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LESSONS TO BE LEARNED FROM THE PHILIPPINES : ENGLISH LANGUAGE POLICIES AND THE BOOMING ESL INDUSTRY IN A MULTILINGUAL SOCIETY VIEWED FROM A JAPANESE PERSPECTIVE

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LESSONS TO BE LEARNED FROM THE PHILIPPINES: ENGLISH LANGUAGE POLICIES AND THE BOOMING ESL INDUSTRY IN A MULTILINGUAL SOCIETY VIEWED FROM A JAPANESE PERSPECTIVE

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1. The Philippines as a Multilingual Nation

Ethnologue (Simmons and Fennig 2019) reveals that, out of 7,097 languages in the world, the number of such languages in Asia is 2,303 with a population of around 4.3 billion. This fact implies the multilingual reality in Asia (including the Middle East), comprising around one-third of the world languages with around 60 % of the world's population. The Philippines is a multilingual society where 182 languages exist across ethnolinguistic groups on the archipelago and multilingualism is the norm in everyday life. Today, the country is not only multilingual but multicultural too, with a rich history as one of the major trading posts in Southeast Asia, abounding with symbolic marks of Spanish, American and Japanese colonization, and with salient political, economic, socio-cultural influences from ever-changing bilateral and multilateral international diplomatic relations in this globalizing world.

The choice of language Filipinos use for communication is negotiated according to the context and goals of a communication event. The typical Filipino uses more than two languages or a mixture of multiple languages (code-switching/mixing) in everyday social life depending on a context in which language use is generally determined by comparing a set of socio-cultural orientations to discourses of ethnicity/regionalism (mother tongue/vernacular language), nationalism (Filipino), and modernity (English) in Philippine society.

Since the introduction of the public education system with English as the medium of instruction (MOI) to the country during the American colonial period, the English language has become an integral part of the Philippine linguistic life as the dominant language in the controlling domains of government bureaucracy, education, science and technology, the judiciary, legislation, and mass media.

Kaplan and Baldauf (1997:3) define language planning as “a body of ideas, laws and regulations (language policy), change rules, beliefs, and practices intended to achieve a planned change (or to stop change from happening) in the language use in one or more communities.” As to the changing paradigms in language policy research, Tollefson (2012) summarizes them as follows:

..., we find in language policy research today a division between an emphasis in the relatively deterministic historical-structural paradigm and on the relatively creative sphere paradigm. The former emphasizes the important role of social structure (particularly class, as well as race and gender) in shaping and constraining language policies in schools, whereas, in contrast, the public sphere paradigm emphasizes the agency of all actors in the policy-making process, particularly their ability to alter what seem to be the coercive and deterministic trajectories of class-based policy making bodies and other institutional forms and structures (p.28).

Tollefson (*ibid.*) further clarifies that “the difference between these two paradigms is not theoretical but instead a matter of emphasis, focus or perhaps even the temperament of different researchers” and “historical-structural and public sphere approaches may co-occur in a single body of research” (p.28).

In the case of the Philippines, Tupas & Martin (2017) explains that the politics of language does not simply revolve around languages, but more importantly around values, ideologies, attitudes and contending visions of nation-building that accrue to these languages. Tupas and Martin further emphasize that “languages in education are never just about languages alone; they are about struggles for power and for contending visions of the nation” (p.255). Madrunio, Martin and Plata (2016 :251) share their view that “the Philippine educational system in the twenty-first century may be described as being at a crossroads, as it strives to resolve issues in the development of language competencies among Filipino students on the one hand, and the strengthening of their academic achievements, on the other.”

After the implementation of Vernacular Education Policy (1957-1974) and Bilingual Education Policy (1974-2012), Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education Policy is currently integrated as a partial component of the “K to 12” (from Kindergarten to Grade 12) Basic Education Program with a mandatory kindergarten year and two additional senior high school years. With the pervasive impacts of globalization on Philippine society, particularly found in the trends of ever-increasing demand for overseas employment opportunities and the fast-growing IT industry, English ability has received renewed attention as a prerequisite for upward social mobility and affluent lifestyles. Accordingly, the English education system in the country has undergone some major transitions in its ideological backgrounds with corresponding policy changes to meet the needs and interests of Filipino students. Furthermore, an offshoot of an Outer Circle country in the Kachurian three-circle model of World Englishes, the Philippine ESL (English as a Second Language) industry, is predicted to grow in the global language learning market to meet the needs of prospective international ESL students mainly from Expanding Circle, such as Korea, Japan, China, and Taiwan, who are socially, culturally and economically motivated to learn English for various personal reasons in their own

intra-/international contexts.

2. Objectives of the Paper

The Philippines is currently in the phase of the biggest educational reform in history. In addition, the country is becoming one of the world's ESL service providers with "study abroad programs" and "online English lessons" to the global market. Following the recent language policy research traditions of "historical-structural" and "public sphere" approaches, the purpose of the paper is designed to be twofold. The paper primarily aims to briefly examine history of language education policies in the complexities of Philippine multilingualism after the independence from the United States and, secondarily, attempts to reveal the current state of the booming Philippine ESL industry as one of the language English learning service providers for Japan in the neoliberal economy.

Specifically, the paper is designed to reveal the following two research concerns;

First, the study is mainly designed to review a comprehensive history of language policies in the Philippine educational domain, mainly concerning the two transitional stages in the post-war period, from "vernacular education" to "bilingual education" and from "bilingual education" to "mother tongue-based multilingual education," examining constitutional provisions and major administrative orders.

Second, the study briefly refers to the current state and mechanism of the emerging Philippine ESL industry and its direct/indirect impacts on the English learning styles of Japanese learners through "*Firipin Ryuugaku* (Study abroad in the Philippines)" and "*Online eikaiwa* (Online English Conversation)" as reasonable and affordable options.

3. A Brief History of Language-in-Education Policies in the Philippines

As to the importance of language policy in education, Spolsky (2009:90) mentions "the language policy adopted by an educational system is without doubt one of the most powerful forces in language management. Shohamy (2006:90) points out that "educational institutions in general, literacy education in particular, are among the primary mechanisms for promoting ideological power in societies." Tsui and Tollefson (2003) regard the MOI policy as a key means of power (re)distribution and social (re)construction, as well as a key arena in which political conflicts among countries and groups are realized.

The history of language-in-education policies in Philippine education in the post-war period has undergone two major transitional stages in resonance with the provisions of 1973 and 1987 Constitutions. As Table 1 indicates, the constitutions exercise the power to authorize the languages of choice, such as English, Spanish, Pilipino/Filipino, dialect spoken by over fifty thousand people, and Arabic with (auxiliary) official status, national language status, official communication status,

and MOI status.

Table 1. Provisions on Language in 1935, 1973 and 1987 Philippine Constitutions
(A Comparative Table)

| 1935 Constitution | 1973 Constitution | 1987 Constitution |
|---|---|--|
| <p>SECTION 3. The Congress shall take steps toward the development and adaptation of a common language based on one of the existing native languages. Until otherwise provided by law, English and Spanish shall continue as official languages. (Article XIV, General Provisions)</p> <p>SECTION 10. This Constitution shall be officially promulgated in English and Spanish, but in case of conflict the English text shall prevail. (Article XIV, General Provisions)</p> | <p>(3) Until otherwise provided by law, English and Pilipino shall be the official languages. (Article XV, General Provisions, section 3)</p> <p>(2) The Batasang Pambansa shall take steps towards the development and formal adaptation of a common national language to be known as Filipino. (Article XV, General Provisions, section 3)</p> <p>SECTION 3. (1) This Constitution shall be officially promulgated in English and Pilipino, and translated into each dialect spoken by over fifty thousand people, and into Spanish and Arabic. In case of conflict, the English text shall prevail. (Article XV, General Provisions)</p> | <p>SECTION 3. The national language of the Philippines is Filipino. As it evolves, it shall be further developed and enriched on the basis of existing Philippine and other languages. Subject to provisions of law and as the Congress may deem appropriate, the Government shall take steps to initiate and sustain the use of Filipino as a medium of official communication and as language of instruction in the educational system.</p> <p>SECTION 7. For purposes of communication and instruction, the official languages of the Philippines are Filipino and, until otherwise provided by law, English. The regional languages are the auxiliary official languages in the regions and shall serve as auxiliary media of instruction therein. Spanish and Arabic shall be promoted on a voluntary and optional basis.</p> <p>SECTION 8. This Constitution shall be promulgated in Filipino and English and shall be translated into major regional languages, Arabic and Spanish.</p> <p>SECTION 9. The Congress shall establish a national language commission composed of representatives of various regions and disciplines which shall undertake, coordinate, and promote researches for the development of, propagation, and preservation of Filipino and other languages.</p> |

Excerpted from Carmero (1999).

Language education policies were formulated, implemented, and monitored by key actors and stakeholders in alignment with these constitutional provisions. In the post-war history of language-in-education policies, the Philippines has three policy transitional stages; (1) from English-only education to vernacular education, (2) from vernacular education to bilingual education (Transitional Stage I), and (3) from bilingual education to mother-tongue based multilingual education (Transitional Stage II). A brief chronological summary of these policies is presented with some descriptions of socio-political, economic, national language, official language contexts in Table 2.

Table 2. A brief history of language-in-education policies in the Philippines

| Constitution | 1935 Constitution [1946] | 1973 Constitution [late-60's] [70's] | 1987 Constitution [80's] [2000's] |
|--|--|---|--|
| [Socio-political Context] | Independence | Nationalism Anti-imperialism sentiments Martial Law regime (1972-1986)-People Power | Regionalism Globalization |
| [Economic Context] | | Economic Crisis Overseas Filipino Workers | Neoliberal Reforms BPO/ ESL industry |
| [National Language] | 1937 Tagalog--1949 Pilipino | ----- | 1987 Filipino----- |
| [Official Language] | 1935 English & Spanish | -----1973 English & Pilipino | 1987 English and Filipino-- |
| [Language Policies in Education (Post -World War II Period)] | English-Only Policy (US colonization) | | |
| | Vernacular Education Policy (Revised Philippine Education Program) | 1957 =====1974 Transitional Stage I | |
| | Bilingual Education Policy (BEP) (Revised BEP in 1987) | 1970's=====1987===== | 2012 Transitional Stage II |
| | Mother-Tongue Based Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE) Policy | | 2009=====Present |

As Gonzalez (1987) mentions that conscious decisions on language have used the school and the school system as the locus of policy formulation, programming, implementation and evaluation, the history of education policies has close affinity with language policies in the Philippines. Therefore, reviewing the history of language-in-education policies can be roughly equated with analyzing historical changes in ideas, laws and regulations, beliefs, and practices of language policies in the Philippine setting. With this orientation, the two periods of Transitional Stages I and II are highlighted to examine the nature of policy changes in their ideological background.

Transitional Stage I: Vernacular Education to Bilingual Education

Since the introduction of American colonization, English was used as the MOI in the Philippine public educational system. English was rapidly spread through American-style education in the

country with “the positive attitude of Filipinos towards Americans” and “the incentives given to Filipinos to learn English in terms of career opportunities, government service, and politics” (Gonzalez 1980:27-28). In 1959, the Revised Philippine Education Program provided the use of the vernacular as the MOI and English as a subject for the first 2 primary grades and English as the MOI from Grade 3 with the vernacular as the auxiliary MOI (Bernardo 2004).

Bautista (1996) provides an overview on the language of instruction during the period from 1957 to 1974 in the following.

1957-1974 : Use of the vernaculars as media of instruction in Grades 1 and 2 primarily in public schools; the Rizal experiment, 1960-1966; the height of student activism and popularity of Pilipino, late sixties; the use of Pilipino for scholarly discourse; official recognition by the National Board of Education of bilingualism in Pilipino and English in Philippine life. (p.225)

Supported by the positive findings in a series of feasibility studies and reports in favor of the use of local languages as the MOI in the post-war period, such as the Philippine Community School Movement (1941-45), the Vernacular Experiments (1948-54), the UNESCO Educational Mission in 1949 and the UNESCO Conference in 1951, the Philippine government established the National Board of Education in 1955 and introduced the Revised Philippine Education Program in 1957, with the use of the vernacular as the MOI and English as a subject in the first two primary grades and English as the MOI from Grade 3 to tertiary education on a nationwide scale. In the vernacular education policy, English became no longer the sole MOI, but it remained as the de-facto dominant language for higher levels of learning.

In 1970's and 80, English was perceived as a necessary social and economic tool for Filipinos to participate and fully benefit from the global economy in the midst of economic crisis in which the Philippine society under the Marcos dictatorship was increasingly being reconfigured toward export-driven liberalized economy under the aegis of the World Bank and other global institutions (Tupas 2008). In 1974, the country made a transition from vernacular education to bilingual education, being supported by the discourses of anti-Americanism and nationalism symbolized by the establishment of a common national language, “Pilipino” (to be evolved into “Filipino”) at on the one hand and the discourses of economic liberalization and globalization with the importance of English language skills in the global labor market on the other.

The Department of Education and Culture issued Department Order No. 25, series of 1974, known as “Implementing Guidelines for the Policy in Bilingual Education” on June 1974 to make the Philippines a bilingual nation competent in both Pilipino and English. The first section of the department order is excerpted to indicate the direction of the bilingual policy below (Table 3).

Table 3. Department Order No.25, Series of 1974, the Department Education and Culture:
Implementing guidelines for the policy in bilingual education

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1. In consonance with the provisions of the 1972 Constitution and a declared policy of the National Board of Education on bilingualism in the schools, in order to develop a bilingual nation competent in the use of both English and Pilipino, the Department of Education and Culture hereby promulgates the following guidelines for the implementation of the policy:
 - a. Bilingual education is defined operationally, as the separate use of Pilipino and English as media of instruction in definite subject areas, provided that additionally, Arabic shall be used in the areas where it is necessary.
 - b. The use of English and Pilipino as media of instruction shall begin in Grade I in all schools. In Grades I and II, the vernacular used in the locality or place where the school is located shall be the auxiliary medium of Instruction; this use of the vernacular shall be resorted to only when necessary to facilitate understanding of the concepts being taught through the prescribed medium for the subject, English, Pilipino or Arabic, as the case may be.
 - c. English and Pilipino shall be taught as language subjects in all grades in the elementary and secondary schools to achieve the goal of bilingualism.
 - d. Pilipino shall be used as medium of Instruction in the following subject areas: social studies/social science, character education, work education, health education, and physical education.
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Notes: The department order was partially excerpted from Brigham and Castillo (1998).

The policy aims to make a division of domains for the use of English and Pilipino by subject with English for English Communication Arts, Mathematics and Science and Pilipino for all other subjects from Grade 1 according to a set time-table. The regional languages were designated as auxiliary languages in Grades 1 and 2.

The 1974 Bilingual Education Policy (BEP) was revised in 1987 as a new policy in the Department Order No.52, series of 1987, of the Department of Culture, Education, and Sports, known as “The 1987 Policy on Bilingual Education.” Basically the same provisions of the 1974 BEP were stated in the new policy, the role of two languages in education was recast with Filipino mandated to be a language of literacy and a linguistic symbol of national unity and identity, and English as an international language and a non-exclusive language of science and technology.

In the policy, the role of Filipino as the MOI in the educational domain was intended to expand its use in wider areas in education with the institutional supports from higher institutions to intellectualize Filipino, but “nothing was changed regarding the implementation of the policy at most levels of education” (Bernardo 2004)

Transitional Stage II: Bilingual Education to Mother Tongue-Base Multilingual Education

The first and most comprehensive evaluation of accomplishment of bilingual education (Gonzalez and Sibayan 1988) found that more than a MOI, the most significant contributor to success in learning in school is the socio-economic composition of the student population which correlates with quality of teachers, salary, and proximity to an urban environment. In summary,

exposure to the BEP was little related to student achievement and the policy was blamed for the deterioration in students' achievement in two languages, English and Filipino.

The 1974 BEP revised in 1987 received a great amount of resistance and its failure was attributed to multiple counts, such as “a lack of unity and coherence in language education policy,” “the difficulty of policy implementation (including the lack of time for preparation, teacher competence, teacher upgrading, instructional materials, etc.),” “code-switching phenomena,” and “the unequal status of development, and the linguistic differences, between Filipino and English” (Gonzalez 1996; Brigham & Castillio 1999; Madrunio, Martin & Plata 2016: 255).

In favor of the view on the use of mother tongue as the MOI for efficient learning in basic education, the Department of Education institutionalized mother tongue-based multilingual education (Department Order No.74, series of 2009), otherwise known as “Institutionalizing Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE).” The objectives and direction of this new policy with the use of mother tongues are clearly stated in the first three section of the department order (Table 4).

Table 4. Department Order No.74, Series of 2009, the Department of Education:
Institutionalizing Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education (MLE)

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1. The lessons and findings of various local initiatives and international studies in basic education have validated the superiority of the use of the learner's mother tongue or first language in improving learning outcomes and promoting Education for All (EFA).
 2. Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education, hereinafter referred to as MLE, is the effective use of more than two languages for literacy and instruction. Henceforth, it shall be institutionalized as a fundamental educational policy and program in this Department in the whole stretch of formal education including pre-school and in the Alternative Learning System (ALS).
 3. The preponderance of local and international research consistent with the Basic Education Sector Reform Agenda (BESRA) recommendations affirms the benefits and relevance of MLE. Notable empirical studies like the Lingua Franca Project and Lubuagan First Language Component show that:
 - a. First, learners learn to read more quickly when in their first language (L1);
 - b. 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
 - c. 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.
-

Notes: The above department order was partially excerpted from the Department of Education, Republic of the Philippines.

The MTB-MLE is fundamentally motivated by the simple and straightforward argument that children can learn better and faster in their mother tongues (primary or home languages). The policy is theoretically and empirically supported by “the lessons and findings of various of local initiatives and international studies in basic education to achieve the effective use of multiple languages for literacy and instruction (subject learning), but the limited number of languages, 19 major Philippine languages (Aklanon, Bikol, Cebuano, Hiligaynon, Iloko, Ivatan, Kapampangan, Kinaray-a, Maguindanaon, Maranao, Pangasinense, Sambal, Surigaonon, Tagalog, Tausug, Waray, Yakan, and

Ybanag), are currently used as mother tongues in school.

A progress report on MTB-MLE cases reveals some challenges to be addressed for successful policy implementation, such as the establishment of a standard variation of mother tongue, the choice of mother tongue as a MOI (matching and mismatching), the development of instructional strategies, the material development (production of local materials and consistency of materials in localization), and the need for centralized training from the Department of Education (Metila, Pradilla, and Williams 2017).

Admitting the dominant importance of English as the language for scientific knowledge and economic stability in the Philippines, the Filipino's language attitudes towards English would predictably continue to be formed by such functional motivations. In this socio-cultural context of English in the Philippines, Tupas and Martin (2017:255) take a dim view on the future direction of MTB-MLE; "While these attitudes and perceptions exist, the intended benefits of MTB-MLE will remain unattainable."

4. Languages as Media of Instruction at Different Educational Levels

Although many insightful findings and detailed discussions from national, regional, and community perspectives on language policies and (pilot) programs under the initiatives of government education agencies, international/local NGOs, and specialists (educators/linguists) in linguistically unique localities are beyond the scope of the study, at least a brief overview of language education policies can be summarized in the following comparative table in terms of the distribution of language as the MOI in the formal education system (Table 5).

Table 5. Language as the MOI at different educational levels in four language policies

| Levels | Elementary Level | | | | | | Secondary Level | | | | Tertiary Level | | | | | |
|----------------------|------------------|---|-------|-----|-------|---|-----------------|---|---|----|----------------|----|-----|----|----|----|
| Years of Schooling | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 |
| English Only | E | | | | | | E | | | | E | | | | | |
| Vernacular Education | V | | E-(V) | | E-(P) | | E-(P) | | | | E | | | | | |
| Bilingual Education | P/F-E-(V) | | E-P/F | | | | E-P/F | | | | E-P/F | | | | | |
| MTB-MLE | V | | | E-F | | | E-F | | | | | | E-F | | | |

Notes: The above table is modified and summarized from Bernabe (1987), Bernardo (2004), Koo (2008), and the Republic of the Philippines (GOV.PH).

MTB-MLE=Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education, V=Vernacular, E=English, (V)=Vernacular as a supplement language, (P)=Pilipino as a supplement language, P/F=Pilipino as national language in 1949 renamed as Filipino in 1987, and F=Filipino.

English was brought during the American colonial period and spread into every corner of Philippine society though Philippine education patterned after the American system with English as the dominant MOI. Although a brief review of language policies in the Philippines indicates three different policy patterns in the post-war period, vernacular education, bilingual education, and

mother tongue-base multilingual education, exhibit varying degrees of policy focus on existing languages in the Philippines in consideration of their planned status as national language, official language, language of instruction, and vernacular language, English has been regarded as the most powerful language and is likely to remain the most dominant language of scientific knowledge and economic stability. Each of language education policy shares the same objective: to make the Philippines bilingual/multilingual where Filipinos could be globally competitive, nationalistic, and regionalistic through the formal education system in the constantly changing political, socio-cultural and economic contexts.

Taking the current MTB-MLE policy as a case in point, the importance of the use of “mother tongue” is emphasized at the basic education level, but it allows for a more efficient learning of English and Filipino as subjects in school (Tupas 2011), playing a part in transition to English as the MOI at the secondary and tertiary levels. With the common objective, each policy was designed to be educationally effective and functionally relevant to achieve a type of ideal Philippine multilingualism which is economically productive, nationally cohesive, and socially just. A brief review of language-in-education policies in the Philippines makes it clear that each policy is closely intertwined with economic, political and social agendas at the time of policy transition and different approaches and strategies to accomplish ideal multilingualism under the different constitutional frameworks.

5. The Booming ESL industry in the Philippines

As examined above, the Philippines has always aimed to achieve higher levels of English linguistic skills among Filipino students through the major language-in-education policies in the past and its quest for English still continues at present with more emphasis on the role and function of mother tongue in the current education policy. Understanding some distinctive features of Philippine language-in-education policies would indirectly serve as reference points to shape the formulation of language policy and the future course of bi-/multilingual education in Japan since the overall purpose of this paper is to search for alternative reference points for English education in Japan from the Philippine experience so far by “historical-structural” and “public sphere” approaches. In the section, the Philippine ESL industry in the private sector is highlighted because of its pervasive impacts on Japanese learners’ attitudes towards English and its learning styles.

Though the years of multilingualism, the Philippines generally came to be regarded as the third largest English-speaking population. The Kachru’s (2008) statistics on world Englishes reveals that the Philippines is ranked as the third with 48 million English L1/L2 speakers next to the US as the first with 293 million and India as the second with 330 million English users among the countries of Inner and Outer Circles. Although the deterioration of English language proficiency in the

Philippines has been the common perception across generations in the post-war period, the prevalent use of English in the country paved the way for transformation of English as the former colonial language to the resource language of language learning providers in the world education market. It is true that Filipinos' ability in English "rangers from a smattering of words and phrases through passive comprehension to near-native mastery" (Gonzalez 1992:765), but the 2018 EF English Proficiency Index of an international education company indicates that the Philippines got the 14th rank (high proficiency) whereas Japan was ranked as the 49th (low) among 88 countries/regions in terms of the best non-native speakers in the world (EF 2019). Filipinos' extensive use and relatively high level of English proficiency made the Philippines "the world's low-cost English language teacher" (McGeown 2012). According to *The Japan Times* (2018), "(M)any (Japanese) are choosing the Philippines to study English because of the language's official status and the nation's geographical proximity to Japan compared with other English-speaking countries, as well as relatively low study and living expenses (parentheses added by the author)."

The beginning of the ESL industry stemmed from the demands of South Koreans for English skills in 1990's. South Korean entrepreneurs saw the need for English language learning as a new business opportunity and designed a business model of cost-effective English language schools. The schools were founded in major cities, such as Manila, Baguio, Clark, Subic, Cebu, Iloilo, Davao, attracting the Koreans first, then the Japanese, the Taiwanese, the Chinese and other nationalities mainly from Asian and Middle-East countries. The Philippines began to gain its popularity as one of the popular ESL destinations in education tourism with its advantageous characteristics represented in the advertising taglines of an association of language schools (Table 6).

Table 6. Advantages of studying English in the Philippines

Intensive Training

English study programs in the Philippines tend to include a high ratio of 1:1 lessons that provide more personalized learning program for students.

All in One Packages

Our member schools provide a range of high-quality services inclusive of accommodation, meals, laundry etc. so that students can focus on their studies and enjoy their experience in a safe and comfortable environment.

Affordable Costs

Students can take advantage of the low cost-of-living in the Philippines that makes course fees as well as daily living costs more affordable.

Exotic Experience

The Philippines is a unique and exciting destination featuring some of the most beautiful beaches in the world as well as very friendly and hospitable people.

Retrieved from the website of English Philippines <<https://english-philippines.org/studying-in-the-philippines/>>.

In 2000's, Japanese entrepreneurs started to invest in this industry and establish language schools to cater to Japanese students with a wide variety of lessons, food, accommodation types, and

off-campus activities. With the development of IT infrastructure in the country, online English lessons via Skype were introduced at an affordable price (approximately JPY400/hour) to the Japanese market. ESL language schools are basically categorized into three types, such as “online,” “offline,” and “the combination of online and offline” schools. Government officials and stakeholders foresee a brighter future for the market attracting more ESL learners as the program contents will be upgraded to meet their various linguistic needs from basic language skills to academic and business skills.

The Philippine ESL industry is continuously offering online and offline English lessons to Japanese learners with the language of a former colonial power as the lingua franca in globalization. In this English learning context, learning English with a non-native Filipino teacher of English might covertly changes the language attitudes of Japanese learners towards English, because English is generally perceived by Japanese learners as the language of the U.S. and the other Inner Circle countries, not of Outer Circle ones. There is still a possibility that Japanese learners would gradually comprehend the dynamic and complex reality of World Englishes in learning English with non-native teachers of Outer Circle, but unfortunately low level learners from Expanding Circle with the limited amount of exposure to English are usually little attentive to sociolinguistic variations and mechanisms in wider international contexts.

Although Philippine English is claimed as a legitimate variety which does not fall short of the norms of Standard American English in the World Englishes paradigm (Bautista 2000), the Philippine ESL industry strategically markets Philippine English as a variety of English that was historically originated in the U.S. and guarantees quality English with attractive labels, such as TOEFL English, TOEIC English, IELTS English, and Business English. What is more, Japanese learners are placed in the completely isolated language learning environment from the Philippine multilingual reality except for the fact that teachers are Filipinos in the cost-effective business models of online and offline ESL industry. With the Philippines emerging as one of the new destinations for English language learning, Lorente, Ruanni and Tupas (2013:79) offer a critical view on the industry: “Philippine labor here in the context of the teaching of English, is sought not because it teaches the most desirable variety of English, but because it is cheap and affordable.” In fact, Pay Scale website computes the average ESL teacher hourly pay in the Philippines is priced at PHP 106/hour (approximately JPY220/hour). Viewing English as a commodity in this capitalist globalization, Japanese consumers might be highly motivated to purchase English in the bargain.

Conclusive Remarks: Lessons from the Philippine Experience

As discussed earlier, major transitional stages in language-in-education policies were highlighted and briefly examined to trace the nature of policy change at transitional stages from the Philippine multilingual experience. The Philippine and Japanese cases might not be directly

comparable at the national language policy-making level, considering the fact that there exist distinctive differences in their social, cultural, economic, and political history; but the Philippine experiences as a multilingual nation yield lessons for Japan in the current stage of globalization where numerous Japanese individuals and organizations/institutions in public and private sectors have been urged to deal with the intra-/international pressures of globalizing forces in any form to remain as one of the major players in Asia where the multilingualism is the norm.

Some findings of the study relevant to the Japanese case are summarized below.

(1) Lessons from language-in-education policies in the Philippines

a. The multilingual ideal

In the Philippines, there have been continuous efforts to achieve the ideal Philippine type of bi-/multilingualism which is economically productive, nationally cohesive, and socially just in the mixture of three discursive orientations towards globalism, nationalism and regionalism in the post-war period. In the mechanism of language planning process, the ideal of multilingualism has been inextricably interwoven into respective national constitution and language-in-education policy at each stage in history. Since Japan has been predominantly monolingual, it might as well seek for its own type of the unique multilingual ideal, Japanese multilingualism, with theoretical and conceptual frameworks both at individual and societal levels.

b. English as the MOI

As presented in the paper, the MOI issue has been crucial in the history of Philippine language policies. With the American colonial experience, English has been the de facto MOI in formal education in this country, but this predominant use of English as the MOI, particularly at the tertiary level, has been counterbalanced by the expanded use of national language (Pilipino/Filipino) through all levels of education and by the mother tongue (local vernacular) at the elementary level, accompanied by the functional distribution of English or Filipino as the MOI by subject, for example, English for Science and Mathematics and Filipino for Social Studies/Social Science. The use of English as the MOI currently receives a certain amount of attention specifically at the tertiary level in Japan, but English medium instruction is limited in a subject taught as “English” without any connections with other content areas in the curriculum at the elementary and secondary levels. The Philippine case on English as the MOI could become a reference point for future discussions on the choice of a language of instruction by subject area in the Japanese context.

c. Transitional program

Each language-in-education policy, aims to achieve the same objective: to make the Philippines multilingual; but they differ in their strategic roadmaps to help achieve long-term goals of the multilingual ideal. There are four types of language-in-education policies in the post-war period: English-only education, vernacular education, bilingual education, and MTB-MLE, all of them

geared towards institutionalizing an effective English Language Teaching (ELT) program to achieve a higher level of English linguistic skills in the Philippine sociolinguistic situations where English has been recognized as “the language of promise” (the language of modernity, scientific knowledge, economic stability, social status, international labor market, and globalization), not as language of the former American colonizers. Each policy aims to help achieve a sufficient level of English skills for Filipinos, taking different pathways to success. Interestingly, the use of mother tongue is emphasized in the MTB-MLE policy and integrated as an effective tool in the transitional program to achieve this goal. For Japan, the use of Japanese as a resource language in English education should be scholarly discussed and closely examined in terms of its roles and functions in the English learning process along Japanese sociolinguistic realities.

(2) Lessons from the Philippine ESL industry

The Philippine ESL industry is likely to continue to grow in the coming years, catering to a growing demand for affordable and effective English education in Japan. The country has become one of the popular online and offline English learning service providers with its advantages in “cost-effective (one-on-one) language classes at affordable rates.” Unfortunately, there is a paucity of research on the state and quality of ELT in Outer Circle, therefore the need to appropriately evaluate the educational efficacy of the Philippines-based English learning service from a Japanese perspective is identified for wide-ranging public and private stakeholders of English education in Japan. More studies should be conducted on online and offline English learning service from various perspectives at different levels of language learning. Then, based on research findings on its perceived advantages and disadvantage, Japanese individuals, groups and organizations (particularly institutions in formal education), should decide whether to partially include the ELT service from Outer Circle as an alternative to reach their intended target in long-term English language learning processes under the existing framework of English education system in Japan, or not at all.

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