

Education, language policy and language use in the Philippines

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The roles of language policy and language practice and use in education have been regarded to influence the efficacy of teaching and learning in the school setting. With the rise of globalisation and internationalisation of services in education, the objective of producing manpower that is equipped to the demands of the knowledge-based economy has realigned government policies worldwide to put education at the forefront of its development plans. From the rise of English language as 'the' language for globalisation calls for a more inclusive and locally-oriented mother-tongue based multilingual education (MTB-MLE), this article will discuss broadly the dynamics of language, access and influence, and will look at the Philippines as a country case study of explicit and implicit declarations in language policy and use, as affecting the education sector, and access to the labour market.

Keywords: language policy, language practice, Philippines, English, mother tongue-based education, internationalisation, globalisation

Introduction

The rapid and increasing internationalisation of services has now more than ever, engaged the education sector with issues that delineate government policy orientations in response to the needs of the knowledge economy. From central issues of access and the increasing democratisation of education through the upsurge of information and communications technology (ICT), to equity issues that define the rights to education for all, education policies globally has set the tune to responding to the cultural and local needs of a society while ensuring at the same time, that its population are receptive to the demands of modern times. The role of language policy as affecting education has been discussed in literature (Tollefson, 2002; Meken and Garcia, 2010; Watson, 2011) From the rise of English language as 'the' language for globalisation to the call for a more inclusive and locally-oriented

mother-tongue based multilingual education (MTB-MLE), this article will discuss broadly the dynamics of language, access and influence, and will look at the Philippines as a country case study of explicit and implicit declarations in language policy and use as affecting the education sector, and access to the labour market.

Language, access and influence

The role of language policy in democratic plurality is contentious given the functions exhibited by languages and power in nation states, with postmodernists framing language as the core of political existence “stepped in power and defining people’s role in the world (Holborow, 1999, p. 1). The role of language in agency and power is marked, with agency defined as the ‘capacity to act’ and with language as an integral part of agency (Woldemariam and Lanza, 2014). Realignment in language policies can also refer to changing political powers where ‘language education plays an important role in controlling access to economic resources, political institutions, and power (Tollefson 1993, p. 73). The realities of language and access are demonstrated further by Tollefson (1993, 1989) through his work on US education policies for South East Asian refugees. It contends that the education programmes given to such groups limit their employment prospects rather than advancing it where their education advocates for ‘self-sufficiency’ and channels them into “minimum-wage jobs that offer little opportunity for increasing language or job skills (...) (p. 74). Nationalistic tendencies in language policy display similar concerns in terms of access where a dominant and preferred language is used as criterion for influence and control, as will be further discussed here.

Additionally, institutional narratives also play an important role when often-times, such govern the ‘crucial purpose of legitimising specific language policies’ (Rappa and Wee, 2006 p. 4) as exhibited for instance in Singapore, a member state of the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN), whose lack of natural resources has naturally compelled the state to develop and depend on its human capital for socioeconomic advancement. Given the ethnic background and diversity found in Singapore, the state has insinuated a bilingual proficiency where English, as the supposed medium for modernity, is widely used as medium of instruction (MOI) in schools while at the same time, not discounting the role of ethnic languages identified by its population. In a similar note, neighbouring Malaysia is identified, with as much ethnic diversity, as prioritising the Malay language reflected in national policies such as the National Economic Policy (NEP) of 1970 and subsequent education language policy revisions (e.g. reverting of the teaching of Mathematics and Sciences to Malay from English in 2010). Notwithstanding contentions, such outlook in language policy in Malaysia is said to clearly, and

meant to, privilege certain ethnic group over others (Samuel and Tee, 2013; Phan, Kho and Chng, 2013). Comparing the two countries, it follows how institutional narratives in language policy would influence the tread to effective modernisation where it is seemingly more difficult for Malaysia to institute this given the footing of the Malay language over English.

Language policies as a factor in discriminating national ideologies is manifest though not necessarily the crux to successful national integration, as may be evident in Singapore where its younger population might not realise how “fragile inter-ethnic relations could prove to be (...) not having lived through poverty and deprivation(...)” (Tan 2011, p. 164). Nonetheless, one cannot discount the commanding force of language in policy relations. Brunei Darussalam, also a member state of the ASEAN, has since established a bilingual education policy since 1985 in all government-run schools while non-government run schools were seen to adopt this plan voluntarily. The strong consensus to teach English in Brunei stems again from the desire to be economically competitive, with English considered as the default medium for modernity in an increasingly globalised world. Comparably, the current influx of Korean students in the Philippines also speaks of the demand for the English language where the country is seen to have the competitive advantage in delivering quality training in the language in more ‘economical’ terms than one would otherwise get from the West. This edge stems from the use of the English as a working language in the Philippines which has also, as a result, seen a dramatic rise in the business process outsourcing (BPO) market in recent times. Obviously, such strides and predisposition to the English language are not limited to South East Asia and with the rising interconnectivity between and among societies and nations, this not only makes this ‘language of choice’ more accessible, but further strengthens the influence and command of English worldwide. This was described by Fishman long ago to what is now perhaps the reality set by technologies and interconnectivity:

The uniformizing requirements and consequences of technology are such that for many years to come many monolingual nations in control of “old languages” will need to resort to diglossian compromises in various technological and educational domains. (1968, p. 47)

Given also the effects of mass urbanisation, among others, one cannot live in a completely homogenous setting, where realities are now defined by multiculturalism and a multilingual world. The ideological and political use of a single dominant language in educational settings may be unattainable given such and opens the debate on the written versus the spoken vernacular, and issues in bilingual education (Hobsbawm, 1996). This has also given impetus to the practise of mother tongue- based multilingual education (MTB-MLE) especially documented in

countries with a rich linguistic background. MTB-MLE advocates the use of the learners' first language or mother tongue as medium of instruction in educational settings to promote supposed better quality in learning, and to offset the hegemony of certain languages that are seen to marginalise certain groups in societies. Tupas (2015) highlights the use of the MTB-MLE in two broad political contexts: (i) in educating linguistic minorities where a national or foreign language is employed as medium of instruction and (ii) the practise of such policy in mainstream education displacing former languages used in education. Further expounding on examples for the first case as relevant to Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand and Vietnam; and the Philippines and East Timor, on the other (p. 112). However, the MTB-MLE's quest for continuing influence is suspect in the ASEAN given its move for a stronger and more compact regional bloc through the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) and with the predilection of using English as the working language under the AEC. Of course, there is also the increasing authority and impact of the English language as abovementioned, in scientific and technological discourses.

The next sections will discuss the rise and preference for the English language and the MTB-MLE as relevant in education language policies.

English: the language of choice?

It is undeniable, the spread of English in the global setting propelled further by the increasing internationalisation of services worldwide. But what was once hardly conceived as 'the' international language with global dominance has now made its way to possibly every society imaginable. The 1966 Airlie House conference on 'Language Problems of the Developing Nations' considered English simply as an option for 'wider communication' – far from the compelling force it is reckoned to be now (Spolsky, 2004). About a decade later, Fishman (1977) started to recognise the changing shift when he wrote the introduction of his book detailing the spread of English (as cited in Spolsky 2004, p. 77):

The traveller returning to the United States from a vacation trip in Africa, Europe or Asia is often heard to comment that nearly everyone he met seemed to be able to speak some English. To such impressionist account of the ubiquity of English as the world language [...]

And about two decades ago, the launch of the British Council's *English 2000* project highlighted the already expanding and significant role of the English language in the international market: "Worldwide, there are over 1400 million people living in countries where English has official status. One out of five of the world's

population speak English [...] English is the main language of books [...] international business and academic conferences, science technology [...]” (Graddol 1997, p. 2)

The spread of English has taken in different angles, from Fishman’s (1977) interplay of various factors of, among others, education, political affinity and urbanisation, i.e. ‘making it happen’, to Philipson’s polemic (1992, 2015) ‘linguistic imperialism’ as a result of a well-executed language management favouring the Centre while isolating and further relegating the Periphery into dependency. Philipson argues this view as a form of linguisticism which he maintains as operating “through structures and ideologies, and entailing unequal treatment for groups identified by language”, comparable to racism and classism (Philipson, 2015). Similar to other perceptions, this view of English as cultural imperialism defeats and questions the assumed and possible role of a ‘unifying’ and ‘neutral’ English when the language is considered as the main bearer of Western economic hegemony (Pennycook, 1998; Holborow, 1999), and thus commonly viewed as a promoter of social inequality.

Nonetheless with the rise of English as a language of globalisation and as the custodian of ‘fast capitalism’ (Kress, 1995), has predisposed nations parallel to the economics of market demand, to train its students and to study the language in its own right, where articulacy in English is also equated to having better opportunities and self – advancement. Its rise in China, home to world’s largest population, and the European Union (EU) as one of the more established political-economic unions globally, reinstates further its already compelling influence in world communications, to the effect of it possibly having role in promoting a world that is more equitable and ethically responsible (Johnson, 2009).

The role of language policies particularly affecting education has seen shifts to promoting English either as a second language, a working language or on adopting a bilingual education policy, though implementation, management and practice may not reflect the actual policy orientation. For instance, in Namibia, concerns have been raised of an ill-equipped setting where the language policy in education favouring English since 1990, is faced with realities of lack of qualitative teacher training in the language. Results have been so damning which reveal that the majority of the teachers in the southern African state as not proficient in the language, where 70 percent of teachers in senior secondary schools are unable to read and write basic English thus resulting in poor learning among students (Kitsing, 2012). Literature is also replete with the role of English side-stepping inherent cultural complexities of countries, where in some cases, advocates of mother tongue-based multilingual education have called for a more inclusive setting by promoting this policy (Nolasco, 2008; Whitehead, 2013; Mustafa, 2015).

Mother tongue- based multilingual education

The role of mother-tongue based multilingual education (MTB-MLE) has been pushed in line with the desire to improve student learning, with the perception that using the mother-tongue or first language of the child in early education will result to better understanding of critical concepts needed in scholarship (UNESCO, 2011). Some advocates of the MTB-MLE also ruminate on the benefits to ‘access and inclusion’ of this policy that will otherwise be lacking in schools administering a second or third language (not necessarily English) as its MOI. This alleged role in improved learning has resulted to critical debates and discussions in policy repositioning in both the national and international setting over the years. For instance, UNESCO’s 1953 publication of *The Use of Vernacular Language Education* points to the sustained discussion of this, despite the recent resurgence of the MTB-MLE in education literature as a result for one, of the global call for universal education.

Notwithstanding the accolades bestowed upon the assumed merits of the MTB-MLE, issues of implementation and other executory difficulties may arise where there is lack of teacher training in the language; or when the language may not actually be written or if it is, resources are lacking (e.g. for reading, teaching) of the language (Spolsky, 2004). Tupas (2015) also discusses the predicament of ethnolinguistic minorities in Cambodia, Laos, Thailand and Vietnam in the quest to institutionalise the ideology of “one language, one culture and one nation” (p. 117) whilst marginalising other minority language groups. As exhibited in Pol Pot’s obliteration of Cambodia: “In Kampuchea there is one nation and one language – the Khmer language. From now on the various nationalities do not exist any longer in Kampuchea (Pol Pot as quoted in Edwards 1996, p. 55; Tupas 2015 p. 117).

In the Philippines, an explicit policy has been set on the MTB-MLE in consonance with intentions raised above, while other countries in South East Asia like Cambodia, East Timor, Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, and Vietnam are piloting this initiative at the community level with support from international non-governmental (INGO) organisations (Burton 2013). However, as the issue of language policy versus actual language practice and management often shows, the case of the Philippines’ MTB-MLE shows a discordance between a top-down policy and a community level practice, which will be discussed further in sections to follow.

Language policy and practice in the Philippines

Host to possibly one of the most extensive education sectors in the world, the Philippines has over 62,000 schools (primary and secondary level) and over 21 million students enrolled in public schools alone (DepEd, 2015). It is also one

of the more ethnically and linguistically diverse nation in South East Asia represented by over a hundred ethnic groups and over 170 different languages, which makes language policy planning more challenging than usual. Recent initiatives by the Philippine government which aim to increase quality and access to education has resulted to the institutionalisation of the MTB-MLE in the country in 2009, and subsequently implemented in all public schools in 2012 (with the use of 8 major languages). The MTB-MLE is also envisioned to support the “Every Child-A-Reader and A-Writer by Grade 1” programme which is in line with the universal school participation target of the government.

Language policy and use in Philippine Constitutions

The Philippines has had five Constitutions since the independence of 1896. The Malolos Constitution of 1899 required no mandate or regulation of the use of the languages spoken in the country, except by “virtue of law and only for acts of public authority and judicial affairs”. It pointed further that for such occasions, the “Spanish language shall be temporarily used” (Article 93). On the one hand, under the Americans and the foundation of the Philippines Commonwealth, the 1935 Constitution then instituted the steps to adopt one of the languages in the country as a national language, while English and Spanish are to be used as official languages meantime (Article XIII, Section 3). The Institute of National Language (INL) then suggested, through extensive study and consultation, that Tagalog be the national language of the country. This ultimately resulted to Executive Order 134 of 1937 which pronounced Tagalog as the national language of the Philippines. But given contentions over the choice of Tagalog as the national language, the term was then coined to ‘Pilipino’ to appease the dispute.

The Japanese occupation that then followed saw the creation of the 1943 Constitution which limited Western influence by mandating that “(t)he government shall take steps toward the development and propagation of Tagalog as the national language” (Article IX, Section 2). The short-lived 1943 Constitution was soon replaced by the reinstated 1935 Constitution when the Allied Forces liberated the country (Tan, 2014). Consequently, the 1973 Constitution under then President Ferdinand Marcos has advanced the use of ‘Filipino’ as the national language wherein the government shall “take steps towards the development and formal adoption of a common national language to be known as Filipino” and “(u)ntil otherwise provided by law, English and Pilipino shall be the official languages” (Article XV, Sections 2 and 3). Also, as will be discussed later, under Marcos’ rule, bilingualism was promoted in schools by the National Board of Education (NBE). The Philippines’ current Constitution (1987) formed after the collapse of the Marcos government, also reinstates Filipino as the national language and likewise

promotes a bilingual language policy. And most recently, the Department of Education (in 2009) promoted the MTB-MLE framework in the education sector.

The MTB-MLE, bilingual policy and language preference in the Philippines

In the country context, the MTB-MLE programme is delivered as a subject area and as MOI. Under this scheme, fluency in the mother tongue (MT) starts at grades 1 to 3 (ages 7 to 9 years old). The MT is also to be used as the MOI from pre-primary to Grade 3 except for subjects in Filipino (L2) and English (L3). Oral fluency, reading and writing for L2 and L3 are to be introduced from Grade 1 (DepEd Order 16, 2012). Supported by empirical findings recognised by the government from both the *Lingua Franca* and *Lubuagan First Language* projects, the MTB-MLE gains precedence through the purported academic competencies more efficiently gained by learners if taught in their first language (L1) as compared to their second or third languages (L2 and L3). So much attention has been given to the MTB-MLE initiative that a university, in compliance with the 2009 institutionalisation of the agenda, has offered an education graduate programme specialising in MTB-MLE (DepEd Advisory 398, 2012).

Prior to the MTB-MLE, the Philippines has adopted a bilingual policy on education. Prompted by the National Board of Education's (NBE) inclination to promote bilingualism in schools, the then Department of Education Culture and Sports (DECS) instituted the policy on bilingual education in 1974. Bilingualism then defined as the operational use of both English and Filipino as MOIs in subject areas in schools (Espiritu, 2015). The change in government and constitutional amendments that followed in 1987 also emphasised the use of bilingual language policy, in consonance with the 1973 NBE initiative. The DECS 1987 Policy on Bilingual Education stresses the use of both Filipino and English as language subjects in all levels to achieve bilingual competence and has also promoted the use of regional languages as auxiliary languages to be taught in Grades 1 and 2 (DECS order 52, 1987). Quite clearly, despite the bilingual language policy set forth in the 1987 Constitution which emphasises the use "(f) or purposes of communication and instruction, the official languages of the Philippines are Filipino, and until otherwise provided by law, English" (article XIV, Section 7), the nationalistic ideology in language planning was explicit in the Constitution where the development of the Filipino is seen as a "linguistic symbol of national unity and identity" (DECS order 52, 1987, p. 2).

The role of Filipino was highly accorded its due from the 1987 Constitution with the formation of the *Komisyon sa Wikang Filipino* (Commission on the Filipino Language) in 1991 which was mandated to ensure the evolution and enrichment of the Filipino language. Composed of ethno-linguists and other professionals, the

Commission seeks to conduct research that will improve, expand and preserve the language (KWF, 2015). The use of Filipino was further imposed its stature with Executive Order (EO) 335 issued by then President Corazon Aquino in 1998 which requires the use of the language in all government agencies' official communications, correspondence and transactions. The EO also required names of offices, buildings, public offices, and others to be translated into Filipino. The nationalistic tendencies are much apparent in this order which also decrees the Institute of Philippine Languages to administer an information campaign to emphasise the "importance and necessity of Filipino as an effective instrument for national unity and progress" (p. 2). This move nonetheless has not been without criticisms as seen by players in the private sector: "English proficiency has declined considerably (...) when Cory Aquino came to power, they insisted on using Filipino (...) for nationalistic purposes which is stupid (...) because English is the single most competitive edge we have compared to our neighbours (Symaco, 2011 p. 151).

This explicit top-down approach to recognise the Filipino language has not similarly resonated in language practices, where people prefer the use of the English language with its association to being the 'medium for modernity' (Dumanig, David and Symaco, 2012)

If I master the English language, I will have more chances of getting a job after graduation (...)

If Filipino is given priority in school then I'll find another school that gives importance in English

I study to learn, and to learn English so I can work abroad

Most companies hire applicants with good command of English

English is an international language and recognised all over the world while Filipino is only used in the Philippines (p. 108)

This is validated further by research done by the KWF which shows the limited use of the national language in higher education institutions (HEIs) in the country. The study points out to the prevalent use of the English language in courses, publications and research given the familiarity of the lecturers with the language. The lack of Filipino terms and books in scientific settings also disadvantages the language over English (Geronimo, 2015) this is despite the General Education Curriculum set by the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) in 1996 requiring tertiary students to enlist in 9 units of Filipino courses (for language and literature) and encouraging the Humanities and Social Sciences courses to be taught in Filipino, in consonance with the Bilingual Education Policy (CHED Memorandum Order 59, 1996).

Spolsky (2004) has highlighted the tripartite division of language policy into language belief and ideology, and language practice (p. 39). Obviously as in the

case of the Philippines, the explicit language policies and plans meant to manage the language use and ideologies in the country has not gained the expected effect. In fact, a recent order by the CHED has been heavily criticised by Filipino language advocates when it revised the General Education Curriculum (for 2018) without inclusion of any Filipino subjects. The *Tanggol Wika* (Save the Language) group has projected that more than 10,000 Filipino subject professors will be affected with the policy, in addition to the failure to instil nationalism among the students (Geronimo, 2014). This preference for English seen as the 'modern' language and its role as relevant to labour market entry of the Filipinos will be examined in the section to follow.

English for the 'globalised' Filipino?

The Philippines continues to be one of the top sending counties in the world in terms of manpower and has about 1.6 million overseas Filipino workers (legally) around the globe. In 2014, the remittances from this group amounted to 26.92 billion US Dollars (USD), which contributed to as much as 8.5 percent of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) (BSP, 2015). The quest to cross borders stems from job and financial opportunities perceived to be available in other countries that the national government is otherwise unable to provide. The income differentials between the sending and receiving countries also continue to be one of the main sources of this international migration. Given the sheer amount of exported labour and its contribution to the country's economy, the Philippine government has established the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA) in 1982 to provide assistance to Filipino migrant workers. The POEA has the legal mandate to protect the rights of the migrant workers and among its functions include conducting a pre-deployment orientation seminar which gives advice especially to those going overseas for the first time. The POEA also provides repatriation assistance and provides assistance to victims of illegal recruitment (POEA, 2015). With the need to further protect and ensure the welfare of the Filipino migrant workers and their families, the Migrant Workers and Overseas Filipinos Act was also enacted in 1995 (RA 8042, 1995).

The facility in the English language of the Filipinos – as a result of American education and pop culture bequeathed by its American colonisers shows how this linguistic capital has benefited the populace in its purpose to gain occupation overseas. This fluency has also translated to higher wages and better job chances for those joining the international labour market. Unfortunately, the contradictory and decline in social class mobility is evident for those entering the low-skilled market (e.g. domestic helpers), most of which would give up their middle-class

status, higher education qualification in exchange for financial advancement opportunities that is otherwise lacking in the Philippines. It is not surprising then to hear of a teacher by profession in the Philippines, migrating overseas to work as a domestic worker (Parrenas, 2001; Symaco, 2011). Clearly, preference for the Filipino domestic worker is manifest in the West and South given their articulacy in the language, among other things.

*Those rich Italians with big villas by the coast, you will see that they employ Filipino domestic helpers and they pay higher than what others on average would pay an Eastern European worker, because the Filipinos **speak better English** and work harder than other nationalities*

*Filipino domestic workers [in Greece] are paid more [than other nationalities] because they are more educated and **speak better English***

*We prefer hiring a Filipino [in Malaysia] and do not mind paying more because they are educated and **speak better English** than other Asians* (emphasis by the author)

Filipinos are also spread in other professions and for those in the service industry where facility in the English language is required, this gives them a competitive edge over other foreign workers. Lan (2003) notes of this linguistic advantage posed by the Filipino workers in Taiwan which has served as a “symbolic domination and resistance in their daily communications and job negotiation” (p. 133). The apparent play of linguistic advantage as expounded by Bourdieu’s linguistic capital (1991), similar to other cultural capital, reflects the institutionalised power relations as pre-determined by the “preferred” language as espoused by the market determining it. The preference for instance, of the British English over other ‘forms’ of English was exhibited in England’s (1996) study of foreign domestic workers in Toronto:

Being British, the things we get away with! Our English accents – people just bend over backwards to help us, ‘Oh what lovely accent!’, ‘What can I do for you?’ (...) [Employers] like the English accent, they like the way we speak, they like our education, the way we speak to the children (...) (p. 209)

This is also asserted by Lan (2003, p. 151) where the economic distribution of capital means that well-educated employers are cautious of the Filipino domestic workers’ “bad, substandard [and] unrefined” English as possibly affecting their children’s English skills.

In addition, as reflective of the actual language practice and management in the country, the BPO market (mainly call centres) has shaped and re-introduced the strengthening of the English language policy and challenging the more recently institutionalised MTB-MLE agenda in the education setting, where more university graduates are lured to employment in the BPO industry (Symaco, 2011). Such is the expanse of the sector that it is predicted to create a structural shift in revenues where the BPO commerce is set to surpass the already significant foreign

remittances from migrant workers (Monticello, 2015). But despite the acknowledgment of the country's articulatory in the English language as a factor for the BPO sector's expansion, issues are still raised though not the focus of this paper, regarding the unequal and sub-par training in the English language as exhibited by some call centre applicants and as reflected above in the case of some migrant workers (Bernardo 2004; Frignal, 2007; Tupas, 2015).

The definition of English as the language of globalisation and modernity well describes the situation above drawn in rough where an explicit language policy may not necessarily be translated to actual practice and management. The realisation rings true in actual practice of the MTB-MLE as earlier described and also by Burton's (2013) study which revealed the preference of stakeholders (i.e. teachers and parents) in using the English language over the vernacular in classroom teaching and the home environment. As anticipated in that study, the global command of English and the opportunities it offers (e.g. easier entry to the labour market) defines the implicit language use of the community as challenging the top-down policy of the MTB-MLE. The study also shows the lack of community involvement in policy orientations and highlights the lack of resources and teacher training as similarly revealed by Spolsky (2004), as probable challenges that may be faced by the mother tongue-based education policy. While Tupas (2015) on the one hand, though contentious, polemically positions policies in education in the Philippines that may highlight the "internalized, certainly colonially induced, hatred towards the mother tongues (...)" (p. 121).

Closing remarks

This article illustrates the discordance between language policy and actual language practice and use in the Philippines. The dominant role of the English language as the language for modernisation speaks of the supposed better economic opportunities in line for individuals with fluency in the language. We have also seen the likely implications in terms of the decline and possible elimination of minority languages in support of adhering to 'one' global or national language, as in the case of the Philippines, where controversies still surround the choice of Filipino as the national language, all too linked as the predominant language of the centre of power that is Manila. Given the high degree of linguistic heterogeneity in the country and a strong politics of clientelism, the misconstrued 'neutrality' of the English language that may prevent the marginalisation of other indigenous languages (i.e. over Filipino) is evident. The linguistic capital espoused by Bourdieu is unmistakable where Tollefson (1991) considers the English language as 'the' language of education, which can only so often serve as a significant social

stratifier that dictates the outcome of opportunities for the Filipinos depending on their access or otherwise, to elite institutions that provide the desired quality in English language training.

The preference to acquire 'good' English also threatens the successful implementation of the mother tongue-based education policy in the country. And despite the cash-strapped features of the Philippines and the recognised issues of MTB-MLE programmes such as additional training and references that require substantial resource generation, the divergent views of stakeholders in language policy, practice and use, prefigures the lack of community involvement in language policy formation. Granted the country's desire to better the prospects of its population for development through an improved education setting expected in the MTB-MLE, the attention to the intricacies found in the contextual setting is crucial. When one constructs the matters of socio-economic, cultural and political needs with its populations' desire to forge with modernity and globalisation, only then will language education policy be its most powerful.

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