

Editorial Commentary
**The Preparation and Writing of a Grammar of the Verb in
Philippine English and the Teaching of the English Verb System in
Philippine Schools**

Ariane Macalinga Borlongan
De La Salle University, Manila

That there exists a variety of English called *Philippine English* is now incontestable. Though questions regarding its status came out (i.e. Gonzalez, 1972; Hidalgo, 1970) half a century ago when Llamzon (1969) published his groundbreaking monograph entitled *Standard Filipino English*, Philippine English is now a fact everyone has to live with. A plethora of studies on Philippine English will be able to lend evidence to the existence of the new English (cf. state-of-the-art papers of Bautista [2000b] and Gonzalez [1998]).

And recently, Borlongan (2011) attempts at a codification of Philippine English through the preparation and writing of a grammar of the Philippine English verb system. He analyzed a ten-percent sample of the Philippine component of the International Corpus of English. This is not the place to restate the findings of Borlongan; suffice it to say that he makes two important points on Philippine English: (1) That it is a self-regulating variety that has its own distinctive features and (2) that it has achieved endonormative stabilization in Schneider's (2003, 2007) dynamic model of the evolution of postcolonial Englishes.

What Borlongan (2011) says of Philippine English and the verb in Philippine English has important implications for the teaching of likewise Philippine English and the verb in Philippine English. First, the grammar of the verb in Philippine English would tell that, indeed, the variety can be described and distinguished from other Englishes, particularly the more established ones. Needless to say, the structure of the variety can be more explicitly taught in English language classes with the necessary comparisons with more established Englishes. In retrospect, in the year 1981, a group of distinguished language specialists that represented the Philippines for the SEAMEO Regional Language Centre's seminar entitled *Varieties of English and Their Implications for Language Teaching in Southeast Asia* convened for the seminar's Philippine workshop and decided that the availability

of an adequate description of Philippine English is a prerequisite in making a decision on whether an exonormative or endonormative model in English language teaching in the Philippines.

And the mention of that hints at the second probable consequence of the preparation and writing of the grammar of the verb in Philippine English. There might now be a need to revisit the decision of that group of language specialists from the Philippines in 1981 and think about a possible paradigm shift in English language teaching in the Philippines. A promising scenario would be that English language teachers start with Philippine English grammatical structure. Then, also in an attempt to enhance the sociolinguistic competence of students (Bautista, 2003), teachers should also point out how Philippine English varies with reference to American English in particular – because it is the exonormative standard of Philippine English but not because it is the “better” standard – and other Englishes in general.

Ultimately, the goal of teaching Philippine English to students is for the variety’s increased awareness, acceptance, and even admiration. Bautista (2001a, 2001b) and Borlongan (2009) document the growing acceptance of Philippine English among English language teaching – the so-called “gatekeepers” – as well as students from a private university, albeit with some residual insecurity and longing for the norms previously held so dearly (cf. Borlongan, 2011; Schneider, 2003, 2007). Their survey respondents might not totally represent the Philippine population but their findings give hope to indiscriminate acceptance of Philippine English across the nation.

Of course, for every bright and bold idea is an accompanying challenge waiting to be overcome. Teachers need to be retrained; teaching materials need to be developed (the use of corpora in teaching Philippine English might be the first step); instructional leadership needs to be re-envisioned (cf. Borlongan [2010a, b] on the management of innovations in English language teaching in the Philippines). However, these are so little sacrifices that are not to be held back so as to finally put Philippine English on the pedestal of established Englishes, together with American, British, and Australian Englishes.

References

- Bautista, M. L. S. (2000b). Studies of Philippine English in the Philippines. *Philippine Journal of Linguistics*, 31(1), 39-65.
- Bautista, M. L. S. (2001a) Attitudes of English language faculty in three leading Philippine universities towards Philippine English. *Asian Englishes*, 4(1), 4-32.
- Bautista, M. L. S. (2001b) Attitudes of selected Luzon University students and faculty towards Philippine English. In M. L. G. Tayao et al. (Eds.), *Rosario E. Maminta in Focus: Selected writings in applied linguistics* (pp. 263-273). Quezon, the Philippines: Philippine Association for Language Teaching.
- Bautista, M. L. S. (2003). The new Englishes and the teaching of grammar. In J. E. James (Ed.), *Grammar in the language classroom: Changing approaches and practices* (pp. 62-90). Singapore: SEAMEO Regional Language Centre.
- Borlongan, A. M. (2009). A survey on language use, attitudes, and identity in relation to Philippine English among young generation Filipinos: An initial sample from a private university. *The Philippine ESL Journal*, 3, 74-107.
- Borlongan, A. M. (2010a). *The management of English language teaching in the Philippines*. Unpublished Research Fellowship project, SEAMEO Regional Language Centre, Singapore.
- Borlongan, A. M. (2010b). On the Management of Innovations in English Language Teaching in the Philippines [Editorial commentary]. *TESOL Journal*, 2(2), 1-3.
- Borlongan, A. M. (2011). *A grammar of the verb in Philippine English*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, De La Salle University, Manila, the Philippines.
- Gonzalez, A. (1998). Post-Llamzon studies of Philippine English. In M. L. S. Bautista (Ed.), *Pagtanaw: Essays on language in honor of Teodoro A. Llamzon* (pp. 115-127). Manila, the Philippines: The Linguistic Society of the Philippines.
- Llamzon, T. A. (1969). *Standard Filipino English*. Manila, the Philippines: Ateneo University Press.
- Report of the Regional Seminar on Varieties of English and Their Implications for Language Teaching in Southeast Asia*. (1981). Singapore: SEAMEO Regional Language Centre.

Schneider, E. W. (2003). The dynamics of new Englishes: From identity construction to dialect birth. *Language*, 79, 233-281.

Schneider, Edgar W. (2007). *Postcolonial English: Varieties of English around the world*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

Ariane Macalinga Borlongan is Assistant Professor in the Department of English and Applied Linguistics, De La Salle University, Manila, the Philippines. His interests include Philippine English and world Englishes, English linguistics, sociolinguistics, and educational leadership and management.