

COMPLETION REPORT

The Filipino Teachers in Japan: "Nonnativeness" and the Teaching and Learning of the English Language in Japan

Dr. Nelia Gayosa Balgoa(+1)

Department Chair, Associate Professor

Department of English

MSU-Iligan Institute of Technology

Title : The Filipino English Teachers in Japan: "Nonnativeness" and the Teaching and Learning of English"

This study deals with the Filipino teachers who work as Assistant Language Teachers (ALTs) in various public elementary and high schools in Japan under the Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET) program.

It attempts to explore and analyze the motivations of the Filipino teachers to migrate and teach English in Japan and how their "nonnativeness" shape and reshape their identity as nonnative English speaker teachers (NNESTs) and Filipino migrants in Japan thereby proving that English learning and teaching is very much influenced by market demand, ideological forces and transnationalism.

The paper argues that the teaching of English, considered to be the lingua franca or most often the international language in this globalized world, can never be removed from the cultural, social, economic or political contexts in which it is used (Pennycook, 2017). From this perspective, Filipino migration to Japan intersects with the dynamics of the politicization of teaching of English, thereby reinforcing the concept of "nativeness". "Nativeness" confronts the idea of who should teach the language, what is the correct way of teaching it and whether there should be a standard English. "Nativeness" problematizes the idea of race and nationality in the teaching of English revealing inequitable conditions of power and reinforcing the ideological issues that emerge from use and spread of English as an international language.

Data were culled from in-depth interviews of 18 Filipino ALTs who are based Oyama, Tochigi, Osaka and Nagoya. Two focus group discussions were conducted , participated in by 3 in the first and 4 in second, in Oyama Filipino ALTs. An interview was conducted in Cagayan de Oro City, Philippines of an ALT from Nagoya who came home for a holiday. Interviews were transcribed and answers of the Japanese were translated. Patterns and similarities and differences from the answers were studied and analyzed.

Confirming previous literatures on the push-and pull theory of Philippine migration not only to Japan but to other parts of the world, Filipino ALTs migrate and decided to stay and teach English in Japan for “better” life” and “greener pastures”. All of the ALTs interviewed were convinced that economically, life in Japan can be better. Whether this betterment is for themselves or for their families, these ALTs believed that the Philippines can never provide the quality of life that they yearn. Highly skilled and highly educated, being an ALT in Japan can either be a career advantage or under utilization of their educational degree.

On the other hand, their being Filipino and therefore their being non native speakers of English necessitates the reconfiguration of their identity; to change their accent to American which is considered to “native” and correct; to be less emotional and not to become close to their students- attributes which they consider to be Filipino. Concessions were also made; to settle for compensation lower than the native speakers and to work extra hours to be considered more qualified and better than the native speakers.

The results reveal that English teaching in Japan, within the context of Filipino ALTs participation and their roles in the educational system of the country, particularly in this globalized and transnational world, is still tied to the concept of race, nation and culture.

Publication of the Results of Research Project:

Verbal Presentation (Date, Venue , Name of Conference, Title of Presentation, Presenter , etc.)

2nd National Conference on Language and Literature of MSU-IIT in Iligan City, Philippines
November 15-17.

International Society for Language Studies Conference in Hong Kong, June 20-22, 2019.

Thesis (Name of journal and its Date, Title and Author of Thesis, etc.)

I submitted a complete article of this research to the Journal of Language Teaching and Research (JLTR) is a scholarly peer-reviewed international scientific journal published bimonthly by Academy Publication. It is still waiting for results.

Book (publisher and Date of the Book, title and Author of the Book, etc.)

None