

An Historical View of Languages and the Media in Singapore and the Philippines: Parallelism and Cultural Dimensions

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Abstract

Singapore and the Philippines have commonalities in terms of political history and education but have differences in terms of governance.

Both countries are members of ASEAN and have long histories of success and failures in terms of their political stability and economies. Both were colonized; Singapore by the British and the Japanese and the Philippines by the Spanish, the Americans, the Japanese and then back to the governance of the United States of America again before it became fully independent. The Philippines suffered the brutality of a civil war and WWII, before it established its own identity.

Singapore and the Philippines have adapted legacies left by their histories, including, the English language which they use as a tool to help develop. English has become one of the official languages and one of the mediums of instructions in education in both countries. English is now viewed as a pathway to progress and the reason why both countries are viewed as examples of how ASEAN should move forward.

Singapore is the leading business hub in Asia and has risen to a pre-eminent position as one of the Asian 'Tigers' in Southeast Asia. On the other hand, the Philippines is the leading provider of overseas workers because of the highly educated work force and their command of English.

The Philippines has suffered failure because of political turmoil, consequently, lagging behind Singapore and other ASEAN countries in terms of its economy.

However, both countries are in the process of change. In Singapore this change is in terms of governance and becoming more tolerant of media coverage while the Philippines is trying to change its image as one of the most corrupt countries in the world but with a degree of 'freedom of speech' in media that is unsurpassed within the ASEAN region.

Keywords: Singapore, Philippines, ASEAN region, education, politics and governance, English language, media, freedom of speech

สิงคโปร์และฟิลิปปินส์:

เส้นขนานและมิติทางวัฒนธรรม

บทคัดย่อ

สิงคโปร์และฟิลิปปินส์มีส่วนที่เหมือนกัน ในแง่ประวัติศาสตร์การเมืองและการศึกษา แต่มีความแตกต่างในแง่ของการปกครองทั้งสองประเทศเป็นสมาชิกของอาเซียนและมีประวัติศาสตร์ที่ยาวนานในเรื่องความสำเร็จและความล้มเหลวในแง่ของความมั่นคงทางการเมืองและเศรษฐกิจ ทั้ง สองประเทศเป็นอาณานิคม, สิงคโปร์เป็นอาณานิคมของ อังกฤษและ ญี่ปุ่นและฟิลิปปินส์เป็นอาณานิคมของสเปน อเมริกัน, ญี่ปุ่นและจากนั้นก็กลับไปเป็นอาณานิคมของสหรัฐอเมริกาอีกครั้งก่อนที่จะได้รับ อิสรอย่างเต็มที่ ฟิลิปปินส์ได้รับความเดือดร้อนความทารุณโหดร้ายจากสงครามกลางเมืองและสงครามโลกครั้งที่สองก่อนที่จะได้เอกราชของตัวเอง สิงคโปร์และฟิลิปปินส์ได้ปรับมรดกจากการเป็นอาณานิคม ซึ่งรวมทั้งภาษาอังกฤษ

และการใช้ภาษาอังกฤษเป็นเครื่องมือในการช่วยพัฒนาประเทศ ภาษาอังกฤษได้กลายเป็นภาษาราชการภาษาหนึ่งและเป็นสื่อในการศึกษาอีกภาษาหนึ่ง ภาษา ภาษาอังกฤษถูกมองเป็นหนทางสู่ความก้าวหน้าและเป็นเหตุผลว่าทำไม ทั้งสองประเทศถูกมองว่าเป็นตัวอย่างของวิธีที่อาเซียนควรก้าวไปข้างหน้าสิงคโปร์ เป็นศูนย์กลางธุรกิจชั้นนำในเอเชียและได้ก้าวสู่การเป็นหนึ่งใน 'เสือ' เอเชียในเอเชียตะวันออกเฉียงใต้ ส่วนฟิลิปปินส์เป็นผู้นำการให้บริการของพนักงานในต่างประเทศเพราะกำลังมีการศึกษาสูงและความสามารถในการใช้ภาษาอังกฤษ ฟิลิปปินส์ได้ประสบความสำเร็จเพราะความวุ่นวายทางการเมืองครั้งนั้นจึงล้าหลังสิงคโปร์และประเทศอาเซียนอื่นๆ ในแง่ของเศรษฐกิจ อย่างไรก็ตามทั้งสองประเทศอยู่ในกระบวนการของการเปลี่ยนแปลง ในสิงคโปร์ในแง่ของการกำกับดูแลและการรายงานข่าวของสื่อในขณะที่ฟิลิปปินส์พยายามที่จะเปลี่ยนภาพพจน์จากหนึ่งในประเทศที่ทุจริตมากที่สุดในโลก แต่มี "เสรีภาพในการพูด" ในสื่อที่ไม่มีที่เปรียบภายในภูมิภาคอาเซียน

คำสำคัญ: สิงคโปร์, ฟิลิปปินส์, ภูมิภาคอาเซียนการศึกษาการเมืองและการปกครอง ภาษาอังกฤษสื่อเสรีภาพในการพูด

Singapore: an Island Nation State

Singapore is a very small island located in the southern tip of Malaysia. It is a cosmopolitan country. People who live in Singapore have come from different parts of the world and speak different languages as their mother tongue. Singapore is also one of the economic power-houses in Asia. It has a large offshore banking center and the largest oil refinery in Asia. It specializes in ship building such as converting tankers into storage vessels and building oil-rigs.

Singapore has no natural resources of its own but has a highly educated workforce. All of its development has been dependent upon a stable government with the PAP (People Action Party) being in power since its independence in 1965, and English as the unifying principle in the nation's diverse society.

Singapore and its Diverse Culture

Singapore was one of the British trading colonies, within the 'Straits Settlements' in peninsula Malaysia. It was established by Stamford Raffles. However, the British only took control of Singapore in August 1824, after Britain signed an agreement with the Sultan of Johor. It became independent on August 9, 1965, first from Britain as part of the Malaysian Federation and then from Malaysia itself.

Singapore's populace is comprised of different ethnic groups; Malays, Chinese, Indians and Eurasians. These groups have different religions namely; Muslim, Taoist, Buddhist, Confucian, Christian, Hindu, and Sikh.

Low and Brown (2005:16) summarized the different ethnic groups in the Straits Settlements in 19th century Singapore as follows:

The *Malays* comprised of local aristocracy, court officials, teachers, merchants and professionals as well as working class (rice farmers and fishermen). The Malay migrants were from the Malay Peninsula, Sumatra, and the Riau-Lingga Archipelago. There were also Javanese, Bugis (Sulawesi) and Boyanese (Bawean Island). The *Chinese* were merchants and professionals as well as tradesmen miners, farmers and laborers (coolies). The majority were from Fujian Province in the south of China. The *Indians* held the position as clerks, merchants and professionals but a large number were laborers in the rubber plantations. They came from South India, mainly Tamils but others were Ceylonese (Sri Lanka), Punjabis and Bengalis from the north of India. The *Eurasians* (European and Asian Parentage) were mainly clerks and merchants but also held offices or the lower rank in the government (Malacca, Penang, India). Lastly the *Europeans* were appointed residents and government officials (both high and lower ranked). They comprised the British (England, Scottish, and Wales). Others were from Ireland, Portugal, Holland and Germany often as part of religious

organizations such as catholic priests and Methodist missionaries.

These ethnic groups had varieties of spoken dialects such as Malays, with formal Malay and other local dialects from the region. Chinese were mainly Hokkien, Teochew, Cantonese and Hakka. Indians, who were Southern Indian, were mainly Tamil, Malayalam and Telugu and those who were Northern Indians mainly Punjabi and Bengali and others. Eurasians were spoken their language depending on their ethnic background while Europeans, were British Upper Class English, Scottish, Welsh and Irish regional varieties (Low and Brown, 2005: 17).

The Influence of English

As people were spoken different languages, the ‘Straits Settlements’ which eventually evolved into the Federation of Malay States had to develop a civil service to make sure at least at the clerical level people could communicate in one language. English medium schools were established but were reserved initially for the children of the colonial power or those associated with the colonial power. Eventually ‘the free schools’ that had no restrictions in terms of race and medium schools or mission schools were established by different missionaries from different religious groups.

These schools had a big impact on establishing education in what eventually became the Federation and in particular on how English curriculums were established in schools. There were four phases of the expansion of English medium schools in Singapore according to Low and Brown (2005). *Phase 1* (19th century) Students were ethnically European or Eurasian and were spoken Malay/English at home. Teachers were mainly Eurasian from Ceylon and India. *Phase 2* (Early 20th century) Students were largely Chinese from Cantonese and Hokkien-speaking upbringings – some Chinese teachers were recruited. *Phase 3* (Mid-20th century) Malays were enrolled. There

were many dialects spoken because of the diverse backgrounds of the students. *Phase 4* (Post-independence, 1965 onwards) Education was English-medium only. The growth of Singaporean native speakers of English started (Low and Brown, 2005).

As Singapore developed, people's standard of living also improved. As a result, there were many business sectors established to accommodate the demands of the community and therefore people who had a good command of English were highly prized in terms of jobs.

There are many factors responsible for the spread of English in Singapore (Low and Brown, 2005; Platt and Weber, 1980). An *increase in government services*, with the need for English speaking administrative personnel, especially in the East India Company, meant that English medium educated employees were in high demand. The *development of communication systems and harbor facilities* created more jobs. Positions to facilitate the shipment of cargo and to work for the expansion of the Malayan railway system were opened. Those who were employed with an English medium background mainly worked as clerks, store keepers and station masters. The harbor facilities were developed in order to cope with the growing international trade. Singapore became one of the world's major ports; however the administrators and tradesmen were still British but offered more opportunity for locals with English competence. Eventually, the increase in international air transport provided more employment. Singapore's first airport (Kallang) had information counters representing different airlines with a staff that were expected to be proficient in English. Also, European telegraphic and telephone services extended from India to Singapore in 1870-1879. Jobs such as postal, telegraph and telephone services employees had to have expertise in English to fill in the positions of clerks, sorters, telephonists and telegraphists. The *establishment of commercial companies and banks*, led to a demand for shipping

agents and banks personnel. As businesses developed, Singapore Cold Storage Company was opened by merchants to meet the need for fresh quality meats and dairy products. As the need for English language expertise grew, the *growth of local English medium-educated* supplied the need for English medium educated speakers across the major ethnic groups. These groups were at first composed of 'Malay aristocracy', but 'urban Malays' started to increase in numbers in English schools. Peranakan or Chinese with Malay parentage who studied in prestigious schools such as Raffles Institution in Singapore and Penang Free School in Penang had set up funds and established a school of medicine, later known as the King Edward VII School of Medicine in 1905 and Raffles College in 1928. In the 20th century the first Indian association was founded with members mainly being English-educated merchants, clerks and professionals. There followed an *influx of English language films and use of English in the media*. This meant the 'growth of a local motion picture industry' as more cinemas were opened. In the media, English newspapers were also established as well as radio stations and the use of English on local television spread. This progress was the result of the *growth of educational establishments* after WWII had ended. As Great Britain had wanted Singapore to be stable to serve its strategic and commercial interests, the government had poured more funds into English medium schools. In 1956 PAP won the local elections and many changes in terms of education were made including bilingual education. In 1959, Nanyang University was established to provide tertiary education for Chinese-medium educated students (Low and Brown, 2005).

However, it was not just one single factor that led to the development of English in Singapore but a combination of circumstances that allied language, ethnic balance, economic growth and stable government that brought Singapore the success it has today.

Singapore's education policy

In the period from 1956 to 1979 Singapore had to create an identity. In order to maintain the harmony between different ethnic groups and uphold unity, four languages English, Mandarin, Malay and Tamil were declared the four co-'official languages' of Singapore. This was to ensure that languages of the major ethnic groups had equal treatment to avoid racial discrimination.

Malay was declared the 'national language' in order for Singapore to identify with the predominantly Malay speaking neighbors in the region. However; its function was seen as mainly ceremonial as in its use in the words of the national anthem and in the armed forces as commands.

From 1960 onwards, second languages learning became compulsory at the primary school level to ensure that students received what was basically a bilingual education. English, the language of instruction is the 'first language' while 'one of the other official languages', a person's mother tongue, was termed the 'second language' (Foley, 2006). During this time, English was viewed as a vehicle for Singapore's modernization and a tool for inter-ethnic communication as it is 'ethnically neutral'.

In 1980, the 'New Education System' was introduced with the 'monolingual stream' for students who were weak in English and did not have to study a second language in school. In 1985 to pass an exam in a second language became a requirement for University admission. This meant those students that wanted to continue their university degree needed to prove their 'ability in both English as well as their second language'. By 1987, Singapore made English the official 'medium of instruction in all schools' although de facto this had been the case for several years previously. This regulation sealed the status of English in Singapore and it became the main language in the country; '*corpus planning*' was imposed and determined

which types of linguistic features ought to be ‘codified or accepted as part of standard usage’ (Low and Brown, 2005:30).

Brown (2005) however, has divided Singapore English into two: Singapore Standard English (SSE) and Singlish. These two types of English can be distinguished by the differences in grammar.

Singapore Standard English (SSE) is used by educated people for formal purposes. It is grammatically correct, pronounced in a ‘right way’ and used in education, law and the media.

As Low and Brown (2005) pointed, English has six main usages in Singapore.

- an official language
- a language of education
- a working language
- a lingua franca
- a language for expression for national identity
- an international language

According to Foley (1998) Singaporean English proficiency also depends on the social status of a person or what he called, ‘linguistic differentiation’ that marks stratification by social class.

Foley (1988:15) summarizes this into the following:

The functions of English serve in Singapore, the multiplicity of foreign standards so that whichever one was chosen would not be backed up by the linguistic environment and that the educated Singaporean wanted to sound like a Singaporean.

The debates about Singaporean English have enabled the Singapore government, especially MOE (Ministry of Education), to declare what was acceptable and what was not when people communicate. There was no restriction on what kind of English was being used at

home; Singlish or Standard English (SSE) was possible, but officially, Singapore wanted Singaporeans to speak a form of English that could be understood by people around the world (British, Americans, Australians, etc.)

As a result, by 2000 the government promoted a 'Speak Good English Movement' to encourage Singaporeans to speak good English and hopefully eventually eradicate the usage of Singlish.

Since the introduction of the Speak Good English Movement (SGEM), there have been many changes in the Singaporean education system as well as the economy of the country. Singaporeans are trained to use what is termed 'standard forms of English' in schools as well as in the service sectors as the government believes that it is important for the staff to communicate in 'intelligible English'.

The government is attempting to implement a language policy to train Singaporeans to use SSE but many Singaporeans feel that the government should not take away the 'trademark' of being Singaporean, that is to say use of the colloquial variety, Singlish. This language is seen as part of the Singaporean identity that makes them unique. There are many issues in terms of Singaporean identity because of its diverse culture; however, Singlish makes them Singaporean no matter what their origin may be (Chinese, Malaysian or Indian). People in informal settings will use a form of the language they are comfortable with in terms of communication and identity because 'language tells who you are' (Deocampo, 2011).

Code-switching in the Singapore Context

In a multicultural and multiethnic country like Singapore, it is common to hear people speak different languages and they tend to 'switch codes' frequently. Singapore has a bilingual education program which de facto influences people to switch code or mix their language as code-switching is commonly used as a 'way to

accommodate to each other's level of language and establish one's own self identity in order to try and make sense of what other persons were saying' (Foley, 2006). This switching is more likely influenced by other languages in their linguistic background or 'verbal repertoire' as well as the society that they interact with. Chinese in Singapore speak Mandarin, English and other varieties of Chinese (Hakka, Hokkien, Cantonese etc.) and these play a major role in the ways Chinese Singaporean switch-code. The same happens to Malays and Indians. People tend to choose appropriate language forms to fulfill different functions when they interact. In fact, a Singaporean is not only 'bilingual' but 'multilingual' and 'polyglossic' since more than two codes have 'societal significance' within the community (Platt, 1980).

For Platt (1980:69), Singapore has a complex polyglossia, with not just one high prestige language and one low prestige language or dialect but a continuum with possibly more than one high prestige speech variety, one or more medium varieties and one or more low prestige varieties.

Consequently, the language policy in Singapore has contributed to the economic success and well-being of this nation state. And English has played an important role in Singapore's position today compared to its neighboring countries. It is a tiny state which has attempted to solve the issues of pluralism and multilingualism by adapting a policy of equal treatment to treat languages as a resource and 'to engineer language to target ends' (Gopinathan, 1994).

For almost half a century, adjustments have been made according to the needs of both the society and its members, as a function of social and geographical mobility, demographic pressures, technological and political changes; English has been part of it. Borrowings and inference from other background languages that could not be found in Singapore English, have had an influence on

the colloquial variety of English ‘Singapore Colloquial English (SCE) but it has become very much the mark of identity as the ‘inter-language.’ It is SCE that is now commonly used in code-switching or code-mixing among Singaporeans and even foreigners residing in this city state. It is noticeable in terms of accent which is a clear identity marker but also in terms of the structure of the language, both grammatically and lexically.

An Overview of Media in Singapore

The influence of the west and the attitude of being dominantly Chinese has made Singapore distinctive in terms of its handling of the media. Though it had been influenced by British editors and reporters, independent Singapore realized that Western norms would not work in Singapore because of its past. Education and mass media have something in common, to influence the masses through communication. But the media as the most ‘powerful institution of language maintenance’ does have an influence on the future of languages as well as the political situation of such multilingual societies (Kuo, 1980).

Historically, the government was not always in control of the media in Singapore. Newspaper and radio stations were started by private entrepreneurs who had religious, economic and political motives while television was under the influence of the government from the start.

Lee Kuan Yew’s (2011) memoirs mention the ‘cultural gap’ between Chinese and Malay and how they view Western Media. Unlike westerners, Chinese and Malays cultural practice is for ‘constructive support of government policies’. Not only that, their political and social values were different from the English educated, these people were more focused on maintaining collective groups rather than on individuals. As a result, different newspapers were established based on readerships seen as in-groups.

Indeed, Singapore is becoming an international media hub. It started from the establishment of cable TV and the rising number of users of the Internet, responding to the 'attractive policy measures' Singapore's government has proposed making Singapore into a 'communication and telecommunication' center of the world.

Interestingly, Singapore had modeled its Constitution on the Indian Constitution. PhengHwaAng (2007) summarizes Article 14.

In both Constitutions, it is limited right. First, it guarantees freedom of speech and expression only to citizens of Singapore. Second, it gives the right only to convey expression, not to receive expression of any kind. Third, it does not expressly deal with issue of prior restraint, implicitly allowing prior restraint. Fourth, the right is subject to Parliament's power to legislate in the interest of national security, public interest and public morality and for the maintenance of foreign relations.

(PhengHwaAng, 2007:7)

As Lee Kuan Yew (2011) explained:

Media is needed to reinforce, not to undermine, the cultural values and social attitudes being inculcated in our schools and universities. The mass media can create a mood in which people become keen to acquire the knowledge, skills and disciplines of advanced countries. Without these, we can never hope to raise the standard of living of our people.

(Lee Kuan Yew, 2011: 217)

Evidently, Singapore has prospered and the media is one of the instruments used to discipline people who do not agree with its politics and its economic policies. As Lee Kuan Yew (2011) said, "Freedom of the press, freedom of the news media, must be

subordinated to the overriding needs of Singapore and to the primary of purpose of an elected government”.

There may be a certain amount of truth in this statement: it could be argued that Singapore is where it is today because of Lee Kuan Yew's vision. He handled the government well, planned how education should be, and what would be the role of media for the country.

In his 1993 statement, Lee Kuan Yew expressed his view clearly: Singapore's domestic debate is a matter for Singaporean. We allow American journalists in Singapore in order to report Singapore to their fellow countrymen. We allow their papers to sell in Singapore so that we can know what foreigners are reading about us. But we cannot allow them to assume a role in Singapore that the American media play in America, that is, that of invigilator, adversary, and inquisitor of administration. No foreign television station had claimed the right to telecast its programmes in Singapore. Indeed America's federal Communication regulations bar foreigners from owning more than 25 percent of a TV or radio station. Only American can control a business which influences opinion in America. Thus Robert Murdoch took up citizenship before he purchased the independent TV stations of the Metromedia group in 1985.

(Lee Kuan Yew, 2011:223)

Lee Kuan Yew's views have prevailed in the many challenges by the press (mainly the foreign press) against him over his views of what was best suited for Singapore. In his terms the government has a legal and moral authority as to what is good for its society.

The Philippines: an Archipelago

The Philippines is an archipelago that consists of more than 1,700 islands and islets. Because of its diverse geographical location and

different ethnic groups, as a consequence, a large number of different languages are used. The Philippines has more than 175 local languages and as many as 500 community dialects and 10 of those are major languages. The Ilokano and Pangasinense are Northern and Central Philippine languages; Tagalog, Cebuano Bisayan, Hiligaynon Bisayan, Waray, and Bicol are Central Philippine languages. The third island Mindanao languages are composed of the representation of different spheres of Maranao and Maguindanao as members of the Iranun group of languages. Cebuano Bisayan is the lingua franca, the language of the second largest island in the Philippines, Visayas.

Apart from the Philippines' own rich variety of languages, it had been under the colonial rule of Spain for 330 years, the United States for more than 50 years, Japan for three years until eventually taken back by the USA from Japan in 1945.

Pre-Hispanic Times and the Introduction of the Hispanic Language

According to Gowing (1978) Arabic was the first foreign or imported language in the Philippines, along with the introduction of the Muslim religion at the end of the 14th century in the southern islands of the Philippines (quoted in Sibayan, 1994). For those who converted to the Muslim faith, the use of Arabic was made mandatory through the reading of the Qu'ran and religious education in general.

Not until 1565, when the Spanish Armada landed in the Philippines, was Spanish introduced. Spanish became dominant in the central and northern parts of the Philippines but there was also the use of Spanish in government administration, the judiciary, legislation and higher education throughout the country (Sibayan, 1994). However, according to Collantes (1977) during the Spanish occupation, there was little progress among Filipinos learning Spanish. After 330 years of Spanish colonialism 'there were only 2.6

per cent of fluent speakers' who belonged to elite families and Chinese mestizos known as *Ilustrados*.

Educating Filipino People

1898 was the year; the United States of America would change the life of Filipinos forever. At the beginning the Americans found it difficult to decide what to do with the Philippines because of the different views between Democrats and the Republicans; in the end the Republicans decided that the Philippines had to remain under American control. First, the Americans had thought that the Philippines would provide economic opportunity for the United States as it would provide 'a good base for trade in China'. Secondly, the Americans found that the Philippines was unprepared for self-government and not powerful enough to defend itself from other colonial powers. In addition, it was also thought that the majority of the Filipino populace was uneducated; therefore giving the Philippines its independence was seen as premature. In addition to all this, Japan was starting to expand its empire southward and obviously the Philippines would not be exempted from its influence if the American forces left. After encouragement from the British, the United States remained as the colonial power in the Philippines.

The Treaty of Paris between Spain and the United States in 1898 saw Spain cede the Philippines together with Cuba, Puerto Rico, Midway, and Guam to the United States in exchange of '\$20,000,000'. This set in motion what was envisaged as a great experiment in social engineering. The aim was to show other colonial powers how to transform the world by infusing democracy and the English language into Filipinos of all social classes, as had happened in the melting pot of what had become The United States of America.

After three hundred years of Spanish occupation it was found that few Filipinos spoke Spanish as Thompson (2003) explained.

Catholic friars thought that knowledge of the Spanish “always caused restlessness among the people”. Instead, the friars had learned the local languages and refused to teach Spanish in the provincial school.

As trade increased the Philippines was not viewed as an isolated Spanish colony, as it had created a new wealthy group of Chinese mestizos who controlled the trade throughout the archipelago. Spain decided to spread the Spanish language in the Philippines by opening up schools and universities to educate the children of wealthy families. Although the government at that time insisted on the use of Spanish in schools, there was little success because of the lack of finances to hire Spanish-speaking teachers (Thompson, 2003). As a result, Spanish became the language of only the rich and did not spread to the poor.

Unlike the Spanish, the Americans had a different view. The Americans established schools, built roads, and improved sanitation. They had shown kindness towards Filipinos through the guidance of President McKinley.

His order was:

To win the confidence, respect, and affection of the inhabitants of the Philippines by assuring them in every possible way that full measures of individual rights and liberties which is the heritage of free people, and by probing to them that the mission of the United States is one of benevolent assimilation substituting the mild sway of justice for arbitrary rule.

(Quoted in Thompson, 2003:18)

Osmania, the first leader of the Philippine legislature, wrote:

The Filipinos will never forget the inspiring spectacle of American soldiers leaving their guns and, as emissaries of peace and goodwill, with book in hand preparing to public

schools to teach Filipino children the principles of free citizenship (Quoted in Thompson, 2003:18)

As many of the soldiers were idealists, the teaching Filipino people and 'promoting social justice to uplift the world' vision was a success. Thus, free public education was expanded, with the aim of unifying people, teaching duties of citizenship and creating the desired nation (ibid).

The first US Army Transport ship, *Thomas*, arrived in August 21, 1901 with nearly 1000 teachers recruited from the United States to teach in the Philippines and educate its populace. English would be the language of instruction since local languages would not open the door of opportunity for the Filipinos in the world of knowledge. English would also be the tool to 'enrich, ennoble, and empower Filipinos in every walk of life'. Filipinos called these American teachers simply *Thomasites*. With high qualifications and college degrees and with long teaching experienced, they taught five hours a day, trained teachers one hour, taught adults in evening classes and supervised barrio schools. These Thomasite teachers brought knowledge to Filipinos with a curriculum which followed the educational theories then popular in the United States. The textbooks were imported from the US, since these were the same materials being used in the US to inculcate into the millions of European migrants the American spirit as the foundation of democracy and its language, English. American education taught Filipinos to be self-reliant with the help of the Americans to prepare teachers and local leaders in the few educational institutions that were established. Most notable were the Philippine Normal School, the first and the most famous school for education, and the University of the Philippines. These schools were staffed by Thomasites, conducted summer camps, correspondence classes, night schools and teacher institutes, giving opportunities to bright Filipinos to broaden their knowledge. These selected bright Filipinos were sent to the United States to continue their education

at the university level. They were called *pensionados*. When *pensionados* returned from the US, they held positions as universities staff and heads of government offices and then were given the majority of administrative positions in the education system.

The establishment of such educational institutions gave Filipinos many educational opportunities which they accepted with great enthusiasm. Filipinos from different walks of life welcomed education “reflecting the charge to protect the masses by creating educated citizenry” (ibid). The prestige of English in educating Filipino people was so high that even the daughter of the former rebel leader Aguinaldo, a member of Spanish speaking elite, wanted to be educated in an English language public school.

This period was seen as the cornerstone of Philippines literature in English; poetry and literary magazines started to emerge. English was embraced by Filipinos but with challenges. Some members of the elite families as well as friars and priests had resisted English language schools and discouraged children from enrolling as a counteraction to the Americans forbidding the teaching of religion in schools.

Sibayan (1994: 223) summarized this phase of English:

English was a tool for social engineering and truly a great equalizer. Rich and poor had equal opportunities to learn English and gain social mobility. Both rich and poor had equal access to English medium in public schools and the quality of education was the same whether urban or rural areas since American teachers were distributed equally throughout provinces. Within thirty five years English have been imported to the Philippines, had replaced Spanish in education and government, and was being accepted by the people as the second language.

In Search for Unity: The National Language

Even though Filipinos accepted English as their second language, they had felt something lacking. Filipinos still searched for the 'promise of independence' and become more intolerant of American control. Manuel L. Quezon the first commonwealth president remarked that he preferred hell controlled by Filipinos to heaven controlled by Americans (Diaz, 2009). He stood firm against Republicans who kept on delaying the promise of independence. When Republicans were defeated and the Democrat F.D. Roosevelt was elected, the Philippines was recognized as a commonwealth. It was in 1935 when the '*Commonwealth of the Philippines*' was established with independence to be granted by 1946. The new constitution named English and Spanish as the official languages with a provision for an indigenous national language. In 1937 the new Institute of National Language recommended Tagalog after the publication of a dictionary and grammar, the *Balarila* and the *Tagalog-English Dictionary* (Rubrico, 1998). The choice of Tagalog over other widely used lingua francas in the Philippines, such as Cebuano and Ilocano, was seen as an appropriate choice as it was from a region that was geographically central and it was used in the capital, Manila. And since the revolutionaries who had fought against the Spaniards were Tagalog in origin, it was viewed as patriotic and historically was the first choice of Aguinaldo, the president of the Philippines at that time, in his original constitution in 1897.

By 1939 changes in school system were implemented. English was not the only language taught in public schools and language mixing was used in domains that were previously meant for English only.

In 1940, public schools started to accommodate large numbers of children who desired education. The seven years elementary curriculum was shortened to six years and teachers started to teach two classes a day, eventually because of the rivalry between English

and Tagalog, the decline of English in the Philippines began. In the end, the rich transferred their children to private schools where admittance was dependent on English proficiency and the affluence of the students who could afford the high fees. As the 'professional licensing and college entrance examinations were still given in English, students who had studied in private schools were more likely to get the best marks and be the best speakers of English. As a result, the image of English changed from 'equalizer' to 'stratifier'.

When the Second World War (WWII) broke out in 1940's, the Japanese declared Tagalog as the national language, to gain Filipinos' sympathy. Although many writers had switched to Tagalog, the Japanese realized that they still needed English for business. However, Filipinos who were equipped in terms of their English spoken ability used it to rebel against the Japanese.

The search for unity was indeed vital. America sent extensive help to rebuild the Philippines after the war. The new Thomasites and the Peace Corps arrived to supply native speakers of English to teach children and train teachers in provincial schools and the Linguistic Society of the Philippines was founded.

After the foundation of the Linguistic Society of the Philippines, several experimental programs were conducted to help find solutions to the many language problems. The use of Tagalog as a National language once again was promoted by the government but faced several problems. Many supported the endorsement of using a fusion of the different Philippines languages rather than Tagalog since the latter was composed by assimilations from Spanish and English.

When Tagalog was chosen as the National language particularly in Visayas, many localities had refused to teach the language at school although it was renamed Pilipino to make it more acceptable. In 1973 a new constitution was formulated under President Marcos. It was declared that English and Pilipino (based on Tagalog) were

official languages. However, to develop Pilipino for academic purposes to be used in the school systems an agreement had to be made over spelling and the best sources from which to create new words. Also, Pilipino was changed to "*Filipino*" to represent all Filipinos not just the Tagalog speakers who have no 'f' sound. This phase made clear a 'new attitude' towards the development of the national language.

After the end of this phase, Constantino (1978) pointed out that Americans were right to teach the Filipinos English to help them attain 'democracy and self government'. Although English was also portrayed as the 'language of colonialism' and there was a demand for schools to only use Filipino, in the end Filipinos loved English and did not consider it as a 'foreign language'. Instead, they made it their 'second language' (Thompson, 2003). English was now widely accepted as instrumental in helping Filipinos to learn and to be successful. It opened the door of opportunities to the world.

Filipinos did not forget how English had changed their lifestyle and was a gateway to opportunities in the job market. Unlike Spanish, English became rooted in the Philippines and was absorbed as part of Filipino society, to such an extent that English has become part of the Filipino identity. Although a few Filipinos still think of English as the 'product of a colonial mentality', they could not 'abandon' the language because English language makes the country to be internationally known and has contributed to the progress of the economy (Sibayan, 1978).

Filipino and English: Bilingual Education

Filipino was established as a 'national language' of the Philippines as the product of nationalism; it was the national linguistic symbol of identity and unity. It also becomes the language of literacy and scholarly discourse and continuing intellectualization. Filipino was always seen as a rival to English with the result that there have been

many conflicts in terms of language planning in recent years. Although language planning has been in the foreground of Filipino politics for many years, the implementation of such plans remains a major issue.

Filipinos need English for its intellectualization and as a linguistic passport for a better life but they also need their own national language to establish their own identity.

The aim of many was to be competent in both Filipino and English at the national level, through the teaching of both languages and their use as media of instruction at all levels. But it was not until the establishment and the sanction of the 1987 Constitution that these controversial issues (in terms of the National language of the Philippines, Filipino) became fully systematized.

Bilingual Education created Taglish or the mixture of English language words within Filipino academic discourse. The close relationship between Filipino and English and some similarities in terms of grammar, make it common for Filipinos to switch from one language to another in Tagalog and English.

Standardizing Filipino English: Rebuilding and Re-educating Filipinos

The decline of the quality of English in the Philippines and the rise of Taglish became a problem. English teachers found it hard to promote academic English because of the English teaching materials used. This was mainly though the lack of a budget allocated to education to produce appropriate materials which in turn resulted in the teachers writing their lessons on the 'chalkboard'. The textbooks were had very little content to "develop reading or writing skills necessary for academic success in higher education" (Thompson 2003:44). In addition there was a lack of teaching facilities and too many natural disasters such as flood and typhoons which

contributed to the organizational problems within the Philippines education system.

In order to improve the ongoing effort of English instruction, in 1988 all public schools were nationalized. To rebuild the deteriorating standard of English in the Philippines, English teachers were sent to various English training workshops in different universities in order to enhance their language and teaching skills. Universities such as De la Salle University, University of The Philippines, Philippine Normal College and Ateneo de Manila University re-trained these teachers for a few months and then sent them back to various regions of the Philippines (Thompson, 2003).

In 1996, DECS proposed new curriculum guidelines for teaching English language in public secondary schools and new books were provided. According to Gonzales (1988) these books consisted of 'themes'; Year One focuses on Filipino Literature in English with the theme of "*I am a Filipino*". Year Two focuses on Filipino and Asian Literature in English with the theme of "*I am an Asian*". Year Three focuses on Filipino, British and American literature with the theme of "*I am an English Speaker*". And lastly, Year Four focuses on Filipino and World Literature with the theme of "*I am a world citizen*" (Thompson, 2003: 52). However, the standard of English in the Philippines was still in question. According to Bautista (2000:1) frequently asked questions were: 'Is there Standard Philippine English and When does the error become a feature of Standard Philippine English'.

Bautista (2000:1-2) summarizes Kachru's '*New Englishes*' that Brown (1995) characterized with three key elements: "the repertoire of models for English", the "localized innovations [in English] have pragmatic bases" and the "English language now belongs to all those who use it":

- The *repertoire of models for English*, uses the Concentric Circle model: the overlapping concentric circles of *Inner*

Circle (those countries that use English as the primary or native language such as America and Britain), the *Outer Circle* (those countries colonized by Britain and the U.S which have developed institutionalized and nativized varieties of English, such as Singapore and the Philippines), and the *Expanding Circle* (those countries not colonized by Inner Circle nations and which do not use English extensively in education, such as Japan and China). It also includes the notion of a continuum moving from the basilects (the variety that comes closest to pidgin) through the mesolects (middle varieties) up to the acrolect (the variety that comes closest to the standards and the notion of a “cline of bilingualism” referring to a range of varieties of English together with another (mother) language controlled by individual users within a country.

- The *pragmatic bases for localized innovations*. For Kachru, a nativized variety of English incorporates innovations in vocabulary, grammar and discourse because of the new roles and functions which English was made to play in the new environment. These new items of vocabulary (e.g for food, for literary genres, for common expression) and different patterns for speech events (e.g for greetings, for apologies, for obituaries) are developed when English is transplanted to a new culture.
- Finally, Kachru makes a point that English is no longer the exclusive possession of users in the inner circle; *English belongs to all those who have acquired or learned it and use it widely in their everyday lives.*

Another way of classifying Philippine English in terms of World Englishes, according to Platt, Weber and Ho (1984), is to identify four criteria:

- a. It has developed through the educational system; that is it has been taught as a subject and in many cases, also used as a medium of instruction.
- b. It has developed in an area where a native variety of English was not the language spoken by most of the population
- c. It is used for a range of functions among those who speak or write in the region where it is used, for example, in the letter writing, in the writing of literature, in parliament, in the communication between friends and in the family. It may be used as a lingua franca among those speaking different native languages or among those who speak the same native language but use English because it is felt to be more appropriate for certain purposes
- d. It has become localized or nativized by adopting some language features of its own, such as sounds, intonation patterns, sentence structures, words and expressions.

(Bautista, 2000: 2)

The effort of the Americans to educate Filipino people to open a window to the world, and the Filipinos 'eagerness' to learn English, place the Philippines where it is today. The language that according to D'Souza (1992) was the result of colonization, has been institutionalized, having range and depth, is nativized and stable and has developed through the educational system in bilingual contexts and is creative" (ibid).

If Singaporeans have a distinct accent which tells who they are, Filipinos are the same. According to Thompson (2003: 52), Filipinos are notable because of the 'rhythm' in their pronunciation: Filipino English is described as "syllable timed with each syllable coming with even beats, rather than following the stress timing of American and British English where the stress is on nouns, verbs,

adjectives and adverbs as rather than on the individual syllables follows the even beat”.

Filipino society is already made up of different languages and cultural values; Chinese from the north and Polynesian-Melayu from the south. This archipelago with diverse cultures has undergone different shifts of languages from foreign colonization. And the establishment of ‘Bilingual Education’ has produced Filipinos with different levels of competence in the language. Language contacts are illustrated in many loan or borrowed words used by Filipinos. Few Spanish words incorporated with Filipino words. Such loans are not only lexical but can also be found in phonological, morphological, syntactic and semantic areas; but such words are normally spelled in Filipino (Thompson, 2003). As Sibayan (1991b: 72) pointed out, ‘Spanish never became a popular language with mass appeal in the Philippines while it remained the language of a tiny elite as an intellectual language for use in the domain of government administration, legislation, the judiciary, higher education and the professions’. However, it has shaped the local languages in many ways. Although Spanish was totally abolished in the constitution in 1973, during the Marcos regime, it had still a major role to play in the government because pre-existing government documents were only in Spanish. When, *‘Peoples Power’* ended former President Marcos’ rule it also abolished Spanish in the country.

Like many other multilingual countries there are always problems regarding what language or languages are to be used. The questions are normally whether there is sufficient social support for the language, as in this case the use of Filipino and English. In the diglossic context of the Philippines both Filipino and English are ‘high’ varieties which are considered as a vernacular of the higher class, educated people and in education while the local vernaculars are ‘low’ which are normally linked with families, friends’ connections and activities in informal situations. As English is a

language brought to the Philippines by the colonizer and Filipino is the language of the colonized, English then is always seen as the superior language.

An Overview of Media in the Philippines

The Philippines has had a long history of using media as one of its instruments for 'social and political change'. It was established in the middle of 'political reforms' and has been an instrument of the country's pursuit for 'freedom and democracy' to this day.

According to Tuazon:

The use of the power of the pen by the early heroes proved the feasibility of using non-violent strategies for social and political reforms, a lesson well imbibed by Filipino journalist even today.

(Tuazon, R, 2011:1)

Filipinos in general are passionate readers, whether for entertainment or for education and the media plays a role, especially in rural areas.

As time changes so does the media and its contents; in the past information concerned government issues and events as well as government officials who have dubious reputations, but now it becomes more varied. The strategy of educating Filipinos through the help of media is becoming crucial in attaining a degree of democracy in society.

However, some critics have complained that the media has lost its tenacity and has succumbed to corrupt journalistic practices; Filipinos, with characteristic humour, called this '*envelopmental journalism*.' The term refers to 'an envelope with some money distributed to journalists in return for a favor' (Tuazon, 2011). Later, the term changed to ATM journalism with the use of cards to make the unscrupulous operandi less noticeable. To counteract the

negative reputation of the journalists, The Philippine Press Institute has adapted the 'Journalist Code of Ethics'.

The Code among others; "the journalists must adhere to scrupulous reporting or interpretation of the news, not suppress essential facts or distort the truth by improper omission or emphasis but adherence to the Code is voluntarily and at best imposed through the ombudsman and press council system.

(Tuazon, 2011:4)

Media had given members of society a chance to see and understand the world around them and make decisions about what to believe or not. It transformed Filipino society and has given new avenues to the freedom of expression. The media, in particular the newspapers, are acting as overseers or 'watchdogs'. As a consequence, some government officials or powerful people condemn the newspapers for reporting with minimal evidence and in some cases they file libel suit against journalists. The Philippine libel law, which is embodied in Article 353-364 of the Revised Penal Code, classifies libel as a "crime against honor." For the editors this is considered a serious threat to press freedom, as well as a direct attack on freedom of expression.

The Philippines may have freedom of speech and expression in terms of the media, but if the telling of the truth is threatened with libel from those who are in power, the 'truth will be replaced with fear' and possibly silence. Depending on the consequences and who is concerned, truth is not always good for the person involved. This notion was supported by Harry Roque of the Center for International Law and the director of the Institute of International Legal Studies and the Law Center of the University of the Philippines College of Law. He stated, "Even if you are stating the truth, if they can prove that there is malice, you can still spend time in jail, which is ridiculous". This is a problem in the Philippines. In

addition, the country's political system is considered very dangerous for journalists as witnessed by the number of murdered journalists in the last fifty years.

Conclusion

Singapore has achieved considerable economic success both in the private and public sectors. Singapore's ability to change with the times has been a major factor in its success and consequent growth in economic terms that has filtered down to the majority of the people in the city state.

As Singapore continue to progress, there are many issues the government faces. Some of these issues are the decline of population, particularly among the ethnic Chinese and loss of cultural identity. Many adults, especially the educated, are so focused on their careers that marriage is relegated to just one possible option along with being married but not having children. As Singapore becoming more westernized Singaporean are becoming more vocal pushing forward a 'real democracy, more opposition candidates, and the possibility of a change in government', as indicated in the 2011 general election results. This new mood has resulted in the governing party being more flexible and listening to what the people have to say. In particular, government censorship was unable to control the anonymous comments made on the internet. The dictatorial attitude of previous PAP governments is changing as the party recognizes the need to change.

As for the Philippines, for more than 100 years Filipino people have enjoyed some degree of 'freedom', yet the fate of this country is still ambiguous. Perhaps in one sense, democracy has become the country's 'curse' as until now Filipino people are still showing their discontentment. There is this belief that everyone has the 'right' to do what they want, as they live in a democratic country. However,

this so called 'right' has resulted in disunity among Filipino society for there is no such thing as firmly established equal rights. 'Freedom of Speech', 'Right to Information', 'Due Process of Law', 'Equal Protection of Laws', 'Right of Workers to Safe and Humane Working Condition', and so on ... (The Philippine 1987 Constitution) but such rights are still very difficult to achieve.

As noted above, the Philippines is still one of the world's most dangerous places for journalists as at least 30 reporters and their staff were among the 58 people massacred in the province of Maguindanao in 2009 in the southern Philippines and until now this massacre is still unresolved. The indications are that the so called 'due process of law' is still questionable and the 'equal protection of laws' is only practiced by those who have money and power in society and not for all Filipinos.

The Philippines once was far ahead of its neighbors in terms of development based on a well-educated work force, and with plenty of natural resources. However, it is now suffering from a serious 'brain drain' as the educated sectors of the population are out of the country to work in other 'richer' countries under the banner of Overseas Filipino Workers (OFW). The remittance of OFW salaries has become a major source of revenue for the Philippines but at great social costs.

As Diaz (2009:174) stresses:

If the rights of all Filipino citizens would be upheld by the state, and all Filipino citizens would faithfully fulfill their duties and obligation to their country, then the Philippines would be a haven of peace and prosperity.

Finally, the divergent politics of the two countries seems to be reflected in the different historical experiences of the two countries in terms of the role English and education in English has played.

With the rise of new media such as internet news groups, the use of English in the expression of political opinions will prove to be a powerful factor in the ways new political and social discourses develop. By understanding the historical roots of the different ways English has shaped the two societies, we may have a solid foundation on which to build a critique of the freedom of expression as practiced in the two countries. How English is used with other languages to criticize the government or to reinforce moves for social change is an area that needs a lot more research. So does the way the literatures of the two countries are taught in terms of the historical political experience. As two ends of a continuum in ASEAN democracy, Singapore and the Philippines represent sometimes convergent and sometimes divergent pathways to the use of new varieties of English in the shaping of the future of the region.

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