Towards Dehegemonizing the English Language
Perspectives of a "Center" Researcher Working in the Periphery

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can be alternatively defined as belonging to the "centre", whilst other formerly colonised nations form part of the "periphery", in Galtung's imperialism theory as used by Phillipson (1992: 52-53) to describe processes of "linguistic imperialism". Despite having taught English and other subjects at secondary and tertiary levels in Southeast Asia, mainly in Malaysia and in Brunei Darussalam, since the late 1970s, I still position myself as a "centre" figure because of my British origins and upbringing. This does not, however, prevent me from acknowledging and respecting the standpoints taken by those from "periphery" nations in Southeast Asia.

"Dehegemonizing" English in Southeast Asia: Tupas, Lorente, Noor Azam

For the purposes of this paper 'hegemony' is more than just the dominance of English, it is the unquestioned acceptance of English as the global language. 'Dehegemonizing' therefore can be defined as actions taken to prevent English from dominating and threatening other national, official and local languages.

Tupas (2015) develops the concept of "unequal Englishes" as a framework for investigating whether the varieties of English of the "centre" nations are more highly regarded and esteemed than those of "periphery" nations such as Filipino English: "because speakers of Englishes are rooted in their own identities, ideologies and social positionings, these Englishes are unequally valued, with some more powerful than others." (p. 15).

Lorente (2013) discusses "the grip of English on Philippine language policy" and suggests that the policy "is anchored in the widespread and widely accepted but decontextualized belief that English is neutral and beneficial." (p.188). She contends that the recent move towards implementing a national policy of Mother-tongue based Multilingual Education (MTBMLE) may help to loosen the grip of English, but fears that even this will not stop the unhealthy obsession that associates high proficiency in English with high achievement in education.

Malay and English are viewed as "duelling aunties" by Noor Azam (2012) in his discussion of Bruneians' perceptions of the relationship between the languages in Brunei. Both are perceived by Bruneians as having high status, and thus they are in competition with each other. As a consequence the other indigenous languages of Brunei have been marginalised in discussion that "assume a homogeneous linguistic community that speaks Malay, having to fend off threats from English." (p. 15).

Why is it that we look to the mostly monolingual and anglocentric 'West' for theories of Applied Linguistics? There may not be a simple answer to this question, but it highlights the illogicalities of theory development in our field of Applied Linguistics (as in other fields). Southeast Asia, including the Philippines and Indonesia, is highly multilingual and multi-ethnic, as is much of the

Science and Mathematics being taught through the medium of Malay with effect from 2012. The reasons for this latest policy change were principally political rather than educational. The (then) ruling coalition government wished to retain its support in rural areas where the majority of parents/voters are ethnic Malays with a preference for Malay-medium education, and the use of English-medium is problematic.

Other Southeast Asian nations, including Brunei Darussalam and the Philippines, have attempted to avoid the extreme polarities of nationism and nationalism by developing bilingual medium-of-education policies which aim to produce students who are balanced bilinguals in English and in their respective national or official languages.

so the zero sum game has some factual basis in terms of time allocation in school classrooms. This has caused concern among those who perceive the Malay language as being marginalized. Noor Azam (2016, p. 253, p. 264) argues cogently that the English-Malay imbalance under the SPN-21 policy is somewhat redressed by the requirement for all Muslim Brunei children (the majority of the country's population) to attend seven years of Islamic religious school. Most of the input in the "*Ugama*" (religious) schools is through the medium of Malay; they attend the religious schools in the afternoon after they have been to mainstream government schools in the morning.

MTBMLE cannot be said to be exclusively Southeast Asian, as its origins can be traced back to a UNESCO report on 'The Use of Vernacular Languages in Education' (UNESCO, 1953). Moves towards the promotion of MTBMLE have been taken up by the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organisation (SEAMEO) through a series of conferences and publications, and the policy in the Philippines has been subjected to insightful critical analysis by, among others, Dayag (2012) and Martin (2012, 2015).

Classroom codeswitching or translanguaging

A second area in which Applied Linguistics theories have perhaps been 'misapplied' is the debate over the use or proscription of the teacher's and students' shared first language (L1) in the second-language (L2) classroom, especially where the L2 in question is English.

In their introduction to a volume on codeswitching in university English-medium classrooms, Barnard and McLellan (2014) note that in many parts of the complex multicultural world of the 21st century, people switch between languages on a regular, even everyday basis. For example, the Republic of Korea – until recently regarded as firmly mono-ethnic and monocultural – now has thousands of immigrant residents, mostly women and children, for whom Korean is an additional language and who have to adjust to an unfamiliar social and educational culture. In university contexts in a number of

for investigating and rationalising mixed language use by both learners and teachers. Thus, there are convincing reasons to explore the use of codeswitching in university classrooms, where English is either the subject (e.g. English for Academic Purposes), or the medium of instruction (e.g. a Human Geography course taught in English).

Macaro (2014) considers the directions that research into classroom code switching (CS) might

06 S2   You mean example like, they help rebuild a family's house from kebakaran, Miss? Example macam atu? *<after a fire, Miss? Examples like that*?>

07 T   Yes. Helping to rebuild a family's house that was caught on fire or affected by the recent floods?

08 S2   Oh, okay. Thank you, Miss.

The teacher's feedback move in turn 07 demonstrates how the student could have given her contribution in English, without any explicit disapproval of the student's choice to codeswitch in turn 06.

Example [3] is from a Science class at a university in the Philippines (Martin, 2014, p.176)

[3]

01 T What's the main purpose of a valve? What? Dali! / Para hindi ano// *<Hurry!/So as not t 0 1 431P2 497.7*

and agenda for further research, by those based in Southeast Asia, who are best-placed to campaign against such tyrannical publishing practices and against differential access to academic journals.

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