

American-English on Philippine Radio and Television

by Hachiro Enaka

CHAPTER ONE

American-English in the Philippines

The English language came to the Philippines by way of the United State's involvement in the Philippine Revolution in the 1800's. The combined American and Filipino forces were able to subdue the Spanish colonizers thereby forging a friendship that exists until today.

American-English flourishes as a major language in the Philippines because it serves as one of the solutions to the problem of bridging the fundamental differences among the Filipinos, one of them being language.

Background Information on the Philippines

The Philippines, a country of archipelagic nature is comprised of 7,100 islands with a total land area of three hundred thousand square kilometers. The population is mainly concentrated in the three major island groups: Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao.

By the country's very nature, land travel is difficult if not almost impossible. Terrain and other geographical dissimilarities and the island's relative inaccessibility from one another has created a situation wherein islanders of yore have adapted their ways and language to their environment. Constant migration and cultural integration has made the Philippines a virtual showcase of diversity.

The Philippines according to recent linguistic studies have 128 major ethno-linguistic groups.¹ Majority of the Filipinos speak one, two or even three of the eight major native languages of the Philippines. Tagalog, from where Filipino,² the Philippines' national language is largely based on, is the most widely spoken native language. Cebuano, Iloko, Hiligaynon, Bikol, Samareno, Kapampangan and Pangasinan are the other major native languages. English however remains to be the most widely spoken language. The Philippines is, "according to noted writer and technocrat Carmen Guerrero Nakpil, "the third largest English-speaking country in the world,"³ third only to the United States first and Great Britain, second. The relatively large literate class in the Philippines having been educated with English as the medium of instruction remains one of the major propagators of the English language.

¹ Prem Jesus Jesswani, ed., *A Look at Philippine History* (Manila: St. Paul Press, 1989), p. 5.

² Effective since the ratification of the new Constitution on February 2, 1987, the national language was to be called FILIPINO, formerly Tagalog-based Pilitino.

³ Angie A. Felix, "The National Language Controversy," *Homelife*, October 1983, p. 42.
Filipino? Hindi Lamang Wika ang Problema." *Homelife*, October 1983, p. 40

CHAPTER TWO

American-English in Philippine Electronic Media

Media without a doubt plays an important role in society, now more than ever. With the advent of electricity, media has become more powerful, encompassing not only print but the audio and visual mediums as well. Radio and television are widely believed to have shaped, redirected and changed cultures.

With a culture where new ideas are easily absorbed and adopted,⁴ the Filipinos are much more susceptible to the massive wave of foreign influences brought by radio programs and television shows made-by or patterned after Western models.

Reacting to the public's clamor for Western-type programs, so widely patronized by the society's elite, the Philippine television and radio industry practitioners has taken to giving that "Western appeal" by using English as the language medium. But more often than not, they solely rely on prepared and canned programs imported from the United States, from where ninety percent of all imported programs in the Philippines come from.⁵ These programs depict situations and concerns alien to the Philippine setting, programs that allude to or exhibit the Westerners', usually the United States' supremacy, thereby further promoting the belief among the Filipino masses that the English language is the language of the powerful and elite.

Origins of Philippine Media

Philippine media as it is today has come a long way since the Spaniards first introduced printing in the 1500's and printed the first book in the Philippines, "*Doctrina Christiana en Lengua Espanol y Tagala*,... printed in 1593 by xylographic (or woodblock) method and antedating by 50 years the first book (a hymnal) printed in what would be known as the United States of America."⁶

The Spanish colonizers also spearheaded newspaper publishing in the Philippines with the introduction of *Del Superior Gobierno* in 1811, a publication carrying only news from Europe and meant for the Spanish elite.⁷

Philippine mass media looked most promising during the "rise of the revolutionary press in the latter part of the Spanish rule in the Philippines and the early part of the American regime, approximately between 1890 and 1905."⁸

La Solidaridad, a newspaper in Spanish, published in Spain on February 19, 1889 remains to be the most famous of those revolutionary papers. "This newspapers became the rallying point of Filipino intellectual expatriates in Europe."⁹ Philippine patriots such as Jose P. Rizal,

⁴ Cabotaje, pp. 44-45.

⁵ Dr. Florangel Rosario-Braid, "Fine Tuning for Radio-TV, *Philippine Daily Inquire*, 6 July 1988, p6 7, col. 2.

⁶ Alberto Florentino, "Our 75-Year Romance with the English Language, " *WIIO*, 29 September 1982, p. 31.

⁷ Crispin C. Maslog, "A Brief History of Philippine Mass Communication," in his *Philippine Communication: An Introduction* (Quezon City : New Day Publishers, 1988), p. 2.

⁸ Maslog, p. 5.

⁹ Maslog, p. 5.

Marcelo H. del Pilar, Graciano Lopez Jaena and Marciano Ponce were among the most noteworthy contributors to the paper.

Nine years later, in 1898, an Englishman, Thomas Gowan established the first English language daily newspaper in the Philippines, the *Manila Times*. It lasted for thirty-two years.¹⁰ Publication of this newspaper has since then restarted.

The oldest existing newspaper in the Philippines, the *Manila Bulletin*, was started by an American, Carson Taylor in 1900.¹¹ The newspaper still enjoys a wide readership today.

Movies first came to the Philippines when six documentary films from the United States was shown at Escolta on January 1, 1897.¹² American film makers and companies dominated the Philippine movie industry during those early years. It was only “in 1917, (when) the brothers Jose and Jesus Nepomuceno founded. . . Malayan Movies, which sought to adapt the movie industry ‘to the conditions and tastes of the country’—obviously in reaction to foreign movies which were Americanizing Filipino tastes at that time.”¹³

American influences was evident in the choices of movie personalities the local production companies contracted and promoted. Most local personalities closely resembled American screen idols.¹⁴ Their careers were built on the basis of their being the local versions of these American idols, as in the case of Bayani Casimiro, “Charlie Chaplain on the Philippines,” and Eddie Mesa, “Elvis Presley of the Philippines.”

This practice of the domestic movie industry of introducing local clones has proven to be a sure profit earner that this practice still continues up to present times.

Advertising as an industry and an important component of mass media was started by an American, Edward Bullis in the early 1920’s. Most if not all one-man advertising agencies at that time were owned and represented by Americans.¹⁵

Like the movies and advertising, the electronic media, radio and television, was introduced to the Philippines by the Americans. The first radio stations were owned and operated by Americans until it was bought from them by Filipinos.¹⁶ The franchise to operate the first television station in the Philippines was awarded to an American, only that a Filipino bought his company before the first television station was set-up, thus enabling a Filipino to start the first television station in the Philippines.¹⁷

The apparent beginnings of Philippine media, that it being an offshoot of the Philippines’ being a colony first by the Spaniards, second by the Americans, then by the Japanese and lastly, again by the Americans, goes to show why Philippine media today is largely Westernized in outlook, direction, operation and inclination.

¹⁰ Maslog, pp. 6-7.

¹¹ Maslog, p. 7.

¹² Maslog, p. 7.

¹³ Maslog, p. 8.

¹⁴ Maslog, p. 9.

¹⁵ Maslog, p. 15.

¹⁶ Maslog, p. 12.

¹⁷ Maslog, p. 18.

American-English in Philippine Radio

Radio through the years has proven to be a powerful medium. Broadcasts are sent across the airwaves with an inherent capacity to persuade, to influence, and to even incite their audience. The language by which a broadcast is framed therefore plays an important role in this intrinsic power radio possesses.

In a country like the Philippines where more than a hundred ethno-linguistic groups are identified,¹⁸ the problem of framing broadcasts in a language understandable to the whole populace is quite pronounced. The Filipinos' strong sense of regionalism makes it almost impossible to have broadcasts aired mainly in Filipino, the national language.

It is probably a fortunate coincidence that the Philippines had been introduced to radio technology at a time when the American public school system was in place. With an education program that sought to propagate the English language above anything,¹⁹ a majority of the Filipino's at radios' introduction in the 1920's understood and spoke English. Coupled with the fact that the early radio broadcasters were Americans,²⁰ this did much to hasten the popularity of the English language.

The use of the English language is still quite extensive in the radio industry. However, recent developments in Philippine society show more radio stations framing their former English public opinion and news programs in Filipino, coinciding with the Filipino's hurried attempts to surge ahead and approximate their Asian neighbors economically and be counted among the "Tigers of Asia." Awareness of country, countrymen and government are extolled daily in most news and public opinion programs, in a language to promote nationalism, Filipino.

Regional bickering regarding the use of Filipino is, for the meantime, forgotten with everybody expectantly waiting for the result of this slow weaning away from English.

History of the Philippine Radio Industry. Radio first came to the Philippines in the early 1920's. The first three fifty-watt stations, KZKZ, KZRM and KZEG, two of the stations were located in Manila and one in nearby Pasay City, were owned by Henry Hermann, an American. He started operations in June of 1922.²¹ "In 1925 KZKZ stopped broadcasting and was replaced by KZRQ."²²

In 1927 J. Amado Araneta bought KZRM, the bigger station, and KZEG, the smaller one from its American owners. This was the start of a trend in later years "media monopoly," particularly "cross ownership"... because Araneta also owned the DMHM newspapers.

Before World War II broke out, there were six commercial stations in the country: KZRM, KZRF, KZIB, KZEG, KZRH, all in Manila and KZRC, a short-lived station in Cebu City. A government station, KZND, was established so that the Civil Emergency Administration could keep the people posted on war events, and eventually helped in preparing Filipinos for war.

¹⁸ Jesswani, p. 5.

¹⁹ Zaide, p. 321.

²⁰ Maslog, p. 12.

²¹ Maslog, p. 12.

²² Maslog, p. 12.

Most of these pre-World War II stations were owned by Americans and their announcing staff were mostly Americans. The language used, naturally, was English.²³

American-English in Contrast to Filipino in the Philippine Radio Industry. English, as it is traditionally, remains to be one of the main languages used in Philippine radio broadcasts. With 357 stations nationwide, on both the AM and FM bands,²⁴ sending radio signals to about ninety-five percent of the archipelago,²⁵ at least seventy-four percent or 7,984,618 families of the total Filipino households are able to hear broadcasts in English, Filipino and their local dialects.²⁶

The problem of linking together 7,100 islands, which comprise the country, through broadcasting is compounded by the diversity of languages spoken. About 87 different (major) languages and dialects are spoken. The most widely used are English, Tagalog, Cebuano, Ilocano and Panay-Hiligaynon.²⁷

English' acceptability to most Filipinos stems from the perception shared by Filipinos from Northern Luzon, the Visayas and Mindanao regions that Filipino, the national language, is a thinly disguised copy of Tagalog, the dialect of the Filipinos from Central Luzon. They carry the sentiment that the peoples from Luzon are trying to impose their culture on them. Hence the acceptability of English.²⁸

But in spite of its wide acceptability, the English language is slow to take root in the Philippine radio industry, mainly because of the industry's orientation.

The Philippine radio industry caters to a larger rural-dwelling audience than urbanites. At least sixty percent of the total Filipino households live in the rural areas. With 68.9% of the larger total rural households owning radios, roughly 4.5 million families in the rural area are the targeted audience, as compared to 82.4% of the smaller total urban households or approximately 3.5 million families.²⁹ (See Table 1). And since the radio industry in the Philippines is commercial in nature, where government's role is one of "regulation rather than direct control or operation,"³⁰ makes the radio industry susceptible to the profit motive. To cater to the larger clientele would satisfy that need to earn, a point to show why the Philippine radio industry is largely rural-oriented.

Radio dramas and commentaries framed in the localities' dialects and recently in Filipino, are the daily fare on most stations on the AM bands, 241 stations of the total 357 stations. These stations are heavily favored by the masses, whether urban or rural. The English language is considered to be an anachronism in the "*pang-masa*"³¹ programs, programs that

²³ Maslog, p. 12.

²⁴ Philippines, Philippine Information Agency, Manila, *1991 Philippine Media Profile*, PIA Media Studies Division Communication Research Publication (Manila : n.p., 1991), p. 2.

²⁵ Rosario-Braid, p. 7, col. 1.

²⁶ *1991 Philippine Media Profile*, p. 2.

²⁷ Ernesto I. Songco, "Fundamentals of Radio Broadcasting," in *Philippine Communication: An Introduction*, ed. Crispin C. Maslog (Quezon City : New Day Publishers, 1988), p. 199.

²⁸ Tiempo, pp. 36-37.

²⁹ *1991 Philippine Media Profile*, p. 2.

³⁰ Songco, p. 200.

³¹ "*pang-masa*" literally means "for the masses." Usage in the Philippine context however connotes the lack of proper social graces or refinement in tastes, associated with the impoverished.

Table 1
Philippine Radio Industry Profile

1989 TOTAL HOUSEHOLDS	10,790,024
URBAN	4,136,646
RURAL	6,653,378
OWNERSHIP (1989)	
RADIO OWNERSHIP	74.0%
URBAN	82.4%
RURAL	68.9%
RADIO INFRASTRUCTURE (1991)	
NO. OF RADIO STATIONS	
(197 AM/102 FM)	299*
(241 AM/116 FM)	357**

* Kapisanan ng Mga Brodkasters sa Philipinas (KBK) figures

** PIA figures including non-KBP members

Source : 1991 Philippine Media Profile

nurture a mind-set that favors stereotyped stories concerning battered housewives, philandering husbands, love's inequality and deceit, programs that are looked upon with askance by educated Filipinos. Social services programs and celebrity/show business news, widely perceived to be of interest only to social classes D and E are also framed in Filipino.

A foreign observer, David Rosenberg noted in his book, *The Development of Modern Mass Communication in the Philippines*, that the Philippine communication media forks into two directions. One medium, like the newspapers, caters to the elite, those who could understand and speak English, and the other medium, like the radio, favors the lower classes.³²

But with the growing popularity, albeit in the urban areas of the "music stations," broadcasting mainly in English on the FM band, 116 stations of the total 357 stations,³³ a relatively large percentage of the population, the youth sector in particular, is preconditioned to accept English as a natural mode of communication in the Philippine setting.

The use of the English language is quite prevalent in these FM stations that Filipino is relegated as a secondary language, one that is hardly utilized at all.

But the resurgence of the English language in these stations prove to be of no match to the growing sentiment of "Filipino first." Music stations which are elitist in inclination has even been compelled to schedule Original Pilipino Music (OPM) programs to appease some segments of their clientele.

Radio in the Philippines, as it has always been, is rooted and oriented towards the rural areas and the masses. Unless this orientation changes, the use of the English language will be relatively confined in the Philippine radio industry.

³² Raul T. Penares, "Broadcast Media at the Crossroads," *Philippine Communication: An Introduction*, ed. Crispin C. Maslog (Quezon City: New Day Publishers, 1988), p. 213, citing David Rosenberg, *The Development of Modern Mass Communication in the Philippines* (Ann Arbor, Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 1972), n. pag.

³³ *1991 Philippine Media Profile*, p. 2.

American-English in Philippine Television

Modern technology has made television the powerful tool that it is today. Events and situations from far-off places are made more immediate and intimate through television. People unwittingly respond to the vivid pictures and graphic language used in this medium.

In the Philippines, where intense regionalism hinders the development of a true national language, the necessity of using a “neutral” language is seen as the best and safest compromise. Though English and Spanish were both once listed as official languages in the Philippines,³⁴ Spanish is now considered a dying language in the country, where less than ten percent of the population is fluently conversant in it.

English has taken firm root in the Philippine television industry, very much unlike in Philippine radio. The popularity of American programs and the use of English in most public affairs programs, supposedly the programs addressing the sentiments of the Filipino people, are only some of the indications of English’ firm entrenchment in the television industry.

The use of the English language has been a reality to the Philippine television industry since television’s introduction in the country in the 1950’s³⁵ And if the trend in the industry is any indication, that of systematically piling one American program after another during prime time viewing hours, then English will continue to be the most widely heard language in Philippine television.

History of the Philippine Television Industry. Television in the Philippines is relatively young compared to that of the United States and Europe.

Two Philippine universities were experimenting with television before it turned commercial. In February 1950 a professor and his students successfully demonstrated their homemade receiving set at the University of Santo Tomas. Two years later, Feati University opened an experimental television station.

In 1953 commercial television came to the Philippines, when the very first station, DZAQ-TV Channel 3, was opened by Alto Broadcasting System in Manila. . . .

The franchise to operate the first TV station was. . . granted by Congress to Bolinao Broadcasting Corporation, which was owned by an American, James Lindberg. But Judge Antonio Quirino bought Bolinao Broadcasting in 1952 and thus eared the right to start the first TV station in the Philippines. . . .

The first provincial station was Channel 3 in Cebu by ABS-CBN. With its two other provincial stations in Bacolod and Dagupan, ABS-CBN in 1968 became the largest radio-television network in the Philippines with five TV and 20 radio stations. In 1969, ABS-CBN made television history when it covered live the Apollo 11 moon shot, the landing of the first men on the moon-in color.³⁶

But inspite of that achievement, in its early beginnings, the television industry in the Philippines encountered a myriad of problems. Television sets were priced beyond the reach of the majority and the operations of the stations were hampered by the costs of producing programs.³⁷ “American-produced TV programs³⁷ were expensive, but locally-produced pro-

³⁴ Efren L. Danao, “Language Problems, “ *Veritas*, 30 June-2 July 1986, p. 8.

³⁵ Maslog, p. 18.

³⁶ Maslog, pp. 18-19.

grams cost even more- in 1959, a half-hour local program cost 2,000 to produce. Philippine channels were asked to pay \$125~\$150 for half-hour U.S. show, to be shown only once.”³⁸

Despite these formidable obstacles, the Philippine television industry grew and flourished, creating a niche solely its own. The Filipinos welcomed this respite from reality, a relatively cheap source of entertainment, convenient to be had at all times of the day.

Philippine Television Industry Today. In “1966, a little after ten years after television came to the Philippines, there were 18 privately-owned TV channels in the country.”³⁹ Present data shows that as of 1991, the Philippines has sixty-six television stations nationwide,⁴⁰ with one of the networks, GMA-7 boasting of a satellite broadcast that reaches some parts of Southeast Asia. New additions to the television industry are the cable and pay television facilities.

There are five major networks in the Philippines, ABS-DBN 2, GMA-7, RPN-9, IBC-13 and the government station, PTV-4. These five networks supply the bulk if not all of the programs shown in the provincial television stations. Two new stations, ABC-5 and SBN-21, only started operations in mid-1992 and has yet to link-up with provincial relay stations.

All the networks, cable and pay television stations are located in the metropolis, Manila, and their relay stations in key provincial cities. This “urbancenteredness” translates to the types of programs they air on television. The urban mind set and the urban lifestyle are purveyed over the airwaves from sign-in to sign-off.⁴¹

Although most of the television owners are urbanites, about 2.5 million urban-dwelling households as compared to 1.2 million rural-dwelling families,⁴² (See Table 2) this “centralization” of television programming can only prove to be detrimental to the larger Philippine rural populace.

Table 2
1991 Philippine Television Industry Profile

1989 TOTAL HOUSEHOLDS	10,790,024
URBAN	4,136,646
RURAL	6.653.378
OWNERSHIP (1989)	
TV OWNERSHIP	34.5%
URBAN	60.7%
RURAL	18.2%
TELEVISION INFRASTRUCTURE (1991)	
NO. OF TV STAIONS	66*/63**

* KBK Figures

** PIA Figures including non-KBP members

SOURCE: 1991 Philippine Media Profile

³⁷ Maslog, p. 19.

³⁸ Maslog, p. 19.

³⁹ Maslog, p. 19.

⁴⁰ *1991 Philippine Media Profile*, p. 2.

⁴¹ Rosario-Braid, p. 7, col. 1.

⁴² *1991 Philippine Media Profile*, p. 2.

Aside from being urban-oriented and centered, the television industry in the Philippines is multi-lingual. Broadcasts are in English and Filipino with some early morning programs in the Chinese language.

English programs, whether foreign or locally-produced programs, are heavily favored during the prime time viewing hours and early morning broadcasts, and Filipino programs are scheduled in the late morning and afternoon time slots, mostly of the game and variety/musical type of programs.

Entertainment programs parading a variety of local and international talents comprise the bulk of the programs shown in Philippine television. These programs allegedly are the programs that thrive well in a highly commercialized industry, the programs assumed to “sell” advertising slots, “the lifeblood of broadcasting.”⁴³

The Philippine television industry produces most of the programs aired, sixty percent of the total programs shown on television.⁴⁴ Western influences are very noticeable though. Locally-produced programs follow Western formats and concepts that further “serves to in-grain instead of diminish. . . (the Filipino’s) colonial mentality.”⁴⁵

The prime time viewing fare is a virtual American programs festival, with all networks including the government station, scheduling American programs one after another. English therefore, is the language heard by the most number of viewers everyday in Philippine television.

American-English in Contrast to Filipino in the Philippine Television Industry. The dualistic development of Philippine mass communication mentioned by David Rosenberg in his book, *The Development of Modern Mass Communication in the Philippines*,⁴⁶ is nowhere more evident than in the television industry.

Programs are scheduled in such a way as to target different audience segments daily. The urbanites who are perceived to be more literate than rural folks are served with English-dubbed programs, programs that are assumed they can comprehend. And the rural people and the masses have their scheduled entertainment programs in Filipino.

American programs, which are naturally dubbed in English, comprising ninety percent of all foreign programs shown in Philippine television,⁴⁷ are mostly scheduled during prime time viewing hours, from seven o’clock to ten o’clock in the evening. These time slots enjoy the largest viewership according to the Philippine Mass Communications Research Society. A comparative study done by their offices regarding the listening and viewing trends of households in the Greater Manila area for the years covering 1968 to 1972 compared to 1973, show viewership to be at least sixty-seven percent for these hours⁴⁸ (See Graphs 2.1 and 2.2). Although this figure is now outdated, current advertising preference for these time slots bear out today’s viewing trend is similar.

⁴³ Rosario-Braid, p. 7, col. 2.

⁴⁴ Rosario-Braid, p. 7, col. 1.

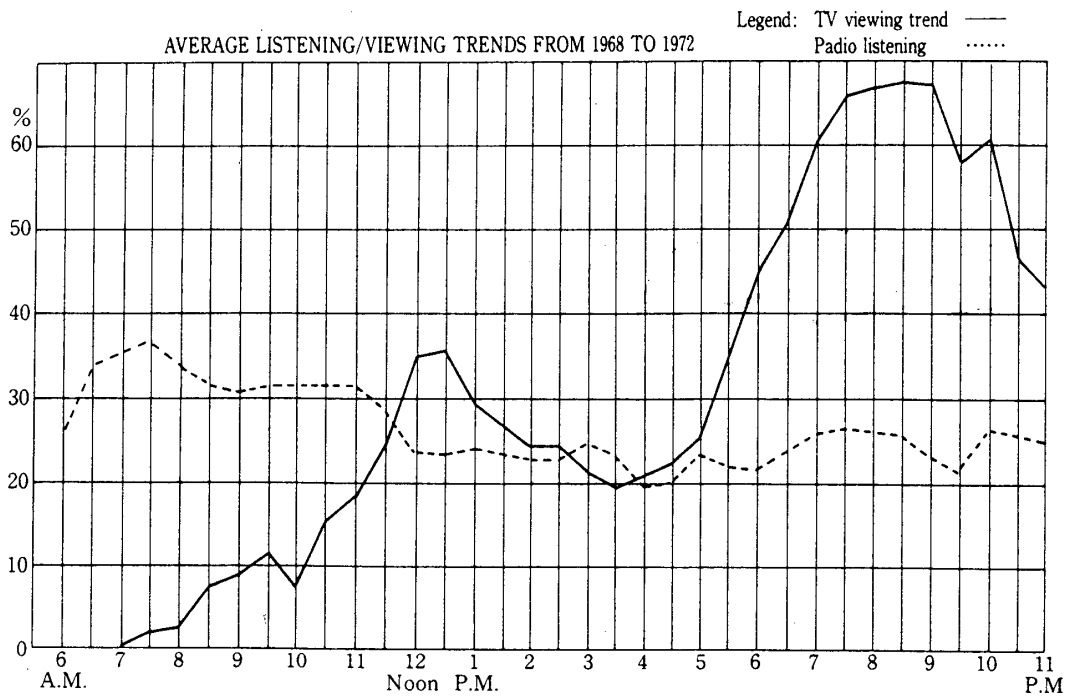
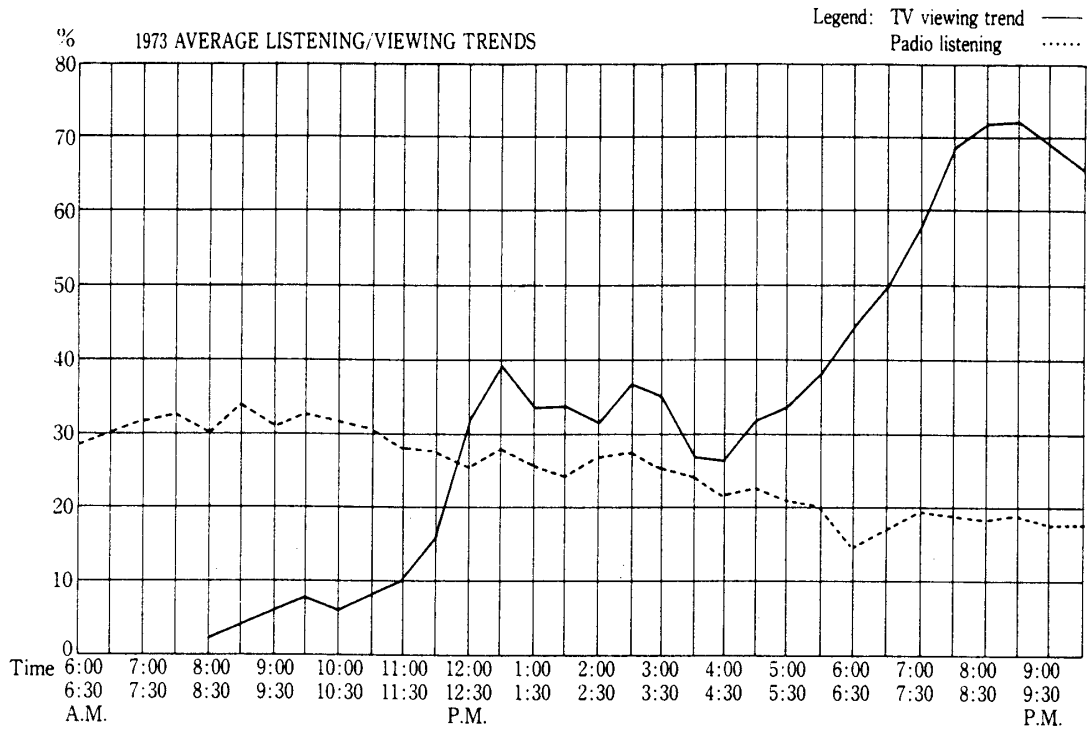
⁴⁵ Rosario-Braid, p. 7, col. 2.

⁴⁶ Penares, p. 213.

⁴⁷ Rosario-Braid, p. 7, col. 2.

⁴⁸ Philippines, Philippine Mass Communications Research Society, Manila, *Listening and Viewing Trends (Among Greater Manila Homes) 1968-1972*, (Manila : n.p., n.d.), n. pag.

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For the larger part, these programs are aimed at the urbanites, audiences who just came from work or school. Early morning broadcasts, primarily news and business programs, targeting business people just getting ready for work are likewise in English. All evening news programs are in English, targeting the same audience sector after a work day.

Most public affairs talk shows and news magazine programs, the programs that supposedly discusses the concerns and sentiments of the Filipino populace are framed in English. It is therefore a common occurrence in these programs to receive phoned-in requests from their viewers asking the host and guests to speak in Filipino. Though the Philippines has a high literacy rate, about 89% of the total population can read and write,⁴⁹ it is quite understandable if Filipinos not conversant in English be curious about their nation's affairs, events that affect and might affect them.

On the other hand, hardly any television programs of consequence are dubbed in Filipino. Game and variety/musical shows scheduled during the late mornings and early afternoon time slots, times when rural-dwellers and househelpers comprise the bulk of the viewing audience, are in Filipino. Programs "catering to the least common denominator of tastes,"⁵⁰ are in Filipino. Hence giving weight to the widely shared perception among the Filipino viewing public that all English-dubbed programs are superior than Filipino-dubbed programs.

CHAPTER THREE

Effects of the Use of American-English in Philippine Electronic Media

Advances in technology has made mass media a more important factor in modern day societies. Print, audio and visual media carries a lot of influence over its reading, listening and viewing audiences. Opinions and even values are formed from what people read and hear. Live broadcasts, through radio and television affecting people even more so.

The way broadcasts are delivered and framed, the language used, give noticeable differences to the broadcasts. People react instinctively to broadcasts they can easily comprehend and associate with. Framing broadcasts in a language responsive to these impulses is therefore *de rigueur* among media practitioners.

But in a linguistically diverse country like the Philippines, where eighty-seven different major languages are spoken,⁵¹ broadcasting in a single language understandable to the whole populace poses as a problem. It was even necessary to designate two foreign languages, English and Spanish to be the official languages of the country in the 1935 Constitution.⁵² Filipino, the country's national language only came to be called as such in the current Constitution's ratification in 1987.

Resistance to the use of Filipino is however still encountered in some parts of the country,⁵³ necessitating a "compromise language," English.

⁴⁹ 1991 *Philippine Media Profile*, p. 3.

⁵⁰ Rosario-Braid, p. 7, col. 2.

⁵¹ Songco, p. 199.

⁵² Section 3, Article XIII, "General Provisions," *Constitution of the Philippines* (Manila: Bureau of Printing, 1935), p. 23.

Broadcasts in radio and television are aired either in English or Filipino, though in varying degrees.

As a language for broadcasting, English commands a small following in the larger rural-based audiences in radio. However the popularity of English songs whether it be in the urban or rural areas is something which cannot be contested. The popularity of English songs came to such heights in the mid-80's that Congress and the Kapisanan ng Mga Brodkasters as Pilipinas (KBP), the regulating body for the television and radio industry, even saw it fit to pass a resolution making it mandatory for all radio stations, especially those on the FM band to play at least one Filipino-made song per hour to stem the growing perception that anything foreign, especially those from the United States and Europe, are of the best quality and therefore to be patronized, and anything Filipino-made, inferior.

A case of misinformation that furthers the Filipino's tendency to be colonially minded, that of idealizing Western cultures and norms, and subsequently unintentionally subjugating national identity.

The Filipino language and the local dialects which are widely-used in the AM band are considered uncosmopolitan by the Filipino elite and urban dwellers, because urban dwellers more than anybody else are easy prey for the unquestioned influx of English materials that they get to read and listen to. The beginnings of contempt can be detected in their attitudes toward the national language, Filipino, and so much more for the regional dialects.

In television, where English is the most popular mode of broadcast, this idealization of Western culture and norms are much more pronounced. During prime time hours when viewership is at its highest, American-dubbed programs outnumber Filipino-dubbed programs easily. Even advertising is Westernized. Television commercials employing the services of foreign-looking Filipinos or foreigners, to endorse a locally-produced product, whose likeness to a foreign brand is the main selling point⁵⁴ is the most widely-used format in Philippine advertising.

This virtual "American cultural invasion" into the Philippine society encounters no resistance from the public and Philippine media.⁵⁵

And in a culture that idolizes the ways and manners of the West, the masses are then hard-pressed to follow suit. And the use of the English language in important matters and broadcasts further pushes them to think of English as the language of the powerful and successful, thus resigning them further into passivity to their fates. Inferiority complex sets in and they feel neutered and dominated in their own country because of their inability to comprehend English.⁵⁶

Instead of acting as a unifying language, a language that would get through the linguistic barriers of the peoples of the Philippines, English then becomes a tool for educated Filipinos to

⁵³ Tiempo, pp. 36-37.

⁵⁴ Sen. Leticia Ramos-Shahani, *A Moral Recovery Program: Building a Nation. Inspiring Our Nation to Action*, eds. V.P. Gapuz and C.D. Lozada Jr., Executive Bookshelf Series No. 1 (Manila: 24K Printing Co., Incorporated, 1990), p. 10; Rosario-Braid, p. 7, col. 2.

⁵⁵ Lewis E. Gleeck Jr., "The American Period and World War," in *A Look at Philippine History*, ed. Prem Jesus Jesswani (Manila: St. Paul Press, 1989), p. 32.

⁵⁶ Tordesillas, p. 40; Ramos-Shahani, p. 8.

alienate their own lesser educated countrymen. English therefore, through mass media, as maintained by nationalists, serves to strengthen and widen existing societal inequalities rather than bridging them.

CHAPTER FOUR

Conclusion

English without a doubt will continue to be the operative language in the international community. And with the present world order, where each country's national boundaries are becoming undistinguishable from their neighbors', being part and speaking the language of this large commune is a must. It is therefore of great advantage to a country if most of its people speaks and comprehends English.

In the Philippines, where the English language has a long history and at one time almost became the country's national language, this advantage is evident in industry. In spite of the country's poor economic standing, the Philippines boasts of a highly educated workforce employed all over the world because of their skills and facility in communicating in English.

The Filipino's adeptness in this borrowed tongue does not come as an accident. Notwithstanding directives coming from the Department of Education to schools and universities to implement a bi-lingual educational program,⁵⁷ most schools and universities still use English as the sole medium of instruction at all levels, universities and colleges, secondary level and the elementary grades, giving Filipinos an early start at learning and mastering a foreign tongue.

Media has in a large part helped in fostering the English language in the Philippines. Now more than ever, when broadcasts can transcend national borders, it is imperative to frame broadcasts in a language understandable to the world community. The popularity of English in Philippine media is therefore understandable and justifiable. But it is the blatant disregard of developing the national language, Filipino, in Philippine media that makes English' popularity dubious.

Most if not all programs of consequence and importance, newscasts, business programs, public affairs and social services programs are all framed in English, not giving due attention to the masses' need to know what goes on around them.

Though most radio broadcasts are in Filipino, these usually take the form of "coffee shop talk" and hearsay—giving no credibility to the broadcasts.

The succession of American programs during prime time viewing hours serves as an irritant to Filipinos working for nationalist causes. They maintain that true national identity cannot be achieved when Filipinos are constantly exposed to a culture alien to their nature.

The preponderance of American programs cannot be faulted as being inimical to the development of national identity, but what can be faulted is the inability of most Filipinos to sift and question the ideas put forth in these programs. It is not the airing of American

⁵⁷ the use of Filipino and English as media of instruction in definite subject areas in Philippine primary and secondary levels. (Philippines, *Department Order No. 25, s. 1974*, Department of Education and Culture, Office of the Secretary, 19 June 1974, n. pag.)

programs espousing Western values, norms, language and culture which hurts the Filipino's efforts at attaining nationhood, but it is the inability of most Filipinos to break away from colonial tendencies that continuously binds them to whole heartedly imbibing foreign influences.

The constant use of English in Philippine media, whether through foreign or locally-produced programs, has trained Filipinos to be literate or at least mere conversant in English, consciously and subconsciously. The everyday use of the language made English "unforeign" to them, making them more comfortable with the language.

On the other hand, the use of the national language should not take a back seat to English. Media practitioners must make efforts at correcting present broadcast programming, to schedule programs that tackles matters of importance in Filipino. To do away with most of the insultingly nonsensical programs dubbed in the national language. To schedule quality Filipino-dubbed programs during prime time viewing hours to serve as an alternative for some of the American programs.

It is the airing of substandard Filipino-dubbed programs that makes English-dubbed programs all the more attractive, and fan the belief that English is the only language of importance in the Philippine setting. It is therefore not the airing of American programs per se that pushes the masses into frustration, but it is their belief that the language they are familiar with, Filipino, is of no import because of media's neglect to educate them otherwise.

True, Filipino is a developing language, the adopted national language of a culturally and linguistically diverse country. To develop and to make it more acceptable to the numbers of Filipinos not familiar with the language, is a major responsibility of Philippine media. It has the means and machinery to effectively disseminate and popularize Filipinos' use. By employing all the means at their disposal, media can help Filipino to bloom and develop as a language and would surely, if slowly, gain acceptance in the whole archipelago.

All of this can be done without obliterating English in education and media. The extreme stance taken by Filipino nationalists need not be taken. The facility to converse, think and comprehend English is probably one of the few advantages the Philippines has over other countries.⁵⁸ And to have an important sector of society, media, give-up its use is equivalent to surrendering that advantage. This is something hard for the Japanese to understand.

The English language should and must continue to be a mode of broadcast in the Philippines for more reasons than one. Firstly, Filipino has yet to develop as a language and gain acceptance in the whole Filipino community. English in the meantime can fill the void. Secondly, facility in the English language is an advantage the Filipinos cannot afford to lose especially in these trying times. Thirdly, English is today's recognized language worldly-wide, and to phase-out English at this point in time "is to go against what the rest of the world is doing."⁵⁹

In Continental Europe, governments are spending large sums to introduce English in their school

⁵⁸ Senior Minister Lee Kwan Yew, "Ready for Take Off," Philippine Business Conference, Manila, 18 November 1992.

⁵⁹ "Love of Country is in the Heart," Editorial, *Veritas*, 30 June-2 July 1986, p. 4.

curricula. In Japan, those who speak English find many new doors opening for them, and the climb to the top less arduous. Even in China, recent visitor there attest, the choicest position go to those who can speak English.⁶⁰

These are reasons enough to encourage the use of English in Philippine media, but it has to go hand in hand with the intention of developing the national language. The use of one language cannot be promoted at the expense of the other. Promoting English does not make a Filipino less Filipino, and promoting Filipino does not necessarily make a patriot out of one. To promote the use of both languages is merely being realistic, taking current and future events in the national and international communities into consideration. No person or country can prosper in this new world order by being "inward-looking." One has to look beyond national boundaries, to be a part of the evolving world community.

English is and will continue to be the international language, and that is a fact inescapable to all, including us Japanese.

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⁶⁰ "Love of Country is in the Heart," p. 4.

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