" *only* as form through localized and culturally relevant content, as well as through the use of multilingual resources in the classroom (Tupas 2010, 2006). The teachers grapple with the different ideological demands of their newly found political and ideological clarity in their work: the simultaneous demands to teach "Standard English," to teach localized English, and to acknowledge and use local languages in the effective teaching and learning of English. The point here is that teachers with political and ideological clarity in their work can radically reconstitute the rules and content of teaching and learning and help themselves and their students act upon (and perhaps transform) sociopolitical processes and practices that shape who they are as teachers and learners.

## Conclusion

As mentioned many times in this paper, ideologies against multilingualism still dominate the ideological landscape of multilingual education in the Philippines. These ideologies circulate and constitute inequalities of multilingualism where some languages are more powerful than others and where their respective speakers also are located in unequal spaces of relations. It is because of these that teacher ideology is key to reconceptualizing English language education in the country. Teachers need political and ideological clarity to act upon the processes that impact their work and open up potential spaces for transforming teaching and learning that will contribute to addressing inequalities of multilingualism. There is no doubt that the use of locally and culturally sensitive English pedagogical norms, as well as the harnessing of multilingual and translingual resources in the classroom to teach English more effectively and ethically, helps reconstitute power relations in the teaching and learning of English – for example, in the deconstruction of Standard English, the native speaker and native speaker norms, and the legitimation of the Englishes of so-called nonnative speakers of English. However, these do not guarantee that inequalities of multilingualism are addressed. If teacher ideology is not placed in the center of English language education, it is possible to celebrate the teaching of Englishes and multilingual pedagogies and still be blind to the inequalities brought forth by the continuing hegemony of English and its impact on the devaluing of local languages, identities, and cultures. In the case of expulsion of students for speaking Ilokano in a school in Ilocos Norte province, it is possible to implement mother tongue-based multilingual education and promote ideologies against it. The problem here seems to be the conceptual and political separation of the two education projects – multilingual education on the one hand and English language education on the other hand. Harnessing teacher ideology can bridge the gap between them: English language education does not begin and end with the teaching and learning of English; it must be viewed as *in the service of* multilingual education. In other words, it should be part of the grander project of multilingual education, where the mother tongues flourish and give voice to the millions of schoolchildren disenfranchised by the country's enduring and deep infatuation with English, plural or not.

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# Part III
# Teaching English, Teaching in English

# Chapter 7
# An Endocentric Approach to English Grammar Teaching

**Alejandro S. Bernardo**

**Abstract** This chapter discusses the endocentric approach to English grammar teaching that Filipino ELT practitioners may adopt as a pedagogical philosophy. In this approach, language teachers adhere to General American English (GAE) and educated Philippine English (PE) in teaching grammar. Doing this entails making grammar instruction corpus-driven, designing Philippine and American English-based ELT syllabi, conducting pedagogical acceptability judgment tests, featuring both Philippine English and American English grammar in ESL textbooks and work texts, incorporating the World Englishes (WE) framework in textbooks and work texts, and testing learners on varieties of English.

**Keywords** Endocentric approach to grammar teaching · Philippine English · World Englishes · Pedagogical acceptability judgment tests

## Introduction

What is more remarkable than the historical accounts of English in the Philippines is the fact that the nonnative speakers' constant use of the transplanted language has given birth to a local variety, known as Philippine English. A survey of foreign and local studies published in the past years shows that there has been a sustained attempt to advocate the use of local norms as a teaching model in academic settings. As early as the 1980s, the formal appreciation of the different varieties of English in the educational system, particularly in the English as Second Language (ESL) enterprise and pedagogy, has been advanced. Further, now that language learners thrive in a classroom environment that is no longer monolingual and monocultural, language teachers are confronted by the complexities of teaching in multilingual contexts. And if the language taught is English, the questions that may be raised are countless. These questions may include the following: "Which variety or varieties of English must students learn and internalize?" "Whose norm(s) or standard(s)

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should be promoted?" "How can English teachers be more pedagogically responsive in multilingual contexts or multilingual classroom milieus?"

Drawing inspiration from the insights and works of Kachru (2006) positing that "it is now generally recognized that the Hydra-like language [referring to English] has many heads, representing diverse cultures and linguistic identities" (p. 446), the pedagogical approach advanced in this chapter is the *endocentric approach to grammar teaching* in which both English teachers and students shift their linguistic attention and pedagogical interest to the use of General American English (GAE) and educated Philippine English (PE) as their point(s) of reference in teaching and learning the English grammar. This approach entails a formal study of and reference to the highly acceptable grammatical features of both varieties in their attempt to teach and learn the grammar of English.

I argue that from a linguistic as well as a pedagogical point of view that there is a need to include both varieties of English in English Language Teaching (ELT) in a more effective manner. My basis for such a claim is the comprehensive study I conducted (Bernardo 2013a), and based on the insights generated from the data, a majority of college English language teachers believe that they use both American and Philippine Englishes in the ELT classroom and outside its borders and that they aspire to formally teach both varieties, i.e., use them as their pedagogical standard, particularly in the teaching of grammar. A fraction of the study I conducted (Bernardo 2014) is a survey aimed at finding out whether and to what extent English teachers in three prominent Philippine universities wish to conform to native speakers' models only or whether and to what degree they intend to rely on localized varieties of English as well, not just with respect to pronunciation but also in relation to traditional written-based grammar. While the survey may not provide a statistically accurate representation of all English teachers' perceptions and beliefs because the population surveyed is simply a small fraction of the total populace of English language practitioners in the Philippines, the findings may still give the impression that a good number of college English teachers now seem to gradually place less premium on full acquiescence to native speakers' models – in the case of the Philippines, American English. A larger population of teachers now approve of not only one variety of English as a pedagogical model in Philippine schools and not only one variety as a model for local usage but a pluricentric variety, i.e., two varieties – one inner-circle variety (American English) and the local and nativized variety (Philippine English (PE)). Unsurprisingly, this thinking and aspiration translate into their classroom practices.

In my analysis of transcriptions of classroom interactions, I found that distinctive grammatical features – established and yet to be established PE variants – are evident. The locally printed textbooks that teachers use are also full of PE idiosyncratic structures (Bernardo 2013b). A few distinct features, such as articles and verb tenses found in the transcriptions of classroom interactions, likewise surfaced in the textbooks I examined. Thus, I concluded that these PE structures are used both in spoken and written discourses. The college English language tests I perused, although prescriptivist grammar based and inner-circle driven, also bear a good number of PE distinctive grammatical structures. Thus, based on this trilogy of data-gathering pro-

cedure, I argue that the variety of English currently used as the pedagogical standard in teaching English grammar in Philippine universities is a pluricentric variety, i.e., both GAE and PE. Based on the data, the thinking that college English language teachers rely solely on GAE now seems unfounded because in reality, they use two varieties, GAE and PE – GAE as the *target or idealized* variety but GAE and PE as the *propagated* varieties.

Adherence to these two varieties (GAE and PE), therefore, may be regarded as pedagogically appropriate. The practicability of using both GAE and PE varieties cannot be disregarded and underestimated. To a large population of English language teachers, the use of the two varieties is a potent medium for communication and for academic and nonacademic interactions. The data I generated and the implication it carries may be further condensed by stating that, when students and teachers learn and teach English for use in various contexts and purposes, they may now be given the freedom or the choice of acquiring a variety (or varieties) that is more relevant than what traditional grammar syllabi offer. The above assertions further challenge the age-old conjecture that teaching English grammar, in particular, should center only on native speakers' varieties and argue that ELT should tread a different trail where students will be introduced to a different linguistic benchmark in order to help them be linguistically prepared for intranational, international, and intercultural communication.

The question that remains though pertains to how English teachers could make grammar teaching *endocentric*, i.e., grammar instruction draws pedagogical support from a endonormative model that is anchored on both GAE and educated PE varieties. The World Englishes paradigm has had positive impact on various aspects of English language teaching and learning and that there is, at present, a heightened reception of local or regional norms and models (Gill 1993). Hence, the effective application of the endocentric approach to English grammar teaching may offer ESL learners chances to make sound linguistic choices, especially those which pertain to the variety (or varieties) that appropriately fits their linguistic needs.

The following section, therefore, talks about in detail a number of ways by which the endocentricity of grammar teaching may be realized. These include making grammar instruction corpus-driven, designing Philippine and American English-based ELT syllabi, conducting pedagogical acceptability judgment tests, featuring both Philippine English and American English grammar in ESL textbooks and work texts, incorporating the World Englishes (WE) framework in textbooks and work texts, and testing learners on varieties of English. The very last section presents a sample lesson which applies and illustrates the endocentric approach to English grammar teaching.

## Endocentricity of Grammar Teaching

***Making Grammar Teaching Corpus-Driven*** It is imperative for language practitioners and language learners to start using corpora, corpus tools, and corpus evidence as a starting point not only for linguistic research but also for the teaching and

learning of the English language. Thus, ESL practitioners should draw their attention to corpus-based or corpus-driven delivery of instruction.

Barlow (1992) underscores that corpus linguistics plays a very significant role in three key instructional areas: syllabus design, materials preparation, and selection of classroom activities. Barlow explains that, by analyzing a corpus germane to the purpose of an ESL class, teachers can decide on what language items are linked to the target register. Furthermore, through the use of a corpus, designers of instructional materials could create exercises and language-learning tasks based on real examples that offer students opportunities to discover the features of language use and could conduct analyses or simply use a published corpus study as a reference guide. Corpus-based teaching allows students to do hands-on language analyses in which they use a concordancing program and a deliberately chosen corpus to generate their own discoveries about language use, thus, promoting learner autonomy.

It is foremost, however, to categorize pedagogical corpus applications or the utilization of corpus tools and methods in a language-teaching and language-learning context. Indirectly, corpora (whether general, e.g., ICE-PHI or specific, e.g., classroom-generated corpus) can assist both teachers and researchers in making decisions about teaching contents and can also be directly accessed by language learners and teachers in designing more specific classroom-based language-learning exercises, thus, assisting in the teaching process (Fligelstone 1993). In the words of Romer (2010):

> Indirect applications involve hands-on work mainly for corpus researchers as well as, to a limited extent, materials writers and provide answers to questions on *what* to teach and *when* to teach it, whereas direct applications mainly affect *how* something is taught and actively involve the learner and teacher in the process of working with corpora and concordances. (p. 19, italics original)

Both direct and indirect applications may be useful in achieving endocentricity of grammar teaching. Students may be led to verify if a certain feature is of educated PE only or exo-endonormative in nature, i.e., both GAE and PE use the same feature, and judge its pedagogical value based on the findings of corpus analysis conducted. If a certain PE grammatical feature is prevalent in the corpora used and is judged pedagogically appropriate, then it would warrant formal teaching in class without reproach. Through the use of corpora, as how Wu (2010) words it:

> English teachers of non-native speakers now can reply not on intuition of native speakers but on principled corpora to solve some grammatical and usage problems…[and] because a particular grammatical feature may occur in a textbook only once or twice, additional corpus material may be useful to expose the learner to a recurrent patter rather than a single occurrence. (p. 73)

If there are observable mismatches between naturally occurring English and the English presented in ESL classes and teaching materials such as textbooks, then there is a need for improved and principled pedagogical language descriptions that take corpus findings into consideration and present a more accurate image of language as it is used.

***Designing PE-Based ELT Syllabi*** State-prescribed English course outlines (which normally, in the Philippine ESL context, are simply expanded and made more comprehensive to become subject syllabi) hardly bear any hint or instruction with respect to the model or variety of English that teachers and students should use. The course outlines for general English courses mandated by the Commission on Higher Education (CHED), for instance, hardly explicitly mention the model that will stand as the point of reference in teaching and learning grammar. The course objectives and contents also hardly detail the specific variety(ies) of English to be promoted in ESL classes. This suggests that if language practitioners are truly sentient of the language-related issues, particularly PE existence and its status in intranational communication, they will probably consider the inclusion of acceptable PE grammatical variants as a benchmark of grammatical correctness and accuracy. It appears that there is a call for offering ESL learners with a general idea of the development of English as a global language and also as a language which has a plethora of global and local varieties.

Syllabi designers should take into account the harnessing of students' knowledge and understanding of the historical, social, and political contexts of the global expansion and development of English and Englishes and sharpen their critical awareness of the geographical and linguistic advancement of Englishes. Through this curricular effort, students will be enticed to explore the variations across Englishes and the emergence of new standard Englishes, understand the debates enfolding the standard language ideology, and explore the internationalization and globalization of English.

***Conducting Pedagogical Acceptability Judgment Tests*** A university-wide or classroom-based survey of highly and close-to-highly pedagogically acceptable PE grammatical variants needs to be conducted, no matter how tedious it is, prior to teaching specific linguistic forms to note what both teachers and students use in spoken and written discourses, what they formally welcome in the classroom, and what they believe to be correct and appropriate, i.e., the extent to which grammatical features are likely to be adopted or judged to be desirable (normative).

The results of the pedagogical judgment tests may advise or caution language teachers and learners that there might be questions or controversies involving the use of certain PE grammatical constructions. Through the information obtained from pedagogical acceptability judgment tests, not only from studies on language policy formulation which often limits itself to the choice between two languages such as Filipino and English, students and teachers would be given a sense of how PE grammatical features might be judged when they (and others) use them. Students and teachers may be offered the opportunity to plot PE grammatical variants on a pedagogical acceptability cline or scale and decide which ones are the least and the most desirable for them. If this happens, the acceptable features of the local variety will no longer be treated as unwanted and unsuitable when grammar teaching and learning are concerned. The acceptable grammatical features of the local variety, therefore, may be explicitly taught thereafter and used as a yardstick (or one of the yardsticks) of correctness and no longer only the exogenous norm.

***Featuring PE Grammar in ESL Textbooks and Work Texts*** Barbieri and Eckhardt (2007) summarize the reasons behind the mismatch between textbook descriptions and real-language use, as follows:

1. Textbook descriptions frequently rely on the writers' intuitions rather than on empirical data.
2. Textbooks are hardly supported by empirical evidence with respect to the relative frequency of occurrence of linguistic features.
3. Textbooks usually present grammatical and lexical patterns as evenly generalizable and equally significant communicatively, thus, disregarding information about register-specific or discourse-context-specific use.
4. Textbooks usually draw support from written norms only, thus, ignoring the spoken language.
5. Textbooks simplify real-language use for pedagogical purposes. The abovementioned reasons also explain why, in almost all cases, only an exogenous norm is (or believed to be) represented in locally published ESL textbooks and work texts.

The teaching and learning of grammar tends to be endocentric if the local variety of English is substantially featured or represented as *the* norm, if not, a "co-norm" when internalization of grammatical rules in a form-focused ESL class is concerned. It may be helpful to position PE grammatical features vis-à-vis GAE expectations, which will not only foster awareness of both varieties but also allow students to make personal decisions with respect to variety use. Further, contemporary issues with respect to the use of a local variety need to be substantially covered in textbooks to allow the key players in ESL classrooms to discuss and debate about concerns that emanate from the localization and nativization of English. In addition, textbook writers (who are often commissioned by their respective universities to publish textbooks for their own use) may be encouraged to exert effort to consult empirical studies of PE, and not only books published and marketed by inner-circle countries in writing grammar books, lessons, or units. Through this consultation, textbooks will scarcely ignore lexico-grammatical structures that reflect the linguistic behavior of their target users.

***Incorporating World Englishes (WE) in Textbooks and Work Texts*** Textbook developers are usually endowed with the freedom to go beyond the requirements of educational institutions and the state. Because World Englishes have been regarded as a serious pedagogical agendum, incorporating lessons about the existence of the different varieties of English across the globe remains well advised. This, however, does not imply that all varieties of English will be taught to students. The intention is quite plain – make students cognizant that English has evolved and continuously evolves and the use of English in the different corners of the world and in different domains has given birth to Englishes that require critical and pedagogical examination, heightened tolerance, and recognition. By incorporating lessons on WE, students' effective intercultural communication skills may also be harnessed. They will be made aware that the English they use may not be exactly similar to the English used by other speakers of English; thus, meaning negotiation will be given pre-

mium. Furthermore, exposure to WE paradigms will allow students and teachers to examine pertinent issues such as intelligibility, acceptability, and linguistic hegemony.

***Testing ESL Learners on a Variety of Englishes*** Canagarajah (2006a) eloquently words that:

> …it becomes clear that we have to reconsider the dominant paradigms of testing based on single varieties of English, grammaticality judgments, and a display of formal competence. This is a call to creatively devise new instruments that address our emerging communicative needs. (p. 230)

Canagarajah's position is suggestive of the need to test students' proficiency not on a single variety (in the case of local ESL classrooms, both GAE and PE) and to test them on how they use both varieties, e.g., GAE and PE, to facilitate effective communication. Test developers need to consider the varieties of English against which students will be judged and allow them to select answers to grammar items that reflect their actual use of the language. In the same vein, established features of the local variety that appear in student major compositions (that usually serve as final examinations in a good number of local universities) need not be marked red or rectified, e.g., changing *result to* to *result in,* especially if the compositions are for local consumption. Simply stated, local language tests need to be variety-sensitive.

The endocentric approach to grammar teaching may be further enhanced, considering other factors and pedagogical practices. The above means, however, may spur English grammar teaching that is PE-variety-sensitive and considerate of the sociolinguistic character of both ESL teachers and students.

## An Endocentric Approach to Classroom Practices

***Presenting Grammar Rules*** In subjects or lessons that require reference to, derivation, and presentation of linguistic rules, the application of the endocentric approach to English grammar teaching is of paramount value. As a specific illustrative case, when prepositional phrases (e.g., *result in, based on,* and *cope with*) and the use of articles are the focus of the lesson and sentences in which these structures occur are introduced, it is worthy to overtly mention that in the local variety of English, Philippine English, the collocates *result to, based from*, and *cope up with* and the phrase *Ø majority* are evident; that is, they are used by a large number of educated Filipinos, and their use is acceptable (Bernardo 2013a); thus, they may no longer be considered as deviations or errors.

Moreover, in teaching perfect tenses, as another illustrative case, the presentation of the conventional rules that govern the use of perfect tenses and their counterparts in PE is deemed necessary. One of these rules may be presented in the manner outlined below:

(a) Shiela ***had eaten*** breakfast before she ***took*** a bath.
(b) Shiela ***ate*** breakfast before she ***took*** a bath.

In explaining the rules, it is necessary to highlight that (a) adheres to an exogenous norm (GAE) while (b) adheres to the local norm (PE) and is pedagogically acceptable (Bernardo, 2013a). Put in another way, both GAE and PE varieties are presented and highlighted in grammar classes, and students are made aware that the use of both varieties, when the above prepositional phrases and the use of perfect tenses are concerned, is tolerable. This implies that grammar instruction, whether inductive or deductive, requires reference to both varieties. Through this, the students will be exposed to varieties of English and will be trained to shuttle from one variety to another should the communicative context requires them to do so.

***Designing Grammar Tests*** If a test were to assess a student's proficiency in the English grammar traditionally, an item similar to the one presented below would be given:

*Cross out the section of the sentence that contains an error. Write **NE** if there is no error.*

*Based on the report, majority of Filipinos should not be dealing with bad politics for this might result in economic failure.*

If *majority of Filipinos* is not selected and the test taker believes that there is no error in the sentence, a student's answer will most likely be considered incorrect. A student might judge *majority of Filipinos* correct and acceptable since, in the Philippines, the expression *Ø majority* is more commonly used by the educated circle of Filipinos and an expression considered to be a feature of PE (Bautista 2008). In the case of the above item, it would be pedagogically sound to consider "no error" as an alternative answer because *Ø majority* is an established feature of PE grammar and a pedagogically acceptable structure (Bernardo 2013a).

In the case of the following item, teachers, in using the endocentric approach, may allow test takers to choose either *a, b,* or *d* for an answer since embedded questions in PE seem to have a unique placement. If teachers do not, the tests students are required to complete will negate the existence of a local variety of English.

*Person A: When is Barack Obama's birthday?*
*Person B: I don't know ______.*

(a) *when is Barack Obama's birthday*
(b) *when his birthday is.*
(c) *if he has a birthday.*
(d) *when is his birthday.*

The foregoing assessment practice will allow teachers and students to challenge the relevance of "only-American-English policy" in outer-circle territories with institutionalized varieties of their own. Thus, correctness and accuracy are also measured against the expectations of the local norm. Canagarajah (2006a) argues that "it is unwise to define proficiency based on a single variety and because it is impossible to teach or measure proficiency in many varieties simultaneously, we have to consider revising the dominant paradigms of assessment" (p. 229). By

accommodating both GAE and PE varieties in local English tests, assessment practices are revisited and modified in light of sociolinguistic developments.

***Composition Writing*** In composition writing in which grammar and mechanics are a usual criterion, students' papers may not be "marked red" and full of corrections if they use *with regards to, fill up, results to,* and *based from*. The teacher need not cross out (which is tantamount to saying that what students wrote are wrong) *regards*, *up, to*, and *from* in these prepositional phrases and perpetually insist that they be replaced with *regard*, *out, in,* and *on.* It is also important to explicitly state prior to the writing stage that students are at liberty to use both GAE and PE varieties in writing paragraphs or compositions. In other words, through the endocentric approach, composition-writing courses are also made WE- or variety-sensitive. It is necessary, however, to conduct a thorough discussion of WE-related issues, e.g., existence of the local variety of English, in writing classes beforehand so that students are informed of these sociolinguistic realities that directly impact ESL teaching and learning.

***Assessing Speaking Proficiency*** In assessing students' oral proficiency, for instance in speech or oral communication classes in which accuracy is also given premium, the use of the endocentric approach is also of paramount significance. When using a speech assessment rubric, for example, varieties of English (GAE and PE, in particular) may be accommodated by modifying the criterion for accuracy in such a way that students will not be penalized through score reduction if acceptable features of PE are used in their speech. At the end of a student's oral performance, the teacher may simply give remarks that there are distinctive structures in his or her speech which may be rightfully termed as PE and that these have counterparts in GAE (the assumption is that the teacher is fully aware of the acceptable features of PE). However, the students may be allowed to decide which features to use without any form of restriction or dissuasion since the use of both varieties (GAE and PE) will not unfavorably affect their performance.

The above specific instructional practices are also reflective of Canagarajah's (2006b) strategy called *code meshing,* a means of merging local varieties with Standard Written English. Canagarajah argues that:

> …though code meshing is a complex discursive act for our students (one that involves a polydialectal competence— i.e., familiarity with standard varieties, expert use of local variants, and the rhetorical strategies of switching), multilingual communities have a long tradition of using such communicative practices. (p. 602)

Through code meshing and by adopting the endocentric approach, ESL practioners and learners are able to "pluralize" grammar teaching to accommodate both the exogenous and the local norms and reserve a space for varieties of English in grammar instruction. Both ESL teachers and learners are induced to look at English as "a plural language that embodies multiple norms and standards" (Canagarajah 2006b, p. 589).

## Developing an Endocentric Grammar Lesson

The endocentric approach may be more concretely applied in specific grammar lessons following the typical structure of a weekly teaching plan. Lessons in college English grammar that have started to take into account the existence of World Englishes may commence with an introductory discussion on the varieties of English, particularly Philippine English and its defining characteristics, before proceeding to the grammatical units or forms covered in the course syllabus.

In grammar classes, language forms, such as prepositional phrases, may be taught after delving into the grammatical features of the local variety of English in comparison with the inner-circle varieties. Motivational activities could be provided during the pre-instruction period to spur the interest of the learners and to stand as lesson takeoff points. Tasks that are in consonance with the target content and that allow learners to work and deepen their conceptual understanding either individually or collaboratively should be carefully planned as well.

Under the instruction stage, more careful attention, however, must be allotted for the teaching of grammar that draws normative support from both GAE and PE varieties. In doing so, the inductive approach to grammar teaching may be more favorable since learning seems more lasting when students generate linguistic rules and conclusions on their own or with minimal teacher intervention.

Modifying the framework proposed by Ke (2008) and incorporating the pluricentricity of English in it, grammar lessons taught inductively may follow these steps:

**Step 1**
Students are given a representative set of sentences about an area of English grammar.
**Step 2**
Students are asked to generalize a grammatical rule to account for the set of English sentences.
**Step 3**
Students are asked to check and test the grammatical rule against new sentences about the same area of English grammar but this time, taking into account the existence of World Englishes and the grammatical features of the local variety of English.
**Step 4**
Students are asked to revise the grammatical rule(s) to accommodate the new sentences, considering the acceptable grammatical features of the local variety of English.

Finally, application and enrichment activities may be provided during the post-instruction phase. This will offer students opportunities to practice and further understand the target language in class.

## *A Sample Lesson*

**Background** This lesson was specifically developed for college freshman students. The lesson serves as an introduction to World Englishes and Philippine English and the issues that accrue to their use. Its design is based on the premise that if instruction is to achieve maximum effectiveness, learning experiences should involve students as much as possible through manipulation of objects, writing, real-life situations, and individual and collaborative work. The lesson is also anchored on the principles of inductive and task-based grammar teaching. Furthermore, it includes learning activities that would allow learners to compare the exonormative standards and the standard that Filipinos might want to embrace for intranational communication purposes. In the end, this lesson aims to make the learners cognizant that English comes in different varieties and that a pluricentric model may be used in learning its grammar.

**Lesson Objectives** At the end of this two-part lesson, the students should be able to:

1. Demonstrate understanding of the concept of World Englishes and the features of Philippine English by identifying the speakers who use it and by describing its lexical and syntactic features
2. Argue about and decide on the variety of English that they believe must be taught in Philippine schools
3. Form verb-plus-preposition combinations in English taking into account a pluricentric model in explaining and applying grammatical rules in meaningful sentences

**Materials**

1. Venus Raj's Miss Universe Question-and-Answer Video (Venus Raj is a Filipino beauty queen who represented the Philippines in the 2010 Miss Universe pageant in Las Vegas, Nevada, United States.)
2. Information on the differences between American and British Englishes (There are many that are available online.)
3. Student-made Survey Forms
4. Copies of Graphic Organizers
5. Copy of Ma. Lourdes Bautista's essay "Who's Afraid of Philippine English?"

**Time Allotment** 1.5 weeks (approximately 4.5 h)

**Procedure**
**Part I**

1. Have the class watch a video of Venus Raj. This motivational activity is done to foster intrinsic motivation by creating a learning activity that is based on topics relevant to the students' lives or interests. After watching the video, the students should critically talk about it guided by the following questions:

   (a) *What are your initial reactions to the video?*
   (b) *Is Venus Raj a competent speaker of English? Why? Why not?*

(c) *When do you say that a person speaks good English? Does he or she have to speak the native-speaker way?*
(d) *In your case, what kind or variety of English do you speak? Do you adhere to a certain standard when you speak or write in English? If you do, what standard is it?*

2. Ask the students to do research on the differences between British and American English, which are two popular inner-circle varieties of English.

(a) *Based on your research task, do American and British English differ? In what specific ways?*
(b) *To you, which standard do we follow in the Philippines? What made you say so? Can you give examples that will support your answer?*
(c) *Do you think we, Filipinos, have developed our own variety of English, too? How? What indications can you cite to prove that we have developed our own variety of English?*

3. Have the class break into groups and think of the English terms/expressions that Filipinos use for the following definitions or ideas. Process the task by asking the discussion questions that follow.

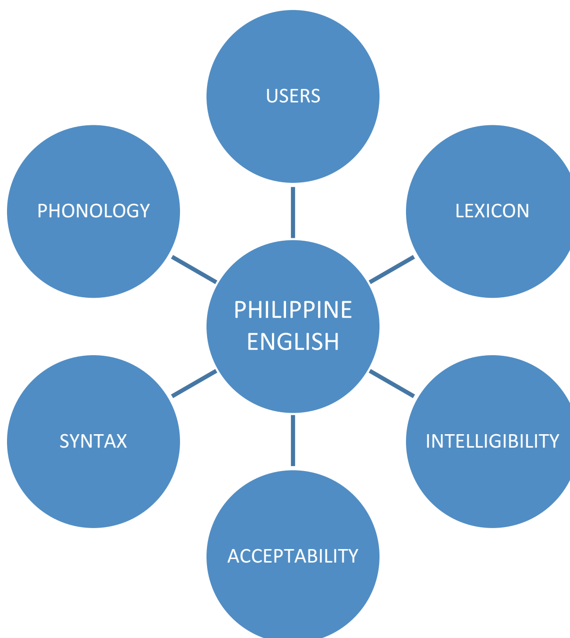
| Definition | Term |
|---|---|
| 1. An unsuccessful social climber | |
| 2. A public (for hire) vehicle consisting of a motorcycle and an attached passenger sidecar | |
| 3. An adjective to describe a young lady, usually a "colegiala" (who is very nice and very sweet. From t + sweet + ums. Akin to the British term "twee" | |
| 4. A person aspiring to become senator | |
| 5. A small, neighborhood convenience store or booth. "Sari-sari" is Tagalog for "mixed variety" or "sundry," but the term is generally used in Philippine English. Sometimes called a "variety store" in the Canadian sense | |
| 6. A student who participates in a course of study that involves the supervised practical application of previously studied theory; an intern | |
| 7. A prefix used as an adjective to describe a person who is high strung. From the term "hypertension" | |
| 8. A part of the Quiapo district in the Philippine capital, manila, which has a large number of colleges. Also called U-belt | |
| 9. A day where an employee can wear casual clothes | |
| 10. To urinate | |
| 11. Mass transit vehicles originally made from US military jeeps | |
| 12. A person aspiring to become president | |

(a) *Do you think these words are found in the vocabulary of native speakers of English,* e.g., *Americans? Why? Why not?*
(b) *Do you regard the aforementioned words as correct English? Why? Why not?*
(c) *Based on the items above, do you really believe now that there is a local variety of English in the Philippines, a sign that we have localized or nativized the English language? Why? Why not?*

4. Lead the class in describing the features of Philippine English by talking about the statements below. Afterward, have them collaboratively fill out the graphic organizer and respond to the discussion questions. This task will allow the learners to further characterize the features of Philippine English.

*State whether you agree or disagree with the statement. Explain your position.*

1. Philippine English is the variety of English used in the Philippines by the media and the vast majority of educated Filipinos.
2. English is used in education, religious affairs, print and broadcast media, and business though the number of people who use it as a second language far outnumber those who speak it as a first language.
3. A person's social class is often easily identified by the language he or she speaks (in addition to skin color; i.e., the fairer/whiter the skin, the higher the perceived social class), as well as his or her accent.
4. Those in the middle class tend to speak English with a peculiar accent which is somewhat in between the upper class Filipino English with a stronger Malay-Indo twang, and they tend to emphasize every single syllable and vowel in a word, without common shortcuts.
5. English, as it is taught in the Philippines, is very similar to North American English.




Graphic Organizer on Philippine English

(a) *What is Philippine English? Who uses this variety of English?*
(b) *How is it different from other native varieties of English such as American English?*
(c) *In your view, is Philippine English a standard or substandard English? Why?*

5. Have the class engage in an informal debate on the topic: *What variety of English must be taught in Philippine schools? Why?* Spend at least 20 min for the informal debate. This task will allow issues and opinions about Philippine English to surface. Misconceptions about nativized varieties of English may be clarified either by the teacher or the students themselves through this task.
6. As an enrichment task for the first part of the lesson, ask the class to conduct a survey about the variety or varieties of English that Filipino students want to learn. Have them design a simple questionnaire as their data-gathering instrument. Require them to submit a written report following the APA format and prepare for a discussion of findings and the implications that may be deduced from them.

**Part II**

7. Have the class read in advance the article "Who's Afraid of Philippine English?" by Ma. Lourdes Bautista. Ask a few students to state the gist of the article. Allow the class to further characterize the features of Philippine English based on Bautista's article. Write sample Philippine English syntactic features on the board for analysis.
8. Focus on form by following the steps of the inductive grammar teaching. This inductive approach is based on English native speakers' (or near-native English speakers', or even advanced English learners') subconscious knowledge of English grammar and makes use of their grammatical judgments about the sentence well-formedness and sentence structure to *rediscover* and establish a set of conscious grammatical rules that underlie their grammatical competence (Ke 2008) and take into account the World Englishes paradigm.
**Step 1:** Present pairs of verb-plus-preposition combinations in English such as those presented below. Ask the students which one they consider grammatically correct. Have them expound on their choice. Remind them of the article by Bautista as they make their judgments.

(a) fill out – fill up
(b) result to – result in
(c) based from – based on
(d) in search of – in search for
(e) cope with – cope up with

**Step 2:** Ask the students to generalize a grammatical rule to account for the set of prepositional phrases. For example:

(1) *Fill out the BIR forms*
(2) *Fill up the BIR forms.*

Note: According to Step 2, students are asked to produce or generalize a grammatical rule from the group of sentences to account for both its grammatical and ungrammatical sentences. Based on their grammatical judgments about the two sentences, the students would formulate tentative grammatical rules that govern the use of verb-plus-preposition combinations in English as applied in the two sentences above.

**Step 3:** Ask the students to check and test the grammatical rules against new sentences about the same area of English grammar. As an example, ask the students to complete the sentences below.

(1) *Fill ___ the container with water.*
(2) *Fill ___ the sick leave form from the Dean's office.*

Note: The rules that students formulated in Step 2 must be further examined to find out if they also apply to the new sentences.

**Step 4:** Ask the students to revise the grammatical rule to accommodate the new rules in the new sentences. For example:

*"Fill up" (instead of fill out) may also be used in (2) to mean "to complete by supplying the requested information." Possibly, the use of "up" denotes that one has used or needs to use all the available space,* e.g., *information sheet (not a container) and to provide all the needed details there. In other words, "fill up" is used to signify to "make a form or application full of the required information."*

Note: At this point, it is necessary for the teacher to underscore that under the World Englishes paradigm, both *fill out* and *fill up* are acceptable when completing blank forms is concerned.

9. Provide additional exercises which accommodate Philippine English verb-plus-preposition combinations. As an example, have the students provide a preposition for each statement below. Process the students' answers. Ask them to explain their choice of prepositions. Highlight that because of World Englishes, a number of possible acceptable prepositions may be used. For example, in (a) both *in* and *to* may apply.

(a) *Good study habits result ___ good academic standings.*
(b) *In writing, you should stick ___ the rule.*
(c) *How is the simple past tense different ____ the past perfect tense?*
(d) *Let us now proceed ____ the discussion of the second part.*
(e) *Make sure that your conclusions are based ____ the data gathered.*
(f) *English helps us to communicate ____ other people.*
(g) *What is the implication of terrorism _____ world economy?*
(h) *The proper role of government in various sectors shall be steering and mobilizing the instruments that contribute _____the achievement of sectoral objectives.*
(i) *It is hoped that this simple endeavor would be useful to researchers and other people interested___ indigenous yams.*

10. As an additional task, ask the students to create a dialogue. The dialogue may be taking place in a bank or any business establishment. The dialogue must make use of verb-plus-preposition combinations (other than *fill up* and *fill out*) following either American English or Philippine English as their model.
11. End the lesson with a writing activity that allows students to reflect on what they have learned. The following guide questions may be provided:
    (a) *What have I learned about World Englishes and Philippine English?*
    (b) *Is the knowledge of World Englishes relevant to my college degree and to my life as a communicator?*
    (c) *Did this lesson open my mind to the reality that we, Filipinos, have owned and nativized the English language? How?*

## Conclusion

The use of any pedagogic model necessitates a conception of a complementary instructional approach that may be employed in teaching English grammar. The approach advanced in this chapter draws normative support not only from an exogenous standard, particularly GAE, but also from PE since the use of these two varieties as a model is approvable for Filipino ESL teachers and students. A requisite step in the conception of an instructional approach is a critical observation of grammar-teaching practices and a conceptual understanding of the existing body of literature that account for the sociolinguistic environment which surrounds the ESL learners.

Mahboob and Tilakaratna (2012) promote the principles-based approach (PBA) for ELT policies and practices. They believe that "PBA builds on the current work on language policy and practice, but instead of providing a set of standards, it identifies a set of principles that can help policymakers in diverse contexts develop locally appropriate language policies and practices" (p. 2). Thus, the instructional approach advanced in this chapter is the *endocentric approach to grammar teaching* in which both English teachers and students shift their linguistic attention and pedagogical interest to the use of GAE and educated PE as their point(s) of reference in teaching and learning the English grammar – a locally appropriate pedagogical backbone. It is crucial that ESL approaches match the sociolinguistic realities that surround the ESL learners. One of these realities is that insisting that they learn only the native-speaker varieties is no longer pedagogically just, for not all learners are trained to function in inner-circle countries; thus, imposing American English or British English alone may disregard their real linguistic needs especially now that the language-learning classrooms have inevitably become multilingual and multicultural. Adherence to the endocentric approach may aid the ELS practitioners and learners in recognizing the pluralistic nature of English across the world today.

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# Chapter 8 Using Filipino in the English Classroom: Teaching with Resistance and Relevance

**Devi Benedicte I. Paez**

**Abstract** This chapter presents the use of Filipino as a strategy for empowerment in a periphery ELT setting as it consciously resists institutional policies such as the traditionally prescribed English-only policy. In a case study of a public elementary school, I find that using the students' language in ELT contributes to creating a relevant classroom atmosphere that is an extension of family and shared community. The use of the Filipino language in ELT shows that the periphery English classroom has become an extension of family and community. The English language teacher, in exploiting the mother tongue in the classroom, does not only instruct but disciplines as well as asserts the role of cultural values such as respect, accountability, honesty, and solidarity in the completion of classroom tasks. Thus, the English teacher, through the mother tongue, accommodates students' shared values and identities in the local culture and creates a site for empowerment in the teaching and learning of the language.

**Keywords** Mother tongue · Critical pedagogy · English language teaching

## Introduction

After having been observed in class one day, a Grade 6 public school English teacher pointed out: *"Kung hindi ko ituro sa Filipino [ang* English*], mawawalan ng saysay ang tinuturo ko. Wala pong makakaintindi."* (If I do not teach English in Filipino, what I teach will have no meaning. No one will understand me.) This comment reveals what may be a common source of conflict faced by many Filipino teachers of English today: making English accessible to students while conscious of a perceived obligation to implement institutional policies, such as the English-only policy, that only seem to marginalize students' identities, cultures, and values. This

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chapter illustrates the classroom realities of one elementary public school teacher in using Filipino to teach English amidst debates and shifts in language policies in Philippine education. Bernardo (2008) points out that "there are many competing discourses on the role of English in education, and these competing discourses have been moved to and from the center of public and policy discussions over the last century." But the discussions seem to leave out the compelling narratives of teachers who face the challenges of implementing prescribed policies that seem to view English language teaching and learning in such an orderly but decontextualized view. The descriptions found in the chapter support the argument that teaching English only through English in a multilingual and multicultural country such as the Philippine language can never benefit any student.

## The "American Language" Finds a Home in the Philippines

Former Education Secretary and linguist Andrew Gonzales identified English as "the American language" (2008, p. 13) when he illustrated how it rooted itself and flourished in the Philippine educational system and beyond during the American occupation in 1898–1948. The country's conditions then, after having been a Spanish colony for more than 300 years, provided "a favorable climate and soil for transplantation" (p. 13) that enabled English to be the language that is now associated with literacy, culture, and economic mobility. Martin (2012) asserts as much in her survey of the Philippines' language policies beginning with the American colonial period that viewed English as a "language that would 'civilize' Filipinos" after more than 300 years of being ruled by an oppressive Spanish church and government (p. 190). Under the American colonial government as provided by the Organic Act of 1901, Filipinos were given education but instructed in a language not of their homes nor identities. The 523 American teachers or Thomasites (as they came on board the US Army Transport *Thomas*) in August 1901 pioneered an approach to teaching English that is still the practice in many classrooms today.

Gonzales (2008) describes the manner of instruction as:

> …the tradition of teaching English analytically, via grammar, definitions of parts of speech, exemplification, and numerous exercises of what we would now call testing rather than teaching exercises. American phonology was not taught, but a form of oratory and declamation overladen with the traditional oratorical style and manner of delivery. (p. 14)

Teaching English in this manner was consistent with the direct method approach in the nineteenth century when the Berlitz Method had gained momentum for its supposed success in "totally immersing the student in the new language,... and [eliminating] the cumbersome process of introducing a concept first in the student's language and then in the target language" (Hall and Cook 2012). Interestingly, Hall and Cook (2012) maintain that the term "target language" has "military overtones." This view seems to have complemented how General Douglas MacArthur looked at public education as a "military strategy" (Martin 2012) that furthered the American

colonizers' objectives in the Philippines. Coming to teach in a country populated with multilinguals in a single classroom may have proven to be such a formidable task for the individual Thomasite. Hence, teaching only in English spared the American teacher from the rigor of learning the students' many languages. Despite the 1925 Monroe Report that recommended the use of students' native languages as auxiliary medium of instruction in the areas of character education, good manners, and right conduct (Board of Educational Survey 1925, as cited in Martin 2012), the Americans continued with the practice of using English exclusively in the classrooms (Martin 2012). This practice was continued under Filipino teachers who later on replaced their American mentors in the classroom. Gonzales (2008) explains that the Filipino teachers themselves spread the Philippine variety of English as the majority of their American counterparts did not stay long after the first few months of their disembarkation from the USS Thomas. Consequently, the marginalization of students' many local languages, as well as precolonial Philippine literature, in the American colonial educational system created and perpetuated an uncritical language attitude that all too readily favored and still favors the "American language." Vincent L. Rafael (2013) writes:

> Rather than unify native societies by providing a common language, English intensified social divisions while promoting historical amnesia. An alien language, it could only produce alienating effects. It turned natives neither into Filipinos nor Americans but into copies of the latter. Thus did natives become triply displaced: not only from whom they had been as native peoples, and from what they were destined to be as national subjects, but also from what they were taught to become but were barred from achieving: faithful copies of their colonial masters. (pp. 40–68)

## Shifts in Language Policies

For the most part of the American occupation, there was neither a recognized nor an institutionalized policy that allowed the development of laws or agencies that looked at and aided language planning closely (Gonzales 2003). In 1937, steps were finally taken toward formulating a national policy that included establishing a national language when the National Language Institute was formed under the Romualdez Law (Martin 2012). Beginning in 1939, Tagalog was recognized as the national language of the country; assigning its official status lays in the hands of those who spoke it and those who had political influence in Manila and the nearby Luzon provinces (Tupas 2009). It maintained its status even throughout the Japanese occupation from 1943 to 1945 (Martin 2012) and resistance from formidable yet less influential ethnolinguistic groups around the country such as those who spoke Cebuano in the South (Tupas 2009). In an effort to "de-ethnicize" the term Tagalog and to identify a national language that seemed more inclusive, the term was changed to Pilipino. This change ran parallel to the anti-colonial and nationalist movements in the 1950s–1960s that rallied against what was seen as the "miseducation of the Filipino people" (Constantino 1970, as cited in Tupas 2009) during the American colonial

period. When issues in language emerged yet again in the 1970s, Tupas (2009) points out that the term “Filipino” was brought to the fore:

> ‘Filipino’ was to evolve from Pilipino and other local languages, thus making it even more inclusive because its very existence was dependent on the contribution of all languages in the country. (p. 25).

However, in reality, Tupas points out that the concept of an all-inclusive Filipino, coming from a perceived biased Pilipino, was still essentially Tagalog as it was the national language which gained a foothold in the educational system, alongside English, since the 1930s. In 1987, one year after the People Power EDSA Revolution, the national language came to be known as Filipino, what Gonzales (1980) described as a “linguistic fiction” and “an amalgam of many Philippine languages but whose base form ... is essentially Tagalog” (Tupas 2009). In 1974, a “compromise policy” (Bernardo 2008) in the form of the Bilingual Education Policy (BEP) was approved. No significant revisions to the BEP were made for the next 35 years. The 1987 Constitution of the Philippines assigned the places of English and Filipino in teaching. Nolasco (2008) pointed out that this called for:

- The use of English and Pilipino (changed to Filipino) as media of instruction from Grade 1 onward: English in Science, Mathematics, and English and Filipino in Social Studies, Character Education, Work Education, Health Education, and Physical Education
- The use of regional languages as auxiliary media of instruction as well as the initial languages for literacy (as spelled out in DECS Order No. 52) (p. 135)

Bernardo (2008) illustrated that certain sectors of society viewed the BEP as a significant reason for a weakened Philippine education. Macapagal-Arroyo’s Executive Order No. 210 aimed at “establishing the policy to strengthen the use of the English language as a medium of instruction” in 2003 (as cited in Nolasco 2008, p. 135), and three similar proposals were lined up in the 2005 session of the Philippine Congress (Bernardo 2008, p. 29). Following these were two opposing bills filed at the House of Representatives on the issue of medium of instruction (MOI). First there was House Bill 5619 (the Gullas Bill) or “An Act to Strengthen and Enhance the Use of the English as the Medium of Instruction in Philippine Schools” authored by Cebu Representative Eduardo Gullas (as cited in Nolasco 2008, p. 135). Gullas asserted:

> Ten Filipinos who are fully employed and economically productive, partly if not mainly on account of their adequate English skills, will do more good and justice to the Filipino heritage than 100 Filipinos who are jobless or underemployed because they lack English expertise. (“English Bill to pass despite suit,” 2007).

Then there was House Bill 3719, the Multilingual Education and Literacy Act of 2008 (Gunigundo Bill) authored by Valenzuela Representative Magtanggol Gunigundo, which proposed to “upgrade the literacy program of the government by making the native tongue as the medium of instruction for the formative years of basic education” (14th Congress of the Republic of the Philippines 2008, in Martin 2010). A formidable group of institutions such as the Linguistic Society of the

Philippines, Philippine Business for Education, Department of Education, and the National Economic Development Authority as well as educators and researchers from the University of the Philippines, Ateneo de Manila University, and De La Salle University pledged their support for the bill.

In 2009, the Department of Education (DepEd) issued Order No. 74, entitled "Institutionalizing Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education (MLE)". The order presents pedagogical principles validated by local empirical studies as the basis for promoting the use of the students' vernaculars for literacy and instruction. Because the implementation of the order is still in its foundation stages, the 35-year-old Bilingual Education Policy (BEP) that it replaced may still hold authority in many classrooms with the English-only policy as the default mode for many teachers who are drawn to its neat and simplified view of language learning.

While there are a growing number of local research on the effectiveness of using students' L1 in teaching content subjects such as Math and Science (Martin 2006; Balce 2010), the practice of teaching English in the Philippine context may still seem to reflect an adherence to the monolingual model, that is, teaching English exclusively through English without accommodating students' L1 as a strategic resource. In this context, Hall and Cook (2012) raise a relevant argument that "the monolingual teaching of English has inhibited the development of bilingual and bicultural identities and skills that are actively needed by most learners, both within the English-speaking countries and in the world at large" (p. 273). Indeed, in a multilingual nation with more than 170 languages (Nolasco 2008), monolingual instruction is an inadequate and ineffective practice that only silences the multilingual identities of students in and beyond the English classroom.

By employing a kind of language alternation (McLellan 2010) that uses Filipino and English to teach English, the Grade 6 teacher, who is the subject of this study, operated on a gut feel that seemed to follow how Canagarajah (1999) defines critical pedagogy as a "pedagogical practice in terms of an expanded notion of context" (p.17). Her language teaching practices are relevant to investigate at a time when the MTB-MLE policy is trying to gain momentum. Just as there was and continues to be resistance for the appointment of Tagalog as a national language, there is resistance against the notion that students' mother tongues have a rightful place in the classroom. After having been educated in the "American language" since the turn of the twentieth century, the multilingual Filipino still looks to English as the most credible language of knowledge and literacy.

## Using Filipino in an English Classroom

However, with the undeniable reality of languages coexisting in the English classroom, the questions that compel a more grounded look at how English is taught in periphery settings are how and why Filipino is used in teaching English in an elementary public school classroom. An investigation of the answers to these questions

is built upon the framework of *critical pedagogy* (CP) as it was applied in Canagarajah's research on a periphery Tamil community in the northern peninsula of Sri Lanka (1999). In analyzing the data, the study focused on the instances that the teacher used Filipino as soon as the period for teaching English began and when she signaled the end of class. The teacher's use of Filipino during English class was categorized broadly according to (a) classroom management or "ways in which L1 helps manage the instructional process" and (b) lesson content or "how the use of L1 is motivated by cognitive considerations to help in the transmission of the lesson's academic content" (pp. 131, 134).

Based on its School Profile Report (2009), Culiat Public Elementary School is located in a periphery community where most of its members live in slums or illegal settlements. Out of the total population, 25% are Muslim and 65% are Catholics. Furthermore, school enrolment is affected by demolitions of illegal settlements and the transient status of Muslims. Absenteeism among students is also a common concern among teachers. Many of the older students work before or after school hours as street vendors, jeepney barkers, or scavengers in dump sites. The School Profile Report also shows that 89% of the students' parents are unemployed, with 95% of those employed earning a monthly salary of 10,000 pesos or less (Ateneo Center for Educational Development 2009).

Based on the National Achievement Test (NAT) scores in 2006–2007, Culiat ES ranked 4th out of the five public schools in the district with a general average score of 54.40. In 2007–2008, it ranked 29th out of 38 schools in the district under the category of "400 and above examinees." Based on a survey of teachers on subjects that students seem interested in, frequency results show English as the subject that is least liked. Moreover, teachers identified "Basic communication skills in English" as the area where students perform most poorly (School Profile Report, ACED 2009).

The English class observed was ranked second among all Grade 6 sections in terms of achievement scores. There were 54 students in all, 26 of whom were male and 28 were female. The students are accustomed to seeing visitors observing different teachers and classes for research and benchmarking purposes such as local officials from the Department of Education as well as those from Singapore's Ministry of Education.

Ms. Bernardo is a pseudonym for a Grade 6 level English teacher. She has had teaching experience in a private school and has earned some graduate units. Ms. Bernardo's day in school began at 5:30 in the morning as she welcomed her students, checked attendance, and supervised the classroom's physical maintenance. It ended at 12:20 at noon after her last class period. She would teach five classes back-to-back every day for 360 min per day. This schedule allowed her to fulfill the number of hours as well as the number of teaching and service units prescribed by the school. The following table shows her daily schedule (Table 8.1).

A sense of awareness for this teacher's context in terms of a heavy workload that begins at 5:40 in the morning with no breaks in between classroom responsibilities except for the 20-min recess period leads to a more informed understanding of the different sources of tension, conflict, and fatigue. On top of a tight and packed schedule, Ms. Bernardo has to address problems on language proficiency, classroom performance, and test results.

**Table 8.1** Daily teaching schedule

| Time | Class/activity | Section |
|---|---|---|
| 5:40–6:00 | Good manners and right conduct (GMRC) | VI-Rizal |
| 6:00–7:00 | English | VI-Bonifacio |
| 7:00–8:00 | English | VI-Malvar |
| 8:00–9:00 | English | VI-Juan Luna |
| 9:00–9:20 | Recess | |
| 9:20–10:20 | Training of young writers' contestants/photojournalism | |
| 10:20–11:20 | English | VI- Burgos |
| 11:20–11:40 | Preparation of instructional materials | |
| 11:40–12:20 | HEKASI (*heograpiya, kasaysayan, at sibika* or geography, history, and civics) | VI-Rizal |
| Teaching load | 360 units | |
| Service load | 20 units | |
| Total | 380 units | |

## Teaching English in Filipino

The teacher was observed during 4 consecutive days. The following topics were taught and discussed in class (Table 8.2):

The main reference for the class exercises was a workbook prescribed by the Department of Education entitled *All Around English 6* by Lea G. Talosig (2005). Each student had a copy to take home to answer assigned pages and to bring back to class for reading and recitation. However, the school does not allow the students to write on the pages because these books would be passed on and used again for the next set of classes for the following school year. Students are only allowed to write their answers in their own notebooks or on separate sheets of paper, depending on the teacher's instructions.

The next table looks at the number of teacher's words uttered in Filipino versus the number of words uttered in English. The figures establish in more concrete terms that Filipino is, indeed, used in teaching English in a Grade 6 periphery classroom (Table 8.3).

That the teacher's total number of words is almost equally divided between Filipino and English is significant. The data validates what the research of Macaro (1997), as well as similar studies by Turnbull and Arnett (2002), Kim and Elder (2005), Liu et al. (2004), and Littlewood and Yu (2011) (as cited in Cummins 2010), points out that near-exclusive or exclusive use of L2 is rare in the classroom. Hall and Cook (2012) present an extensive survey of the use of both the students' "own language and new language" (pp. 280–286) in the English classroom. As a result, they point out that "there is overwhelming evidence of widespread own-language use and code-switching in language classrooms, so much so that the amount of own-language use is often underestimated or under-reported by teachers" (p. 287).

**Table 8.2** Lessons and activities observed and recorded in class

| Day | Topic/lesson/class activity |
|---|---|
| 1 | Checking homework on sequencing events |
| | Introducing lesson on cause and effect relationship |
| | Identifying cause and effect relationships in a paragraph |
| 2 | Checking homework on identifying cause and effect |
| 3 | Checking homework on getting the main idea of a paragraph |
| 4 | Checking homework on getting the main idea of a paragraph |

**Table 8.3** Frequency of teacher's words in Filipino and English in the data

| Class | Number of teacher's words in Filipino | Percentage | Number of teacher's words in English | Percentage | Total number of words |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 986 | 46.3% | 1145 | 53.7% | 2131 |
| 2 | 220 | 35.9% | 392 | 64.1% | 612 |
| 3 | 1490 | 58.6% | 1051 | 41.4% | 2541 |
| 4 | 772 | 48.5% | 820 | 51.5% | 1592 |
| Total | 3468 | 50.41% | 3408 | 49.59% | 6876 |

## Functions of Filipino in the English Classroom

The following extract illustrates the most frequent function of Filipino under classroom management in all the observed classes which is to encourage recitation (Table 8.4).

### Extract 8.1

| Classroom discourse in Filipino | Translation |
|---|---|
| T: *O, sino dapat?* Who's the next? *O sige. Kuya?* | T: Who should answer? Who's the next? Okay. Older brother? |

The practice of using Filipino to call on students to encourage them to recite in class was routine for Ms. Bernardo. Aside from calling their attention in Filipino, Ms. Bernardo was often observed to use familial terms such as *Kuya* which means "older brother" in Filipino or *Ate* which means "older sister." In a class of 56 students, Ms. Bernardo's manner of identifying students using familial terms seems to create the classroom as an extension of the family. Although Ms. Bernardo may not know all her students by name, calling them using either *Kuya* or *Ate* seems to resist the tendency to diminish her students into a state of anonymity and reduce the distance and power associated with the teacher's institutional role (Canagarajah 1999). Consequently, it also seems to establish rapport with the students as the familial term seems to perform an affective function of softening Ms. Bernardo's tone when calling on a student to recite. Ms. Bernardo demonstrated a sense of inclusiveness

**Table 8.4** Summary frequency table: functions of Filipino in classroom management in the data for four lessons

| Functions of Filipino in classroom management | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Encourage participation | 190 | 31% |
| 2. Break the ice and establish rapport | 89 | 15% |
| 3. Reprimand classroom behavior/performance/ maintain discipline | 89 | 15% |
| 4. Announce/reinforce classroom/school rules/ policies | 82 | 14% |
| 5. Check and comment on students' scores | 66 | 11% |
| 6. Prepare students for the lesson | 55 | 9% |
| 7. Praise/encourage classroom behavior and performance | 31 | 5% |
| Total | 602 | 100% |

that everyone in class, despite limited levels of English proficiency, may participate in the discussion. This may be viewed as contributing to a sense of confidence and security as a student had to commit to the challenge of demonstrating one's understanding of what was going in class by volunteering to recite. Furthermore, to be called and identified as an older brother or older sister may also signify an acknowledgment of one's sense of maturity and responsibility. Ms. Bernardo may have shown that she saw her students as having reached a mature age capable of independent thought that could be nurtured further. This is consistent with the study of Forman (2010) that identified "Ten Principles of Bilingual Pedagogy" in his study on Thai teachers in the tertiary level. The second pedagogical principle in this study is one that addresses the affective aspect of teaching and aims to establish solidarity "to facilitate easy, 'natural' interaction amongst students and teacher." Similarly, Dumatog and Dekker (2003) observed that teachers in Lubuagan, Kalinga, in the Philippines, developed more creative and culturally situated contexts of learning as the project led them to a sharpened awareness for how "the educational system had alienated Lubuagan children from their own culture" (Dumatog and Dekker 2003). Both studies corroborate the observation that Ms. Bernardo sought to provide a learning environment that allowed her students to see that their everyday lives, and the values that hold a community together, are not detached from the English classroom. In effect, English is not a detached language from the students' own language.

### Extract 8.2

| Classroom discourse in Filipino | Translation |
|---|---|
| T: Will you please listen first? (addressing students who are talking, then focuses again on the student who volunteered to answer) *Tayo ka nga, anak. Bakit nangyari ang Ondoy?* | T: Will you please listen first? (addressing students who are talking, then focuses again on the student who volunteered to answer) stand up, my child. Why did typhoon *Ondoy* happen? |

Another familial term that Ms. Bernardo used is *anak* which is the Filipino term to refer to one's child. This practice of using such a term to identify a student when managing classroom dynamics in recitation truly seems to reduce the distance and power of Ms. Bernardo as a teacher and identified her role as mother as well. Indeed, this function of Filipino may also demonstrate the view of CP toward learning as personal that which Canagarajah (1999) points out as "our consciousness, identity and relationships are implicated in the educational experience" (p.15). Thus, the classroom may be viewed as a shared community in the way Ms. Bernardo called her students with a term of endearment that means "my child." This function of Filipino seems to tap into the community's "cultural value" of family (Hohulin 1995; Dumatog and Dekker 2003; Zafra 2010) and, consequently, respect and solidarity (Forman 2010).

Aside from using Filipino when calling on students to recite, Ms. Bernardo also used it to ask a question to prompt and sustain interest and enthusiasm in sharing responses. In the second extract, the question about the causes of Typhoon *Ondoy* (international name *Ketsana*) in 2009 was preceded by the students' various narrations of their experiences during the tropical storm that affected more than five million lives (Philippine Statistics Authority 2009). The classroom buzzed with animated noise related to this question. Indeed, Ms. Bernardo seemed to know well enough to use a shared experience that remained powerful in the collective memory of many of its survivors in the National Capital Region (NCR), specifically in the Quezon City area where this public school is located. Allowing students to recall and narrate their vivid memories also allowed her to establish a personal and familiar sense of rapport; she demonstrated keen interest in their stories, and she asked relevant follow-up questions, repeated some parts of their stories for the rest of the class to hear, and expressed sympathy and empathy for what they went through. All of these exchanges were conducted in Filipino. The observation revealed how the class resonated with this distinct sense of community emerging from shared experiences, identities, and values through the use of Filipino to teach the skill of identifying cause and effect as a lesson in English class (Table 8.5).

The summary frequency table shows that the most frequent function of Filipino under lesson content in all the observed classes is identifying students' needs and problems. This function is adapted from the competencies of non-native English-speaking teachers (NNESTs) that Medgyes (in Forman 2010) identifies in his study. In the next extract, Ms. Bernardo drew students' attention to the need to improve their skill in sequencing events.

**Extract 8.3**

| Classroom discourse in Filipino | Translation |
|---|---|
| T: *Tingnan niyo*. Sequencing events? *Hirap din tayo*. *Hindi niyo mapagsunod-sunod yung? Storya.* | T: Look. Sequencing events? We also find this skill challenging. You do not know how to sequence events in a? Story. |

**Table 8.5** Summary frequency table: functions of Filipino in lesson content in the data for four lessons

| Functions of Filipino in lesson content | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Identifying students' needs and problems | 114 | 25% |
| 2. Facilitate comprehension | 69 | 15% |
| 3. Define vocabulary/translate phrases | 63 | 14% |
| 4. Clarify/qualify ideas | 47 | 10% |
| 5. Repeat students' answers | 43 | 10% |
| 6. Add knowledge/give information | 35 | 8% |
| 7. Translate task instructions | 25 | 5% |
| 8. Reformulate concepts/reinforce an idea | 21 | 5% |
| 9. Help in pronunciation | 13 | 3% |
| 10. Give examples | 8 | 2% |
| 11. Explain grammar points | 7 | 2% |
| 12. Initiate extended discourse | 4 | 1% |
| Total | 450 | 100% |

Interestingly, in using Filipino for this function under lesson content, Ms. Bernardo used the inclusive pronoun *tayo* (we) when she identified the challenge in applying this skill. In Medgyes' study (in Forman 2010), this kind of competency among NNESTs is more accurately identified as the ability to "be more empathic to the needs and problems of students" (in Forman 2010). This kind of empathy is evident in Ms. Bernardo's use of *tayo* (we) to signify how she herself could also relate to this challenge of applying the skill of sequencing events. She may have conveyed through the use of the pronoun, we, that it was a struggle she also found familiar and shared with her students. Including herself in the challenge seemed to have signified that they belonged to a group of shared goals and interests as demonstrated in the way that the whole class read the paragraphs together with Ms. Bernardo her close and attentive facilitation. Frequently, she would stop the class in the middle of their reading and ask comprehension questions immediately. When she would notice that there was some challenge in comprehending the meaning of a paragraph, she would emphasize key words and define them using translation.

### Extract 8.4

| Classroom discourse in Filipino | Translation |
|---|---|
| T: *Ano yung* "schools of fish?" *Ano, anong ibig sabihin ng* "schools?" *Baka sabihin niyo "ay, may skwelahan sa* beach." | T: What do we mean by "schools of fish"? What, what does "schools" mean? You might say "oh, there's a school on the beach." |
| S11: *Ang mga tirahan ng mga, mga bangka—* | S11: They are the homes of, boats— |
| T: *Tirahan ng? bangka?* | T: Homes of? Boats? |
| S12: *[isda]* | S12: [fish] |
| S13: *[−-mga isda po]* | S13: [fishes, Ma'am] |

| Classroom discourse in Filipino | Translation |
|---|---|
| T: When you say—*O?* "School of fish," meaning collective noun *yon. Yun ang grupo ng mga isda. Ang tawag natin sa kanila ay?* School of? Fish. *Naintindihan niyo? Grupo. Kung baga sa* fraternity? *O? grupo ng mga? Bata. Mga? Kalalakihan. Na iisa ang?* (pauses to listen to what a student says) *O ayan. Grupo ng Tau Gamma, alam na alam niyo talaga.* | T: When you say "school of fish," that is a collective noun. That refers to a group of fish. When they are in a group, we call it a school of? Fish. Did you understand? It is a group. Like a fraternity. It is a group of? Kids. Who are? Boys. Who have one? (pauses to listen to what a student says) yes, that's right. The group of Tau Gamma, you know that very well. |

Ms. Bernardo checked on the students' comprehension of the term "schools of fish" by using Filipino. This is consistent with relevant literature on using translation to explain and define terms in L2 (Canagarajah 1999; Macaro 2009; Latsanyphone 2009; Cummins 2010; Swain et al. 2011). There seemed to be considerable effort from the students to understand the use of collective nouns in this structure based on the tentative responses. Although the students' answers were nowhere near the accurate definition, Ms. Bernardo made an effort to steer their levels of understanding to more familiar terms. She directed the student's attention to the term "collective noun" to "a group of fish" and what it means in Filipino *(grupo ng mga isda).* There was a more deliberate pace in her speech as she seemed to make the effort to choose her manner of illustration more carefully. Her manner of focusing on the use of collective nouns in English is similar to how Zafra (2010) used *Sinugbuanong Binisaya* to raise "metalinguistic awareness" (p. 17) for understanding vocabulary in English. To make the term even more familiar, she used the word "fraternity" to explain what a group (*grupo)* is. She even acknowledged a specific fraternity *(Tau Gamma)* as she heard a student identifies the name in class. This led her to stress that she was aware that her students knew this concept very well *(alam na alam niyo talaga yan).* Close to the time of the classroom observations, media reported on violence initiated by a fraternity in another local public school in the city ("Top 10 in," 2011). This was a frequent topic in conversations among students and faculty outside the classroom. This extract may also show how Ms. Bernardo tapped on what Hohulin (1995) illustrated as one of the principles that guided the FLC-BP in Ifugao, and that is to use the students' "cultural model of the world to understand perceptual information, concepts and new information" (p. 8). She made an effort to catch the boys' interest by mentioning a familiar term, "fraternity" (*grupo ng mga bata, mga kalalakihan*) to explain the meaning of a collective noun. She showed that she was aware of the subculture of cliques and gangs in school and deliberately made use of this knowledge to facilitate understanding of this grammar item. Perhaps Ms. Bernardo chose "fraternity" as the most relevant term among her linguistic repertoire based on the media report at the time and how it might be relevant to her students. Viewed in this manner, Ms. Bernardo may be demonstrating how she applied the critical pedagogical principle of "learning as situated" that the students' personal and social contexts shape what is learned in class and that whatever is learned in class also shapes the students (Canagarajah

1999). More significantly, Ms. Bernardo's effort at explaining the concept of a collective noun demonstrated the need for both languages, English and Filipino, to facilitate understanding. Creese and Blackledge (2010) identify this as "translanguaging in which the speaker uses her languages in a pedagogic context to make meaning, transmit information, and perform identities using the linguistic signs at her disposal to connect with her audience in community engagement."

Reasons for Using Filipino in the English Classroom.

In a post-observation interview, Ms. Bernardo gives the following reasons in using Filipino in the English classroom:

1. To adjust teaching method to students' needs;
2. To encourage students to participate in class;
3. To be more efficient in explaining ideas and teaching skills;
4. To fulfill the requirements of the prescribed syllabus;
5. To assert the relevance of English to students' daily lives and future goals.

The following transcription shows Ms. Bernardo's response when was asked how she knew when to adjust her teaching method.

**Extract 8.5**

| Post-observation interview response in Filipino | Translation |
|---|---|
| *Pag magtatanong ka, hindi nila masagot, nagpabigay ka ng example, hindi nila makuha,*so meaning *ibig sabihin, "ay may problema na 'to." A, e, sige, i-Tagalog na natin. Ganito na lang ang paraan natin. Kasi,* or else*, kung masyado akong mag-ano sa standard ko kasi ito ang nakalagay sa libro, e ano pa'ng* learning*?* | When you ask them and they cannot even give an example it means "oh, there's a problem." okay then, let's use *Tagalog*. Let's just do it this way. If I always refer to my standards because of what I have learned from the books, what kind of learning is achieved? |

Ms. Bernardo saw herself as a *facilitator* who needed to be *flexible* (words in italics are Ms. Bernardo's). For her, the English-only policy did not allow effective learning to take place in the classroom. She maintained that she could not follow nor practice the English-only policy because it did not consider the needs and contexts of her elementary public school students. In this context, the use of Filipino in the English classroom may be viewed as a tool for empowerment for Ms. Bernardo as it appropriates teaching practices to suit the classroom realities of what students expect and what linguistic objectives need to be met. This reason also asserts that Ms. Bernardo was aware that she is part of a community; her role as English teacher was not detached from the realities of her students. Similar to the study of Creese and Blackledge (2010) and their notion of translanguaging, Ms. Bernardo understood that she needed both English and Filipino to make meaning as she engaged in a classroom that was also an extension of students' notions of family and community.

The four succeeding reasons seem to spring from this primary concern of adjusting the teaching method to students' needs. While Ms. Bernardo's conscious use of Filipino was to make English more accessible to her students, it was also grounded

on the obligation to satisfy the requirements of the class syllabus, the school's objectives, and institutional policies in the context of enabling the students to pass the National Achievement Test (NAT). In her effort to fulfill these institutionalized objectives, she was also making an effort to fulfill the students' needs. With every negotiation of how she could teach the prescribed syllabus effectively and appropriately, thereby fulfilling the school's objectives and equipping her students with the skills needed to pass the NAT, she was asserting her role as an English teacher. It was a daily classroom practice that employed "pedagogical practice in terms of an expanded notion of context" (Canagarajah 1999, p. 17). However, her reasons for using Filipino in the English classroom also must be discussed based on the CP framework that views learning as ideological and political (ibid.).

Ms. Bernardo seemed to accept the ideology that English is, indeed, *the* language of power and that achieving success means having to achieve a high level of English proficiency so that job opportunities arise, job security is fulfilled, and, consequently, financial independence is attained. But what standard of English is needed to achieve these goals? Based on her comments about investing in ELT books on teaching grammar and devoting time to her graduate studies that teach methods that seem more appropriate for private schools, she may still adhere to the notion that western-oriented standards of English provide the best measure for acceptable language proficiency. These are standards that are prescribed by center establishments, those that shape the educational policies and reforms in the country such as the Department of Education. Against this perceived notion of adhering to western-oriented standards of English, Canagarajah argues:

> While the center-based rules and values underlying English could alienate minority students, it is a more pluralized English that can accommodate their needs, desires, and values. English should become more pluralized to accommodate the discourses of other cultures and facilitate fairer representation of periphery subjects. Periphery communities are therefore compelled by virtue of their marginalized status and location to reform English. (1999, p. 175)

But perhaps the complex sociolinguistic, sociopolitical, and sociocultural history of center establishments in the Philippines that shape educational policies and reforms has done much to develop such tensions and conflicts between language theories, teaching practices, and classroom realities for public school teachers such as Ms. Bernardo. The need to be efficient in teaching the syllabus due to time constraints and institutional requirements such as achievement tests also did not give enough class time to interrogate the contents of the paragraphs in the English workbook.

At one point during the post-observation interview, Ms. Bernardo asked what appropriate resources and references of pedagogy and practice public school teachers like her can study when it comes to teaching English effectively under unique classroom contexts such as those in Culiat. It was a relevant question. She shared that she was aware that the teaching methods and language theories that she learned in her graduate classes are the ideal; but she reiterated that they are inadequate and irrelevant to her classroom realities. Ms. Bernardo's mindfulness of the challenges of an English teacher in a periphery setting brings to mind what Canagarajah asserts:

> ELT methods, as they are currently defined and practiced, stifle such reflexivity and negotiation as they enforce a partisan set of values, thought processes, and learning strategies as the norm. The emergent post-method movement, however, liberates learners and teachers from the totalizing control of methods and encourages them to develop the reflexive approach. (1999, p. 195)

## Conclusion

Implementing relevant language policies in a multilingual society such as the Philippines is, indeed, a complex task. Although the American colonial period did much to silence the Filipino multilingual, significant strides have been made since then to allow more voices to participate in the English classroom. Despite shifts in language policies and conflicts in implementing them consistently in the classroom, teachers like Ms. Bernardo consciously make the decision to empower themselves every day by putting students' needs first.

The functions of Filipino in the English classroom show that the periphery English classroom in Ms. Bernardo's context was an extension of family and a shared community in a larger perspective. For Ms. Bernardo, the teacher's role is not only to instruct but to discipline and assert the relevance of shared cultural values such as family, respect, accountability, honesty, and solidarity in the completion of classroom tasks. This is a unique feature in many English classrooms in the Philippine setting: students are part of a family, a community where the teacher is one who nurtures, guides, disciplines, and praises. In order to fulfill these roles, the empowered English teacher uses her students' languages in whatever relevant ways she can. Moreover, learning to use English in authentic and meaningful ways was not a solitary task in Ms. Bernardo's periphery English classroom. Identifying the functions of Filipino and analyzing the classroom interactions where these functions are relevant seem to point to the decision to use Filipino as a practice of resisting what Canagarajah terms as "center pedagogical practices" such as the English-only policy in an effort to make classroom tasks and institutional requirements such as achievement tests more appropriate to the classroom realities of students' limited levels of English proficiency. Each function under the two different aspects is related in the way that they seem to make the cognitive tasks in English more accessible and relevant.

However, as in the case of Ms. Bernardo's class, the notion that English proficiency is a gateway to financial success and stability is still a popular one in many educational settings. However, this view may have been shaped largely by the demands of institutional policies which public schools have long followed. Her openness to look for appropriate, relevant, and creative solutions to the challenges that Filipino public school teachers and students face in the teaching and learning of English in a periphery community reflect, indeed, a changing period in the field today. Stakeholders in the Philippine setting and the larger region will benefit in developing and maintaining teacher development that truly addresses classroom realities that include teaching English in a classroom with a plurality of voices.

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# Chapter 9
# English in the Teaching of Mathematics: Policies, Realities, and Opportunities

**Maria Luz Elena N. Canilao**

**Abstract** The transition from Bilingual Education Policy (BEP) to Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education (MTBMLE) policy has brought about many challenges for educators in the Philippines. In this new system, the prescribed medium of instruction (MOI) in mathematics in the first three levels of primary school is the mother tongue, and it shifts to English in the upper elementary levels. This chapter presents the highlights of my study on the role of English in teaching mathematics in the fifth and sixth grades of an urban public elementary school in the Philippines. Using the concepts of Discourses and cultural models (Gee, Social linguistics and literacies: ideology in discourses, 3rd edn. The Falmer Press, London, 1996, An introduction to discourse analysis: theory and method. Routledge, London, 1999) and building on the works of Moschkovich, (Math Think Learn, 4:189–212, 2002, Bilingual mathematics learners: how views of language, bilingual learners, and mathematical communication impact instruction. In Nasir N, Cobb P (eds), Diversity, equity, and access to mathematical ideas. Teachers College Press, New York, pp 89–104, 2007) and Setati (J Res Math Educ, 36:447–466, 2005, Access to mathematics versus access to the language of power. In: Novotná J, Moraová H, Krátká M, Stehlíková N (eds), Proceedings 30th Conference of the International Group for the Psychology of Mathematics Education. PME, Prague, pp 97–104, 2006), I uncovered realities of mathematics teaching and learning in two multilingual math classrooms. The results indicate that across mathematical and nonmathematical Discourses, teachers and learners use a combination of English, the prescribed medium of instruction; Tagalog, the children's home language; Taglish, the fusion of Tagalog and English; and other non-language resources. The main findings suggest that English serves mainly as the language of mathematics and assessment, while Tagalog and Taglish function primarily as the language of instruction, authority, and interpersonal communication. The majority of the students who participated in the study revealed that English was their least preferred

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language of instruction and assessment because they had difficulty understanding it. Possibilities for improving language-in-education policies are explored to empower teachers and learners in multilingual mathematics classrooms.

**Keywords** Bilingual Education Policy (BEP) · Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education (MTBMLE) Policy · Medium of Instruction (MOI) · Discourses · Cultural models

## The Role of English in Mathematics: Impediments and Attempts

For many children, learning mathematics is a complex task. Learning mathematics in English may even be more complicated for them if it is not their first language (L1). A child's L1 or mother tongue may mean any language which he/she is most familiar with (Congress of the Philippines 2013; UNESCO, 2003), and it may refer to his/her home language (as used in Setati 2005).

Thus, English may be a hurdle for learners who are still in the process of learning it if it is used as a medium of instruction (MOI) and as language of assessment for mathematics. They face the double burden of unlocking the intricacies of mathematics in a language that they still have to master. If English serves as a block to the learning of mathematics, what options may be considered?

Simplifying linguistic items of math word problems in English is one way of addressing this problem. Word problems present and describe specific situations requiring mathematical solutions that students are expected to provide by using appropriate computations, operations, or formulae. Studies in the United States (Abedi and Lord 2001; Barbu and Beal 2010; Martiniello 2008) reveal that English language learners (ELLs) in multilingual classrooms are the ones who benefit most from this process of linguistic modification that employs familiar terms and phrases students can easily grasp. ELLs refer to students whose first language is not English in the United States (Uro and Barrio 2013). Findings suggest that when ELLs encounter challenging math word problems and procedures, their performance declines as linguistic complexity is usually associated with mathematical difficulty. However, ELLs perform better when they solve math word problems that use simple language and require basic arithmetic procedures. Teachers are, therefore, encouraged to consider linguistic scaffolding in helping learners understand mathematics.

Visualizing word problems and translating them to the learners' home language are other means of providing cognitive support for learners who find it hard to understand mathematics in English. Versoza and Mulligan (2013) employed these strategies to help Filipino primary learners in an economically disadvantaged urban area in Metro Manila understand math concepts and problems. Their work confirms that students whose L1 is not English have more difficulty learning mathematics if

it is taught in English, and it shows that sufficient English skills are essential for them to solve word problems competently. Thus, they also used Filipino, the children's mother tongue, as an MOI to make learning more comprehensible and appealing. (The term Filipino may refer to the country's national language which is based on Tagalog, a regional language, or it may also refer to the citizens and nationals of the Philippines.)

Using the mother tongue as an MOI in mathematics is, indeed, another useful alternative as shown in other local studies in the Philippines. For instance, the findings of Espada (2012) comparing the use of the home language and the use of English as the MOI for mathematics show that Filipino kindergarten learners who were taught in Waray, their home language, had a higher achievement level than those who were taught in English. The results validate other local findings cited in the study (e.g., Dekker 2003; Reyes 2000) revealing that the use of the children's L1 as an MOI is more effective in helping children perform better in mathematics. This choice is ideal in multilingual settings where teachers and students speak and understand the same local language.

Using more than one language or code-switching (CS) in multilingual mathematics classroom is another resource that may be considered. Sepeng's study (2013) illustrates how ninth grade mathematics learners in South Africa employed English, the MOI, when they interacted with the teacher and the whole class and switched to isiXhosa, their home language, when they accomplished group tasks. The children also favored the use of English together with isiXhosa in solving math problems. While their achievement level was higher in English in word problems which could be attributed to the use of English as an MOI, in the area of sensemaking, their performance was better in isiXhosa. Other studies (e.g., Vizconde 2006; Bernardo 2008; Choudhury and Bose 2011; Jegede 2011) reveal similar benefits of CS in multilingual classrooms.

All these aforementioned works indicate that, indeed, children find it quite challenging to solve math problems in a language that is not their own. However, when they are given sufficient linguistic and cognitive scaffolds, they perform much better. Thus, with the Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education (MTBMLE) Policy that prescribes the use of the children's L1 as the primary MOI in mathematics in the first three grades, children in the Philippines are expected to learn it more effectively. However, there are obstacles that math teachers have to overcome, given the constraints of this new policy.

## From BEP to MTBMLE: Gains and Pains

In 2011, the K to 12 Program was launched to enhance the quality of basic education in the Philippines. The current K to 12 Program offers early learning education and additional 2 years of secondary education (SEAMEO INNOTECH 2012). Its implementation marked the official shift from the Bilingual Education Policy (BEP) that was reinforced in 1987 to the MTBMLE Policy that was institutionalized by the

Department of Education (DepEd) in 2009 (Department of Education 2010; Nolasco 2010; SEAMEO INNOTECH 2012).

The BEP prescribed English as the MOI for mathematics (Nolasco 2008), while the MTBMLE Policy requires the use of the L1 in teaching mathematics in the first three grades and the gradual use of English at the upper primary levels (Department of Education 2012a). The MTBMLE Policy is a product of a long-term project of DepEd (Cruz 2010), and it is based on studies (e.g., Walter and Dekker 2011) that prove that the use of the mother tongue as an MOI enables learners to develop literacy skills more efficiently, promotes learning in a second language and a third language more effectively, and hones cognitive abilities more successfully. It also is founded in a DepEd study that indicates that learners who were instructed in their L1 in mathematics and science achieved better in Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) tests (Department of Education 2009, 2010).

As early as the 1950s, various local experiments revealed that the use of the mother tongue as the MOI helped maximize student participation and promote literacy; however, the lack of materials in the local languages and the inadequate training of teachers in using local languages in instructing their students caused difficulty (Cena 1958). Just the same, the use of the local language as an MOI was advocated in the first two grades in all public schools, while English was used as the MOI from the third grade onward with the local language as the auxiliary language of instruction in the third and fourth grades. Tagalog was used as the MOI in the fifth and sixth grades (Bernardo 2008; Brigham and Castillo 1999; Mindo 2008). This was also in line with the advocacy of United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in 1953 to use the mother tongue as the MOI for promoting literacy in the classroom (UNESCO 1953; Bernardo 2008; Brigham and Castillo 1999).

It is important to note that in 1940, Tagalog was declared as the national language of the Philippines because it was regarded as the most developed regional language in the country (Brigham and Castillo 1999). In 1959, the national language was renamed Pilipino which is based on Tagalog, and in 1987, it was replaced with the term Filipino (Cruz 2010). Tagalog is currently acknowledged as one of the mother tongues in the K to 12 Program. Filipino is offered as a separate learning area, and it is introduced as an MOI in the upper grades in some subjects (Department of Education 2012b). Thus, in this study, Tagalog, instead of Filipino, is used to refer to the L1 of student participants. There is an ongoing debate on the distinction between Tagalog and Filipino in the K to 12 Program because they are very similar.

The use of English as an MOI was opposed by nationalists (e.g., Constantino 1982) in the 1960s. However, in the 1970s, English reclaimed its position as the primary MOI, being considered by the government as a vehicle for economic progress (Tollefson 1991). The role of English was strengthened further in the 1987 Constitution as it was declared as an official language together with Filipino, the

national language, while regional languages were acknowledged as auxiliary official languages (Nolasco 2008). The BEP was promoted with the vision of uplifting the state of education through the use of Filipino and English as the primary MOI (Department of Education, Culture and Sports 1987).

With the era of globalization in the 1990s and the early 2000s, there was widespread preoccupation in the learning of English, especially with the constant need for overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) by various countries and a high demand for Filipino workers who were highly competent in English by the booming business process outsourcing (BPO) industry. Many lawmakers, therefore, proposed and supported an English-only bill (Llanto 2008) which was countered by other legislators and members of the academic community who advocated the MTBMLE Policy (Gunigundo 2008). The triumph of the MTBMLE Policy happened in 2009 when DepEd institutionalized it (Nolasco 2010) and in 2013 when the K to 12 Act that mandated the MTBMLE Policy was signed into law (Congress of the Philippines 2013).

On paper, the MTBMLE Policy seems ideal; however, the transition from the BEP to the MTBMLE Policy has not been a smooth one, especially that primary school teachers are accustomed to teaching mathematics in English. Mathematics classrooms are “common sites of resistance” (Burton 2013, p. 89) with the lack of mathematical terminology in the mother tongue and the habit of learners who are accustomed to using mathematical terms in English.

The continued use of examinations in Filipino and English also gives teachers qualms about using the mother tongue as an MOI. Moreover, teachers are not given sufficient training in MTBMLE and are not provided with adequate materials to aid them (Burton 2013; Paulson Stone 2012). These are the same problems that teachers faced back in the 1950s when the local languages were used as MOI.

Another fundamental barrier to the use of the mother tongue as an MOI is the perception that its use can deprive learners of having access to English which is perceived as the language of attainment. For example, teachers may be willing to follow the MTBMLE Policy, but they may face external pressure from other stakeholders such as parents who believe that using the mother tongue as an MOI may be a hindrance to students’ achievements (Burton 2013; Paulson Stone 2012).

In Burton’s (2013) study, one teacher argued that in reality, the mother tongue, Filipino, and English are used in their classrooms because one language is not enough for teaching and learning in multilingual settings. Thus, while the MTBMLE Policy is meant to help children learn much better with the use of their L1 and designed to elevate the position of local languages in the field of education, it poses several challenges that need to be addressed and overcome.

It is, therefore, crucial to look at classroom realities in the Philippines that may give a clear glimpse of the place of English in the teaching of mathematics along with the children’s mother tongue. In determining its position, how it is used and why it is used that way have to be scrutinized considering the postcolonial condition of the Philippines.

## Language in the Math Classroom: Discourses and Practices

Language use in the math classroom is often guided by powerful forces that are unseen. This is the reality that needs to be unveiled further in order to determine the other aspects of teaching and learning mathematics. Gee (1999) contends that language always carries a political element which is related to the access of social goods that are associated with power.

Therefore, the political role of language in mathematics classrooms cannot be ignored (Setati 2005). Because language may either empower or marginalize learners in the classroom, its use has to be examined critically. Moschkovich (2007) and Setati (2002, 2005, 2006) are among those who explored new grounds in understanding the relationship between language and mathematics. They adopted Gee's (1999) concepts of Discourses and cultural models that may serve as helpful research tools in inspecting the role of language in mathematics.

According to Gee (1999, p. 17), discourse (with a small letter d) refers to "language-in-use or stretches of language (like conversations or stories)," while Discourses (with a capital D) include both verbal and nonverbal elements that are employed to project a certain identity and enact a particular activity. What helps shape Discourses are cultural models that have been constructed in people's minds through social interaction. The patterns that people have grown accustomed to usually develop into accepted and appropriate standards or cultural models that they adhere to.

Gee (1999) describes cultural models as given assumptions that are usually transmitted and bolstered through various means. They differ across cultures and communities, and they may evolve through time along with changes in society and culture. People may also hold on to competing cultural models which are fostered through various modes of communication and social interaction.

Using Gee's concept of Discourses, Moschkovich (2007) determined various mathematical Discourses that seventh and eighth grade bilingual learners engage in. Her study reveals that mathematical communication involves not only words and figures but gestures, visuals, and concrete objects as well. She contends that the focus should veer away from looking at the difficulty of bilingual mathematics students in learning vocabulary and unlocking meaning of concepts and shift to the ability of children to use creative strategies and resources such as daily experiences and CS in tackling problems.

CS involves the process of shifting from one language to another employed by bilingual and multilingual speakers (Edwards 1994). For instance, many Filipinos use Tagalog and English together or Taglish in their informal interactions. Dayag (2008, p. 50) defines Taglish as "the code-switching variety of Philippine English." McFarland (2008, p. 144), on the other hand, describes it as "a general label given to the mixing of English and Tagalog, which is available to all bilingual speakers," and it is commonly used in casual conversations.

McFarland (2008) distinguishes CS from borrowing that involves appropriating terms from another culture through intercultural contact or substituting existing

words with those from a more dominant culture. Bilingual and multilingual speakers often use CS and borrowing, but they also employ translanguaging for academic purposes.

Translanguaging involves "the process of making meaning, shaping experiences, gaining understanding and knowledge through the use of two languages" (Baker 2011, p. 288). García (2009a, b) extended its description and uses it to embody bilingual speakers' practices to communicate effectively. Translanguaging may include CS and translation, and it is meant to help speakers in multilingual contexts fulfill their learning goals. It is also associated with the concept of translingual practice (Canagarajah 2013) that views languages as complementary and hybrid. This position encourages learners to draw from their linguistic repertoire and other available resources to convey ideas and grasp meaning. While translanguaging focuses more on the cognitive aspects of language use, translingual practice emphasizes the social elements of communication (Canagarajah 2013).

The multilingual mathematics classroom, therefore, is one domain where different languages may come into contact as teachers and students from different cultural backgrounds interact to negotiate learning in the classroom resulting in various Discourses. A domain is a social space where members are defined by their social roles and relationships (Fishman 1972; Spolsky 2007). Among the mathematical Discourses that surfaced in Setati's (2005) investigation on mathematical Discourses in a South African primary classroom were procedural Discourses that refer to the steps taken to solve problems and conceptual Discourses that explain the processes learners follow to have a clearer understanding of mathematics.

Nonmathematical Discourses were also observed such as regulatory Discourse which was used by the teacher to manage students' behavior and contextual Discourse which was employed to enable children to understand the situation used in word problems. The cultural models that surfaced indicate that English served as the language of mathematics, authority, and assessment, while Setswana, the children's home language, functioned primarily as the language of solidarity. The study also showed the teacher participant's dilemma. As an African, she wanted to uplift the position of Setswana, the home language, but as a teacher, she considered the practical importance of English that her students could benefit from.

Setati looked at the cultural models that some eleventh graders from South Africa adhered to as well. What was prevalent in this study (Setati 2006, p. 99) was the cultural model of "English as an international language." Students equated English with attainment and desired to acquire it for future academic purposes and better work opportunities. The results also indicate that learners favored their home language as the MOI in mathematics, so they could understand concepts easily. At the same time, they wanted to have access to English which they regarded as their primary vehicle for obtaining social goods. The findings suggest competing cultural models that expose the complex relationship between language and mathematics education.

## Teaching and Learning Math: Queries and Discoveries

Following the lead of Gee (1999), Moschkovich (2007), and Setati (2005, 2006), I investigated the place of English in the teaching of mathematics in a public elementary school in Quezon City, one of the biggest cities in Metro Manila. The study involved Teacher A, a fifth grade female math teacher with 8 years of teaching experience, and Teacher B, a sixth grade male math teacher with 3 years of teaching experience.

Three class observations were conducted in Teacher A's fifth grade class and in Teacher B's sixth grade class as well. Teacher A's lessons were about temperatures and line graphs, and Teacher B's lessons were about plane and solid figures. Post-observation interviews with Teacher A and Teacher B were conducted after each class observation. A video recorder was used for the class observations and a voice recorder for the interviews.

A survey asking Teacher A's and Teacher B's students to indicate their most and least preferred MOI, and language of assessment was also included in the study. The teacher and student participants are multilingual speakers coming from different cultural backgrounds, and they shared a common language: Tagalog, the children's home language and the lingua franca in Quezon City.

Thirty-eight students (79%) in Teacher A's fifth grade class and 33 students (70%) in Teacher B's sixth grade class agreed to participate in the study. Ten students (21%) in Teacher A's fifth grade class and 14 students (30%) in Teacher B's sixth grade class declined. I obtained the formal consent of DepEd, the participating elementary school, the teacher participants, the student participants, and their parents to conduct the study. The research procedures they agreed to and the ethical standards my university required were followed.

In transcribing the video recording of the class observations, I adopted Gee's (1999) and Setati's (2005) methods. One complete speaking turn was considered an utterance in this study, and stanzas indicated the different parts of the lessons. Utterances and stanzas were numbered sequentially per lesson. Some Vienna-Oxford International Corpus of English markup conventions (VOICE 2007) were also followed in transcribing the lessons. Student speakers who spoke in unison in the class observation were identified as SS. Individual speakers among the students were identified according to the sequence of their speech and their gender (e.g., Boy 1; Boy 2; Girl 1; Girl 2), and those individual speakers who were unidentifiable were marked SX, and those whose genders were identifiable were marked SX-f (female) and SX-m (male). Like Setati (2005), I indicated English translations in brackets. In this work, additional information is given in brackets.

Based on the stanzas, the types of Discourses were categorized, and utterances per stanzas were classified according to these categories and according to the languages used by the participants: English, Tagalog, and Taglish. Tagalog had two categories: Tagalog and Tagalog with borrowed terms from English (e.g., mathematical terms).

The findings echo the contention of one teacher from Burton's (2013) study that in a multilingual classroom, there is space for more than one language. In both the fifth and sixth grade mathematics classes, English was used along with Tagalog and Taglish. In Teacher A's fifth grade class, formal Tagalog was used as the main MOI, while in Teacher B's sixth grade class, conversational Taglish was the dominant MOI. Both appropriated English terms and expressions in conducting their math lessons. No single language was used by both teachers. They used a combination of English, Tagalog, and Taglish within and across Discourses in conducting their mathematics lessons.

Below is an excerpt from a fifth grade lesson that shows how Teacher A borrowed English scientific terms (e.g., #11-thermometer; mercury) into her formal Tagalog statements. Excerpts are numbered according to the order of presentation in this chapter, not according to the stanzas used in the original transcripts, and utterances are numbered sequentially per excerpt.

**Excerpt 9.1**

1. TEACHER A: Okay. *Bago tayo mag-start (balikan natin) yung* lesson *natin kahapon. Naaalala n'yo pa ba 'yon?* [Before we start, let's review yesterday's lesson. Do you still remember it?]
2. SS: *Opo*. [Yes. *Opo* is a Tagalog word indicating a formal and polite way of expressing agreement in the Philippines.]
3. TEACHER A: *Tungkol saan ang* lesson *natin?* [What was our lesson about?]
4. GIRL1: *Ma'am, pangsukat ng ano. Kung gaano kainit o kaya kung gaano kalamig.* [It's used for measuring how hot or cold something is.]
5. TEACHER A: Okay. Very good.
6. GIRL 1: Temperature *po,* Ma'am. [Temperature, Ma'am.]
7. TEACHER A: *And then, maliban doon, ano pa yung natutunan n'yo kahapon?* [What else did you learn yesterday?]
8. SX: Ma'am!
9. TEACHER A: *Magtaas na lang ng kamay.* [Just raise your hand.]
10. SX: (inaudible)
11. TEACHER A: *Pagsukat o pagbasa ng* thermometer.
[Measuring or reading the thermometer.] Very good. Okay. *Kapag mainit ang panahon, anong nangyayari sa* mercury? [When the weather is warm, what happens to the mercury?]

The next excerpt illustrates Teacher B's use of Taglish in his sixth grade class and other non-language resources (e.g., use of sample figures) in explaining mathematical concepts.

**Excerpt 9.2**

1. TEACHER B: Okay. So, *anu-ano pa ang iba't ibang mga* solid figures *na makikita natin*? *Meron tayong tinatawag na* [So what are the different types of solid figures that we see? There is what we call]…{looks for his sample figure}…*Meron tayong tinatawag na*… [There's what we call a…]
2. SX: Cone.
3. TEACHER B: {shows a sample figure} *Yung parang don sa apa…Yung* ice…[It's like the ice cream cone…the ice…]
4. SS: Cone!
5. TEACHER B: Cone.{shows a sample figure} *Ngayon* [now] (unintelligible) {shows features of the sample figure} *na meroong* circular base. *Bakit* circular base? *Kasi bilog.* And then curved surface *at meron siyang* [that has a circular base. Why circular base? Because it's round]…{refers to the tip of the figure} *Anong tawag sa dulo?* [what do you call the tip?]
6. SX: Vertex.
7. TEACHER B: Vertex. *Isang…Isa lang, ha*? [one…just one, all right?] vertex. *Nasa dulo. Meron siyang* slant *na*…[It's on the tip. It has a slant that's…] {refers to that part of the figure}*Anong tawag dito*? [what do you call this?]
8. SX: Edge.

Having taught at private schools that prescribed English as an MOI for mathematics and following this mandate for teaching upper elementary grades firmly, Teacher A and Teacher B used English initially in teaching mathematics when they transferred to the participating public elementary school. Later on, they began using Tagalog and Taglish, respectively, because their students could hardly express themselves and understand the lesson. The following excerpt shows Teacher B's view.

**Excerpt 9.3**

TEACHER B:…*kasi ang napansin ko na kahit* English *ka ng* English *kung di naman naiintindihan ng bata, bakit pa? Ang importante naman* is *yung naiintindihan ng bata.* […because I noticed that even if I kept using English, if the students couldn't understand it, then, what's the point? What is important is that children understand it.]

The main factor, therefore, that guided their decision to shift from English to Tagalog and Taglish as the primary MOI was their pedagogical concern. They wanted learners to participate more actively in class and grasp math concepts more effectively through a nonthreatening and a familiar medium. What enabled them to make this choice was the school culture that allowed code-switching in the classroom. According to the school principal (2014, personal communication, 6 February), there had never been English-only policies that penalized students for using local languages. He asserted that such policies were not appropriate and effective. The school's language policy, therefore, mirrors a culture that fosters multilingual education and respects children's rights to use their mother tongue as espoused by UNESCO (1953, 2003).

The mathematical Discourses that were observed in the study include the following types. Sample excerpts are provided to distinguish them:

- **Whole-class discussion Discourse –** Involves question and answer activities to introduce, explain, and review concepts

**Excerpt 9.4**

1. TEACHER B: …*Tinatawag silang* 2D. *Ngayon, yung mga larawan na nakikita nyo naman, nahahawakan… na mayroon siyang dagdag…tinatawag nating* height. *Di ba sa* 2D *meron lamang siyang* length *at tsaka* width*?* So, *ngayon,*{shows a sample figure} *yung mga larawan na nakikita nyo… mga larawan na nakikita n'yo na meroong* length, width, *at tsaka* height*, ang tawag naman don ay*…[…They are called 2D. Now, the pictures that you can see and touch…that have something added… we call height. 2D figures only have length and width, right? So, now, the pictures you see…the pictures you see with length, width, and height are called…]
2. SX-m: Solid figure.
3. TEACHER B:…*tinatawag na*? [they are called?]
4. SS: Solid figure.
5. TEACHER B: {takes away previous visual aids on the board and writes on the board} solid?
6. SX: Figure. *Meron silang* [they have]…{shows a sample}length…
7. SS:… width…
8. TEACHER B: *May* [they have] width…
9. SS: Height!
10. TEACHER B:…*at mayroong* [and they have]?
11. TEACHER B AND SS: Height.

- **Procedural Discourse** – Deals with the process of computations (Setati 2005)

**Excerpt 9.5**

1. TEACHER A: One by one. Five plus four?
2. SS: Nine!
3. TEACHER A: Nine plus six?
4. SS: Fifteen.

- **Conceptual Discourse** – Focuses on the reasons for choosing particular operations in a given problem or situation (Setati 2005)

**Excerpt 9.6**

1. TEACHER A: …*Anong* operation *ba ang gagamitin sa* number two? [What operation should you use for number two?]
2. SS: Subtraction.

3. TEACHER A: *Paano n'yo nalaman na mag-su*subtract *kayo*? [How did you conclude that you have to do subtraction?] {Various answers are given by students at the same time and the teacher calls on one student to answer.}
4. SF: Ma'am*, para maano. Para malaman kung gaano yung ki-nut n'ya o binaba n'ya.* [Ma'am, to find out how it has decreased.]

- **Illustrative Discourse** – Entails the use of visuals, gestures, concrete objects, and other resources (e.g., using actions) to make mathematical concepts more vivid in the minds of learners

**Excerpt 9.7**

1. TEACHER B: …*Anong* funnel? *Alam n'yo yung…ah…Yung nilalagay sa…sa* plastic. *Binubuhusan ng ano*…[What is a funnel? You know the…uh…The one in…in plastic. Where you pour the…]
2. SX: *Ayun!* [That one!]
3. TEACHER B: '*Yung malamig o kaya kung minsan ano. Embudo.* [Cold or sometimes the…Funnel.]
4. SS: Ah! *Ay!* [Oh!]
5. TEACHER B: *Embudo. Embudo. O 'yung iba*. [Funnel. Funnel. The others.] {raises the marker} *O para mas mabilis ilagay… isalin ang…yung tubig*. [Or so it's faster to place…to pour…water.]
6. GIRL 11: Sir, *ako*! [Sir, me!] {answers the next item}
7. TEACHER B: *Tama ba?* [Is it correct?]
8. SX: *Opo.* [Yes.]
9. TEACHER B: Funnel shaped *siya, di ba?* [It's funnel shaped, right?]{gets a sample figure of a cone} *Di ba, ito?* [This one, right?]… *gasolina* [gasoline]. {pretends to pour gas into the cone and students laugh} *Di ba*? [Right?]…

- **Explanatory Discourse** – Reflects instances when teachers offer supplementary input to clarify points

**Excerpt 9.8**

1. TEACHER A:…Group D. *Sasabihin ko para* aware kayo. Correction po *sa* eight p.m. *Dapat po ito ay* twenty eight point two degrees Celsius [I will tell you something to make you aware of it. There is a correction with the temperature at eight p.m. It should be twenty eight point two degrees Celsius.]
2. GROUP D REPORTER (F1): Ma'am, *nandito,* Ma'am. [It's here, Ma'am.] {gives their group paper to the teacher}

3. TEACHER A: Okay. {reads their paper} *Ah, medyo mali ang pagkasulat. Okay. Pero,* anyway, *tingnan natin.*{points to the items on the Manila paper} *Ano kaya ang mangyayari sa mga sagot ninyo dito sa bandang ibaba kung meron kayong maling* reading *sa* thermometer *ninyo na nasa taas?* [Oh, there is an error in the item written on the visual aid. Let us look at it. What would happen to your answers written in the bottom if you had a wrong reading of the thermometer as indicated above?]
4. SX: *Mali rin,* Ma'am *ang makukuha mo sa baba.* [You would also get the wrong answers.]

- **Evaluation Discourse** – Indicates the process of assessment

**Excerpt 9.9**

TEACHER A: {reads the test questions aloud}…Okay. Question number two. At what time is the temperature thirty five degrees Celsius? *Sa anong oras ang* temperature *ay* thirty five degrees Celsius? [At what time is the temperature thirty five degrees Celsius?] Okay. Number three. What is the difference between the temperature at six a.m. and eight a.m.? *Ano ang* difference *ng* temperature *ng* six a.m.*at tsaka ng* eight a.m.? [What is the difference between the temperature at six a.m. and eight a.m.?]…

- **Group Presentation Discourse** – Allows students to share their work with the entire class

**Excerpt 9.10**

1. GROUP A REPORTER (M): {reads the piece of paper} I am pupil (mentions his name) of Group 1. (Mentions his other group mate) is my assistant (member)…
2. GROUP A REPORTER (F): {continues to read the piece of paper} our member are…{introduces their group members}…now, listen to our report. According to the chart, at six o'clock in the morning, the temperature was twenty-six degrees Celsius…

Teacher A and Teacher B and their students also engaged in nonmathematical Discourses which include the following categories. Some excerpts are shown to illustrate them.

- **Preparatory Discourse** – Involves setting the tone for the session

**Excerpt 9.11**

1. TEACHER A: Okay. Ready *na tayo*? Ready *na kayo*? [Are we ready? Are you ready?]
2. SS: Opo. [Yes.]

3. TEACHER A: *Yung* ready, *pataas naman ng kamay*. [If you are ready, raise your hand.] {Students raise their hands.} Okay. Very good. {calls on a boy and talks to him directly} Ready *na rin po*? [Are you also ready?]
4. BOY 1: *Opo*. [Yes.]

- **Regulatory Discourse** – Includes monitoring and managing students' behavior in the classroom (Setati 2005)

**Excerpt 9.12**

TEACHER B: …*Tahimik nga* [Silence]…{directs groups to their areas} Group one. Group two. Group three. Group four. Group five. *Tsaka* [And] group six. {Students go to their respective areas for the group task} *Upo na. Upo na*. [Sit down. Sit down.]…

- **One-on-one Discourse** – Shows direct communication between the teacher and the students

**Excerpt 9.13**

1. GIRL 7: {finishes her computation, goes to the back, and looks at the computations on the board} Sir*, tama yung sagot ko*? [Sir, is my answer correct?]
2. TEACHER B: *I*-check *natin pagkatapos ni* (*first name of the boy*) *at ni ano* (*the other girl*).. [We'll check it after (*first name of the boy*) and (*the other girl*)]…*I*-che-check *natin mamaya.* [We'll check it later.]

- **Congratulatory Discourse** – Reflects personal acknowledgment by the teachers and the class

**Excerpt 9.14**

1. GROUP FOUR REPRESENTATIVE (F): {counts the edges} It has twelve edges.
2. TEACHER B: Twelve edges. Okay *na?* [Okay now?]{The female group representative hands him the green prism.}*Palakpakan natin*. [Let's give them a round of applause.] {The teacher and the students give them a round of applause as the group representatives go back to their seats.}…

- **Personal sharing Discourse** – Entails narration of personal experiences to inspire learners

**Excerpt 9.15**

1. TEACHER A: … {points to the graph}*so etong* graph *na 'to, sinasabi sa atin na mabilis siyang lumalaki dahil 'yung* line *ay pataas*. Okay. So, actually zero *hanggang siya ay maging* nine years. *Totoo 'yon. Kayo nga eh. 'Di nga lang kayo* nine years old. *Ilang taon na ba kayo?* [This graph tells us she grew up fast because the line is ascending. From zero to nine years. That's true. Like you. You're not just nine years old. How old are you now?]
2. SS: Eleven!
3. TEACHER A: Ten. Eleven. *Pagdating n'yo sa* grade six *sa* June. Okay. *Ganyan ang itsura n'yo ngayon…Tuwing* June, *nakikita ko 'yung mga estudyante ko nung* grade five, *pagdating ng* June, they feel *na ang bilis lumaki. 'Yung iba, mas matangkad pa sa akin. 'Di ba?* Okay, so *ang bata, talagang mabilis ang paglaki*. Okay. *Natutuwa ba kayo 'pag sinasabing "Uy, matangkad ako?"* [When you reach grade six in June. That's how you look now. When…When June comes, I see my former grade five students who feel they grow so fast. Some are even taller than I am. Right? Children really grow fast. Do you feel glad when you say, "Hey, I'm tall?"]
4. SS: *Opo*. [Yes.]

- **Emotive Discourse** – Mirrors the expression of emotions

**Excerpt 9.16**

1. TEACHER B: Number six. {calls on a girl to answer the sixth item on the board in the matching activity}…{The girl chooses the wrong label which she pastes on the board.}
2. SX: *Ay, Ginoo*! [Oh, my God!] {The girl realizes her mistake and replaces the wrong label with the correct one because of her classmate's exclamation.}

- **Farewell Discourse** – Requires a formal exchange of goodbyes to end classes

**Excerpt 9.17**

1. TEACHER A: …Okay. So, that's all for today. Goodbye…
2. SS: Goodbye, Ma'am (surname of teacher). Goodbye, Ma'am (nickname of the researcher).

The results indicate that 58% of Teacher A's utterances were in Tagalog with borrowed terms from English, 18% were in Tagalog; 16% were in English; and 8% were in Taglish. Most of her utterances (76%) involved mathematical Discourses,

and the others (24%) reflected nonmathematical Discourses. On the other hand, 28% of Teacher B's utterances were in Taglish; 26% were in Tagalog; 26% were in Tagalog with borrowed terms from English; and 20% were in English. Most of his utterances (80%) also indicate mathematical Discourses, and the others (20%) show nonmathematical Discourses.

Teacher A's utterances were spread across the following Discourses (whole-class discussion Discourse (64%); regulatory Discourse (18%); conceptual and explanatory Discourses (10%); and other mathematical and nonmathematical Discourses (8%)), while Teacher B's utterances were divided among the following Discourses (whole-class discussion Discourse (46%), illustrative Discourse (21%); regulatory Discourse (17%); procedural and explanatory Discourses (12%); and other mathematical and nonmathematical Discourses (4%)).

Most of Teacher's A utterances in whole-class discussion Discourse were in Tagalog with borrowed terms from English (62%), followed by English (15%), Tagalog (1%), and Taglish (10%). In regulatory Discourse, her utterances were primarily in Tagalog with borrowed words from English (47%) and Tagalog (37%) and seldom in English (15%) and Taglish (1%). 88% of Teacher A's utterances in conceptual Discourse were in Tagalog with borrowed terms from English, and 12% were in English.

Teacher B's whole-class discussion Discourse were mainly in Taglish (30%), followed by Tagalog (27%), Tagalog with borrowed terms from English (22%), and English (21%). 31% of his utterances in illustrative Discourse were in Taglish, 35% were in Tagalog with borrowed terms from English; 27% were in Tagalog; and 7% were in English. He used Tagalog with borrowed terms (35%), Tagalog (33%) and Taglish (22%) frequently, and English (10%) sparingly for regulatory Discourse.

As the figures indicate, both teachers devoted much time to whole-class discussion Discourse which Teacher A conducted primarily in Tagalog with borrowed terms from English and Teacher B in Taglish. Their frequent use of Tagalog and Taglish in these mathematical Discourses suggests the cultural model that the *mother tongue or the local language is the language of learning and teaching*. However, Teacher A and Teacher B borrowed English mathematical terms and incorporated them in their Tagalog statements regularly. They also used English primarily for procedural Discourse suggesting the cultural model that *English is the language of mathematics* similar to Setati's (2005) findings. Most mathematical terms and expressions used by the teachers and students were in English because they had grown accustomed to it.

When asked if they were in favor of translating English mathematical terms and expressions to Tagalog, Teacher A opposed it, believing that they are originally in English, while Teacher B supported it, asserting that it would help learners understand concepts better. Despite this difference in opinion, both teachers showed a level of appropriating these English terms and used them as resources. In Teacher A's case, her integration of these English words into formal Tagalog statements made them sound as part of her Tagalog repertoire. On the other hand, Teacher B's use of these English expressions in his conversational Taglish mode made the class-

room atmosphere more "Filipino" as it approximated real-life Filipino conversations outside the classroom.

Both teachers also employed English mainly for evaluation Discourse indicating the cultural model that *English is the language of assessment* parallel to Setati's (2005) findings. However, while Teacher A and Teacher B used English mainly for evaluation, Teacher A provided an English version followed by a Tagalog version of the test, while Teacher B gave Tagalog clarifications of the instructions when needed. Teacher A also began designing tests in Tagalog that was more consistent with the primary language of instruction she used in her math class.

In the initial interview, Teacher A said that she did not focus much on standardized examinations in English, but later on, she admitted that my presence as an observer made her remember the need to for her students to be exposed to English somehow because it is the language of assessment for standardized periodical examinations. Hence, another important factor that helps shape Discourse is the language of standardized tests.

The case of Teacher A illustrates the dilemma that most teachers go through, and this tension represents competing cultural models that Gee (1999) describes. Teacher A favored the use of Tagalog, her students' mother tongue, as the MOI and also preferred it as the language of assessment; however, she could not ignore the reality that standardized examinations are in English. This dilemma reflects the same predicament that other teachers go through as indicated in previous studies (e.g., Setati 2005; Paulson Stone 2012; Burton 2013).

The illustrative Discourse that Teacher B engaged in as shown in Excerpt 9.7 was quite remarkable. He used gestures, drawings, illustrations, concrete objects, and even humor to enable his students to have a more practical grasp of math concepts and make math lessons more meaningful and exciting. In one session, for instance, an "aquarium" made of hard paper was placed in his classroom. Fish-shaped cutouts with concealed questions filled it for students to pick, open, read, and answer as a form of review. The class participated enthusiastically. He also asked them in groups to produce their own solid figures using hard paper in different colors (e.g., a black cone; a blue pyramid; a green rectangular prism; a red cylinder; a violet sphere; and a yellow cube).

Thus, teaching mathematics is also not just a matter of using the right words or expressions. Teacher B's strategies show how non-language resources may be used in mathematics classrooms to develop learners' mathematical competence as Moschkovich (2002, 2007) proposed. Teacher B's use of conversational Taglish also established a friendly atmosphere that encouraged children to participate enthusiastically in the series of activities he conducted.

Personal Discourses (one-on-one; congratulatory; personal sharing; emotive; and farewell Discourses) transformed the mathematics classrooms from mere venues for cognitive development into settings for enjoyable learning and class bonding. All nonmathematical Discourses Teacher A and Teacher B engaged in were primarily in Tagalog and Taglish except for farewell Discourses that were usually done in formal English suggesting the cultural models that *Tagalog and Taglish are the languages of authority* and *interpersonal communication.*

Both teachers also gave the children the freedom to use the language of their choice in their math classrooms. Their belief in the value of this freedom was a major factor that guided their language practices in class. In one instance, Teacher B's student exclaimed, "Ay, Ginoo!*" [Oh, my God!], an expression in Bisaya (a general term referring to the language used in various provinces in the Visayas and Mindanao), when a classmate posted the wrong label beside an illustration of a solid figure in a visual aid posted on the blackboard as shown in Excerpt 9.16. Upon hearing the Bisayan expression often used in Metro Manila, the girl who made the mistake used the linguistic signal and corrected her answer. This is an evidence of how multilingual children may employ verbal cues to support their learning in the math classroom. It also shows how they use their home or local languages to express their strong feelings, suggesting the cultural model that the *home language is the language of emotions*.

The combined use of different languages including CS and translation for pedagogical purposes may be considered an instance of translanguaging. Teacher A and Teacher B made use of linguistic resources to enable learners to grasp math concepts and procedures more effectively. They also demonstrated to their students how to use these linguistic tools which their students employed. Translingual practice was, therefore, apparent in these multilingual mathematics classroom.

However, English was used for farewell Discourses that formally ended classes suggesting the cultural model that *English is the language of academic settings*. Students also used English primarily for group presentation Discourse as indicated in Excerpt 9.10, another instance that reflects this cultural model. What was interesting in the fifth grade class was that students were actually reminded by their teacher that they could continue using Tagalog for the group presentation if they were more comfortable with it. However, on the day of the observation, they opted to use English. The following excerpt shows the group reporters' responses when asked why they chose English for their group presentations.

**Excerpt 9.18**

1. STUDENT 1: *Para mataas ang grade*. [To get a high grade.]
2. STUDENT 2: *Yung tanong po namin…yung tanong* English. [Our questions were…the questions were in English.]
3. STUDENT 3: *Para po mahasa din ang utak…[*So, we can also hone our minds…]
4. STUDENT 4: *Para mahimasmasan po.* [To regain consciousness or wake up.] {laughter}

Their statements suggest the cultural models that *English is the language of reporting in the classroom* and *English is the benchmark of achievement; the gauge of communicative competence*; *the sharpener of the mind*; *and the carrier of power.* However, while the reporters used English for the group presentations, it was carried out more in a mechanical manner than a spontaneous way. Students looked at

their visual aids instead of establishing audience contact and spoke in soft and shy tones. There seemed to be an absence of ownership in using the language.

It was a manifestation that many public elementary school students in the upper grades still grapple with the English language as results of achievement tests suggest. Math achievement tests in English conducted by the Ateneo Center for Educational Development (ACED) among public elementary schools show that a significant number of students score below 50%, and English was regarded as a "stumbling block" to word problems (ACED 2009, pp. 8–9, 2011, 2012, 2013). Thus, in many instances, mathematics teachers in the upper elementary grades, observing their learners' difficulty in learning mathematics through English, use the language that they think could best help them achieve their teaching goals.

The results of the student survey confirmed the teachers' claim that the children found it difficult to learn math through English. The most preferred MOI of fifth grade student participants for mathematics was Tagalog (58%) followed by Taglish (34%) and English (8%), while the most preferred MOI of sixth grade student participants for mathematics was Taglish (61%) followed by Tagalog (33%) and English (6%).

The majority of the fifth and sixth student participants chose English as their least preferred language of instruction, and the main reason they gave was that they could hardly understand it. As one sixth grade participant described her experience of tackling math in English: "dahil para akong nanonose blid at para akong nahihilo at nakakapagod itagalog" [because it's like I experience a nose bleed and I feel nauseous and it is exhausting translating it to Tagalog].

The majority of the fifth grade participants identified Tagalog as their most preferred MOI, while the majority of sixth grade participants indicated Taglish as their most preferred MOI. The main reason they gave was that they could easily understand these languages. Their preferences matched the MOI used by their teachers. It was possible that their preferences were shaped by their teachers' language practices as well.

The difference in the preference between the majority of the fifth grade participants and their sixth grade counterparts was that the latter were probably anticipating the academic challenges that they would meet in high school that requires them to be more proficient in English. Some respondents pointed out that Taglish would allow them to learn English, and they saw it as a bridge between Tagalog and English (Sample answer: "Kasi para matuto ako ng tagalog at English." [Because it will allow me to learn Tagalog and English]). Taglish, therefore, may be viewed as a means of reducing linguistic complexity and as a link to English which they perceived as the language of success.

Taglish was also regarded very positively by some students as indicated by this response: "dahil maganda itong pakinggan" [because it is pleasant to the ears]) in contrast to Tagalog which was considered quite negatively by some children as illustrated by this statement: "Mapanget pakinggan ito [Tagalog]… It does not sound nice…]. Being a hybrid social language, Taglish is usually not an acceptable language in formal settings that dictate the use of pure Tagalog or English. However, in reality, "Among Filipinos, 'pure' Tagalog or English is seldom heard, and Taglish

is the usual order of the day…" (McFarland 2008, p. 144). Moreover, Taglish is the popular language of media (Dayag 2008) which children may be exposed to. This is probably one reason why some students see Taglish more positively than Tagalog.

The most preferred language of assessment of fifth grade student participants for mathematics was Tagalog (69%) followed by Taglish (18%) and English (13%), and the most preferred language of assessment of sixth grade participants for mathematics was Tagalog (52%) followed by Taglish (42%) and English (6%).

The majority of the fifth and sixth grade student participants indicated that English was their least preferred language of assessment, and again, the primary reason they gave was their difficulty in understanding it. At the same time, the survey reveals that some fifth and sixth grade student participants desired to learn English through mathematics. The use of English as an MOI and as a language of assessment in mathematics was seen as a means of giving them greater access to the language of opportunity and the language of the world. Moreover, some participants had more positive views toward English than Tagalog.

For instance, one interesting reason given for choosing Tagalog as the least preferred language of instruction was that there should be a shift in the language use since Tagalog is not understood by foreigners who may be around as indicated by this response "dahil para maiba ang salita kunyari may isang Amerikano e hindi niya maiintindihan ang sinasabi" [so the language may differ for example if there is an American, he/she will not understand what is being said]. The concern reflects the students' desire to be able to communicate with foreigners and reflects the cultural model that *English is an international language* (Setati 2006).

Moreover, some student participants used the word "maganda" (beautiful) for English (e.g., "Because the english ay maganda para marunong silang mag english" [Because English is nice so that they will know how to use English]) and used its antonym "pangit/panget" (ugly) for Tagalog (e.g., "'Tagalog' kasi makita mo sa exam ang panget" ["Tagalog" because when you see it in the exam it is so unappealing"]) to indicate that English is the appropriate MOI and assessment and Tagalog is not.

The responses indicate that there are children who consider Taglish as the bridge between Tagalog and English since the use of these two languages may facilitate better comprehension. Some students also see it as a means of gaining more access to English which they view as the benchmark of achievement, a prominent cultural model among them.

## Turning Obstacles into Opportunities: Implications and Recommendations

The findings, thus, indicate that while English is the prescribed MOI for the upper grades, Tagalog and Taglish are used along with it. English is the main language used for procedural and evaluation Discourses suggesting the cultural model that

*English is the language of mathematics and assessment*, while Tagalog and Taglish are used primarily for whole-class discussion and personal Discourses indicating the cultural models that *Tagalog and Taglish are the languages of instruction*, *authority*, *and interpersonal communication*.

This study also confirms that teaching mathematics does not simply have to be limited to words, but it can be expanded through the use of illustrations, gestures, concrete objects, and other creative resources that may be used to make it more concrete in the minds and lives of learners. The results support Moschkovich's (2002, 2007) advocacy to use non-language tools to enhance learners' mathematical competence.

Therefore, being the current language of mathematics that many teachers and students use in public elementary school in the Philippines, English may serve as a building block for facilitating learning in the classroom if it is appropriated and utilized together with the mother tongue and other linguistic and nonverbal resources. The freedom to use all these learning tools in the mathematics classrooms may be the key to empowering teachers and learners.

However, if English is imposed on children who are struggling with it, it may become a hindrance to their learning. The findings suggest that many fifth and sixth grade learners in public elementary schools in the Philippines are still in the process of developing their comprehension and communication skills in English. The call for extending the use of the mother tongue as an MOI in the upper primary levels to maximize its impact on learning (Agcaoili et al. 2013) may be considered by policymakers.

An evaluation of the language of assessment also needs to be conducted as this study confirms that the language of assessment is one primary factor that public elementary school teachers consider in carrying out their classroom tasks (see Paulson Stone 2012). It is a source of predicament as math teachers have to choose between the children's mother tongue that they understand and English, the language used for standardized tests in the upper grades.

This dilemma may be solved by simplifying assessment instruments as proposed in previous studies (Abedi and Lord 2001; Martiniello 2008; Barbu and Beal 2010) or giving translations for difficult words or phrases as Teacher A and Teacher B did in their classes (see Versoza and Mulligan 2013). Using the students' home language and incorporating familiar English mathematical terms is also an option as Teacher A demonstrated in her class. In an interview with Ms. Evelyn Francisco (2014, personal communication, 23 August), a teacher who has extensive experience in mathematics teaching in the Philippines and the USA, she pointed out that an alternative would be to train math and English teachers in developing children's skills in understanding basic instructions, word problems, and math texts more effectively.

Furthermore, studies may be pursued on how mathematics can be localized both in content and language to make it more relevant and meaningful for learners. Various strategies may be investigated: "developing mathematics registers in the local languages and…borrowing from mathematical English" (Kazima 2008, p. 56); borrowing from English that may simply entail using the very same terms and

expressions as demonstrated by Teacher A and Teacher B in their mathematical Discourses; or utilizing existing mathematical terms and concepts in local languages (Tirol 2009, 2010).

Further studies also have to be conducted on school policies (e.g., English-only policy) that promote a colonial legacy, violate the rights of children and members of the school community to use local languages, and penalize them for doing so. Linguistic equality has to be fostered in multilingual classrooms. Translingual practice (Canagarajah 2013) in the classroom should be seen not as an academic threat but as an instructional device that may help facilitate learning. This study mirrors the sentiments of teachers who acknowledge the reality that multilingual learners use different languages to communicate in the classroom and enable them to understand lessons (see Sepeng 2013; Burton 2013).

These are some possibilities that may help turn obstacles into opportunities. The use of English in mathematics may, therefore, be enhanced with other linguistic resources and non-language tools to empower teachers and learners in multilingual classrooms. Teaching and learning may be more significant and enjoyable if teachers and children are given more space to think freely and communicate creatively as they discover the treasures of mathematics.

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# Chapter 10
# The Technicist Framework and the Teaching of Speech Communication in the Philippines

**Gene Segarra Navera**

**Abstract** In this chapter, I offer the reader a brief sketch of speech communication education in the Philippines. I then discuss how the technicist framework animates the pedagogical practices of speech teachers by framing speech communication education within the discourse of the knowledge business enterprise (Fairclough 2006). To substantiate my argument, I offer a preliminary analysis of selected speech communication textbooks to demonstrate how the technicist approach is realized in course materials, that is, how students are geared to be the marketable English-speaking commodities that the industry demands from institutions of higher learning. I suggest that one of the ways that we can counter this technicist orientation is by revitalizing the notion of speech communication as a liberal art. Such a counter-perspective would allow us to emphasize not just skills that are demanded by industry, but also those that are pivotal in transforming the industry and the society at large.

**Keywords** Speech communication · Technicist framework · English language education · Liberal education

## Introduction

The teaching of speech communication in the Philippines has had a long-standing love affair with English. In most Philippine institutions of higher learning, it is quite often the case that the English language departments offer the basic speech communication course aimed at developing students to become adept at using language, voice, and body in various communication situations. Even in such institutions where a non-English language department[1] offers courses or programs in speech

[1] This could be a department of speech and drama, speech communication, or communication arts.

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communication, speech courses are often taught in English and with emphasis on acquiring English language communication skills.

The emphasis on English language communication skills has particularly made speech courses salient and in demand because speaking in English is perceived not just as a capacity to speak what is thought to be a prestigious language, but also as an expression of capital necessary to be able to thrive in tertiary education and workplace contexts (Martin 2010; Tupas 2011, 2015). This apparent emphasis on English language skills is however problematic if critically examined. It appears to point toward what I would call a *technicist* approach toward education. This technicist approach, which I shall explain in more detail later in the chapter, puts premium on the learner's preparation for global competitiveness. It is driven by the need to equip graduates with the technical skills and know-how that are supposedly useful in enduring, if not winning, the competition in the global arena. In this chapter, I wish to examine the teaching of speech communication within the technicist framework of English language education, which appears to be a dominant practice in the Philippines and even in other neighboring countries in the Southeast Asian region.

In the succeeding sections, I shall offer the reader a brief sketch of speech communication education in the Philippines and what may be problematic in the teaching of speech courses. I will then discuss in more detail what I mean by the technicist framework in higher education and how this translates to the teaching of higher education courses including speech subjects. A preliminary analysis of selected speech communication textbooks follows to demonstrate how the technicist approach is realized in course materials, that is, how students are equipped to be the marketable English-speaking commodities that the industry demands from educational institutions. From this analysis, I shall draw the readers' attention to insights that contest and engage the often unexamined presence of the technicist framework in speech education. I shall also attempt to offer possibilities for dealing with the technicist framework that animate our pedagogical practices. This chapter concludes by posing questions that the author hopes readers, especially speech communication teachers, will consider in reconceptualizing the practice of teaching speech communication in the Philippine context.

## Speech Communication Education in the Philippines

Since the latter half of the twentieth century, there have been successful attempts to treat speech communication as a separate subject area from English in the Philippines. This is particularly true in the case of the University of the Philippines (UP), where speech communication is taught as a separate subject from English, is offered by the Department of Speech Communication and Theater Arts (a non-English language department), and can be taught using English or Filipino as a medium of instruction.

Efforts to distinguish speech communication from English as a separate subject area or discipline manifest themselves in the institution of academic degree programs

in speech communication or speech and drama in some reputable institutions of higher learning in the Philippines.[2] The field as far as its proponents in the Philippines are concerned covers a wide range of areas: interpersonal communication, group discussion and conference leadership, public communication, oral interpretation, rhetoric and public address, radio and television, communicology, and speech pathology and audiology (Caparas 1993a). A learned organization such as the Speech Communication Organization of the Philippines (SCOP) founded in 1984 holds its annual convention with the aim of advancing the field. The University of the Philippines held two national conferences on speech communication in 2000 and 2009, which underscored the centrality of speech in various domains of human endeavor. These conferences showcased research undertaken in the various areas of the speech communication and highlighted the fact that there is a steady stream of local scholarship in the field.

The practice of teaching speech communication in English appears to remain pervasive in the Philippine context. The general education course in speech communication uses the code "English 3" which suggests that the area is very much seen within the context of English language education. The English 3 (Effective Speech Communication) syllabus, approved by the Commission on Higher Education, runs parallel with the 1988 (pre-RGEP[3]) Communication III syllabus of the University of the Philippines which lists the following general objectives: (1) to understand the nature of the speech communication process, (2) to become perceptive and critical of everyday speaking and listening experiences and capable of coping with communication problems at all levels, and (3) to train in the effective use of thought and verbal and nonverbal symbols toward ethical communication (Caparas 1993b). There is notably no mention of English as a medium of instruction and communication in the speech classes in the said objectives, but it seems to be implicit that speech communication in the Philippines is often made synonymous with English language communication. While the University of the Philippines offers the general education course in speech communication in Filipino, speech communication as a subject remains to be largely taught and preferred in English.

With the creation of the new General Education Curriculum, the closest possible course that may be offered under the rubric of speech communication is the GE course on "Purposive Communication." The CHED does not prescribe a particular medium of instruction in teaching this course, but the likelihood that it will be offered by English departments (or communication departments that offer English language courses) makes it possible to think that "Purposive Communication" will be offered in English and with emphasis on English language communication skills.

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[2] Examples include the University of the Philippines (UP) in Diliman which offers bachelor's and master's programs in speech communication and Silliman University in Dumaguete which offers a bachelor's program in speech and theater. Other constituent universities of the UP System like UP Los Banos and UP Baguio offer communication arts or communication studies programs with speech communication as an area of concentration.

[3] RGEP stands for Revised General Education Program launched in 2001 in the University of the Philippines (UP) System. The revised or reconfigured speech communication courses in several constituent universities like UP Diliman and UP Los Banos generally carry similar objectives.

What is curious in all of this, however, is not that speech communication courses are taught in English, but that they appear to be taught with a technicist framework in mind. In the next section, I explicate the notion of the technicist approach and discuss how it has extended to the domain of education. The influence of the technicist framework on education is manifested in the emergence of what Norman Fairclough (2006) calls the "discourse of the knowledge business enterprise." This particular discourse, I contend, animates the teaching of certain courses like speech communication in English.

## The Technicist Framework in Higher Education

The technicist framework, as used in the essay, is a perspective or an orientation that puts premium on the development of practical skills and technical know-how deemed necessary in order to carry out a set of tasks in a specialized field. In the context of higher education, it is concerned with the inculcation of skills, techniques, and attitudes that are meant to prepare students for employment in specialized jobs that demand the same set of skills, techniques, and attitudes from workers or employees (Beyer 1986). Technicist thinking which treats universities as "training centers for the industry" has gained currency with the growth of consumerist culture and the rise of corporate capitalism (Natale and Doran 2011). It is very much in consonance with the "marketization of education" characterized by an increased focus on specialization, competitiveness, and branding (Ibid.). These features of a "marketized education" are not only meant to attract prospective students concerned with securing degrees for employment; they are supposed to entice considerable funding from the industry interested in tapping resources generated by higher education institutions (187–9). The pervasiveness of the technicist approach in the field of education can be further explained by the emergence of the "discourse of knowledge business enterprise" that tends to view education as a tributary to (big) business. Fairclough (2006) in his critique of the discourse of knowledge business enterprise explains that:

> There is a characteristic claim that 'knowledge, skills, and creativity' are the decisive assets for competitiveness, *that 'capabilities' are something that one 'invests in'*, and *the associated increasingly influential view of universities and research institutes as primarily resources for business*: they are 'collaborative partnerships', 'networks' and 'clusters of excellence' with companies, all of which suggest a relationship between equals, *whereas the indications are that universities are losing their autonomy and increasingly becoming subservient to business*. (Fairclough 2006, p. 49, emphasis added)

I wish to unpack the quote by pointing out both explicit and implicit details that may be useful for our understanding of the technicist approach. The details are as follows:

1. On capabilities that one "invests in"—commodification of education
2. Universities and research institutes as "primary resources for business" vis-à-vis universities as "subservient to business"
3. Universities as fierce competitors in the global economic order

The first and second points refer to the proclivity of higher education institutions to commercialize or commoditize education. In the Philippine context, commodification of education is manifested in the "production" of degree holders to suit the purposes of big business and for deployment in the international labor market (Lorente 2012). In such terms, we think of our students as "products" that need to be deployed in the highly volatile market. The market is a competitive arena where participants or competitors either survive or perish depending on whether they are fully equipped with capabilities "relevant" to such market.

In their drive to get to the top of the heap or to even survive the competition, universities or institutions of higher learning sometimes end up giving in to the demands of the market. On the one hand, this disposition ensures the employability of university graduates as they are trained to work for what the market desires; on the other hand, it dismisses as irrelevant ideas and practices that do not necessarily address the needs of the moment, of the here and now, but may be crucial to the development of the whole person, the human being, or the critical citizen. This proclivity to kowtow to the demands of the global market is in fact supported by the state (Lorente 2012), and this has actually forced schools and institutions of higher learning to focus on teaching "market-driven and practical language 'skills'" (Tupas 2015, p. 119). This necessarily minimizes the role of communication education with an orientation toward liberal education, a treatment of which vis-à-vis the more skills-oriented and specialized communication education could encourage "multiple and diverse thinking and doing" (Fleury 2005).

Global competitiveness, which most higher education institutions aspire to, has to do with an economic order that encourages the survival of the fittest. When universities aspire to be globally competitive or aim to produce globally competitive graduates, there is the unspoken acceptance of the inexorability of the highly competitive global economic order that has no room for the weak, the slow learners, or those who cannot keep up with the demands of the competitive race. We of course know that those who are often found to be weak and slow and unable to complete the race are, more often than not, members of the underprivileged class who, due to structural inequalities and asymmetrical power relations in society, neither have access nor the capability to acquire the resources needed to get by in the arena (Tupas 2011).

The technicist approach toward education valorizes global competitiveness. It is driven by the need to equip graduates with the technical skills and know-how that are supposedly useful in enduring, if not winning, the competition in the global arena. I contend that this framework also undergirds the teaching of speech communication in English in the Philippines. This, I suggest, is manifested in the textbooks that are accessible to tertiary level institutions. Speech teachers, of course, have the choice to select materials that are in consonance with their individual teaching philosophies or with the pedagogical principles they live by, but that the technicist framework actually undergirds course materials needs to be made manifest and critically examined. It is only by making it explicit and by critically unpacking it that we make ourselves more discerning and judicious in making use of resources for teaching and learning.

In the next section, I examine some of the course materials available for speech teachers in higher education. I show how the technicist framework is realized in the textbooks and course materials and reflect on what the implications of such realizations are for speech communication education and our perspective toward English as resource in the speech classroom.

## Speech Communication Course Materials as Sites for Technicist Thinking

I have chosen the following textbooks for analysis: Arsenia B. Tan's *Public Speaking and Speech Improvement for Filipino Students* (fourth edition, 2004); Anita M. Navarro, Gina O. Gonong, and Vivian I. Buhain's *Speak Well: Empowered Oral Communication for College Students* (2011); and Carmelita S. Flores and Evelyn B. Lopez's *Effective Speech Communication* (fifth edition, 2008). These books are primarily speech communication textbooks and, unlike other local textbooks on speaking, do not solely focus on "spoken English" or "oral communication in English."[4]

All three titles are arguably useful resources for the teaching of speech communication in the Philippines. They are especially valuable for novice teachers who are just starting to develop and expand their repertoire of course materials in the subject area. The three titles cover fundamental concepts and principles of speech communication. They also offer a range of exercises and activities that the teacher and students can carry out in order to apply concepts and put into practice principles discussed in class. All three texts generally frame speech communication education as a necessary preparation for academic and professional life. Perhaps, the most important feature of these texts is that they consolidate materials that may not be readily available to most speech teachers in the Philippines. As a speech communication teacher myself, I would not dismiss the value of these texts considering the fact that there are still limited resources and a dearth of published research done in the field of speech communication in the Philippines.

However, as expressed earlier, there are features or aspects of the texts that I consider potentially dangerous especially if they remain unexamined. Broadly speaking, these aspects have to do with a particular conceptualization of English as

[4]Another text considered for analysis is the book titled *Speak Smart: A Textbook for Spoken English* by J. G. San Miguel, D. C. T. Barraquio, and R. DV. Revilla (Quezon City: C & E Publishing, 2007). The book is, however, meant to prepare students for the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) and the International English Language Testing System (IELTS). This purpose distinguishes this textbook from the three in that the rest reflect the scope and content usually covered in higher education courses in speech and oral communication. Also considered but excluded in the analysis is the classic text *English Pronunciation for the Filipino College Student* (Quezon City: Ken) by Lourdes Sevilla Mata and Isabella Sevilla Soriano, both trained in the Philippines and the United States. The book, which was first published in 1967 and which has had a couple editions, is directed to the speech development of Filipino students as second language learners.

a *tool* for professional and academic communication and corollary to this is the framing of speech communication education in the service of business.

I wish to highlight two points in this analysis. The first has to do with the privileging of American English evident in all texts examined. This privileging, I argue, implies the need to develop marketable English-speaking commodities demanded by a market-driven society. The second is the explicit framing of speech communication education as a means to equip students for business enterprise demands and economistic reasons. The forthright articulation of the link between proficiency in English and the business process outsourcing (BPO) in Flores and Lopez's *Effective Speech Communication* fortifies the main point of this essay: that speech communication education tends to be animated by technicist thinking and is therefore made subservient to business.

The emphasis on the use of the General American English (GAE) is evident in all three textbooks. Navarro et al. (2011) especially talk about underscoring in the contents of their book the "critical [English] sounds for Filipinos" for "the improvement of the voice and diction" (Preface). Tan (2004) introduces readers to exercises "based on standard General American speech" (p. xv), while Flores and Lopez (2008) explicitly familiarize their readers with, among others, the "tunes and intonation patterns of Standard American English" (p. 168). It seems taken for granted in these texts that such standard of English must be privileged. In fact, there is little explanation provided why other varieties do not warrant careful study by the learners.

What is more contentious though is that the Filipino pattern of speaking English, that which is partly influenced by Philippine languages, is rendered a "problem." Navarro et al. (2011), in their section of "The Speech Sounds," ask a series of questions having to do with this pattern and then offer their readers a somewhat definitive answer to these questions:

> Why do some Filipino speakers say [p] instead of [f] in the English words *father*, *feather*, *fan*, and *flower*? Why do they produce [b] instead of [v] in the words *vase*, *vent*, *voice*, and *Vietnam*? And why do they sound [t], [d], and, [s], when they are supposed to produce [θ], [ð], and [z]? The problem lies in the incorrect voicing, or incorrect place and manner of articulation. (p. 34)

This rendering of the Filipino speech as "incorrect" or problematic appears to be shared by Tan (2004) who tells her readers in her preface that:

> [T]his book offers a practical approach to the fundamentals of speech improvement. The exercises are based on standard General American speech, using the International Phonetic Alphabet to present phonetic materials. *Special attention is given to speech problems of our Filipino college students who may have some knowledge of English grammatical structure, who possess a reasonably extensive vocabulary, but who have not made a detailed study of oral English and who have little practice in speaking English*. (p. xv, emphasis mine)[5]

Both assertions on the "incorrect voicing, or incorrect place and manner of articulation" by Filipino speakers and the "speech problems of our Filipino college

[5] Tan spends half of her book for "speech improvement" (i.e., 237 pages out of 444 excluding the appendices which contain sample materials for oral interpretation) that to my mind demonstrates the author's resolve to address the "speech problems" of Filipino students.

students…who have not made a detailed study of oral English" clearly presuppose a preference for a particular standard of English, one that is obviously considered to be a prestige variety. Such tendency of the Filipino textbook writers to treat as problematic or incorrect certain Filipino patterns of communicating in English is an act of conforming to what is considered standard or normative and, in this case, the standard of GAE (Tupas 2010). However, as Tupas (2010) reminds to us, the privileging of GAE should not simplistically be seen as a mere enactment of linguistic imperialistic tendencies. He points out that teachers, and I would hasten to include textbook writers, generally view English as something "equated with social mobility and individual achievement" (p. 570). I share the perspective of Filipino critical sociolinguists (Tupas 2015, Martin 2010, Lorente 2012) that the privileging of the prestige variety is motivated by the need to develop among students English-speaking commodities that a market-driven society like the Philippines demands. Filipino patterns of speaking that do not conform to the GAE pronunciation are inimical to the development of the Philippines as a competitive player in the global market. After all, that most Filipinos are thought to have a facility with the English language is still touted by the state and the industry as one of the "unbeatable comparative advantages" (Arroyo, 2003) of the country which increasingly competes with "expanding circle countries like China, Korea and Japan [that] exuberantly [embrace] English as an economic asset" (Tupas 2015, p. 118; also see Tupas 2010, p. 575).

In the textbooks by Navarro et al. (2011) and Tan (2004), the expressed rationalization of the preference for or privileging of the GAE standard is that it equips the learners to become "empowered speech communicators" (Navarro et al. 2011) or "competent and dynamic administrator[s] or leader[s] in [their] field[s] of endeavor" (Tan 2004, p. xiv). This rationalization may be seen as consistent with the knowledge business enterprise in that English language communication skills can very well be considered a "decisive asset for competitiveness" (Fairclough 2006). English language communication skills, especially those skills that are anchored on the prestige variety, are, more often than not, viewed as useful for the business enterprise.

A rather explicit expression of how speech communication education is reframed to serve business can be found in Flores and Lopez's (2008) fifth edition of *Effective Speech Communication.* Flores, in her preface to the edition of the book, is explicit in stating that the book had been revised to serve particular industries:

> At the suggestion of colleagues in the English and Speech departments and some speech experts, new exercises have been designed to give meaning and applications in the context of the International Hospitality Management (Hotel Restaurant, Tourism, Travel Management Services) industry and the contact industry, among others. (p. v)

Interestingly, an entire section consisting of six paragraphs is included in the first chapter on "Oral Communication" to underscore the importance of the BPO in the national economy and how training and education in speech communication are useful in the said industry. Titled "Proficiency in Communication and the Business Process Outsourcing Industry," the section opens with the following paragraph:

> The growth of burgeoning business process outsourcing and two of its satellites, the contact center industry and medical and legal transcription services, has come as the latest phenom-

> enon in the Philippines that extensively utilizes *strong English skills for Filipinos in oral and written communication*. Filipino business leaders and economists acknowledge that hundreds of thousands of young college graduates and undergraduates possessing excellent oral and written communication skills find jobs in the contact center industry to handle customer services like airline and hotel reservations, tourism destinations, credit cards, among others, and join the medical and legal transcription services to write down fully as accurately as possible, electronic recordings of doctors' and lawyers' detailed oral descriptions, transactions and statements. (p. 6, emphasis mine)

With no reference to existing studies or data on the demands of the BPO industry, the text brings to the fore the inexorability of "strong English skills for Filipinos." English language skills are a decisive asset because those who possess them succeed to "find jobs in the contact center industry… and join the medical and legal transcription services."

In the paragraphs that follow the opening statement, the authors draw their readers' attention to the English-speaking foreign customers of the BPO industry. This supposedly warrants the imperative to train or retrain Filipino customer service representatives (CSRs) in oral communication in English. The authors assert: "[The Filipino CSRs] must have the ability to speak comprehensible English to native English speakers including a conversational knowledge of English, skills that can be learned by intensive training in language proficiency" (p. 7). Clearly, training in and careful study of General American English work well in developing such "ability." To reinforce this imperative, the authors cast positive future outcomes for those who would go through the training as shown in the extract below:

> After undergoing the rigors of oral communication training and possessing the necessary language proficiency skills, *graduates of this training course emerge with a new confidence and hope for creating a positive professional future for themselves to get them in business, industry, including science and technology*. (p. 7, emphasis mine)

The passage suggests that to possess English language skills facilitates membership in the industry. These skills are presumed to provide Filipinos "a cutting edge advantage in the global economy translated into employment opportunities and increased employability" (p. 7). It appears that the preferred set of English language skills works toward "credentializing" learners for the global economy where competition for survival and success is almost always given.

The credentializing of learners through English language communication skills is further extended in the following paragraph:

> Moreover, possessing excellent oral communication skills is advantageous, not just to customer service representatives but also to all students and professionals in all fields of endeavor *because it will make them very articulate, convincing, credible, educated, and professional, but not 'intimidating*.' As a caveat, to intimidate should never be intended and therefore is not desired because it could backfire to the detriment of the business industry and other institutions. (p. 7, emphasis mine)

The text clearly endorses a particular set of desired characteristics ("articulate," "convincing," "credible," and "educated") that is presumably accomplished by "possessing excellent oral communication skills" through rigorous training while at the same time curiously dissuading readers from developing an "intimidating"

character because of such skills. Just what is meant by “intimidating” in the context of the “business industry and other institutions” remains unclear. One of several meaning potentials of the expression is that it has to do with speaking one’s mind or asserting one’s position to the extent that the act can spark conflict or disagreement with other parties. More often than not, this kind of attitude is discouraged in an industry that puts premium on stability in order to maintain profit gains.

Flores and Lopez’s section on the interface of language proficiency and the BPO industry comes full circle as the authors discuss the importance of the industry to developing nations:

> Developing nations need the business process outsourcing industry because it is a tool for employment and *a vehicle for progressive interaction and exploration*. Employment in this area and other professions calls for a speedy and massive retraining in oral communication among students and professionals alike in order to address the need for excellent and effective communication skills. Excellent language proficiency could make a contribution particularly among young people brought up in the information age, where communication skills are primarily needed in a great deal. (p. 7, emphasis mine)

Like the term “intimidating,” the expression “progressive interaction and exploration” that is supposedly brought about by BPO is unclear. What is clear is that to the authors’ minds, developing nations like the Philippines will increase the likelihood of achieving such a state through BPO. And that “a speedy and massive retraining” in speech communication is needed to deploy people, students and professionals, in the burgeoning industry. This is, quite obviously, an explicit account of how speech communication education is geared toward business enterprise demands and economistic ends—clearly a technicist approach toward speech communication education.

Other textual features that point toward a technicist orientation toward the teaching of speech communication include a section on “power dressing” that explains the preferred attire in the corporate setting (Navarro et al. 2011, p. 75) and “new integrative skills exercises for understanding and giving meaning to oral messages, scanning information, recalling specific details, summarizing main points, using appropriate vocabulary and socially correct telephone expressions, taking down notes and reviewing grammatical constructions” (Flores and Lopez 2008, p. v; see also pp. 29–31). With their emphasis on managing information and using “appropriate” and “socially correct” expressions, the so-called integrative skills exercises appear to be useful in training potential entrants of the BPO industry.[6]

[6] I would like to point out that the analysis presented in this chapter is preliminary and primarily based on an informed but less than comprehensive examination of textbooks, which arguably serve their purpose quite well: that is, to offer consolidated teaching resources to teachers in speech communication in the Philippines. Having said that, I believe the limitation of the analysis necessitates an extensive observation and study of how Filipino teachers actually teach speech communication in the classroom, how they exploit or use the existing resources for their own purposes, how they recontextualize these resources, and how they potentially resist the seduction of the technicist framework.

## Critical Insights: Contesting and Humanizing the Technicist Framework

The rather cursory analysis offered in this chapter is not meant to merely nitpick on certain features of the textbooks that suggest a technicist approach to speech communication education. My purpose is to surface these features in order for speech teachers to be more cognizant of the resources that are available to us and how we can make informed and intelligent choices when tapping these resources.

So what do these features surfaced in the analysis above potentially mean to us as language and speech communication teachers? I argue that within the technicist framework of English language education, we tend to view speech communication in a pragmatic or instrumentalist fashion. Rather than an attempt to understand human meaning making processes and practices through language, thought and action—a legitimate endeavor that enables us to understand how communicative effectiveness is accomplished in various contexts—speech communication tends to be reduced to a tool in order for learners to be prepared for their immediate academic activities and the life in the workplace or in professional practice. Using the technicist framework, institutions offering speech courses and programs are treated like factories where students are molded to become the human capital that English-speaking big businesses require.

While this pragmatic perspective may serve its immediate purpose, to treat speech communication using such technicist framework means to create unnecessary artificial limits for the field and to constrain possibilities for the learners' role in the broader context. The implicit humanist or liberalizing intent of the textbooks—that is, to develop in the students the (deep) interest in the principles and practices of the art of eloquence in order to function well in a democratic and free society—necessarily competes with this technicist orientation. I am afraid that the latter sometimes minimizes, if not supersedes, the former so that little value is given on creative and critical thinking, ethical speaking and listening, and a critical view of long-standing assumptions and principles in speech communication.

In addition, the technicist orientation toward the teaching of speech communication tends to marginalize Filipinos who cannot produce the GAE pronunciation because of their L1 s. As the analysis of textbooks shows us, Filipino patterns of speech that deviate from the GAE standard are considered "incorrect" and a "problem." While there is value in exposing students to the standard of GAE (i.e., to be familiar with the standard and to actually be able to use it can be a strategic choice on the part of the student in order to get by in a sociocultural milieu that privileges a particular way of speaking), it is unfair to dismiss Filipino speech in English as inferior, that is, "incorrect" and a "problem." To do so renders simplistically the complexity of second language use in the country. Why some Filipinos speak English the way they do is not simply because they are "incorrectly" using their vocal mechanism or that they are unable to make "a detailed study of oral English"; they do so for a variety of reasons and that may very well include the fact that they and their fellow interlocutors in the course of their conversations or communicative

engagements may not at all be bothered by whether their [f], [v], [θ], [ð], and [z] sounds are produced and articulated according to how the champions of General American English wish them to be so. In other words, it is the responsibility of the speech communication teacher, who is not at all shunned from endorsing a particular variety of English, to provide her students a *better* contextualization of why people speak the way they do and why certain options are made available to them. This potentially minimizes the tendency to unnecessarily discriminate against people who do not speak in the way we are taught to speak or are made to think we should be speaking.

I suggest that we counter the technicist orientation that is driven by state policies and other authoritative external forces with a revitalized take on speech communication as a liberal art, one that views symbol systems, including (English) language, not as instruments to achieve economistic ends but as resources to enact citizenship, that is, to engage in social controversies, explore and discuss possible alternatives to social problems, express one's position in a public controversy with grace and clarity, as well as encourage and persuade people to change perspectives or to adopt a course of action (Fleury 2005, Kock and Villadsen 2014). This presupposes that together with our students, we must treat language and other semiotic resources as inextricably interwoven with the sociopolitical, cultural, and historical contexts that constrain us as communicators (Navera 2013). The end of liberal education, explains Fleury (2005, p. 74), is to produce good citizens. By repurposing and reorienting speech communication toward this end, we veer away from the technicist tendency to treat students as automatons or mere commodities to be deployed to the market.

We can of course still encourage our students to enter industries that would launch their careers, that would help them pay the bills, or that would enable them to put food on the table. But as responsible language and speech communication teachers, we need to constantly remind them and ourselves of the broader context within which effective communication in (standard) English is implicated. I suppose there is nothing oxymoronic in our vision of a customer service representative who is able to speak in General American English but who is a critical, creative, and competent communicator at the same time. It is imperative that we teach our students not just the skills demanded by industry or by their future work stations, but also, and perhaps more importantly, the skills that would enable them to *reshape* the industry and the broader society into a more just and humane place to work, to learn, and to thrive (Navera 2007).

## Conclusion: Rethinking Practices in the Teaching of Speech Communication

In this chapter, I began by offering the reader a brief sketch of speech communication education in the Philippines and discussed how the technicist framework animates the pedagogical practices of speech teachers by framing it within the discourse

of the knowledge business enterprise (Fairclough 2006). To substantiate my argument, I offered a preliminary analysis of selected speech communication textbooks to demonstrate how the technicist approach is realized in course materials, that is, how students are geared to be the marketable English-speaking commodities that the industry demands from institutions of higher learning. I then suggested that one of the ways that we can counter this technicist orientation is by revitalizing the notion of speech communication as a liberal art. Such a counter-perspective would allow us to emphasize not just skills that are demanded by the industry, but also and especially those that are pivotal in transforming the industry and the society at large.

I wish to clarify that I am in no way suggesting that we should minimize or abandon the teaching of speech communication using the resources of English. What I suggest that we do is to rethink the English language education framework that animates the current speech communication pedagogy in Philippine schools. There is definitely more to speech communication than training our students to be the marketable English-speaking commodities that the technicist framework makes us do. I hope that the modest insights offered by this chapter can enable us to rethink our current framework in the teaching of speech communication.

I thought a good way to hit the ground running is by posing questions that should enable us to reconsider our assumptions and current practices when we teach speech communication in English: What exactly is our perspective of language in the speech communication classroom? What kind of English do we privilege when we teach oral communication in the Filipino classroom, and why do we privilege such kind? How do we treat unique Filipino patterns of speaking in English? What do we mean by intelligible speech? As speech and language teachers, how do we take into consideration elements of sociopolitical and cultural contexts in the teaching of oral communication in English?

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# Chapter 11
# Migrant Workers, Language Learning, and Spaces of Globalization: The Case of Filipino Maritime Professionals

**Paolo Niño Valdez and Neslie Carol Tan**

**Abstract** With the rise of a global workplace, language learning takes center stage as it is a primary component in shaping the identity of different workers. Coupled with the different stratifications produced by globalization, language learning departs from a mere positivistic process but becomes a central force in imbuing individuals the needed cultural capital to fit in the global market. This chapter argues that migrant workers are a unique group of language learners resulting from the ripples created by globalization. It initially surveys the notion of language learning within the backdrop of globalization and proceeds with exemplifying inherent characteristics of migrant workers in the Philippines which show the complex relations between language learning and globalization. Drawing insights from a case study conducted among maritime professionals in the Philippines, this paper furthers that examining migrant workers in an era of globalization is entangled within discourses from different actors of the state and shows the stratified distribution of power and resources. Further, we attempt to sketch alternative engagements to language policy in education in the Philippines that considers the tensions brought about by globalization.

**Keywords** Philippine Education · OFWs · Poster Essays · Seafarers · Sociolinguistics of Globalization

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## Language Learning in the Context of Globalization

Recent studies show that much of our understanding of language and language learning should take into consideration the impact of globalization in different domains of social life. Though language learning processes have been widely explored in the subdisciplines of second-language acquisition and language education, the current trend appears to be examining language learning as a sociopolitical process. Departing from the positivistic tradition, Norton (1997) posits that language learning is a process of investment that requires learners to orientate their efforts in achieving success with the language being learned. By this, the analytical lens of examining language learning processes should not only be concerned with the cognitive aspects of language learning but must also consider the struggles and consequences of these processes that help shape a language learner's path.

Norton's (1997) edited special issue in TESOL quarterly featured papers delving into different investigations that reflect the oftentimes messy intersections between identity and social life. An interesting question posed in her editorial introduction which is useful for this paper is "how are ESL leaners categorized?" Norton furthers that to answer such questions requires an examination of language learners' investments and the social environment where language learning takes place.

Recent work on language and migration reveals different levels of discursive practices which not only situate the English language as a key tool in addressing neoliberal regimes of commodified labor but also compel the appropriation of necessary identities to prepare trained, docile bodies for the international market. For instance, Lorente's (2006) investigation of Filipino domestic helpers in Singapore reveals the intersections of language and identity in the commodification of these "servants of globalization" which are finely enmeshed in global/local ideologies of the new economy. In postcolonial contexts such as in the Philippines and India, for example, one thriving industry emerging from intense globalization processes is the business process outsourcing profession.

Though studies have been largely limited to linguistic and interactional processes, an interesting area of exploration is the employment of practices that index a set of identities which may inform current educational practice (Salonga 2009; Friginal 2009; Forey and Lockwood 2007; Lockwood 2009). Instances of identity masking in terms of location or gender among call center agents lead to greater questions of the role of the English language in a culturally and linguistically diverse yet globalized industry. In keeping with the notion that reproductive forms of inequality (unequal distribution of material resources and access to opportunities) are attributed to different agencies of the state (Auerbach 1991), investigations on the Students of the New Global Elite, students from EFL or ESL contexts who study in mostly western English-speaking countries, open spaces for theorizing in the mobilization of recombinant identities (Vandrick 2011). On the other end of the spectrum, the development of "workers of the world" from periphery nations (domestic helpers, seafarers, manual laborers, and service workers) entail the shaping of identities that are not only discursively produced but are historically

conditioned as well (Lorente 2006). Further, though commodified identities may suggest dystrophic realities of intense expressions of materialism and consumerism, developing "counter" identities are equally important for researchers to critically examine the role of agency in resisting the tensions brought about by the impact of globalization in local communities (Canagarajah 1999; Blommaert 2010). Examples here are auto-ethnographic investigations of Phan (2008) and Canagarajah (2012) as both successfully present nuanced accounts of identity transformation within the scales of globalization.

Given the foregoing points, this chapter attempts to examine the discourses surrounding Overseas Filipino Workers (henceforth OFWs), as well as the relationship between language learning and globalization.

## Commodified Labor in the Philippines: Language Policy and the Case of Filipino Seafarers

In order to fully grapple with the complex processes underlying the issues we attempt to address in this chapter, this section sketches historical, sociopolitical movements that have shaped the current situation of commodified labor in the Philippines. As a former colony under American rule, Filipinos were subjected to the imperial control through education using English. Though accounts of the history of language policy movements in the Philippines have been documented (Mindo 2003), we focus on the relationship between language planning and the commodification of labor in the country.

The perceived (or actual) power of the English language is entangled in the intersecting language planning practices and economic and political aspirations of the Filipinos. In fact, Martin (2012) succinctly states the formula for economic success of the Philippine government to be "English equals money" (p. 194). The trade and industry and the information and communications technology sectors were cited as two primary fields that promote and maintain the eminent status of English in the country. Proficiency in this language is deemed as the competitive edge of the Filipino laborers we export everywhere (Martin 2012). This trend has long been described and anticipated by Gonzalez (1998) when he wrote of the possible continued necessity of English especially in the "specialised domains of seamanship, the health sciences, technology, and management" (p. 515). Throughout the "diffusions" in the history of language policy in the country (from the English-only policy to the bilingual policy and now to current multilingual policy development), English has assumed roles with varying degrees of importance (Martin 2012). On the one hand, pedagogical benefits of using local languages have been raised and proven in a number of studies. But, on the other hand, the pragmatic pull of English still cannot be easily dismissed or overlooked. At present, according to Bernardo (2004), English plays a "more circumscribed role as a language of access" (p. 29). But Tupas (2009) reiterates that it "continues to be seen as an important language which will serve as a bridge between local communities and global community" (p. 32).

Ultimately, discussion on English language policy can never be divorced from issues on development (Tupas 2009) and "political, ideological, and other socioeconomic considerations will always strongly bear on the issue" (Bernardo 2004, p. 29). It is apparent that enmeshed in these debates on the directions of our local language policies are the competing discourses on social, political, and economic forces and contexts. It is likewise impossible to deliberate on the deteriorating or improving English proficiency scores of Filipino students without it intersecting with issues of class – on who has the economic opportunities to access the "privileged" language and thus can reap the rewards.

Early in the twentieth century, Battistella (1995) notes that Filipinos started working abroad due to colonial ties with the United States. They worked as laborers since they were needed in parts of the country such as Hawaii and Alaska. Though these occurrences were not considered significant in terms of number, Tyner (2000), through a historical analysis of the Philippines' political economy, posits that the Overseas Filipino Worker (OFW) phenomenon can be attributed to the Marcos regime's attempt to save its government from the failure of industries to expand, decline of export value of Philippine goods, and increasing overseas borrowings from international institutions. Due to the impending decline of market and industrial growth, the Marcos government in the 1970s thought of a temporary solution of marketing labor to the global workplace as a means to address economic woes and political tension (Tupas 2008). However, the so-called temporary strategy turned out to be a permanent fixture in succeeding government administrations in the Philippines as commodified labor for the global market has been one key strategy in providing stability to the nation-state (San Juan 2011). Previous investigations have shown that every year, the number of Filipinos leaving for work abroad has steadily increased (Lorente 2006; San Juan 2011; Ruggunan 2011). As Tyner (2000, p. 146) aptly puts it, "Just as other countries are 'blessed' with abundant supplies of natural resources such as coal or petroleum, the Philippines has been blessed – according to the POEA [Philippine Overseas Employment Agency] – *with abundant supplies of labour* (emphasis ours)." These are not the only circumstances that contribute to the phenomena; Milde (2009) also enumerates socioeconomic factors, government migration policies, family and cultural notions of migration, and the educational system as strong influences that compel citizens to leave for work abroad.

As opposed to other jobs offered in the foreign market, work in the maritime industry appears to be a popular one in the country as shown in statistics claiming that 28.5% of seafarers around the world are Filipino (Amante 2005; Galam 2011). Further, Milde (2009) argues that there seems to be a preference for cruise ship jobs among Filipinos due to the following reasons. First, since most Filipinos occupy lower-rank positions for low- or semiskilled employees, wages for these positions in the cruise industry are higher compared to other industries and sectors. Second, in terms of restrictive rules for immigration, as compared to land-based labor markets, there appears to be a more relaxed set of rules placed implemented since these workers constantly travel from one location to the other. Pragmatically, workplace conditions in the maritime sector are relatively favorable: "an advantage living on

board is that it is guaranteed that cabins get cleaned, laundry is done by ship personnel, and food is regularly provided" (Milde 2009, p. 82). Likewise, accommodations are perceived to be much better than those of land-based labor counterparts considering that ships need to be maintained constantly. In addition, it has been observed that cultural stress is unlikely to be experienced considering the multicultural composition of the crew. Specifically, predominantly Catholic Filipino crew members are not compelled to follow religious rules in some host countries. More importantly, in terms of reported maltreatment of employers, shipowners are at the mercy of their employees considering that these workers operate and maintain the vessels assuring maritime professionals relatively fair treatment in terms of benefits and wages. Relating these advantages and the Philippines' thrust in developing labor migration through policies and practices, it can be said that the maritime profession is a cornerstone industry where the country gains great material resources.

## Maritime Professionals in Training: A Case in Point

*Background of the IMEC Project and Student Profiles* The International Maritime Employers' Council (IMEC) project was conducted in a university in Cebu City, the second most populous metropolitan city after the capital of the Philippines, Metro Manila (National Statistics Office 2010). It is a major area of commerce, trade, and education in the Visayan Islands. Strategically located along the coastline, Cebu is a significant hub for the maritime industry, housing about 80% of domestic and international shipping operators and shipbuilders in the country ("Philippines now" 2013). It is also the location of a number of important training centers for seafarers, being deemed as a "right place to expand" after centers in the capital (Lacamiento 2010).

The program is a collaboration between the university in Cebu and Blue Water Incorporated, a shipping company based in the United Kingdom. It offers generous scholarship packages (which include tuition, accommodation, and living allowances) for a 4-year bachelor's degree in maritime studies (Bachelor of Science in Marine Transportation or Bachelor of Science in Marine Engineering) plus an Unlimited Watchkeeper's Certificate. After successful completion of the program, scholars are expected to work for their sponsoring companies as junior officers for 2 years.

This study involves 52 second year male students enrolled in the 160-h program implemented during the summer months (April to May) of 2012. This annual summer program offers students English (Business and Academic), Mathematics (Algebra and Geometry), Physics, and Personal Effectiveness courses in order to prepare them for their formal coursework in the following school year. Given the rigorous selection process the students went through (two exams and two interviews) to obtain their scholarship, most of these 16- to 18-year-old students have graduated with honors from public high schools in Cebu and neighboring provinces and

regions. Moreover, interviews revealed that most of them were also involved in various community youth organizations in their respective towns/municipalities/cities.

The discourses of the students on their language learning in the globalized contexts are gleaned from the poster essays they prepared in a class activity prior to writing their résumés. The following questions guided their essays and drawings:

- How do you view your profession?/How do you envision your future?
- What is the importance of English in your work as maritime professional?

Apart from these illustrated reflections, more information was elicited from the students during the presentations of their artworks and follow-up socialized discussion on their perceptions about their profession (aspirations, fears, and other concerns) and about the role of English in their career choice. Both the written outputs and class discussions were collected and used as data in this study with the consent of the students.

*Discourses on Language Learning in the Globalized Context* Three key themes emerge from the poster essays and interviews of the maritime professionals in training:

*Mobility as Adventure and Freedom/Freedom and Adventure in the Mobile Profession*

Written reflections and class discussions reveal the students' romanticized notions of their mobile profession. For instance, Archie views his future occupation as imbued with a sense of freedom to explore the world as well as his passions (Fig. 11.1):

The poster essay makes maritime work appear like a tourist trip – complete with taking photographic remembrances of attractive destinations. Another one even drew giant wings to symbolize *"touring the whole world… exploring the earth for free." Optimism is also apparent in Jessie's output with an image of a bright sun as well as reference to "odyssey at sea," aligning his occupation to exciting sea adventures* (Fig. 11.2):

Mobility means freedom and adventure for these future seafarers, most of whom come from less fortunate financial backgrounds and whose opportunities to travel to foreign places are quite limited. They hence have a positive regard for the maritime industry with its accompanying travel prospects apart from the expected financial gain.

However, the last sample also hints at the students' cognizance of the other side of their occupation: maritime work can be "full of fears, worries, and danger." Thus, Jerry presents a more somber outlook on their future mobile existence by depicting an ominously named ship (M/V Disgrasya which translates to "accident" in English) braving the stormy seas while perched precariously on top of what looks like an iceberg (Fig. 11.3):

Jerry, as well as others in the class, recognizes the trials involved on board a ship (external physical challenges as well as internal psychological/emotional pains), yet they determinedly pursue this career for pragmatic reasons that shape their multifaceted identities as future migrant workers.

**Fig. 11.1** Archie's poster essay
*The logo above symbolizes my passion, talent and future. The sunset means beauty and the light that inspired me to travel to foreign countries to take pictures of the sunset. The anchor that looks like a guitar symbolizes my combined ambition and passion. I want to become a composer and a guitarist someday. But I also want to travel to different places to be able to see the beauty of the earth. The birds symbolize freedom and like me, I'm a free person. My parents just let me do what I want to.*

**Fig. 11.2** Jessie's poster essay
*While sailing on a vast ocean the sunset is the happiness of almost all seafarers even if it's just the same every single day. As pictured in my illustration the sunset is in the horizon because a seafarer's goal is to sail beyond the farthest horizon to reach a desired destination. Sailing towards the horizon is a proof that a seafarers navigating skills can withstand every obstacles in our odessey at sea.*

**Fig. 11.3** Jerry's poster essay
*As you can see in the drawing, there is a huge ship in a very bad condition of weather. As a future sailor this very bad condition is expected.*
*I believe in the saying "calm seas never produce great sailors". As a sailor, storms are problems in a voyage. The storms are like test if a sailor is really a sailor. Just like in our lives these storms are problems that are need to be faces. These problems will test your determination and fear. As days passes by you can observe yourself changing and ready to face the problems of life. When you overcome these problems you ought to be called great. A sailor once he passes or overcome the storm in the seas, I can say that he is a great sailor. After the storm he can travel in the calm seas with no worries.*

## *Hybridity of Identities*

As language learners and migrant workers in training, these selected students straddle multiple identities: as family breadwinners, maritime professionals, and (inter) national Filipino heroes.

Jimenez (2012) asserts that the existence of a diaspora of Filipino seafarers is because of economic necessity. Due to domestic poverty stemming from economic failures under various political leadership, Filipinos are compelled to work away from home in order to survive. During the interviews, the majority of the seafarers in training spoke about their responsibility as breadwinners of their families: to provide for the daily household expenses of the family, to enable their younger siblings to go to school, and perhaps even to save enough money to establish small-scale businesses for their parents to manage. The scholarship program they are completing is treated as an investment for their whole families as seafaring is seen as the only viable opportunity that promises financial rewards beyond what they could possibly earn for their families locally. The wider macro-level of labor migration is thus personalized in these micro-narratives of sacrifices for familial prosperity.

As future maritime professionals, they expect to embody an interesting transnational condition McKay (2004) calls "suspended migrants" since they are away from their homes, yet not grounded on any fixed workplace. They face a multicultural and hierarchal environment onboard (Jimenez 2012) and are hence expected to

constantly negotiate cultures and languages in their encounters with peoples of different cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

Smorochynska (2011) thus emphasizes the need for future maritime officers to develop their sociocultural competence in order to respond appropriately to various unexpected/expected intercultural professional situations on board. However, while English is "the medium of intercultural communication on board between non-speakers from different countries" (p. 130), she clarifies that teaching and learning sociocultural competence in maritime educational institutions does not mean that the cadets neglect their own cultural identities.

Thus, as they are exposed to risks on a daily basis, Filipino seafarers are trained to demonstrate the known Filipino cultural attitude of "pakikisama" (a way of getting along well with others) (Jimenez 2012) and/or turn to their faith as a means of coping with maritime troubles. For instance, Rolando reflects:

> As I've seen, working onboard is full of fears, worries and danger. So I put three letters inside the pentagon "MOS" which means "My Own Shepherd" appointing our Heavenly Father God who guides is in every challenge in our life.

McKay (2004) notes that this pliant attitude is actually part of the construction of the identity of the Filipino seafarer. He investigated the role of the Philippine state in constructing the Filipino seafarer as "both pliant cheap labor and nationalist hero" in its efforts to control the resources from the diaspora (p. 2). Jimenez (2012) reports that out of 16 billion dollars worth of remittances of Overseas Filipino Workers, seven billion dollars come from the Filipino seafarers – the true "heroes" that help keep the Philippine economy afloat.

The seafarers in training in this study are thus drawn early on into the wider government scheme of the "Great Filipino Worker" campaign (Guevarra 2009). As former President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo announced on June 7, 2002, during the commemoration of Migrant Workers Day, "The Philippine economy will [in] the foreseeable future continue to be heavily dependent on overseas worker remittances. The work and reputation of the overseas Filipinos confirm to the world that indeed, the Philippines is the home of the Great Filipino Worker" (Guevarra 2009, p. 3). Guevarra (2009) further reveals the hegemonic ties among the state, the employment agencies, and the workers themselves in constructing this process of commodification. In this regard, the scholarship scheme, the university in Cebu, and even the program all contribute to produce and perpetuate the labor-brokering process that represents Filipino seafarers as ideal workers on board and seafaring an ideal work opportunity.

However, these maritime professionals in training may not be mere passive players in the whole labor migration scheme. Their poster essays reveal a sense of cognizance of the reality of their future employment conditions, and they struggle to actively engage with their multiple identities as breadwinners, seafarers, Filipinos, and heroes as they articulate their personal aspirations and plans, verbalize their fears, and keenly participate in their own education toward possible reassertion of their distinct identities or rerouting of futures.

### *Utility of English/English as a Linguistic Capital/English for Survival*

Integral to the education and possible regaining of some control to the course of their future work is learning the English language. The seafarers in training realize and acknowledge the value of the English language to their profession. For instance, Jessie recognizes the multicultural nature of the industry and the need for English as a tool to mediate verbal and written communication among crewmembers of different cultural and linguistic backgrounds:

> English comes in my future career when dealing with foreign people and on the job applications to other companies. English plays a big role on our career especially on our job onboard international vessels. We have to use English in communicating to officers, giving orders to ratings and even on radio communication with other vessels. English is also significant in learning more things onboard because every maritime publications and documents are written on English.

Bocanegra-Valle (2010) reminds us that "today's international economic and political framework together with technological innovations require highly qualified seafarers to cope with global demands at different levels of expertise" (pp. 151–152). Since English is the medium of intercultural communication on board (Smorochynska 2011), seafarers must be fluent in this language in order to effectively communicate personal and occupational matters on board and ashore – a basic requirement of the current internationally oriented crews. In fact, communicative competence in English at sea is considered a crucial aspect in the "human factor dimension" – this means that "a poor command of Maritime English by professionals may endanger human lives (crews and passengers), pollute the marine environment or ruin an important commercial operation" (Bocanegra-Valle 2010, p. 152). This very crucial aspect is recognized by Rolando in his reflection:

> English is the standard language used onboard a vessel. That is why English subject is still part of my curriculum in studying for my profession. Working in a ship is quite difficult especially when the crews and officers coming from different countries. It is hard to communicate with each other if everyone will use its own language. Miscommunications will lead to any possible danger or accidents. As we know, there is no reasons for mistakes onboard. One small mistake will cost a life of the crew. That is why they come up to standardize this communication language. That is where English come in.

Jerry further includes the specific instances of the utility of English in their work:

> Learning English has a major role in our seafaring life. It gives us techniques and ideas in a certain situation. Like incident report, it help in how to report all incident report. Policy statement it help us in giving the exact words. The most important is the making of resume and application letter. These help us in transferring into other companies.

These written tasks are the ones also covered in the Business English course of the ramping program. He (as well as the class during the discussion) thus concludes: "It help me to become a good seafarer and a person so that is why learning English is important." Competence in English is equated to becoming a good seafarer in an industry that has become (since the 1990s) multinational (multiethnic,

**Fig. 11.4** Rolando's poster essay
*What I see in myself five years from now is to be a successful seafarer. In my logo, I make an anchor representing my course as a bachelor in science in Marine Transportation. Attached to it is a diamond form which means I will be earning or having a lot of money in my future job. Above the anchor is the number "2020" and a ship. What I dreamed of is the I will be owning a ship, and the number is the target year of achieving this.*

multi-crewed, or mixed) where all activities rely on the smooth interaction and collaboration among peoples from different countries and cultures (Stan 2011, p. 177). This multicultural situation has been a direct consequence of the globalization of seaborne trade (Bocanegra-Valle 2010). Interestingly, the program does not include extensive training on dealing with listening and speaking skills that incorporate reception and production of varieties of English (Fig. 11.4).

The reflections and discussions reveal the integral role of the English language in the maritime industry. This powerful position of English as a global language is realized by the seafarers in training, and they therefore determine to develop their English skills in order to carry out the legitimate practices that will enable them to engage appropriately with their employers and peers in the future. The students realize that their employability (and subsequent chances at pursuing their personal travel/adventure dreams) likewise hinges on their linguistic capabilities; thus English is seen as a key to financial liberation. Rolando's poster included a diamond at the center which translates to how he "will be earning or having a lot of money in my [his] future job."This poster echoes much of the sentiments of the students in the class who aspire for financial stability through their seafaring profession. Quite a number of them likewise aim for social mobility – to rise up the maritime ranks and perhaps lead or own their own shipping vessels. McKay (2004), however, is quite pessimistic about this aspiration as he contends that ships are not necessarily spaces of mobility and hybridity, but are actually "suffused with forces and inequalities of the inter-national world, and tend to reproduce a highly stratified order" (p. 3). From the early twentieth century until the 1970s, Filipinos on board US Navy ships were restricted to the lowly ranks of stewards and mess boys (4). And currently he reveals that there has not be much dramatic change: "some 300,000 Filipino seafarers, by

far the largest national group, ply the world's oceans and seas, primarily as deck hands, engine room oilers, cabin cleaners and cooks aboard container ships, oil tankers and luxury cruise liners" (p. 2).

As seen in the investigation, English education in relation to the training of maritime professionals should not only be seen as utilitarian but rather as a means to promote counterdiscourses (Pennycook 1994; Valdez 2012). This means that though English serves as a key to development and stratification, it should equip maritime professionals the tools to challenge existing forms of control apparent in their profession. This can be seen not only within their local sphere of professional practice in the local setting but also in the international scene (Sioson 2014). Moreover, the role of English education in a multilingual, professional setting such as the Philippine maritime industry should not be confined to training docile bodies responsible for earning revenue but should contribute to personal, community, and national development. In the wider context, though the Philippines acknowledges the role of English in the educational system, different sectors of the state do not seem to realize the potential of the multilingual character of the country. Often viewed as a problem, multilingualism can benefit from and help English education through the enhancement of teaching and learning opportunities. Given that maritime professionals possess characteristics of a globalized learner (highly mobile, employs hybrid forms of communication and fluid identities), multilingualism affords them the opportunity to capitalize in participating in the global market but also allows them to live meaningful lives as Filipino citizens.

## Conclusion

Tupas (2007) and Bernardo (2004) believe that debates on language and education are deeply enmeshed in sociopolitical and economic concerns that have been conditioned throughout history. They rightly argue that much debate stems from the notion that language and education from a critical lens are an issue of class, i.e., a matter of who has more will get more from the educational system. This, however, does not discount the capacity of individuals to demonstrate their agency in resisting oppressive realities. Departing from a largely macro, sociopolitical perspective on language and education, this chapter has demonstrated that despite ideological pressures to take part in machinations of commodified labor, the students have the capacity to articulate their own views, appropriate language, and challenge the status quo within a richly contested, diverse, and contradictory space.

One productive move on the part of program developers is to expand the range of listening and speaking skills for these maritime professionals to develop a wider skill set for their repertoire. For example, these training programs should at least expose students to varieties of English to prepare them for impending cross-cultural transactions.

Relating the findings to developments in the country, the Philippine government's promotion of the Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education and the K to

12 basic education system, which recognize diversity and uplift education standards for global competitiveness, reflexively leads to questions for educators. Will these education initiatives encourage Filipinos to stay in the country? Or are these simply a means to reinforce the existing status quo? Perhaps, a more pressing and humbling point for reflection which hints at our role as educators is this – Do we continue teaching the English language as we do and effectively contribute to producing servants of the global market? As Pennycook (1994) emphasizes, our work as teachers is crucial as we help the learners develop counterdiscourses so that they become critically conscious individuals in these globalized times.

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# Chapter 12
# The Social Dimension of English Language Testing in the Philippines

**Isabel Pefianco Martin**

**Abstract** This chapter focuses on an important and often neglected component of ELT, which is testing and assessment. In the Philippines, there is a dearth of substantial research on the topic. While most studies about English language testing are concerned with the psychometric dimensions of tests, very few, if any, investigate test bias and fairness. Throughout history, tests have been used to control human behavior. Language tests have been and continue to be used for gatekeeping purposes. To what extent are these test practices fair to test-takers? To what extent are test instruments inclusive of all speakers of the English language? Are English language tests biased against so-called 'non-native' users of the language? This chapter looks at the social dimension of English language testing. Using the Philippines as context, the chapter raises some concerns about bias and fairness in testing policies and practices in the country.

**Keywords** Social dimension of language tests · English language testing · Test fairness · Second language testing and assessment · English in the Philippines

## Language Testing as Gatekeeping Practice

"What does it mean to know how to use a language?" Bernard Spolsky (1985) asks this question when he wrote about the theoretical basis of second language testing. Spolsky argues that the field of language testing and linguistic theory share common concerns about finding out the nature of language and how it is used. According to Spolsky:

> Anybody who knows a second language may be assumed to have all three kinds of knowledge [structure, functional, and general] and ways to use them, and they are related but not in any direct way, so that any description on one dimension alone is just as likely to be

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> distorted as a description on the basis of one aspect of one dimension (e.g. vocabulary knowledge only for structural knowledge, or greeting behaviour only for functional). (Spolsky 1985, p. 188).

The quote above draws attention to the issue of whether or not language tests truly determine what a language user is capable of doing. For Spolsky, testing language proficiency must be informed by both pragmatic and ethical considerations. It is the second concern—fairness in language testing—that this chapter focuses on.

The history of testing reveals that tests have been used since ancient times to control human behavior, sometimes with violent consequences. There is the proverbial narrative about the "shibboleth" pronunciation test described in the Bible (Judges 12: 4–6) as a means of determining who belonged to what ingroup. Two warring groups shared one river which group members regularly crossed to go about their daily lives. Guards at checkpoints ensured that members of the enemy group would not enter their territory. Everyone who crossed the river was given the "shibboleth" test. Those who could not pronounce the "sh" sound of the word were identified as belonging to an enemy tribe and killed. The Bible reports 42,000 deaths resulting from this practice (Judges 12: 4–6). Other similar "shibboleth tests" are recorded throughout history. Such tests with violent consequences for test-takers have been used in England in the fourteenth century, in Yemen during medieval times, in Egypt in the 1300s, in Japan shortly after the Great Kantō earthquake of 1923, and in the Dominican Republic in the 1930s (McNamara and Roever 2006).

The history of testing also tells us that tests have always been used to protect the interests of powerful groups. Madaus et al. (2009), in their analysis of the paradox of high-stakes testing, present a comprehensive account of the beginnings of testing.[1] According to Madaus et al., "tests have always been used as a tool to address political, social, educational, and economic concerns of the power elite" (2009, p. 109). The earliest practice of testing in the formal sense that we know now is recorded in China during the Han Dynasty (206 BCE to 230 CE) when tests were developed for civil service needs. Tests allowed the emperor to choose his advisers based on merit, rather than on recommendations of local officials (Madaus et al. 2009). This examination system of the Chinese was later brought to Europe by the Jesuit priests who used tests to tightly manage their school systems (Madaus 1990 in Spolsky 1997) as well as influence the introduction of the French civil service examinations (Webber 1989 in Madaus et al.).

Tests, especially high-stakes tests, continue to be used today for gatekeeping purposes—employment in a firm, admission into a university, placement in a program, and even awarding of citizenships. Tests are also used to determine the accountability of personnel and institutions responsible for education and training. Needless to say, this gatekeeping function of tests has resulted in economic, educational, political, and social consequences. One such consequence is the transformation of the testing industry into a billion dollar enterprise. A report concerning the

[1] A comprehensive history of testing is found in Chapter 7 of Madaus et al. (2009).

Common Core States Standards[2] in the USA, for example, exposed the involvement of four large testing corporations, namely, Pearson Education, Educational Testing Service, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, and McGraw-Hill, in lobbying for mandatory student assessment. It was estimated that these corporations "collectively spent more than $20 million lobbying in states and on Capitol Hill from 2009 to 2014" (Strauss 2015). The lobbying has resulted in a US testing industry that earns a two billion dollar profit annually (Strauss 2015; Persson 2015).

## The Social Dimension of Language Tests

Language tests, like all tests, make or break individuals and institutions. Because of this, there is a preponderance of research studies that attempt to make us understand the nature of tests and how these may be used to benefit specific groups. However, these research studies tend to focus more on psychometric concerns—objectivity in testing, construct validity and reliability issues, factors affecting performance, and the like. In addition, many research studies are undertaken within the organizational structures of test development institutions because of their need to safeguard the psychometric soundness of their tests (McNamara and Roever 2006). Ensuring the adequacy of psychometric properties of language tests is indeed very important. However, issues of fairness and the social consequences of language tests need to be attended to as well. Moss (1998) quotes the following question posed by Foucault, which best captures this concern for the social consequences of all our actions, language testing included: "People know what they do; they frequently know why they do what they do; what they don't know is what what they do does" (Foucault cited in Moss 1998, p. 6).

Studies on language test fairness range from issues of construct validity to test bias tendencies and to questions of whether or not tests must be used in the first place. Messick's (1980) facets of validity matrix is often cited as a classic framework that points to the social nature of testing within the context of construct validity.

According to Messick, the matrix (Fig. 12.1) draws attention to four distinguishable and interrelated aspects of testing, which are the following:

| | Test interpretation | Test use |
|---|---|---|
| Evidential basis | Construct validity | Construct validity + Relevance/ utility |
| Consequential basis | Value implications | Social consequences |

**Fig. 12.1** Facets of validity (Messick 1980, p. 1023)

[2] The Common Core State Standards is a career and college readiness initiative launched in 2009 and adopted by 48 states in the USA (http://www.corestandards.org)

- What balance of evidence sustains the interpretation or meaning of the scores?
- What evidence supports not only score meaning but also the relevance of the scores to the particular applied purpose and the utility of the scores in the applied setting?
- What makes credible the value implications of the score interpretation and any associated implications for action?
- What signifies the functional worth of the testing in terms of its intended and unintended consequences (Messick 1990, p. 23)?

While research on construct validity tends to focus more on structuralist and psychometric dimensions, this matrix of Messick allows testers to locate test use as part of a unified construct validity framework. By doing this, Messick underscores the reality that all tests must inevitably account for their social consequences. According to McNamara (2001, p. 336):

> The bottom row of the matrix has been seen as presenting new, or relatively unfamiliar, sets of considerations for testers. The bottom left cell of the matrix insists that all interpretations of test scores involve questions of value, that is, that we have no 'objective', 'scientific', value-free basis for this activity. This is, indeed, a radical and disturbing (or liberating) notion...The final cell stresses the need to investigate what specifically happens when a test is implemented in terms of its impact.

The field of language testing has been active since the 1960s. Developments since this time have focused mostly on language proficiency concerns. The field has moved from the period of discrete point testing to the integrative era, to communicative language testing, and later to performance testing and alternative assessment (Shohamy 2008). But of late, contemporary language testing research has begun to explore the "pivotal roles that tests play in societies in shaping the definitions of language, in affecting learning and teaching, and in maintaining and creating social classes" (Shohamy 2008, p. xiv). Present-day sociolinguistic realities resulting from increasing physical and virtual mobility across territories have forced the language testing field to confront more diverse, multilingual, and multicultural landscapes. More and more, dependence on monolingual norms has begun to diminish. Do international measures of English proficiency, such as the extremely popular (and expensive) TOEFL and TOEIC, impose Inner Circle English[3] varieties on test-takers who use other varieties? Is it fair to expect "nonnative" users of English to be knowledgeable about the features of "native speaker" English? These are questions that language testing research has begun to ask.

Lowenberg (2002) criticizes the "presumed international validity of English proficiency tests based solely on native-speaker, often American norms" (p. 431). He provides the following items to demonstrate the weaknesses of international tests of English:

[3] I am using the term "Inner Circle" English, following the Three Concentric Model of Englishes of Braj Kachru (1992). In this model, three circles of Englishes are presented, namely, Inner Circle (the USA, the UK, Canada, and the like), Outer Circle (the Philippines, Malaysia, India, Nigeria, and the like), and Expanding Circle (China, Japan, Korea, and the like).

1. *His* proposal met *with a lot of resistances.* (ETS 1980, p.27 in Lowenberg 2002, p. 434)
2. The new *equipments made in* France will be *the only* items *on sale* this week. (ETS 1993, p. 9 in Lowenberg 2002: 434)

In the test above, test-takers are expected to identify which among the italicized items are ungrammatical. The intended errors, following American English norms, are the nouns *resistances* and *equipments*. Clearly, these tests do not take into account the fact that in many "nonnative" English-speaking contexts, such nouns are widely used and therefore acceptable.

Davidson (2006) also writes about the "well-established and legitimate concern that large, powerful English language tests are fundamentally disconnected from the insights in analysis of English in the world context." Davidson presents the following imaginary test that engages Liberian English norms (2006, p. 710):

> Imagine that you want to take a few days off from work to attend a family event, such as an important wedding. You explain to your boss that you need to attend the event, and then you say:
>
> (1) Please, may I have a few days?
> (2) I beg you, I may take a few days?
> (3) Hey, ya, my man—I can have a few days?
> (4) My friend, can I have a few days?

The test calls for the identification of the correct utterance in the situation. Davidson tells us that if this item were used in a North American context, the intended correct answer would probably be item (1). However, if this item were pretested among Liberians, Davidson argues that all the other answers would have been acceptable as well. According to Davidson, test writers must consider that reality that "the right answer becomes wrong and the wrong answer becomes right depending on the match-up of the test norm group with the target testing group" (p. 709).

The situations described above point to test bias, which Davies et al. (2003) define as "…not about difference as such but about unfair difference" (p. 571). In raising concerns about test bias, Davies et al. ask the following important questions (2003, p. 582):

1. How possible is it to distinguish between an error and a token of a new type?
2. If we could establish bias, how much would it really matter?
3. Does an international English test privilege those with a metropolitan Anglophone education?

Current research on English language testing does not seem to have found a satisfactory answer to these questions. In a study that attempted to respond to these concerns, Hamp-Lyons and Davies (2008) concluded that the question of test bias in the context of world Englishes remains elusive. They write:

> Bias on the basis of our study may be 'not proven', but it cannot be dismissed. As for the three questions we posed at the outset, we are no closer to any answers, but we are becoming clearer as to how further research can help us understand whether these are the right questions to ask and to select the right strategies with which to pursue them. (p. 36)

Perhaps, these are not the right questions to ask. Yano (2005) makes this point when he argued that TOEFL, TOEIC, and IELTS tests were not intended to measure English proficiency for performance in local settings. In response to the questions raised by Davies et al. (2003), Yano presents another question: "Is it possible to test EIL/ELF[4] which is based on what can be termed 'supra-normative' norm(s) of English and its use, rather than exonormative or endonormative ones?"(2005, p. 96). The question is a recognition of the existence of "a loose league of varieties of English used and understood by the educated speakers of any variety, native speaker or not" (Yano 2005, p. 95). He goes on to propose future research projects that would contribute to the development of tests on EIL/ELF proficiency. Of special interest to me is the recommendation below:

> An investigation into whether the materials and question items in TOEFL, TOEIC, and IELTS exclude proverbs, idioms, metaphorical expressions as well as vocabulary items which are uniquely Anglo-American in terms of linguistic forms, and uniquely Judeo-Christian in terms of pragmatic and sociocultural aspects of the use of the language, and whether they lower the scores of test-takers from the Outer and Expanding Circles. (Yano 2005, p. 96)

Language testing research has also delved into issues of language policy. Shohamy (2007), for example, argues that national language tests have become de facto language policies. These tests are "more powerful than any written policy document, (since) they lead to the elimination and suppression of certain languages in societies" (p. 120). Shohamy (2007) cites several studies (Evans and Hornberger 2005; Byrnes 2005; Menken 2005, 2006) that show how the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) policy of the USA, instituted as a law in 2002, resulted in the marginalizing of native languages of immigrants and first settlers (as in the case of the Navajo). Shohamy calls for more democratic practices in language test development (Shohamy 2001) which include the following:

- To examine the uses of tests through critical language testing (CLT);
- To develop assessment models that are based on shared and collaborative models;
- To assume a growing responsibility for those who are engaged in test development and use;
- To examine the consequences of tests;
- To include different voices in assessment, especially in multicultural societies; and
- For test-takers to protect and guard their rights from the authority and misuses of tests. (p. 373)

Language policies of higher education institutions, especially of universities that cater to international students, have also been found to favor native speakers of English. Jenkins (2013) raises this concern in her analysis of websites of international English-medium universities, in which she found that claims for the recogni-

[4] EIL or English as an International Language and ELF or English as Lingua Franca are used interchangeably by Yano in his response to Davies et al. (2003).

tion of cultural diversity does not fully match actual policies and practices. Native speaker English norms are still preferred, especially in testing practices. For example, while students who are nonnative speakers of English are required to take the IELTS or TOEFL, their native English speaker counterparts are not. Jenkins also found that students who were asked to take the IELTS did not find the test to be relevant to their academic work in the UK.

Indeed, language test fairness and the social consequences of these tests are complex issues. These are made more complex by the fact that it is very difficult to reconcile performance in one test and actual proficiency in the tested language. Will a candidate who receives a high score in a multiple-choice format (MCF) test perform well in university-level courses taught in the tested language? Can we tell from performance in one interview if an applicant can adequately handle telephone inquiries from customers? Does this essay written by an applicant to a graduate-level degree program tell us if she is ready to write academic essays in the tested language? To these questions, testing specialists will most likely reply that there can never be 100% certainty in test results. At best, what tests offer are informed predictions. McNamara (2000, p. 11) defines a language test as "a procedure for gathering evidence of general and specific language abilities from performance on tasks designed *to provide a basis for predictions* [emphasis mine] about an individual's use of those abilities in real world contexts." Language testing, in effect, relies heavily on interpretations of performance in a test. McNamara (2000, p. 11) likens language testers to "soothsayers of ancient Rome, who inspected the entrails of slain animals in order to make their interpretations and subsequent predictions of future events."

## English Language Testing in the Philippines

Curriculum design and assessment for basic education in the Philippines are directed primarily by the Department of Education (DepEd). Since 2002, the DepEd, through its official testing arm, the National Education Testing and Research Center (NETRC), annually administers the National Achievement Test (NAT) to 6th graders and 4th year high school students throughout the country. The government reports an improvement in the mean percentage scores (MPS) of Filipino students who took the NAT over an 8-year period (see Fig. 12.2).

Despite these claims for improvement in NAT performance, the scores remain below the 75-percentage target of the government. Several questions come to mind when confronted with these scores; among them is the concern about the quality of basic education institutions in the country. But issues about the reliability and relevance of the NAT have also surfaced. There are calls to abolish the test for many reasons, most notably that the NAT causes a washback effect or a teaching-to-the-test mindset among school personnel because of sanctions that schools face if students perform poorly in the test (Flores 2014). There are also reports that school personnel receive bonuses when their students do well in the test (Umil 2015).

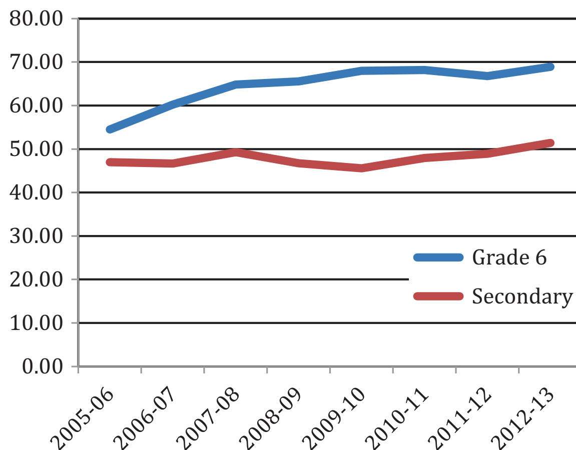


**Fig. 12.2** National Achievement Test (NAT) mean percentage scores (MPS), elementary and secondary, school year 2005–2006 to 2012–2013 (UNESCO 2015, p. 50)

Other reported weaknesses of the NAT include the following: (1) claims of rampant cheating in the administration of the test, (2) lack of learning-centered applications of the test because the scores are not disaggregated according to specific skills or question types, and (3) lack of comparability between tests from one school year to another (Bautista et al. 2010). However, as the NAT remains the only standardized test in the country, reliable or not, this test continues to inform policies at the national, local, and school levels.

The administration of NAT from 2002 to present times has seen several major curricular reforms in basic education,[5] the latest being the Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013, also known as the K to 12 Law. This law extends the period of basic education from 10 years to 12 years. DepEd provides two major reasons for the introduction of this 12-year basic education program (Department of Education n.d.), as follows:

- The Philippines is the last country in Asia and one of only three countries worldwide with a 10-year preuniversity cycle (Angola and Djibouti are the other two).
- A 12-year program is found to be the best period for learning under basic education. It is also the recognized standard for students and professionals globally.

The K to 12 Law is seen to provide radical curricular reforms that will take place not only in the basic education sector (elementary schools and high schools) but also in tertiary-level higher education institutions (colleges and universities). To what extent will testing and assessment practices adapt to these major curricular changes remains to be seen. However, in past curricular innovations such as the 2002 Basic Education Curriculum (BEC) and the 2010 Revised Basic Education Curriculum (RBEC), there did not seem to be any major revamp in test practices. Plata (2007), in an analysis of assessment practices in the English subject areas, found that the

[5] In another chapter in this volume, Doplon provides a list of 13 language-related policy statements issued by the Philippine government from 2001 to 2009.

paradigms observed by the DepEd when it implemented the 2002 BEC remained traditional. According to Plata, tests and assessment tools that were used focused more on measuring knowledge of language structures (grammar), were too teacher-oriented, and relied heavily on the use of MCF in testing discrete items. In a later study, this time on the 2010 RBEC innovations, Plata (2010) found a mismatch between what the tests measured and the content of the English courses.

The present K to 12 Law makes a special case for mother tongue-based multilingual education (MTBMLE). This is believed to be one of the educational hallmarks of the Aquino administration, which lists a 10-point agenda referred to as "Ten Ways to Fix Philippine Basic Education" (Education for All 2015 National Review Report: Philippines, p. 10). Point number 8 makes explicit the country's goal of developing citizens who are trilingual, that is, knowledgeable in English for international communication, Filipino for national rootedness, and the mother tongue for local heritage preservation. The K to 12 curriculum was designed to meet this goal. Again, a question is raised—to what extent will testing and assessment practices adapt to meet these curricular changes? If courses in the primary school levels are taught in the mother tongues, will the students be tested in the mother tongues too? At present, the NAT remains an English-medium test, with a section in Filipino. However, in 2015, the DepEd administered the nationwide Language Assessment for Primary Grades (LAPG) test to 3rd graders, which aimed to evaluate the effectiveness of MTB-MLE instruction in the 19 mother tongues[6] officially recognized by the K to 12 program (DepEd Memo 2014). As of this writing, the DepEd has not made available the results of the LAPG. But it is hoped that the LAPG would provide the information DepEd needs to revise the NAT so that it adapts to curricular reforms in the K to 12 program.

The implementation of MTBMLE in the Philippines is supported by several international and local research studies that demonstrate the linguistic and educational benefits of instruction in the mother tongue (Thomas and Collier 1997; Thomas and Collier 2002; Dumatog and Dekker 2003). However, as Mahboob and Cruz (2013) have pointed out, this radical curricular reform may not succeed without a corresponding change in attitudes that hold English as the most important language to acquire. This attitude comes at the expense of local languages, as we have seen in 2013 when three high school students were expelled from a private school because they spoke Iloko (Lagasca 2013). Elsewhere, I have argued that Philippine education is beset by four myths about languages in the country, namely, (1) American English is the only correct English, (2) English is the only cure to all economic ailments, (3) English and Filipino are languages in opposition, and (4) English is the only language of knowledge (Martin 2010). These myths also manifest themselves in testing and assessment practices in the country.

Following the arguments of Lowenberg (2002) and Davidson (2006) that were discussed earlier in this chapter, I conducted a study involving 120 public and 156

[6]The 19 mother tongues recognized by the K to 12 curriculum include Aklanon, Bikol, Cebuano, Chabacano, Hiligaynon, Iloko, Ivatan, Kapampangan, Kinaray-a, Maguindanaoan, Maranao, Pangasinense, Sambal, Surigaonon, Tagalog, Tausug, Waray, Yakan, and Ybanag.

| Philippine English | Standard American English |
|---|---|
| (1) This *results to* a better quality of life. | results in… |
| (2) The solution cannot *consist in* a purely technological measure. | consists of… |
| (3) *On* many instances, officers run out of patience and rule out further negotiations as unnecessary. | In… |
| (4) However, even if the company disposes * its properties, there may be no buyer... | disposes of… |

**Fig. 12.3** Examples of Philippine English prepositions identified by Bautista (2000)

private high school students in Metro Manila. My goal was to find out how students would perform in a 10-item MCF test that made use of "native" speaker norms (see Appendix). The students were presented with MCF test items selected from NAT review books[7] that were sold in popular bookstores in Manila (Alferez and Feliciano 2000; Alferez 2009).

Most test items I selected for this study involved the use of prepositions. The decision to include these items is based on Bautista's (2000) comprehensive description of the grammatical features of Philippine English. Bautista states "Prepositions have been identified as the second most difficult aspect of the English language, after articles, for language learners and the data [in the Philippine English corpus] bear this out" (2000). She presents the examples of preposition use in Philippine English and how these depart from Standard American English. Some examples follow (Fig. 12.3):

Even without this description of Bautista, the frequent use of "nativized" prepositional phrases is noticeable in Philippine English. Signages around Metro Manila demonstrate this; we often see such signs, for example, "Please dispose your garbage properly," "For vehicles bound to Quezon City," and "Get a free subscription of the magazine."[8] Because of this widespread nativizing of preposition use, teaching this structure to Filipino students has become a nightmare for English teachers who are obsessed with upholding "native" speaker standards.

The table below reproduces the test items on prepositions that I selected for the study. I also present some observations and questions about each test item. These observations ultimately point to the question—are the test items fair to the test-takers? (Fig. 12.4)

Other than test items on prepositions, I also selected from the NAT review books a noncount noun item, as well as items on set phrases or idiomatic expressions. These selections were based on personal observations I have made throughout the years of the widespread use of these "nativized" structures in oral and written form.

[7] As it was not possible to use items from the NAT, I selected items from NAT review books instead.

[8] Standard American English would use the following expressions: "Please dispose *of* your garbage properly," "For vehicles bound *for* Quezon City," and "Get a free subscription *to* the magazine."

| Test items on prepositions | Observations and questions |
| --- | --- |
| (1) Don't allow your tasks to ______, finish all your tasks in time.<br>a. build in c. build<br>b. build on d. build up | The intended correct answer is **b. build up.** However, the item also introduces what some may consider an error in sentence construction. We find this in the comma between the two independent clauses, which creates what is known as a comma splice. Some may argue that the comma should be a fullstop (period), or a semi-colon. To what extent does this error affect performance? One also wonders if this "error" is actually a feature of Philippine writing in English. |
| (2) Preposition relates one word to another word, phrase to another phrase, clause to another clause. To what will the preposition ***on*** be accurately used?<br>a. on 1981 c. on 1319 Pilar Street<br>b. on Manila d. on Monday | The intended correct answer is **d. on Monday**. Some, however, may argue that there is nothing wrong with the option **on 1319 Pilar Street**. For those who use the prepositon **on** with streets, is this test item fair? |
| (3) Cyril jumped __________ that car and drove away.<br>a. in b. into c. at d. for | The intended correct answer is **b. into**. However, there is a very fine line between the meanings of **in** and **into**, so that the option **in** may also be chosen by some test-takers. How can one argue that the only correct choice is **into**? |
| (4) Fill in the blank. *My friends and I will meet ________ the new restaurant along Roxas Boulevard.*<br>a. at b. in c. on d. of | The intended correct answer is **a. at.** The preposition **in** may also be considered as acceptable. |
| *(5)* Fill in the blank. _______________ *the stadium, everyone was fighting because of the deliberate foul committed by one of the basketball players.*<br>a. Inside c. Within<br>b. On d. In | The intended correct answer is **a. Inside.** However, some may argue that the prepositions **in** and **within** are also acceptable. |
| (6) Do not be absent ________ your classes anymore.<br>a. from c. at<br>b. On d. In | The intended correct answer is **a. from**. However, some may argue that the preposition **at** may be acceptable for this sentence. |

**Fig. 12.4** Some observations and questions on test items on prepositions

| Test items | Observations and questions |
|---|---|
| (1) The bank employees are well __________.<br>a. taken care for c. taken cared of<br>b. taken care of d. taken cared for | The intended correct answer is **b. taken care of**. I chose to include this test item because of the frequent use of **taken cared of** by Filipino speakers of English. |
| (2) My grandmother has a lot of antique _________.<br>a. jeweler c. jewelry's<br>b. jewelry d. jewelries | The intended correct answer is **b. jewelry**. I chose to include this test item because of the widespread use of **jewelries** in written texts, as well as in everyday conversations. |
| (3) She was caught ________ during the meeting.<br>a. aware c. awares<br>b. unaware d. unawares | The intended correct answer is **d. unawares**. I chose to include this item because I was interested in finding out if Filipino users of English were aware of the expression **caught unawares**. There is frequent use of **caught unaware**, but never **unawares**. |
| (4) Your taste in perfume ______ mine.<br>a. is different for c. was different to<br>b. is different from d. was different than | The intended correct answer is **b. is different from**. However, some may also argue that **was different than** may be an acceptable option. |

**Fig. 12.5** Some observations and questions on other test items

In particular, I am referring to the following: (1) the use of *jewelries*, instead of *jewelry*; (2) the use of *taken cared of*, instead of *taken care of*; (3) the use of *caught unaware*, instead of *caught unawares*; and (4) the use of *different from*, instead of *different than*. The test items are presented below with some of my observations and questions (Fig. 12.5):

The results of my study generated the following data:

- In all the test items on prepositions, a large majority of the students chose the correct answer (Fig. 12.6).
- For the test items on **taken care of** and **different from**, a large majority chose the correct answer (Fig. 12.7).
- For the test items on **jewelry**, about half chose the correct answer, and the other half opted for the wrong answer **jewelries** (Fig. 12.8).
- For the test item on **caught unawares**, a large majority chose the incorrect answer **caught unaware** (Fig. 12.8).

Given the test results, this study does not allow me to make conclusions about whether or not the test-takers were unfairly subjected to "native" speaker norms. However, I cannot discount the possibility of bias in some items, specifically, in

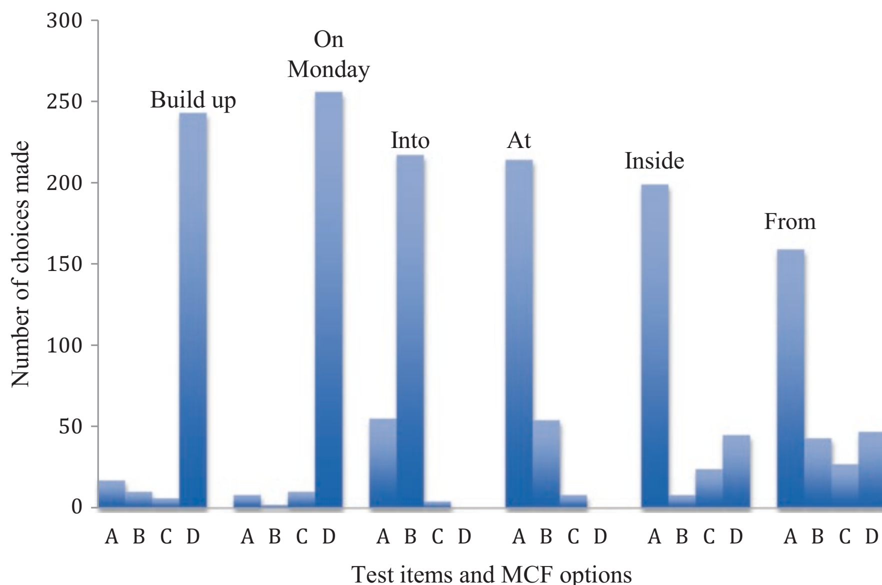


**Fig. 12.6** Performance in the preposition test items

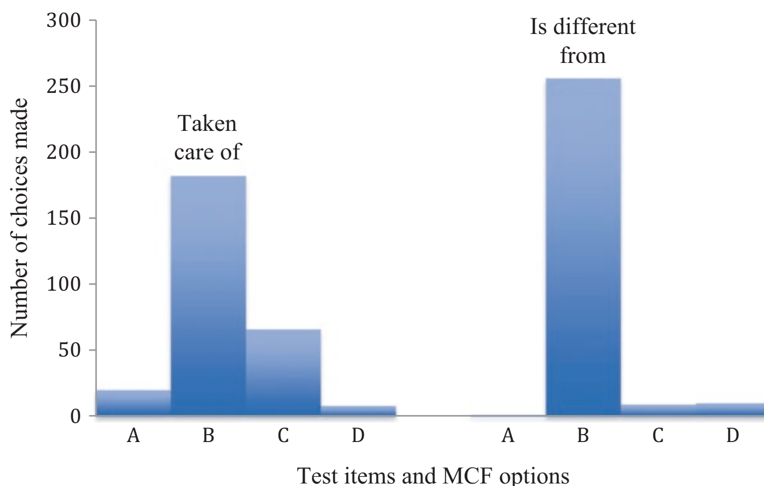


**Fig. 12.7** Performance in other test items

assigning error to the word **jewelries**. Among Philippine English speakers, this word, along with **furnitures**, **foods**, and **staffs**, is often used in both written texts and everyday conversations. In the case of **caught unawares**, the expression, being a "native" speaker idiom, is not at all used in the country. Why then should Filipino test-takers be expected to identify the expression as correct?

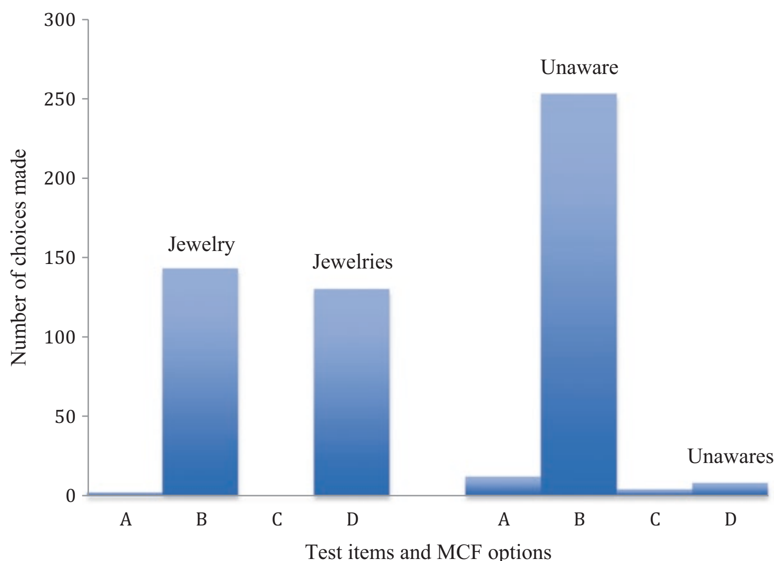


**Fig. 12.8** Incorrect choices made in two test items

It should be noted too that the format of the test itself (MCF) presents several weaknesses. This test format was first introduced in New York in the 1920s because of a need to manage a growing number of test-takers and limited time to determine these test-takers' level of proficiency (Madaus et al. 2009). Through the years, the population of test-takers has continued to increase. And with the availability of machine-based test marking systems, MCF tests have become more and more popular among test developers. However, an MCF test item, as Madaus et al. describe, is ultimately "a sound bite that strips depth and context from a question and a student's answer" (Madaus et al. 2009, p. 127). Thus, for the NAT that is administered annually in the Philippines, test interpreters must be cautious in concluding that knowledge of language structures signals proficiency in that language. Conversely, poor performance in an MCF test does not necessarily indicate low English proficiency levels.

Another weakness that I see in MCF language test items is that such tests do not recognize the nature of language variation and linguistic diversity. Here I am referring to nativized features of English, otherwise known as new Englishes or varieties of English. However, I am also concerned about variation that occurs within these varieties, in formal and colloquial registers and discourses, and in nonstandard, marginalized forms within these country-based varieties. Elsewhere, I have argued (Martin 2014) that Kachru's (1992) Three Concentric Circle Model of Englishes may not accurately capture the complex sociolinguistic realities of countries such as the Philippines. In Kachru's model, the Philippines is an Outer Circle country. However, within this Outer Circle context are circles of Philippine Englishes: an inner circle of elite, highly educated Filipino speakers of English, an outer circle of Filipinos who are ambivalent about Philippine English legitimacy, and an expanding circle of Filipinos who hardly use English and, if they do, use nonstandard,

"funny" forms that are marginalized in Philippine society. Needless to say, tests of English language proficiency in the Philippines (such as the NAT) may have been developed using a monolingual paradigm that does not recognize these variations in the language. In such situations, can we say that these tests are fair? Can we truly believe that these tests would have positive consequences for Filipino test-takers?

## Toward New Paradigms for English Language Testing

According to McNamara (2011, p. 435):

> The distinctive character of language testing lies in its combination of two primary fields of expertise: applied linguistics and measurement. Language testers typically enter the field from one of these sides: either statistics and measurement (the 'testing' side) or language and linguistics (the 'language' side), rarely both. Yet the best language tests are those that are richly informed by the best practice in both areas.

Language use is a complex phenomenon that tests cannot accurately measure. Still, we cannot deny that tests are necessary tools that must be continually developed and utilized to inform policies and practices. As McNamara has pointed out in the quote above, language tests are best prepared from the viewpoint of two disciplines, applied linguistics and test measurement. Too much focus on one discipline may create language tests of disastrous consequences for individuals and institutions.

For the Philippines, language testing practices have been influenced by a long tradition of test measurement research in higher education institutions in the country. There are countless college-level and graduate school programs on statistics, educational measurement, testing and assessment, psychometrics, and the like that are offered by Philippine universities. However, not very many institutions are involved in English applied linguistics. To what extent have Philippine language testing practices been informed by applied linguistics research is a question that must be raised.

The English language that our grandparents grew up with has evolved radically into new forms. English language use in the twenty-first century is determined by a variety of forces that did not exist decades ago. Today, the monolingual, monocultural mindset will not find satisfaction in a world that has become more diverse yet more connected than ever. For the Philippines, this phenomenon of "unity in diversity" is felt in its membership in the Association of South East Nations (ASEAN), which has resolved to integrate in 2015. The integration has both economic and educational implications for all the ten members of ASEAN. From the linguistic standpoint, it means the strengthening of English as a lingua franca (ELF) in the region. As more and more interaction takes place among citizens of ASEAN member nations, the English that is used in the region will tend to merge into a shared form. Linguists have already begun to identify common features in the Englishes spoken in the region. Kirkpatrick (2010, p. 173),[9] for example, found that ASEAN

[9] Kirkpatrick's chapter in this volume discusses ELF in ASEAN in greater detail.

speakers of English shared nonstandard phonological features, such as the reduction of consonant clusters and the merging of long and short vowel sounds.

It is this reality of ASEAN integration and the inevitable sociolinguistic consequences of integration that English language teaching in the Philippines must confront. Needless to say, English language testing practices must also adapt to these realities. Without doing so, language testing in the Philippines will persist in the unfair practice of evaluating Filipino users of English using obsolete monolingual paradigms.

## Appendix

### *Ten-item MCF Test for Public and Private HS Students*

(Selected from Alferez and Feliciano 2000; Alferez 2009)

**Directions** Items in this part are incomplete sentences. Following each of these sentences, there are four words or phrases. Select the *one* word or phrase labelled (a), (b), (c), or (d)-that best completes the sentence. Encircle your answer.

1. Don't allow your tasks to ______, finish all your tasks in time.

a. build in c. build
b. build on d. build up

2. Preposition relates one word to another word, phrase to another phrase, clause to another clause. To what will the preposition ***on*** be accurately used?

a. on 1981 c. on 1319 Pilar Street
b. on Manila d. on Monday

3. Cyril jumped __________ that car and drove away.

a. in b. into
c. at d. for

4. Fill in the blank. *My friends and I will meet ________ the new restaurant along Roxas Boulevard.*

a. at b. in
c. on d. of

5. Fill in the blank. _______________ *the stadium, everyone was fighting because of the deliberate foul committed by one of the basketball players.*

a. Inside c. Within
b. On d. In

6. The bank employees are well __________.

a. taken care for c. taken cared of
b. taken care of d. taken cared for

7. My grandmother has a lot of antique _________.

a. jeweler c. jewelry's
b. jewelry d. jewelries

8. She was caught ________ during the meeting.

a. aware c. awares
b. unaware d. unawares

9. Do not be absent ________ your classes anymore.

a. from c. at
b. for d. to

10. Your taste in perfume ______ mine.

a. is different for c. was different to
b. is different from d. was different than

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# Part IV
# Synthesis

# Chapter 13
# English in Education in the Philippines: From Research to Policy

**Mario Saraceni**

**Abstract** As in other postcolonial settings, in the Philippines, linguistic and ethnic diversity intersect with ideological concerns related to identity and the politics of nation building. Therefore, any investigation on the forms and functions of English in the Philippines will also deal with matters that are relevant in many other parts of the world. Dilemmas, controversies, uncertainties and ambivalence regarding English and its place in society and education are analogous to those observable in countless other situations. The adoption of English as the medium of instruction raises even more questions and anxieties: are local languages going to be marginalized? Is English going to be an added intellectual burden impeding the students' learning? Under the weight of such questions, policies sometimes oscillate between promoting English or the local national language and the ideal aim being that of finding a solution where the advantages of both languages are maximized and their disadvantages minimized. In addition, even when English is adopted as a medium of instruction, which variety is best suited? Should preference continue to be accorded to 'native speaker' varieties such as American English, or should local varieties of the language be granted full recognition as equally valid? In this chapter, I address these questions both generally and within the context of the Philippines, as discussed by the various contributors to this volume.

**Keywords** English in the Philippines · English as a medium of instruction · World Englishes · Language and globalization · Language as social practice

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## Introduction

From a sociolinguistic point of view, the Philippines constitutes an ideal locale for investigating the forms and functions of English in postcolonial settings. This is because all the ingredients are there: typical variables in the historical, social, cultural and linguistic context intersect with ideological concerns related to identity and the politics of nation building. These are not unique to the Philippines. One does not have to travel very far at all, for example, to find almost identical circumstances in nearby Malaysia. Equally, the linguistic and ethnic diversity characterizing the Philippines, as well as the ways in which different languages are inextricably linked to social class, status and allegiances, are fundamentally the same as those in most other parts of the world, including places as disparate and geographically distant as Brazil, Algeria or the countries that once belonged to Yugoslavia, just to name a few. Any sociolinguistic study that takes the Philippines as its setting, therefore, will also, to some extent, deal with matters that are relevant in many other countries. In addition, in studying the place of English within the Filipino sociolinguistic environment, one is confronted with issues that cut deep into our understandings not only of language but also of nation, society and identity. In such a scenario, non-trivial questions concerning what 'English' means and what being a Filipino(a) means must be addressed, and, again, any conceptual or analytical approach towards answering those questions will be applicable and relevant to virtually any other contexts worldwide.

Related to all of this, dilemmas, controversies, uncertainties and ambivalence regarding the place and roles of English in education – the core subject matter of this volume – are analogous to those observable in countless other situations. As education becomes increasingly intertwined within the market forces of globalization, there is pressure to internationalize both curricula and student cohorts and, consequently, to adopt English as the medium of instruction. This happens both at the local level of individual schools and universities and at the level of government policy. In turn, this causes anxieties about the fate of other languages, especially those invested with the role of cementing national identities (are they going to be marginalized?) as well as about students' academic performance (is English going to be an added intellectual burden impeding the learning process of subjects such as maths and science?). Under the weight of such questions, policies sometimes oscillate between promoting English or the local national language and the ideal aim being that of finding a solution where the advantages of both languages are maximized and their disadvantages minimized.

From the more specific point of view of English language teaching, two other thorny issues continue to demand our attention:

(a) Given that English exists in so many varieties around the world, what is the 'model' to be preferred for teaching (and testing) purposes in terms of lexis, grammar and phonology?
(b) Should English be used as a language of instruction for content subjects such as maths and science?

In the sections that follow, I will address these questions both generally and within the context of the Philippines, as discussed by the various contributors to this volume.

## Which English?

*The World Englishes Perspective* The question of the 'model' of English to be used in the language classroom was the primary spark that ignited the academic field of World Englishes (WE) first (from the 1980s onwards) and that of English as a lingua franca (ELF) later (from the beginning of the new century). In the mid-1960s, it was a publication by Halliday et al. (1964) that gave rise to a controversy that would later in turn fuel the development of the paradigm shift that Braj Kachru, Larry Smith and others set in motion in the late 1970s. In their book, Halliday et al. advocated that the time had come for language educators to recognize that English was no longer to be considered exclusively in terms of one (British) standard form but that different world varieties were equally valid and adequate teaching models. This position provoked the reaction of Clifford Prator (1968), according to whom the proposition of the three British linguists amounted to no less than pedagogic heresy. Prator's tirade focussed particularly on Indian English as an example of a variety of English that, due to its non-standard features and incomprehensible speakers, was wholly inadequate to be used as a teaching model. According to him, therefore, the interests of learners of English around the world were best served by the adoption of British or American English in the classroom. Braj Kachru, originally from India, responded to Prator in 1976 and used the 'sin' as another religious metaphor in his counterargument to Prator's 'heresy'. In his paper B. B. Kachru systematically debunked myths about the English language, its varieties and their speakers and encouraged a more egalitarian and respectful approach towards postcolonial varieties of English. B. B. Kachru's paper could be considered the precursor of the WE movement, which later developed through the years with other milestones, such as B. B. Kachru's debates with Randolph Quirk (1985, 1990, Kachru 1985, 1991), the publication of the two editions of the collection *The Other Tongue: English Across Cultures* (Kachru 1982, 1992) and the founding of the *World Englishes* journal (1985).

Perhaps the essence of WE is best encapsulated in the following two quotes:

> The spread of a natural human language across the countries and regions of the planet has resulted in variation as a consequence of nativization and acculturation of the language in various communities [... ]. These processes have affected the grammatical structure and the use of language according to the local needs and conventions. (Y. Kachru and Smith 2008, p. 177)

> Varieties such as Indian English, Nigerian English and Singaporean English represent the extent to which a foreign language can be profitably reconstructed into a vehicle for expressing sociocultural norms and networks that are typically local. (Kumaravadivelu 2003, p. 539)

Combined together, these two quotes emphasize how the spread of English to different parts of the world caused it to absorb and adapt to the cultures of the various environments in which it was transplanted and acquire different lexical, grammatical and phonological features as a consequence. So, the varieties that Kumaravadivelu mentions, plus many others, including Philippine English, are all manifestations of this process of local cultural adaptation and formal transformation. When it comes to English language teaching, therefore, a WE-informed curriculum would at the very least consider the suitability of adopting a local variety of English as a model to use in the classroom.

*Resistance to Change* A local variety of English exists in the Philippines too. From a WE perspective, it would be preferable if the norms of the language to be taught were those of Philippine English, precisely because it is this variety, which has had time to adapt to the local cultural milieu, that is most relevant to Filipino learners. However, as Martin (2010) explains, over 100 years after English first arrived as a colonial language, English language teaching is still characterized by the myth that 'American English is the only correct English' (252). Not surprisingly, 'The existence of a Philippine variety of English does not necessarily translate into acceptance of that variety' (253). Indeed, the selection of a local variety of English as pedagogic model is very rarely implemented, not just in the Philippines but virtually anywhere else in postcolonial settings. This is partly because of lack of adequate descriptions of local varieties of English (and hence of materials based on them) and partly because of the widespread and deep-seated conviction that American and/or British English are the only models suitable for teaching purposes. It could be argued that such a conviction derives from a certain colonial mentality that still persists according to which products and services emanating from the former colonizing powers, also referred to as the 'centre' or, more generally, the 'developed world', are intrinsically superior to their counterparts in the postcolonial world, also known as the 'periphery' or 'developing world'. From this perspective, local varieties of English are seen as poor imitations of the 'original' varieties, tainted by contact with local languages.

The Speak Good English Movement (SGEM) in nearby Singapore is a perfect case illustrating this idea. Launched by the Singapore government in 2000, the SGEM encourages 'Singaporeans to speak grammatically correct English that is universally understood' (Speak Good English Movement n.d.). This aim has always been virtually equivalent to the eradication of 'Singlish' – the local colloquial variety of English – considered detrimental to the competitiveness of the country as a whole, which relies heavily on international trade. As Singapore's Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong stated in his speech delivered at the launch of the Movement, 'If [young Singaporeans] speak Singlish when they can speak good English, they are doing a disservice to Singapore' (Goh 2000). Although the SGEM has been the subject of considerable critique by sociolinguists (Rubdy 2001, 2007; Hoon 2003; Bruthiaux 2010; Wee 2014; Chua 2015), who have by and large pointed out how

Singlish is a lively, creative variety, deeply embedded within the linguistic fabric of Singapore and an important component of its inhabitants' identity, the government have dismissed these comments:

> While Singlish may be a fascinating academic topic for linguists to write papers about, Singapore has no interest in becoming a curious zoo specimen to be dissected and described by scholars. Singaporeans' overriding interest is to master a useful language which will maximise our competitive advantage, and that means concentrating on standard English rather than Singlish. (Liew and Ho 2008)

Even without anything resembling Singapore's SGEM, the perception that international intelligibility is inversely proportional to the use of local varieties is widespread and is reflected, more or less explicitly, in English language education materials throughout the world, including in countries where local varieties of English exist, like the Philippines. This clearly ignores not only the intranational functions that the language plays in many countries in the world but also the fact that the vast majority of speakers of English reside outside the Inner Circle. The decision by ASEAN to make English its official language is symptomatic of how much this language is used in contexts that do not involve people from America, Britain, etc.

The resistance towards a move away from 'native speaker' models that can be seen in language teaching policies as well as in language educators' attitudes becomes even more accentuated when it comes to language testing, an area traditionally very impervious to change. As Martin (Chap. 12, this volume) observes, language testing has tended to be informed primarily by parameters established within the testing discipline but not sufficiently by the insights of applied linguistics and sociolinguistics. The result is the adoption of rather rigid models that do not take into account, and are disconnected from, the ways in which English has been adapted locally. Given the power that testing exerts on language pedagogy, it can easily be seen that the rigidity of language norms perpetuated in language testing has a very considerable impact in determining the resistance that exists towards shifting paradigms more in general.

*Between the Global and the Local* Setting aside all the postcolonial hang-ups, from a more practical perspective, the question of which English to teach boils down to whether one wishes to emphasize the global, international role of English or the local and national one. Taking into account this dual role of English in the Philippines, in this volume Bernardo proposes the simultaneous adoption of General American English and educated Philippine English, in a pragmatic solution that caters both for the role of English as an international lingua franca and for that of English as a localized language, capable of expressing local cultural content. Kirkpatrick (Chap. 2, this volume), by contrast, suggests, as he has done in the past (Kirkpatrick 2006, 2012), that a lingua franca approach represents the best way forwards. In this approach, emphasis is placed upon 'the ability to communicate successfully in multilingual settings [as] the primary goal of the learner' (Kirkpatrick 2012, p. 134) rather than on native speaker norms or distinctive fea-

tures of local Englishes. The lingua franca approach, therefore, represents a sort of 'third way' between traditional 'native speaker' models and nationally defined local varieties. This requires that teaching models be based on systematic descriptions of the ways in which English is used as a lingua franca, particularly, in this case, in the ASEAN region.

Projects such as the Asian Corpus of English (ACE) have precisely this aim. Thus, thanks to advancement in the technology of data collection and storage, research is now showing that there are significant regional similarities in the ways in which English is used as an international lingua franca both at the level of lexicogrammar and at the level of phonology. In addition, there is evidence that speakers accommodate to each other's norms in flexible ways. All of this, in Kirkpatrick's view, should be capitalized on in English language education.

*Language as Social Practice* The lingua franca approach transcends the seemingly irresolvable contention between the positions of WE sociolinguists who advocate the use of local varieties of English and language educators who insist that the only model to adopt is British or American English. Indeed, to some extent, both views are underpinned by the same understanding of language as a 'thing', with its own place of origin and the new homes it has moved to, its original owners and the people who have appropriated it, its original form and the new shapes and favours that it has developed. Within the 'model of English' dilemma, the difference between 'original' and 'new' is only superficial, while the substance remains the same, namely, that English is a *code* – a system of words and phrases with their own meanings and whose use is regulated by specific syntactic rules. Accordingly, learning English means familiarizing oneself with the workings of a particular code – either one considered 'standard', 'correct', internationally intelligible, etc. or one regarded as 'new' and adapted to the local cultural milieu.

However, an alternative view of language knowledge is 'not in terms of abstract system components but as communicative repertoires – conventionalized constellations of semiotic resources for taking action – that are shaped by the particular practices in which individuals engage' (Hall et al. 2006, p. 232; see also Pennycook 2009, 2010). Thus, if we see language in this way, then debates on which English to adopt become futile. If language is understood as *doing* (function) rather than *being* (form), what matters is how people get things done by exchanging meanings rather than the accent they may have, how they spell words or whether they 'borrow' words from other languages. This, to be absolutely clear, is not about adopting a kind of laissez-faire attitude whereby anything goes as long as people understand each other. Mutual understanding is based on meaning negotiation – a social skill – and anything most certainly does *not* 'go' if communication is to be successful. 'Anything' does not refer here to the formal features of a language but to strategies that people adopt in order to understand each other. For example, the inability to change one's pronunciation, lexical choices or syntactic constructions dynamically according to contextual variables impedes successful communication, no matter how 'correct' or 'standard' those language features may be thought to be.

From the perspective of language as a social practice, meaning is not a property of language units but is co-constructed by speakers. It is people who mean, not words:

> Since meaning is constructed – negotiated, if you prefer – in our social practice of language, rather than simply contained in words, then it follows that the relationship between the forms and functions of our language is necessarily flexible. No linguistic form – be it a word, a phrase or a sentence – can simply be associated with one particular function or meaning.
>
> [...]
>
> the essentially cooperative practice of our social behaviour ensures that our linguistic intentions are, for the most part, understood by those with whom we interact – regardless of their syntactic form or their dictionary definitions. (Wood 2006, pp. viii–ix)

*The Localization of English* If we take these fundamental notions seriously, the question of which 'model' of English to adopt is irrelevant. In addition, regardless of which norms of English are adhered to in the classroom, the language will subsequently become part of the students' linguistic repertoire. Thus, users of English in the Philippines and other multilingual societies naturally localize the language in ways that go much further than classic descriptions of world Englishes account for (Saraceni 2018, in press). That is, the localization of English is not so much a matter of infusing the language with a local flavour, in the form of phonological features or the odd lexical item 'borrowed' from local languages, as a far more profound embedding of it within the rich and dynamic linguistic tapestry that typifies multilingual societies. The short Facebook conversation below illustrates this kind of localization:

**Name1** Tambis.. ? Wow, sarraapppp...

**Name2** Yes Ma'am Name1 right in my backyard!

**Name1** Nami gd no...? Sang una mag tambis man kmi damu bunga. Tinapas due to expansion and development in our property. Puti ang amon, tam us mam... kun paasuhan mo permi, grani iys bunga. Nadumduman ko lang pagkakita mo sang tambis mo...

**Name3** Ang gina pamahaw ko kon aga Nette..i miss those days!! Of cource pagbalik ko na naman..

**Name2** Yes, nag enjoy ka gid! Pagbalik mo, timing season na naman sang tambis. Can't wait to see you again soon!

The person identified as Name2 has posted a photograph of some tambis (*rose apple*, a fruit found throughout Southeast Asia) in their garden, and the conversation that has ensued, with the tambis as the central theme, uses a combination of Tagalog, English and Cebuano. The first linguistic aspect of a conversation like this that strikes the external observer unaccustomed to this kind of linguistic border crossing

is the fact that the different languages seem to be blended together in ways that cut across syntactic structures. In traditional language contact terminology, this would be classified as code mixing, highlighting the simultaneous use of *different* codes. However, from the perspective of language as a social practice (rather than a code), the three friends here are conversing and reinforcing their bond by making use of semiotic resources that they *share*, and the fact that some of those resources might be identified by a language taxonomist as 'English', 'Tagalog' or 'Cebuano' is of very little or no consequence, since they 'now are experienced against each other in speakers' interactions as one new whole' (García and Wei 2014, p. 21). In this sense, a conversation like the one above is an example of *translanguaging*, namely, 'the deployment of a speaker's full linguistic repertoire without regard for watchful adherence to the socially and politically defined boundaries of named (and usually national and state) languages' (Otheguy et al. 2015, p. 283).

The brief example of translanguaging I used here involves Filipino speakers because this volume is specifically about the place of English in the Philippines, but multilingualism and translingual practices that come with it are not peculiar to this country nor are they a special feature of twenty-first century technologies. As Canagarajah (2013, p. 37) notes, such practices 'have been around in other times and places', and, in fact, 'there were more fluid forms of multilingualism in premodernity rather than in contemporary times'. This is because 'language ideologies today are more restrictive'(37), stemming directly from nineteenth-century European nation-state ideology. It is under the lasting spell of this ideology that many linguists in the European tradition are still so fascinated by the identification, description, nomenclature and classification of languages, often getting entangled in questions about what counts as a language, what should be regarded as a dialect and what their actual names are. The Wikipedia page for the languages in the Philippines exemplifies this very well (Languages of the Philippines 2016). And it is for this reason, too, that they tend to perceive instances of language use such as that displayed in the text above as somewhat special, rather than as entirely normal and hence unremarkable (Otsuji and Pennycook 2014).

The normality with which English is embedded within people's linguistic repertoires, therefore, means that the *which English?* question at the beginning of this section is not really that important and should be replaced by a different one: *what is English?*

## What Is English?

*The Roles of English* In classic WE literature, the Philippines would be placed in the so-called Outer Circle. This means that, as is the case of, e.g. Malaysia, English arrived through colonization and has since had enough time to establish itself in the country to the point of acquiring intranational roles (for instance, in education and the media) as second language, unlike, e.g. Vietnam, where it is chiefly a foreign language exclusively used in international communication. The 'three-circles'

model, however, has received significant criticism (Bruthiaux 2003; Yano 2009; Pennycook 2009; Saraceni 2010; or, for a fuller critique of the WE framework, see Saraceni 2015) for being too static and, especially, incapable of adequately accounting for the considerable variation *within* each circle. Perhaps no other country could serve as a better illustration of this limitation than the Philippines. Here, the role of English ranges from being a language with little or no presence outside the classroom to being a home language and a mother tongue. This means that English is most certainly not the same one 'thing' to all Filipinos. This, however, is not the only form of unevenness in the country's linguistic environment. Undeniably, within the 'language constellations' (de Swaan 2001) of multilingual societies, especially in postcolonial ones, different languages are arranged along a pecking order of prestige, recognition and power. Some languages may have official status, some may be designated as the language of national unity, others may enjoy greater international currency, and others yet may be closely associated to the religious/ethnic identity of a specific part of the population. English is the language of modernity, opportunity, science, technology, international trade, international relations and global popular culture, and, consequently, it possesses an immense amount of power, 'linguistic capital' (Bourdieu 1991) or 'mojo' (Joseph 2015). As it tends to be more commonly used among the highly educated urban middle class, where families frequently raise their children with it as their home language, a vicious circle is produced whereby (a) access to English ensures that privileged classes maintain and enhance their social status, while widening the gulf between them and the rest of the population, and (b) other languages become increasingly less important and less valued, including by the people who speak them. For these reasons, English has been called a *lingua frankensteinia* (Phillipson 2008) and a Hydra (Rapatahana and Bunce 2012).

*English and Inequality* Very compellingly, therefore, Tupas (Chap. 6, this volume; see also Tupas and Rubdy 2015) argues that in a comprehensive discussion about the place of English in a multilingual, postcolonial setting such as that of the Philippines, seeking to establish what kind of English to teach and how to teach it is not enough. Teachers also need to be aware of, and ideologically clear about, the role that English plays in potentially perpetuating inequality with respect to other languages and their speakers. One may be seduced by the egalitarian promises of the WE and the ELF paradigms, but these concern English only, namely, Philippine English vis-à-vis more prestigious varieties or the seemingly uniformly neutral position of English as an international lingua franca. The glorification of equal English(es), however, insidiously glosses over the very important question of the relationship between English, singular or plural as it may be, and the other languages it shares the sociolinguistic environment with.

English is indeed often (and not just in the Philippines) caught in ambivalent, complex and even apparently contradictory positions about its place in education and society in general, as this volume testifies (see, in particular, Doplon's Chap. 3, Paterno's Chap. 5, Cruz & Mahboob's Chap. 4, Valdez & Tan's Chap. 11 and Tupas's Chap. 6). Also, in postcolonial settings, its powerful position clashes with the

aspiration of countries to have local national languages that can represent, as well as boost, national identities. The selection of such national languages, in turn, is far from straightforward. Every country today that used to be part of a European empire is, to a significant extent, a product of that empire. During colonialism, conquered land areas were divided up by means of borders drawn by European colonizers. The Europeans also named these territories and, often, their inhabitants and languages too. The name of the Philippines, for example, comes from Felipe, Prince of Asturias, who later (1556) became King of Spain, and, indeed, the very idea that the Philippines should be a single national entity stems directly from colonialism. The result, as is the case in all former colonies, is a country whose population is a conglomerate of different social, ethnic and/or religious groups who speak a myriad different languages. In such a situation, the language of national unity is either the colonial language, as is the case in many African countries, or one of the larger local languages, typically the language of the capital, as is the case of Tagalog in the Philippines. One consequence of this is that the language that is supposed to be a symbol of national unity is not everybody's mother tongue, and, almost inevitably, those for whom it is not their home language will feel a degree of resentment towards something that they are likely to regard as an imposition. Consequently, virtually all language policies, including in education, are ideologically charged and potentially controversial. The case of nearby Malaysia, where the government has had various implementations and reversal of policies over the years with regard to the place of English in education (Gill 2005; Tan 2005; Ali 2014; Hashim and Leitner 2016), serves to illustrate how delicate decision making in this area can be. The criticism that has often been levelled at the decisions by the Malaysian government in this matter is that policies seem to have been put forwards on the basis of rather abstract and theoretical objectives but without proper regard to practical implications for the stakeholders involved (teachers and students), with the result that those objectives are not met (Ali 2014).

*The Mother Tongue as a Language of Instruction* In the Philippines, the government policy of using the pupils' mother tongues (as opposed to exclusively Tagalog or English) in the early years of education introduced in 2009 is based on research findings about the advantage in terms of students' academic performance. Order no. 74 issued by the Department of Education on the 'Institutionalizing Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education (MLE)' states:

> The preponderance of local and international research [...] affirms the benefits and relevance of MLE. Notable empirical studies like the Lingua Franca Project and Lubuagan First Language Component show that:
>
> 1. First, learners learn to read more quickly when in their first language (LI);
> 2. Second, pupils who have learned to read and write in their first language learn to speak, read, and write in a second language (L2) and third language (L3) more quickly than those who are taught in a second or third language first; and
> 3. Third, in terms of cognitive development and its effects in other academic areas, pupils taught to read and write in their first language acquire such competencies more quickly. (Department of Education 2009)

Indeed, it seems entirely obvious that a language that a child has little familiarity with represents an added cognitive burden to a young student who is already engaged in the learning of mostly new content. So, as Kirkpatrick (Chap. 2, this volume) notes, English should only become the language of instruction once students have reached a sufficient level of proficiency in it. In addition, some research (e.g. Canilao, Chap. 9, this volume) also shows that pupils at elementary school level dislike the use of English as a language of instruction as they find it difficult to understand. Cruz and Mahboob (Chap. 4, this volume), however, challenge this position and argue that the question is not as simple as it may appear to be. Their own survey shows that young people in the Philippines rate English very highly as a language of education and, conversely, tend to hold more dismissive attitudes towards local languages. Accordingly, the two researchers contend that while the pedagogic benefits of using the mother tongue are undeniable, until local languages have reached a sufficiently high status, their use as media of instruction might end up perpetuating a situation of inequality in the country between those with and those without access to English. Yet another viewpoint is offered by Paterno (in Chap. 5, this volume), who makes the point that the opposition between 'mother tongue' and English may not be fully justified since, given the number of Filipinos for whom English is effectively a native language, there is no reason why English should be excluded as one of the possible mother tongues in the government policy mentioned earlier.

But the question of inequality seems to be the most important one to tackle. And there is no easy solution or recipe. Different people have different views. Even research data can be inconsistent. It is not surprising, for example, that the urban, educated, English-speaking users of social media surveyed by Cruz and Mahboob seem to have very different opinions regarding English to those expressed by the elementary school pupils surveyed by Canilao – the two groups of respondents represent different subsections of the Philippine society. Any strategy will have to take into account the societal diversity in the country. From my own outsider's point of view, it seems to me that the Philippine government may have implemented policies in ways that are more solidly informed than those put forwards by their neighbouring counterparts. The choice of ensuring that schoolchildren can study in the language they feel most comfortable with seems to me to be entirely sensible (including for the teaching of English, as Paez contends, Chap. 8, in this volume), and I cannot see any valid argument against it, especially if this, in itself, does not equate to denying access to English later on in life. In comparison with its two 'Outer Circle' neighbours – Malaysia and Singapore – it seems to me that the Philippines can capitalize on the multilingual aspect of their society and have the best of both worlds. Instead of the quasi-schizophrenic attitude to English displayed by Malaysian authorities towards English in the past decades, or the ruthlessly utilitarian and ultra-materialistic strategy adopted by the Singaporean government, the Philippines may have chosen a more balanced path, where attention is devoted to students' learning needs, linguistic and cultural diversity as well as opportunities for advancement through access to an international lingua franca.

## Conclusion: The Impact of Research

Quite rightly, there is increasing pressure nowadays for academic research to demonstrate its ability to have impact on the 'outside' world. In our field, applied linguistics, the most visible impact one can hope for is in influencing language policy, and I feel that the policies produced by the Philippine Department of Education constitutes a good example of research-informed legislation. In all of this, I concur with Tupas that it is essential that teachers (as well as learners) are absolutely ideologically clear as to what English actually is (in this sense, the argument offered by Navera, Chap. 10, in this volume is very interesting) and, I would add, what *language* is, more in general. In this regard, I feel that one more step towards countering language-based inequality is to revise our rather rigid (and unnecessarily so!) understanding of what language is in education, and I would hope that language teaching might be informed by recent developments in sociolinguistics, with special attention to the following points:

- Language is not regulated by a set of rules to memorize, but by conventions that are mutually negotiated by the participants in any bit of social practice involving language. This means that all participants share an equal amount of responsibility in ensuring successful communication.
- Languages are not separated by fixed borders. This means that (a) individuals do not need to be identified as 'speakers of language X or language Y', and (b) any piece of social practice involving language does not have to take place 'in language X' or 'in language Y'. Instead, participants will use whichever semiotic resources they share.
- In the specific case of English, its connection to Britain or North America should not amount to more than an archaeological curiosity, for which the space of a textbook footnote should be sufficient. Learning 'English' simply means adding elements to one's set of semiotic resources that are shared by a large number of people worldwide.

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