

English and mother-tongue-based multilingual education: Language attitudes in the Philippines

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In this paper, we will problematize the proposed use of mother-tongue-based instruction in the Philippines. As a country that has, for almost a century, supported the use of English in schools, this proposal marks a drastic shift in Philippine languages in education policies. We argue that a century of language policies, which have privileged English over all the local languages of the Philippines, have led to specific attitudes to language that will impact on the success of mother-tongue-based education. To support our arguments, we will draw on the results of a survey on language attitudes conducted in the Philippines. This survey specifically asked respondents about what they perceived to be the role/s of English and other Philippine languages in education. We argue that although mother-tongue initiatives are admirable, they need to be examined in terms of attitudes to language, which may or may not value mother tongues. In addition, we argue that for mother-tongue-based education to succeed, it is necessary to consider the possibility of changing these attitudes to language via a principles-based approach to language policy.

Keywords: Mother-tongue-based multilingual education, Philippines, language attitudes, language affiliation, language allocation

1. Introduction

In many parts of the world, there is a growing awareness that local languages (including minority languages) need to be positioned more strategically within the educational landscape. In this paper, we will examine some of the issues in relation to this by focusing on English and mother-tongue-based multilingual education in the Philippines. This study is

necessary because it will add to current discussions on mother-tongue-based education in the Philippines by considering the results of an attitudinal survey that reflect what (some) Filipinos perceive to be the role(s) of English and local languages (including Filipino) in education. We argue that although mother-tongue-based education (MTBE) policies are fundamentally sound and supportive of national and community-oriented initiatives toward raising standards of education and literacy, these policies cannot exist without being problematized along with attitudes to languages that may impact on the theorized positive effects of MTBE. We argue that without addressing attitudes to languages in the Philippines, MTBE policies may further strengthen the linguistic imperialist position of English and Philippine “polarized class relations” (Tupas, 2009, p. 73) that are inextricably linked with English, which is perceived to be the language of upward social, political, and economic mobility. Furthermore, we argue that for MTBE policies to be truly successful, they must be institutionalized side-by-side with strategies that raise the vertical discursiveness (Bernstein, 1996) of local languages in order to strengthen their position/s as languages of major social, economic, educational, and political domains. In developing this argument, this paper will, first, locate current discussions/debates on MTBE in the history of English and Philippine language policy and planning. Second, it will present the results of an attitudinal survey on languages in education in the Philippines. Finally, it will discuss the results of this survey in light of current language policies and planning in the Philippines with a look into the possible futures of English and mother-tongue education in the country. The paper will then end with a brief discussion of how a study of the Philippines is relevant to other countries with similar issues as well.

Background of the study: Colonial policies, education, and English

Language policy and planning (LPP) in the Philippines is inextricably linked with the country’s colonial history and its postcolonial or neocolonial effects. In this section, we give a brief overview of LPP in the Philippines from the Spanish times to the present day. Our goal here is to root the language attitudes revealed by the survey in historical processes of LPP that have shaped these attitudes. In this section, we build our argument that unless mother-tongue-based learning policies address deeply rooted language attitudes, there is a strong possibility that it may not lead to the desired effects.

While the Spanish ruled the country, one means of control was to limit access to language and education except for the elite *ilustrado* class that was generally composed of wealthy Filipinos who were economically and socially positioned to conform with and support Spanish colonial agendas (I. Martin, 1999). Only to this class was access to the Spanish language given while the rest remained uneducated in language and everything else in general. Much has been

written about Spanish colonization in the Philippines, but what matters to this paper on LPP is the fact that language was a means to divide the rich and the poor. This linguistic divide between social classes persisted also when a new language, English, came with the country's next colonial masters.

Unlike the Spanish, the Americans knew right away that education was a powerful weapon in their colonial arsenal. In the Philippines, the Americans found ideal colonial subjects who were receptive to the opportunities given by English, the "most potent weapon of the colonial government" (I. Martin, 1999, p. 132). It was, therefore, easy for the Americans to bring English to the Philippines because of "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, quoted in Lorente, forthcoming). This perceived link between English and economic mobility, which was first introduced at the end of the 19th century, shapes many of the language attitudes of today.

Although there were issues of whether English was the best language for education in the Philippines, local languages were not used as media of instruction. In the first place, teachers were trained to teach in English, and there was a dearth of materials in the local language. In addition, the American colonial government insisted on the use of English as a medium of instruction, hence, prioritizing its colonial agendas (Bernardo, 2004) and shaping a pliant nation of 'brown Americans' who "would be able to participate in a society determined by colonialism" (I. Martin, 2009, p. 246). English was pushed as the primary language of literacy with local languages as "auxiliary languages to teach character education, good manners, and right conduct" (I. Martin, 1999, p. 133). American language policy and planning then led to what Ricento (2000) calls a "stable diglossia" (p. 198) with English as the major language of higher education and socioeconomic and political opportunities while local languages were restricted to other functions. This stable diglossia between English and local languages is still visible today.

The Philippines gained independence from the US in 1946, but there was no independence from English. Bernardo (2004) writes that even though there were studies at that time that showed the positive effects of using local languages in education (see also Nolasco, 2008), there was no altering of the dominant position of English. However, because of the positive results of a few studies on mother-tongue education, the Philippine government decided on a formula for language in education that involved local languages being used up to the second grade and English as the medium of instruction from third grade onward. This formula of local languages for primary school and English thereafter promoted a split between the language of home (the local languages) and childhood and the language of the larger world (English) and adulthood.

Nationalist movements of the 60s up to the early 70s that were critical of English led the Philippines in further stretching its postcolonial legs in the shaping of its own language policies. The most important development was the formal introduction of a bilingual education policy (BEP) that stipulated the use of English “for science and mathematics and Filipino was to be used for all other courses” (Lorente, forthcoming). This is a system promoting a stable diglossia with English as the language of global developments and Filipino as the language of national identity (Gonzalez, 1998 as cited in Lorente, forthcoming). The BEP, though, was eventually blamed for what Filipinos considered to be a deterioration in literacy, as if learning in another language could whittle away a Filipino child’s learning. Bilingual education had marginal success, with English still dominant and resulting in Filipinos fearing an “English-deprived future” (I. Martin, 2010, p. 126).

Despite nationalist movements critical of English in the late 60s that led to the BEP, 1974 was a year that cemented the connection between English and economic opportunities through government labor policies. The 1974 government, under President Ferdinand Marcos, released an advertisement in *The New York Times* equating Filipino cheap labor with English. The ad said: “We like multinationals ... Local staff? Clerks with a college education start at \$35 ... accountants come for \$67, executive secretaries for \$148 ... Our labor force speaks your language” (Lorente, forthcoming; Tollefson, 1991, p. 140). It seems that the most important change that happened in the 70s was not the BEP but the Filipinos’ own articulation of American colonial policies that led to the imagining of English as the language of opportunity and wealth. By 1974, the shaping of the Philippine colonial mind was complete as the Philippine government itself was shaping national aspirations that were aligned with American needs. Today, with the Philippine economy largely dependent on remittances from overseas workers, many of whom work in English-speaking countries, the link between cheap labor and English is as strong as ever.

In 1987, a new bilingual education policy was enacted into law involving the newly energized national language, Filipino. The history of the national language has been problematic at best. Filipino is actually Tagalog, the language of Manila, the political, economic, and social center of the Philippines. Tagalog was given the less regionalistic moniker of Pilipino and later, Filipino. Filipino was to be a language that was developed out of all the local languages of the Philippines. However, no new language was developed, and Filipino is really still Tagalog (Hidalgo, 1998). In the 1987 BEP, “Filipino was mandated to be the language of literacy and the language of scholarly discourse, while English was described as the international language and the non-exclusive language of science and technology” (Bernardo, 2004, p. 21). In this ‘new’ bilingual provision, the functions of the two languages were more formally split into ‘Filipino for local purposes’ and ‘English for global purposes.’ However, Gonzalez (1998) and Bernardo

(2004) point out that because of economic advantages, English has remained as the most dominant language of literacy, despite efforts to widen the domains of Filipino (Gonzalez, 2004). Other reasons are the “controlling domains” (Gonzalez, 2004, p. 11) of English in Philippine life that include politics, business, and the law. This split between ‘local’ Filipino and ‘global’ English remains an important element in the perception of the place of different languages in Philippine life.

In recent decades, more fears of an “English-deprived future” (I. Martin, 2010, p. 126) have surfaced mainly through a stronger need for Filipinos to fill global jobs. President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo pushed for aligning Philippine educational goals with global needs (Lorente, forthcoming). What Arroyo wanted was for the educational sector to keep producing graduates who would fill labor positions all over the world:

Ang importante kung ano 'yung nakikita nating demand sa mga skills, ang ating school system ay dapat produce nang produce. Kung malaki ang demand sa nurses, produce more nurses; kung malaki ang demand sa I.T. workers, produce more I.T. workers kasi kailangan din natin sila dito, kailangan sa ibang bansa. (Arroyo, 2002, quoted in Lorente, forthcoming)

Translation: What's important is that our school system should produce and produce based on whatever skills are in-demand. If there is a huge demand for nurses, produce more nurses; if there is a huge demand for I.T workers, produce more I.T workers because we will need them here and they will be needed in other countries. (Translation, ours)

Since the ability to use English is an important skill for a global workforce, Arroyo's position led to fears that bilingual education caused the weakening of Filipinos' English skills and consequently, the chance to work abroad (Lorente, forthcoming). One result of Arroyo's position was House Bill No. 4701, later changed into House Bill 5619 (HB 5619). This was filed by Representative Gullas in the Philippine Congress (Nolasco, 2008) and was meant to ensure that Filipinos spent most of their schooling learning English and in English with the “time allotted for [the language] in all learning areas shall not [be]...less than 70%” (Nolasco, 2008, p. 3). HB 5619 wanted to maximize learning and living in English as a way of guaranteeing Filipinos' positions in overseas labor markets, particularly in America, Australia, the UK, New Zealand, and other countries that require English proficiency. In addition, the need for English was exacerbated by the business processing outsourcing (BPO) industry, which set up major English-using call centers and customer service hotlines in the Philippines (Lockwood, et al.,

2009). In a country with high unemployment, the BPO industry, with its promise of a 38% growth by 2015-2016 (Lockwood et al., 2009), naturally further led to the pragmatic connection between English and employability. HB 5619, however, was not enacted into law because of a lack of support in the senate (Nolasco, 2008). However, the combination of labor requirements abroad and the BPO industry in the country again supported the position of English in Philippines.

Amidst fears of losing English, a new bill was proposed in the Philippine Congress in 2008. This bill, HB3719, the “historical... ‘Multilingual Education and Literacy Act of 2008’” (Nolasco, 2008, p. 10) proposed the use of mother tongues—not just English or Filipino—as media of instruction in education. Authored by Congressman Gunigundo, the bill proposed “the use of the first language as the primary medium of instruction from preschool to Grade 6. ...[And] the strong teaching of English and Filipino in the elementary grades, but only as separate subjects and not as media of instruction” (Gunigundo, 2010, p. 78, emphasis added). HB 3719 was a bill that acknowledged the multilingual nature of the Philippines and rescued other Philippine languages from the “auxiliary” position that they had been relegated to (Gonzalez, 1998, p. 499) by English and Filipino (Tagalog). By the time HB 3719 was filed, at least two prominent studies had already been conducted on mother-tongue education, both showing overwhelmingly favorable results with students educated in their mother tongue getting higher scores in “ALL of the subjects” (Nolasco, 2008, p. 8, emphasis original). These studies, plus Gunigundo’s argument that children who learn “cognitive, academic and linguistic skills in their L1” can “gradually transfer this knowledge in the nationally prescribed languages, English and Filipino” (2010, p. 79), have provided a compelling case for L1 learning. HB 3719 assumes that if Filipinos can learn literacy skills in their L1, then learning English and other skills demanded by global labor requirements will not be a problem. Today, in the new K-12 curriculum of the Philippines, mother-tongue education is quickly gaining ground, with schools all over the country now required to use mother tongues in early years’ education.

In this section, we presented an overview of language policy and planning in the Philippines. By exploring this history, it is clear that the hegemonic position of English in the Philippines is supported by more than a century of language and economic policies that have privileged the language. Gonzalez (2004) has written:

All Filipinos know that their home language or vernacular or Filipino will not give them access to international relations, trade and business. Moreover, they also realize the value of education and the value of competence in English for their education not only within their own country but especially outside. The prospects of further study abroad and even work abroad con-

tinue to be attractive and a motivator for learning English and maintaining competence in English not only as an individual but above all as a society. (p. 13)

American colonialism first cemented this link between language and economic opportunities, but history tells us that Philippine government policies of business and labor have continued to support this status quo through its prioritizing of global labor needs, whether by offering English-speaking Filipinos as overseas workers or as local customer service workers for overseas firms. The linguistic divide between the rich and the poor that was seen during the Spanish colonization is still around in a revised form. Now, the idea is if you do not know English, you remain poor. The stable diglossia between English, Filipino, and other local languages is even more visible as English is now, more than ever, packaged as the language of opportunity. In 2001, Tupas wrote that “linguistic imperialism in the Philippines is not a thing of the past” (p. 1), and English still enjoys a dominant position in the minds (and hearts) of Filipinos who want to fulfill their economic dreams by working abroad. Tupas wrote about this in 2001, years before the mother-tongue multilingual education was proposed. Is it possible, then, that HB 3719 will “mitigat[e] the grip of English” (Lorente, forthcoming) over the country? With mother-tongue-based education, will the Philippines see a lessening of the gap between the rich and the poor, a gap that language policies have helped maintain? How do Filipinos perceive the role/s of their languages? What are their perceptions and attitudes? To explore these questions, we will discuss the results of the attitudinal survey we conducted.

2. Method

In order to collect data on attitudes toward various languages in the Philippines, we conducted an attitudinal survey in early 2011. This survey was designed to collect perceptions of Filipinos toward English, Filipino and non-Filipino mother tongues on a number of questions. The survey was created using Survey Monkey, and the link was widely advertised on a number of social websites and universities. In all, 232 people responded to the survey, of which 127 were female and 105 were male. The average age of the participants was 22, with participant ages ranging from 15 to 63. Although the largest number of respondents was composed of educators or students, others who responded to the survey included lawyers, nurses, journalists, business people, and tour guides. In terms of educational attainment, the participants ranged from high school graduates up to postgraduates with doctorate degrees. Although most participants were based in Manila, some were from major cities in the Philippines while others were based abroad. There were 17 mother tongues listed; the majority spoke Tagalog

while others, Aklanon, Bicolano, Bisaya, Cebuano, Chavacano/Spanish creole, Chinese, English, Hiligaynon, Ibaloi, Ilokano, Ilonggo, Itawes, Ivatan, Kapampangan, Korean, Pangasinan, Spanish, and Waray-waray. On average, the participants spoke two languages, but many also spoke three or four.

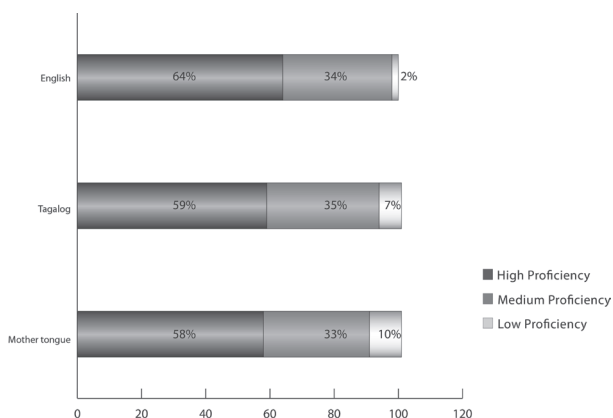
The survey asked the participants questions about their language proficiency in English, Tagalog, and their non-Tagalog mother tongues. They were also asked questions about what they perceived to be the place of English, Tagalog, and non-Tagalog mother tongues in education. The results are presented in the next section.

3. Results

The first item the participants were asked to do was to rate their proficiency in English, Tagalog, and their non-Tagalog mother tongues. The results to this item (Figure 1) show that most respondents perceived English to be their strongest language with the biggest number, 64%, considering themselves to be high proficient in English. In contrast, more respondents rated themselves as low proficient in Tagalog and/or in their non-Tagalog mother tongues. This is significant for MTB education because with more respondents being comfortable in English, a school system based on mother tongues as media of instruction will definitely be met with resistance, particularly among the demographic represented in the survey. This demographic is composed of upwardly mobile Filipinos who are mostly university-educated and employed in various prestigious sectors.

Figure 1

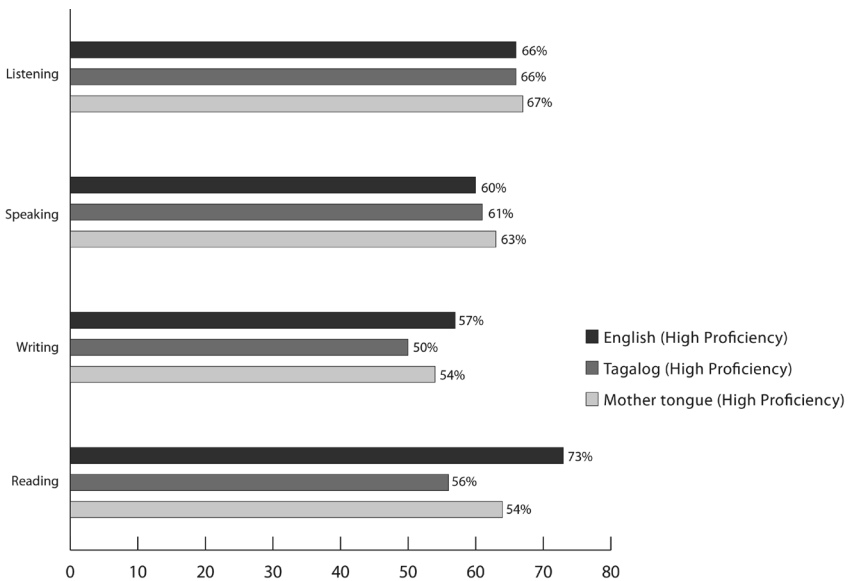
Self-assessed proficiency in English, Tagalog, and mother tongue



The respondents were also asked to rate their proficiency in listening, speaking, writing, and reading in English, Filipino (Tagalog), and non-Filipino mother tongues (Figure 2). The results for this item show that in terms of listening and speaking, the self-assessed proficiency is almost the same in English, Filipino, and non-Filipino mother tongues. However, in both areas, the participants perceived their listening and speaking to be slightly better in their mother tongues than in English or Filipino.

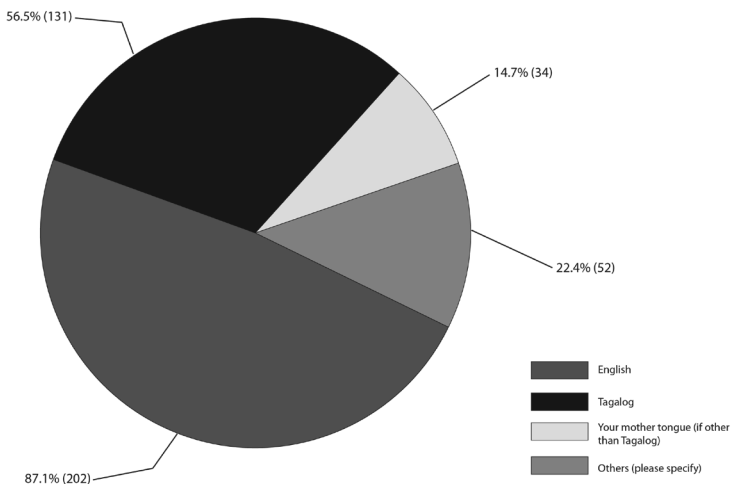
The results, though, are more striking in writing and reading. Whereas participants perceived their listening and speaking skills to be slightly better in Filipino or in their mother tongues, they perceived their writing and reading to be better in English than in any other language. This is striking because to the respondents, the language of literacy is English, with Filipino and mother tongues relegated to ‘everyday’ domains. Since language policies in the Philippines have maintained the position of English in education, students have been educated using English, with very little (or none) in terms of studying in Filipino and/or their mother tongues. Furthermore, given the status of English, there appears to be a higher investment (Norton, 2010) in it, with more people studying English to improve their literacy.

Figure 2
Distribution of proficiency across four skills for the high proficiency group



In another question, the survey participants were also asked to identify which languages should be taught as subjects in schools. The responses to this question are shown in Figure 3. It is clear in the pie chart that the majority of the respondents pointed out that English should be taught as a subject in school, with barely 50% identifying the need to have Tagalog as a subject. Mother tongues as subjects barely got any support, with more respondents identifying the need to have other international languages as subjects rather than other local languages.

Figure 3
Language preference in educational contexts



(Note: Other languages included: Vernaculars, Spanish, Chinese, Korean, French, Japanese, Fookien, and German)

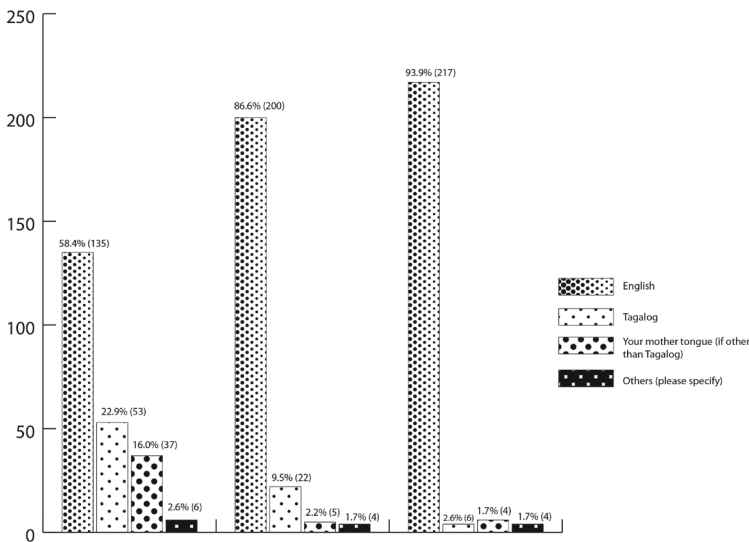
As the results in Figure 3 show, the participants saw the need for learning more English than any other language, including Filipino, the national language. These results again show that English is the language that is perceived to be worthy of investment. Norton (2010) explains that “[i]f learners ‘invest’ in the target language, they do so with the understanding that they will acquire a wider range of symbolic and material resources” (p. 353). Since education is perceived as a means toward acquiring these resources, these survey results suggest that English is the language that allows access to these resources. These results are very important in light of MTBE. If local languages are not perceived to be worthy of investment, then parents

will prefer to send their children to schools that have strong English-medium programs. This relates to the questions raised by Mahboob and Tilakaratna (2012) in their work on a ‘principles-based approach to language policy and planning’ and suggests that unless stakeholders are taken into consideration and a policy is developed based on an agreed-upon vision of the country and the system, the results of a language-in-education policy may actually be counter-productive.

In the final question relevant to this paper, the participants were asked which language/s should be used as a medium of instruction in primary school, high school, and universities. The results (Figure 4) show that fewer and fewer respondents preferred to use other languages as media of instruction as schooling progressed from primary school up to university. Conversely, the number of respondents who preferred English as the medium of instruction increased. However, across all years of schooling, more preferred that English be used as a medium of instruction, with Filipino, mother tongues, and other languages almost disappearing in high school and university.

Figure 4
Medium of instruction

Note: Other languages included: Multilingual (10), Spanish (2), Japanese (1), French (1)



The last set of results shared here shows that the majority of respondents think that English should be the language of schooling, with the national language and mother tongues playing small and temporary roles only in primary school. At university level, over 90% of the respondents preferred English as the medium of instruction above any other languages.

Whatever value was attached to Filipino and other mother tongues in primary and secondary schools disappeared almost entirely in university. So, years of language planning and policy in the Philippines, despite almost three decades of a supposed bilingual education policy, have actually led to the devaluing of the national language and other local languages.

It is important to revisit the domains of English, Filipino, and other mother tongues here. In 1981, Gonzalez wrote that the domains of political and discursive power were in English, such as the courts of law and business. In a recent study, I. Martin (2012) indicates that this has not changed as the majority of courts of law in the Philippines still use English, at the risk of depriving non-English speaking Filipinos of their rights to due process. Considering the importance of English in major sociopolitical and economic domains, it is not surprising why the respondents saw more value in English. If more value is placed on English, then a possible consequence will be the mushrooming of English-as-mother-tongue schools. These will likely be private schools that only the elite can afford. Instead of opening access to wealth, education, and opportunity to all sectors of Philippine society, mother-tongue education may result in further dividing the rich and the poor as individuals who grew up speaking and studying in Filipino or their mother tongues will be further marginalized as they would not have had the same access to the language of power, as opposed to the elite who have always had English.

Sadly, as the results of the survey indicate, a mother-tongue-based system of education, no matter how solid or theoretically positive, will not change over a century of language attitudes that have been entrenched across generations. This would explain the fear of a future without English that I. Martin (2010) wrote about. However, this is not a newly discovered fear. Gonzalez in 1981 wrote about this fear when he mentioned that “the [BEP] has been blamed rightly or wrongly for the “deterioration” of English” (p. 54). This fear of the deterioration of English is unsurprisingly linked with the promise of using English skills to work in the BPO industry locally or in lucrative jobs abroad. In 1998, Gonzalez wrote that: “English and Filipino are taught from Grade 1 on and used as media of instruction from the first grade, although there is much use of the local vernaculars in a bimodal style of communication, with the local vernacular in decreasing use as the children go up the educational ladder” (p. 510, emphasis ours). Since local vernaculars have been devalued so much in education, introducing them now as media of instruction may just lead to more people choosing and wanting English-medium private schools for their children.

In addition to the aforementioned analysis, another way of looking at the survey findings is to explore the perceptions of the respondents based on their backgrounds. Across all professions, all respondents preferred English. Many of them were gainfully employed in various industries and educational institutions in the Philippines and abroad. This is the group that has placed a premium on English as, presumably, the language of their economic and social success. Without a shift in this attitude, students educated in local languages may not have the chance to work in industries that value English above other languages. This confirms the fear arising from the lack of English, which is ‘no English, no opportunity.’ In her essay on the grip of English in the Philippines, Lorente (forthcoming) pointed out that since English was still perceived to be the language of global opportunity, the “biggest winners” and “losers” in the Philippine BEP:

were [speakers of] English which remained preeminent in the country’s linguistic economy and the elite groups whose interests were now legitimized. The biggest losers were the many Filipinos whose wages had been eroded by their incorporation into the global labor market and whose varying levels of English competence facilitated their entry as low-waged workers in an export-oriented, labor intensive light industry financed by foreign capital. (n.p.)

Now, with plans for mother-tongue-based education, there is no guarantee that the policy will not result in the same outcome. When the BEP was first institutionalized, the Philippines was starting its business of sending large amounts of laborers abroad. Along with or despite mother-tongue-based education, the Philippines will still be sending its people abroad as labor force. Without fundamental changes in the way local languages are perceived in relation to economic success, mother-tongue-based education may lead to Filipinos further fearing the loss of their ‘competitive edge’ as they would not have had enough access to the dominant language.

4. Discussion

If attitudes toward language do not support attempts at mother-tongue-based language policies, what can or should be done about LPP in countries such as the Philippines? To answer this, it is necessary to investigate what language planning and policies do vis-a-vis what people may want for themselves. Cooper (1989) defined language planning as “refer[ing] to deliberate efforts to influence the behavior of others with respect to the acquisition, structure,

or functional allocation of their language codes” (p.45). The result of language planning is language policy. Two parts of Cooper’s definition are very important in light of LPP in the Philippines. The first is language planning as a form of “influence.” Copper pointed out that language planning tends to focus on “influence rather than change” (p. 45), which suggests that LPP can actually maintain the status quo rather than change it. Mother-tongue-based-education initiatives in the Philippines, though, are an attempt to change the status quo that painfully divides the rich and the poor. Gunigundo (2010), who authored HB 3719, wrote that with mother-tongue-based education raising the literacy levels in the country, there is a chance for Filipinos to “finally catapult themselves from being low-skilled individuals into high-skilled achievers and professionals” (p. 80). Mother-tongue-based LPP in the Philippines, thus, seeks to change the status quo by providing all Filipinos the opportunity to achieve high-literacy levels regardless of what language/s they speak. However, this attempt to influence how Filipinos perceive English and other languages may just maintain the status quo. To examine how this might happen, it is necessary to examine the relationship between language allocation, language affiliation, and LPP.

Language allocation (J. Martin, 2010) can be understood in terms of how linguistic and semiotic resources are distributed differentially amongst users, i.e., what languages and other semiotic resources people have control over in construing and representing various meanings in relation to the expected norms of the community of practice that they are either members of or would like to be members of. To understand this notion of allocation in the current context, we can observe that all individuals are allocated languages in their homes; these would presumably be their mother tongues, whatever those languages are. Schooling can actually make good use of allocated languages. If children go to a school that uses their mother tongue as a medium of instruction, these children feel that their language and identities are affirmed in school where they can learn sciences, maths, history, and literature in their mother tongues. In the Philippines, since English is the dominant language of education, children have to go through the trauma of learning a new language—English — and learning maths, science, and the like in this new language. So, their mother tongues have no place in school or in the “big” world in general. This situation is different from that of the child who was exposed to English in the home, as in the case of many middle-class and elite families in the Philippines. This scenario can lead to a hierarchy based on language allocation. That English-allocated children come from wealthy families is another concern because in using English as a medium of instruction, the school system privileges children from upwardly mobile backgrounds while disenfranchising those who come from the lower class. In effect, inequality is maintained in the school system through language allocation. Mahboob (2011) argues that the problems of language allocation versus language of schooling have led to children of various

language backgrounds falling behind other children, as if language allocation and general aptitude for schooling are one and the same. It is this break between the language allocation and the language of schooling that mother-tongue initiatives in the Philippines seek to address. But language allocation is not all, as the notion of language affiliation is equally important.

If people acquire an allocated language at home, there are also language/s they may wish to affiliate with. These are the languages of communities that individuals want to join. For instance, a Filipino child with aspirations of joining the global scientific community would want to learn the language/s of the scientific world. Similarly, a child who dreams of working in an English-speaking country will want to learn the language of that country. These linguistic desires linked with the desire to join communities of practice are what go into language affiliation. As an individual desires to affiliate with a community, it becomes necessary to learn the language of that community. What the survey on language attitudes tells us is that although Filipinos may have been allocated Filipino and other mother tongues, the language they wish to affiliate with is English. Unfortunately, since the desire to affiliate with English has not changed, using allocated languages in school may just further separate the rich, who have been allocated English and wish to affiliate with English, and the poor who have not been allocated English but wish to affiliate with English. Consequently, the status quo would have been maintained rather than changed by LPP. For mother-tongue-based educational policies to succeed, all stakeholders, such as parents, students, educators, politicians, industry leaders, should see the value of using local languages in schooling. They should also fully see that using local languages will not negatively affect their access to English and any other languages they wish to affiliate with. Realizing that using allocated languages in schools will not affect access to English will take time. This is the time that the economic situation of the Philippines cannot afford as the country's economy is still held together by overseas workers who make a living in English-speaking countries.

Apart from language allocation and affiliation, another issue that needs to be considered here is that of the vertical discursiveness of local languages. In his work on pedagogy, Bernstein (1996) argued for a distinction between two discursive practices that operate within societies. These are horizontal and vertical discourses. Bernstein argues that horizontal discourses are comprised of "oral or common-sense knowledge" which are also "context dependent" (p. 170). These discourses are, to borrow from Hasan (1999), "quotidian" (p. 311) or everyday. Since Filipino and other Philippine languages are not perceived to be the languages of education, they are "everyday" languages with horizontal discursiveness. Vertical discourses, on the other hand, contain a "coherent, explicit, systematically principled structure" which can "tak[e] 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). Horizontal

discourses contain the languages of every day while vertical discourses contain the languages of power. These are “specialized” (Hasan, 1999, p. 311) languages or the “genres of power” (J. Martin, 1997, p. 419). J. Martin (1997) has argued that when it comes to offering all students the opportunity to uplift their lives, control over the types of language that are privileged is very important. He writes that

the more explicitly discourses are presented to [marginalized students], and contextualized with respect to their social function, the more opportunity marginalized students have to take them or leave them as they choose, and if they take them, to take them up in ways that suit their interests, including renovations where required. (p. 420)

Filipino, despite being the national language of the Philippines, and other local languages, may not be perceived to have the vertical discursiveness required to offer their users access to discourses of power. It is not hard to see why this is so. Language policies in the Philippines, while attempting to raise the status of Filipino, have marginalized local languages and kept them in “auxiliary” positions (Gonzalez, 1998, p. 499). In addition, as mentioned earlier, major discursive practices, such as business and the law, are still in English. Finally, the Philippines is still economically dependent on foreign employment or investment, which both require English. A combination of these factors has led to a disempowerment of local languages, including the national language, in favor of the vertical discursiveness that English offers. Presumably, mother-tongue policies will raise the vertical discursiveness of local languages as using mother tongues in education will “intellectualize those languages so that they may be used for higher-order thinking and wider domains” (Gunigundo, 2010, p. 80). However, vertical discursiveness is not quickly developed. Applying mother-tongue policies before these languages, which have been used in vertical discourses, may not change negative perceptions toward the positions of these languages in sociopolitical and economic domains.

What is to happen now? In writing this paper, we are not, in any way, further supporting the hegemony of English in the Philippines. Rather, what we have done is to show how existing attitudes to language will derail any attempts at LPP that seek to “fi[x] education through language” (Nolasco, 2010, p. 85). For a mother-tongue-based educational system to work, large-scale attempts to change perceptions on the role/s or domain/s of local languages have to be done.

5. Conclusion

In this paper, we have attempted to engage with recent changes in language policy in the Philippines. These changes have been designed to raise the status of local languages or mother tongues which have been disempowered by at least a century of policies that have privileged English. We argue, based on an attitudinal survey on language and education, that policies supportive of local languages need to be implemented along with widespread initiatives that will attempt to change the way Filipinos perceive their own languages. Mahboob and Tilakaratna (2012) point out that it is very important to take into account the hegemonic position of English in postcolonial societies, like the Philippines, when considering language policies, especially those that will impact local languages. While English is perceived to hold a position of power that is the key to socioeconomic and global opportunities, local languages will always be on the margins. It is this perception that has to change for mother-tongue policies to become truly empowering.

It takes at least a generation to change perceptions, especially those linked with language. While we support mother-tongue initiatives, we argue that it is crucial for all stakeholders—policy makers, teachers, parents, students, and especially industry and business sectors—to understand and personally align with the goals of mother-tongue education. In their paper on a principles-based approach to language policy and planning, Mahboob and Tilakaratna (2012) argue that collaboration between all stakeholders is necessary for an empowering language policy. They write that “[t]hese stakeholders should be given power to influence the design of policy, curriculum, and textbooks so that these policies are understood, accepted, and translated into appropriate practice” (p. 13). If there is enough collaboration, then the hegemonic position of English can be problematized and the position of local languages can be truly strengthened.

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