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Foreign Language Policy and Pedagogy in the Philippines: Potentials for a Decolonial Approach

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The implementation of the Department of Education's Special Program in Foreign Language (SPFL) marked the beginnings of the nationwide institutionalization of a range of foreign languages (FL) in the Philippines, stimulating new sites of inquiry for the field of critical language studies. Many of the languages offered under the SPFL do not share the historical and social grounding of the country's official languages. However, they find common ground with English in the extant colonial framings of language teaching and learning, which have often impeded local agency in structuring or reimagining encounters with the "foreign." As such, this paper aims to explore decolonial approaches to issues that have emerged alongside the promotion and teaching of foreign language classes across all levels of education in the Philippines by drawing inspiration from the decoloniality movement in Latin America and related efforts to de-center knowledge and digress from extant canons. First, it problematizes the implicit reinforcement of the one-nation one-language habitus, paying particular attention to assumptions that guide foreign language policies, materials, and teaching methods that reinforce global linguistic hierarchies and assumptions in favor of "competitiveness." Second, considerations for alternative foreign language teaching approaches and materials are put forward, factoring in the Philippines' sociolinguistic and historical features that have guided its framing of the "foreign," as well as extant challenges in promoting intercultural reflection in an increasingly neoliberal educational setting. Challenges in integrating a decolonial perspective in institutional conceptualizations and policies on foreign language teaching in the Philippines conclude this paper to stimulate reflection on how language teaching may offer opportunities to rethink our relationship to language and interlingual/intercultural encounters.

KEYWORDS: decolonial studies, decolonizing foreign languages, foreign languages, foreign language instructional materials, foreign language policy, foreign language teaching approaches

I. FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING IN THE PHILIPPINES AND ITS COLONIAL AND NEOLIBERAL MOORINGS

The Special Program on Foreign Languages (SPFL) of the Department of Education (DepEd) in the Philippines has been implemented since 2009 to introduce foreign languages such as Spanish, Nihongo, French, German, Mandarin, and Korean, among others into basic education. Coupled with the 2010 and 2017 Commission on Higher Education (CHED) Memoranda on Foreign Languages (FL) that created guidelines for the teaching of foreign languages in higher education, there is a need to assess the potentials and pitfalls of introducing foreign languages beyond English in the educational landscape of the country. The SPFL and CHED Memoranda are particularly expedient with both considerable challenges to mustering resources to fulfill the resulting need for foreign language teachers (Cao, forthcoming) and also lingering issues of how prestige languages are hierarchized and commodified by postcolonial states and neoliberal educational policies and practices. This paper argues that colonial and neoliberal approaches continue to pervade the discourses about language in the Philippines by drawing attention to three aspects of foreign language learning (FLL)[2] in light of the SPFL as well as the 2010 and 2017 CHED Memoranda on Foreign Languages: (1) language planning and policy, the creation of (2) instructional materials and (3) teaching practices within the classroom. If the teaching of foreign languages is to continue in the considerable future, we argue that it ought to digress from approaches that are informed by three principles: (1) the monolingual habitus, (2) colonial and neoliberal framings of language teaching, and (3) the idea that language learning purely consists of communication and grammar as opposed to reflective encounters with the unknown.

II. DECOLONIZING FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING AND POLICY

Practices and assumptions in the foreign language classroom in the context of globalization continue to be influenced by ideas and assumptions that gained traction when mobility, identities, and communication were not as fluid, rapid, or wide-reaching as they are in the present day. Languages that have attained a global reach,

such as English, French, and Spanish, have moved well beyond their original geospatial confines and speakers, acting as a lingua franca, an official language, or minority language in many countries, while serving as a source of linguistic features for a host of intercultural communicative situations around the world (Jørgensen 2008). Nevertheless, such complex linguistic dynamism and displacement are rarely depicted in contemporary grammar textbooks for FL classes, and if so, marginally. Typical FL books of foreign languages instead contain many references to a particular country and speech examples that use a prestige or standard dialect alongside grammar exercises (see Cruz 2017), relegating discussions of cultural and linguistic diversity to a different set of books entirely, if at all. There are practical reasons for imparting a "standard" and widely-understood form of the target language for language learners. However, this presumption has implications for how language students perceive not only the target language itself but how they are socialized into particular expectations of language, language learners, and language "users" in general (see Parakrama 1995). Thus, foreign language classes are arguably characterized by a "monolingual habitus." Gogolin (1997, 41) describes this habitus as:

> inspired by Pierre Bourdieu's use of the term "*habitus*" for a modus which generates dynamic changes in human activity. Bourdieu's theory attempts to describe dynamic relations between the structural conditions of an individual existence on the one hand[,] the individual's activities as a product of socialisation under these conditions on the other hand[,] and as a third field of influence, the endless, and at the same time strictly limited capacity of the individual to act.

The "monolingual habitus" generates sustained actions promoting monolingualism and, arguably, monoculturalism in a community through socialization or "the assumption that the children all grow up within the bounds of the same social class, culture, or ethnic group and language" (ibid., 40). This "fixing" of one language to one culture or a specific set of experiences—espousing a Herderian view of culture as a closed system (Heine 2017, 51)—has largely facilitated the presentation of a language as the "property" of a specific and often powerful nation-state.

Quoting Coulmas (1988, 11), decolonial theorist Walter Mignolo (2000, 221) emphasizes that the treatment of language is mired in the history of assumptions of the monolingual, monocultural speaking subject. The necessity of the monolingual subject often went hand in hand with chauvinism and exclusivism in the name of the nation-state:

> "Language may be as disruptive a force as any culture marker, and it is clear that the national language-ideology has bred intra-communal strife and, in a sense, created minorities in many countries that have established themselves as states in modern times."

Entanglements between language-as-identity, identity-as-nation, and their institutionalization and reproduction under the aegis of powerful nation-states thus provide the background to the notion of a "one-way" transmission of knowledge from the native speaker-culture-expert to non-native speakers and other perceived peripheries rather than a "two-way" interaction of mutual learning of different ways of self-expression and inter-cultural exchange.

First, the persistence of the monolingual habitus can further be observed in colonial languages' problematic status where questions of their belongingness and acceptance in postcolonial spaces have persisted despite institutionalization. In the Philippine setting, Tupas (2003) critically interrogates the difficulties of "non-native" teachers of English as they try to reclaim the language as our own while being faced with the overwhelming "cultural capital" (Bourdieu 1991) of the "standard" varieties of English (Parakrama 1995). This reveals how the monolingual habitus impedes teaching practices that promote bilingualism or multilingualism. Despite the growing recognition of the ownership of English varieties where colonies once stood, Tupas and Salonga (2016, 368) argue that "some Englishes are still more acceptable and privileged than others, thus reaffirming different forms of inequality between speakers of Englishes." In a similar vein, foreign languages taught in the country are subject to comparable conditions and monolingual assumptions in their pedagogy. Non-standard varieties of English treated as "inferior" can, for instance, be likened to biases surrounding the non-native foreign language teacher, who is often viewed as sub-par even to a native speaker who has no pedagogical training, as one can only ever excel in their singular "native" language.

Second, sociolinguistic and historical features of interest in postcolonial settings deserve attention when conceiving foreign language teaching (FLT) approaches and materials. The formal introduction and institutionalization of colonial languages reflected and reproduced power asymmetries that established a linguistic hierarchy between the colonial language and the local languages of the colonies. In the Philippines, the system of public education introduced by the United States championed a monolingual approach to education that punished students for speaking in the vernacular (Tupas 2003). For Tupas (2003, 20), the damage inflicted by US educators' English-only campaign on the attitudes of Filipino people toward their respective languages was numbed by various discursive strategies of forgetting or "imperial amnesia." This led to policies of language planning that continue to exacerbate inequalities and promulgate the same imperial framings of language. This approach to language is further supported by Filipino elites and aspiring elites, considering the many socio-political and economic incentives for gaining "mastery" of the colonial languages in reading, writing, listening, and speaking.

In the present era, the power dynamics engendered by the continued use of a colonial language have influenced educators' attitudes toward local languages in that these are often relegated to a secondary status in instruction and everyday conversation. Local languages are not believed to forward "knowledge," a function often relegated to foreign languages. The association of languages with certain functions, for instance, undergirds the Bilingual Education Policy of 1974 that compartmentalized English and Filipino in basic education in the Philippines into monolingual thematic blocs. Whereas English acts as the medium of instruction (MOI) for science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) subjects, Filipino is the MOI for the social sciences (Bernardo 2008), even though English-language literature still dominates social science literature and research in the country more than forty years after the Bilingual Education Program. This continued separation precludes the multilingual possibilities for all domains, creating an artificial bifurcation of knowledge sources. Thus, significant difficulties ensue when separating "colonial" languages (or even "prestige" languages) and the forms of knowledge expressed through them. The recognition of the complexity of cultures and languages in local, regional, and transnational settings is how phenomena like language death and

epistemicide unwittingly committed by the privileging of certain prestige languages can be addressed.

However, rather than acting as a reflective platform that encourages all forms and combinations of multilingualism, the teaching and promotion of foreign languages are instead subject to the same neoliberal discourses that surround justifications of improving English classes in the country. For example, foreign languages are taught in the basic and higher education curriculum in order to make Filipinos "globally competitive" (see section 2 below), a goal that has only reinforced hierarchical views of language in education. However, a subtle but key contextual difference between foreign and English language teaching in the country is precisely the idea of "appropriation" (Gonzalez 1976, 447). For early proponents such as Gonzalez, the purpose of English in the country was not for the Filipino English speaker to mimic those who speak standard varieties of English but "to integrate himself [or herself] with other Filipinos who speak English and to use English" (1976, 448). Despite existing in the same networks of power as some of the SPFL languages (French, Japanese, German, and Mandarin Chinese being among them),[3] the contested role of English for linguistic expression and identity in the country thus makes it inextricable from questions of the self. It is at this point that the encounter with English differs slightly from, say, French or Japanese: The introduction of these languages creates the point of encounter between the self and the unfamiliar other, as opposed to the self and other possible selves.

Sans the political imperialism under colonialism, languages maintain their prestige through an overlap of cultural and economic imperialism (Villlareal 2004). Nevertheless, globalization and decolonizing initiatives have drawn attention to a feature of language that colonialism and racialized logocentrism effectively suppressed—in the moment that a language spreads away from its context of origin, we witness a dialogical moment in which its teachers act not as translators but as trans-creators, who are tasked with highlighting linguistic fluidities that bridge "local" and "foreign" sensitivities (in a vein similar to the "translingual activism" of Pennycook 2006), values and environments. The necessary corrective to colonial language teaching must thus entail dispossessing pretenses of a singular method, a set of contents, and functions, while eschewing practices geared toward colonial tendencies of benevolent assimilation, monolingual presumptions, universalized or standardized approaches,

and racialized logocentric practices linking a particular language to the advanced character of a certain people. Instead, a view that attempts to transcend these deeply-embedded practices sees language encounters as a transactional site for meaning and identity, rather than reinforcing extant monolingual language ideologies by simply "plural[izing] the object from the same epistemology" (Pennycook 2006, 112). Local educators are thus challenged in such encounters not to decolonize language itself, but to rethink encounters with languages.

Third, the teaching of languages is thus not only a purely communicative or grammatical activity but one that inherently involves cultivating approaches and attitudes toward the "new" and "foreign." Such cognitive and affective objectives undergird Kramsch's (2019) argument for global competence as a new language teaching goal. Teaching languages entails the promotion of the qualities of sensitivity, reflective behavior toward other cultures, the willingness to increase knowledge of the other, among others (ibid.), which may serve as behavioral guidelines toward encounters with the "unknown" within and outside states in the rapidly changing context of globalization (Cruz 2017), particularly in states with linguistically marginalized groups.

Decolonial thought recognizes that the gross effects of colonialism are found along various intersections of religious, sexual, racial, linguistic, economic, political, and social divisions in society (Grosfoguel 2007). This holds true for the complex entanglements of language, politics, culture, identity, and economy being described here. In an article on the epistemic decolonial turn, Ramon Grosfoguel (2007, 211) describes the difference between postcolonial approaches and decoloniality in terms of a "Eurocentric critique of Eurocentrism," on the one hand, and a "critique of Eurocentrism from subalternized and silenced knowledges" on the other, referring to the tendency in postcolonial scholarship to eschew critiques that merely reaffirm the dominance of Eurocentric forms of knowledge, ways of being, and power by reproducing modern or Western ontologies.[4] The decolonial school, on the other hand, recognizes the continuing deleterious impacts of persistent colonial relations after the formal decolonization of the state or modernity/coloniality (Mignolo 2000, 2010). However, the extent that the Latin American decolonial school has critiqued postcolonial approaches—both scholarly and activist movements that have accompanied and even predated this venture

in the form of broadly anti-colonial, indigenous, and West-critical writings (Cusicanqui 2012; San Juan 1998) —must be pointed out.

Both decolonial and postcolonial thinking can be said to have grown out of a common impetus to contest "the colonial world order established by European empires, albeit in relation to different time periods and different geographical orientations," (Bhambra 2014, 119) while undergirding intellectual critiques and efforts at the decolonization or "de-linking" (to use a term from Mignolo) from the coloniality of knowledge and practice within the academe and without. This paper will not elaborate on differences between and within postcolonial and decolonial thought, which has become salient in matters concerning the value of hybridity and the possibility of revival or recovery of non-Western epistemologies (Vieira 2019). Nevertheless, we do wish to draw attention to their potentials in critical approaches to applied linguistics and their intersections with a range of local anti-colonial, postcolonial, and in this case, critical language studies, which have produced works aligned with the thoughts presented here—such as postcolonial Englishes (Schneider 2007), translanguaging (Canagarajah 2011), translingual activism (Pennycook 2006), polylingual languaging (Jørgensen 2008), among others.

In the Philippines, critical language studies have developed various standpoints concerning the "foreign," primarily and unsurprisingly, with the English language in mind. While scholars such as Gonzalez (1976) argued for appropriating English for communicative needs within the Philippines and Tope (2008, 262) for the decolonization of English to "express the colonized's sense of nation," variants of these positions have been contested on nationalist grounds by academics such as Renato Constantino (1966), an early critic of the colonial imposition of English who advocated for the primacy of the native language in early education (1966) and Zeus Salazar (1996), who proposed the same ethic for academic discourses. Despite their heterogeneity, these approaches can largely be seen as critical of cultural and linguistic imperialism. Maldonado-Torres (2008, 383 as cited in Vieira 2019, 154) further "recognises that the task of decolonisation is an intermediate step towards complex and inclusive transmodernity 'beyond the pitfalls of modernity/coloniality'," in other words, context-dependent intermediate steps that are conceivable in overcoming the binaries existing in coloniality. While decolonial scholarship may refer to such processes as "de-

linking" (Mignolo and Walsh 2018), we will henceforth refer to acts that attempt to divest policies, materials, and practices of their colonial assumptions as "decolonizing" to find common ground with scholars and language teachers who are more familiar with this nomenclature.

We, therefore, suggest the need for decolonizing initiatives in the field of foreign language teaching. Beginning with issues related to language planning, we interrogate and advocate for rethinking the fields of language policy, materials creation, and foreign language teaching practices that harness the potentials of a non-native language learning context and intercultural reflection. With this, we hope to forward some ideas toward de-centering dominant teaching practices, digressing from standard themes and diversifying the range of experiences, all beginning with the language educator as the medium of cultural flows.

III. FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING IN THE PHILIPPINES

The colonial imposition of the English language was regarded as a way to quell dissent through the vernacular, as noted by Vicente Rafael (2016, 2). In other words, the privileging of English served two primary functions: (1) to monopolize legitimate speech about the country's condition and future by gatekeeping language use and (2) to grant those with knowledge of the favored language not only the right to partake in the practical tasks of administration but also in discourse (Salazar 1996). Nevertheless, even after the Philippines gained official independence as a nation, English's legacy has endured insofar as it was granted official status since the 1935 constitution. The institutionalization of English through the constitution and language policies thereafter have only reinforced its role as a marker of social status (Rafael 2019). The language's discursive framing as a global language combined with the Philippines' continued reliance on labor exportation and BPO services has ensured that the government can capitalize on a large swath of English-literate Filipinos to compete in the global labor market (Lorente 2013).

This economic strategy of taking the role of a feeder country for the global market has been better served by introducing foreign languages (FL) in the Philippines. FL teaching and learning are featured and supported in varying degrees through the education

sector's three governing entities: DepEd for primary and secondary education, CHED for tertiary and graduate education, and the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) for technical-vocational education and training. This section discusses each agency's FL-related policies followed by the colonial assumptions and tendencies that inform the creation and operationalization of these policies.

The Special Program in Foreign Language (SPFL) is the DepEd's vehicle in delivering FL education. This program aims to produce a "globally competitive" multilingual Filipino learner who is "equipped with 21st–century skills" and can move around in a "culturally diverse environment while preserving his/her national identity" so that the learners may be prepared for a "career, higher education, or entrepreneurship." These goals may be achieved by providing an "enhanced, research-based curriculum, a competent roster of teachers, supportive administrators, and [a] strong collaboration with program partners" (Agcaoili et al. 2019).

The SPFL was instituted in 2009 in selected schools with Spanish as its sole language offering. It was subsequently officially recognized as part of its Special Curricular Programs through DepEd Order No. 46, s. 2012. The program is implemented at the secondary level, targeting grade 7 to grade 12 students who have shown competence in English through their National Achievement Test scores (DepEd 2017a). However, these language courses will be taken by students as electives and are not part of the core curriculum. As such, these courses are allotted four hours per week as stipulated in DepEd Order No. 46, s. 2012. Moreover, the medium of instruction is English or the target language.

To date, its language options have expanded to three Asian and three European languages: Spanish, French, and Japanese were offered in 2009, followed by German in 2010, Mandarin in 2011, and Korean in 2018. DepEd works with institutional partners for each language whose roles are to assist in capacity building efforts, especially in training teachers in both the language and teaching methods, and to provide learning materials. Teacher training activities include providing face-to-face and distance courses on the language and teaching methods in the partner institutions. For French and

Spanish, immersion programs abroad are also available, such as master's degree scholarships in Spain for Spanish teachers. The institutional partners for each language are listed in Table 1. Table 2 shows statistics on the nationwide implementation of the program. Current data on the SPFL show that the program is implemented in 16 out of 17 regions in the Philippines. There is a total of 630 FL teachers and 12,026 FL learners distributed among 254 schools all over the country.

Language	Institutional Partners
Mandarin	Embassy of the People's Republic of China in the Philippines
	Confucius Institute at Angeles University Foundation
Japanese	Embassy of Japan in the Philippines
	Japan Foundation, Manila
Korean	Embassy of the Republic of Korea in the Philippines
	Korean Cultural Center in the Philippines
French	Embassy of France in Manila
	Alliance Française de Manille
German	German Embassy Manila
	Goethe-Institut Philippinen
Spanish	Embassy of Spain in the Philippines
	Instituto Cervantes Manila

Table 1. SPFL institutional partners

Language	Teachers	Schools	Students	Regions
Mandarin Chinese	269	94	2,580	10 (I, III, IV-A, IV-B, V, VI, IX, XI, NCR)
Japanese	92	38	3,020	4 (I, NCR, VII, XI)
Korean	36	18	800	2 (NCR, IV-A)
French	23	12	1,112	2 (NCR, VII)
German	20	9	983	1 (NCR)
Spanish	190	83	3,531	16
Total	630	254	12,026	16 regions

Table 2. Statistics on the nationwide implementation of the SPFL

As seen in Table 2, only Spanish is implemented in sixteen regions, followed by Mandarin Chinese, which is implemented in ten regions. In contrast, German is taught only in Metro Manila. While Mandarin has the largest number of teachers and schools, Spanish and Japanese have the highest number of student enrollees. Compared to Korean, which is taught in only two regions, German has more students even with fewer teachers and schools. This difference, however, could be attributed to the recency of the Korean language offering. Mandarin, one of the more recent language offerings, has since exceeded French in terms of learner volume. Based on the data, more learners are studying Asian languages than European languages.

Established earlier than the SPFL, DepEd's Madrasah Education Program (MEP) also offers the teaching of Arabic language alongside religious and cultural topics. It was first piloted

in 2005 with the aim of engaging Muslim learners through culturally relevant content. The program's policy guidelines are laid out in DepEd Order 41, s. 2017 (DepEd 2017b). Under the MEP, Arabic and Islamic Values Education are taught from kindergarten until grade 6. The government sponsors the training of Madrasah teachers. While access to the SPFL is dictated by students' English scores in the NSAT, access to the MEP is offered only to Muslim learners.

As with basic education, higher education also provides opportunities for students to take FL courses as electives. CHED, which is tasked to regulate higher education institutions (HEIs) in the country, adopts a less hands-on approach to teaching and learning FLs than its basic education counterpart. CHED's approach to supporting FL teaching and learning is embodied in two memoranda: Memorandum No. 23, s. 2010 and CHED Memorandum No. 23, s. 2017.

First, Memorandum No. 23, s. 2010 formalizes foreign language electives in higher education curricula to boost the marketability of local graduates seeking employment overseas. Under this directive, students will be able to enroll in a maximum of six units, or two subjects, of FL. Afterward, the document envisions students capable of communicating with international interlocutors.

Second, CHED Memorandum No. 23, s. 2017 lays out the policies, standards, and guidelines for institutions now wishing to offer a full-fledged degree program in foreign languages. The purpose of instituting a Bachelor of Arts (BA or AB) in Foreign Language program is to create professionals who can work in education, translation, business, industrial, and international institutions (CHED 2017). Graduates of the program must be well-versed in oral and written communication, textual analysis, and intercultural communication, while being responsible, appreciative of "Filipino historical and cultural heritage," and engaged in lifelong learning (ibid.). While the said memorandum grants academic freedom to HEIs to design their curriculum per their aims, philosophy, and typology, it stipulates the minimum expected outcomes for all FL graduates, which can be summarized into the following capabilities: engagement in lifelong learning, language, and research proficiency; communication skills and humanist thinking; as well as personal, professional, and social responsibility. The document also provides the prescribed units, model learning experiences, physical and human resource requirements, recommendations on instructional delivery,

and samples of the curriculum and performance indicators. The recommended means of curriculum delivery paint a picture of the teacher as the source of linguistic and cultural knowledge, imparting knowledge from top to bottom rather than a facilitator of intercultural exchange (see section 4).

Statistics on the teaching and learning of FLs in higher education are not readily available due to the semi-decentralized nature of curriculum development in tertiary education. Degree-granting HEIs for FL and FLT can be found in select universities throughout the country, as seen in table 3. Aside from degree programs, most of these institutions in table 3 also offer short courses. The Department of European Languages and the Department of Linguistics in University of the Philippines, Diliman offer European and Asian language courses under their respective extension programs. In contrast, in the Western Visayas State University, all foreign language teaching to the public is centralized under their Center for Foreign Languages. The Confucius Institutes exclusively teach Chinese, and the Mindanao universities offer Arabic.

HEI	**Program**
Confucius Institute at Angeles University Foundation	BSEd Major in English and Chinese Language Teaching
University of the Philippines Diliman	BA European Languages
Confucius Institute at the Ateneo de Manila University	Masters in Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language
Western Visayas State University	AB in Foreign Languages
Mindanao State University	BS Teaching Arabic BEEd in Islamic Studies and Arabic Language
Western Mindanao State University	Diploma in Arabic Language

Table 3. HEIs with degree-granting programs in FL and FLT

Likewise, TESDA offers FL courses for free through its Language Skills Institute (LSI), which provides workplace-based language training (TESDA 2014). In the current economy, English has become a "minimum requirement" in maintaining the country's competitiveness in labor export, hence the need for FL proficiency to provide distinction and added value to its "products" (Duchêne and Heller quoted in Lorente 2012, 184). Languages taught in the LSI include Arabic, Chinese, Japanese, and Spanish. All languages are taught for 100 hours except for Japanese, which is taught for 150 hours. LSIs are found nationwide across the country's 16 regions.

It can be observed that the official FL policies of the country's education system are undergirded by neoliberal and colonial framings, even while alluding to nationalist and humanist underpinnings. The neoliberal ideal of global competitiveness serves as a common thread in offering FL as early as the secondary level up to the vocational education levels. While the policy rationales do mention nation-building and preserving the Filipino identity, the DepEd, CHED, and TESDA policies demonstrate government support for exporting local graduates by modifying the curriculum to serve international labor needs (Ortiga 2015; Lorente 2012).[5] FL fluency is now a welcome addition to the repertory of skills of the country's human capital, one that allows us to transact with more markets abroad and maintain our competitive edge in the international labor market (Lorente 2012). Lifelong learning is another manner in which neoliberalism finds expression in official FL policies. Paltrinieri (2017) observes that in a market-driven landscape, education becomes a tool by which an individual ensures their employability, achieved through the constant reinvention of their skill set to match the labor market.

The reinforcement of the monolingual habitus, unwitting or otherwise, is best exemplified by the institutional linkages for the SPFL, wherein DepEd is partnered with one government and its official cultural arm for each language. The institutional partners have a pervasive influence in implementing their particular language, covering teacher capacitation, and providing learning materials (see section 3). The institutional partners are responsible for socializing some, if not most, of the SPFL teachers for the first time into the target language and culture. Moreover, teachers' professional development is anchored on passing exams designed to measure their

proficiency in one standard variant of these countries' languages. Such a role in shaping official policy and consequently official knowledge could be offered to other subaltern countries with similar colonial pasts where available, especially in the case of Spanish and French, whose linguistic footprints dominate Spanish America and Africa.

Another facet of the SPFL policy that ought to be challenged is the twofold role of English in the SPFL classroom: to serve as the medium of instruction and prerequisite knowledge for both teachers and students (through National Secondary Assessment Test scores). The policies attribute a gatekeeping function to English, filtering access to FL through English fluency. Such a practice echoes Lorente's (2012) assertion that beliefs about English influence social and political processes that regulate access to resources and impact Filipino's everyday lives. Thus, this requirement favors those who are privileged enough to have had earlier and closer contact with English, while eliding the additive value of Filipino and the mother tongue in the FL classroom.

It is also worth noting that aside from English, the target language is also used as a medium of instruction in SPFL classes. In her interviews with SPFL French teachers, Cao (forthcoming) noted that teachers' initial training in the language lasted for a month.[6] They were then immediately tasked to teach as early as a month after the initial training despite having only reached the beginner or A1–A2 level of proficiency described in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR).[7] These disproportionate expectations are mirrored in the 2010 CHED memorandum where students are conceived as being able to fully and easily communicate with native speakers after a mere two subjects of FL electives, where students, at a minimum, will reach the A1 level of proficiency. Such optimism in the expected proficiency of SPFL teachers and college graduates points to the government's urgency in providing skills to FL students of DepEd and CHED programs, who may then be candidates for overseas labor.

In light of the underlying colonial and neoliberal assumptions and expectations informing official FL policies in the country, it becomes imperative to examine how these policies are unpacked and operationalized at the classroom level, which is a common site for encounters among multiple cultures. The next two sections discuss the potentials for the decolonization of learning materials and classroom practices.

IV. THE COLONIALITY OF FL MATERIALS AND THEIR USAGE

The previous section elaborated on the FL policies crafted by DepEd, CHED, and TESDA along with the colonial and neoliberal assumptions that undergird them. The repercussions of such policies and their assumptions become all the more palpable in the contents and usage of FL materials, which may reinforce not only neoliberal and commercial ideas to foster "global competitiveness" but also reproduce monolingual assumptions—teaching practices more relevant for other purposes or contexts.

While the previous section focuses on policies as evidence of coloniality, even seemingly benign and progressive FL policies deserve critical scrutiny in practice. This section thus focuses on the observance of the following policies in the FL classroom: 1) the Higher Education Act of 1994 (Republic Act No. 7722), which mandates the alignment of higher education policies and plans "with the cultural, political and socioeconomic development needs of the nation" and "the enrichment of our historical and cultural heritage"; 2) CHED's (2017) common learning outcomes for the humanities, which highlight multi-perspectives and interrelations among texts in different contexts, interpretive and heuristic approaches to texts, and proficiency in theories, methodologies, and research skills.

What these policies have in common is a seemingly decolonial potential: The former asserts the value of national identity, which has historically served as a counterweight to Eurocentrism, while the latter appears to guard against ethnic chauvinism by emphasizing various perspectives in the study of cultures and texts. However, whether this occurs in practice is an empirical matter rather than one of stated policy (i.e., one is compelled to ask how these policies are expressed in the contents and use of FL materials, and to what degree FL materials and their usage contribute to divesting the colonial character of language teaching). In an ever more globalizing world where diaspora and media expansion give rise to hybridity and cultural diversity, it is essential to question the agendas brought forward even by seemingly "mundane" tools like FL textbooks,[8] which can tend to further linkages between nation, state, culture, and language, in other words, the monolingual habitus. The issue here, though, is not just representational—whether FL textbooks represent linguistic and cultural diversity and eschew stereotypes—but whether hierarchical dynamics between languages are implicitly reinforced, as referenced in previous sections.

The need to present multiple perspectives when approaching a text or an exercise is a key skill for a reflective de-linking or decolonizing of practices and pedagogical assumptions. On a practical level, this can be illustrated through the issue brought about by one of the FL textbooks (*Nuovo Espresso 1*)[9] currently used at the Department of European Languages[10] at the University of the Philippines, Diliman in teaching elementary (A1 level) Italian. As a foreign language class in a public university, its students represent a broad spectrum of students across social classes. In following some of the textbook's suggested classroom activities and exercises, one of the researchers,[11] who teaches Italian at the Department of European Languages, encountered some difficulties in connecting the presented topics or activities to the students. The chapter on hotels ("*In albergo*") focuses on activities that stimulate typical situations and issues travelers encounter when booking and staying in a hotel, promoting a typical middle-class lifestyle in high-income countries. Filipino students taking basic Italian reportedly had problems relating to the lesson as they had never personally experienced these kinds of situations. With a bingo activity from the chapter on holidays ("*Andiamo in vacanza!*"), the students were tasked to go around and ask their classmates if they did any of the leisure activities indicated in the bingo sheets. A large number of students were unable to finish the game since they did not normally do most of the "typical" activities mentioned (e.g., camping, visiting museums, mountain climbing, taking an Italian language course, renting an apartment, attending an art exhibit, going on a bike tour, among others). The eventual solution was to elicit from the students themselves the kinds of activities they did during holidays instead of relying solely on what the book offered.

These cultural differences in viewing hobbies and leisure are most likely rooted in socioeconomic factors and disparities. In Europe, hobbies are usually seen in a practical and integral sense, either skill-based or based on collections. On the other hand, leisure is associated with ease of mobility and travel, whether local or international. This view differs from how Filipino students generally view hobbies and leisure, most of which are going to the movies, eating out, or sleeping instead of developing a particular skill or traveling in their free time. Even when supposing these differences could foster acceptance, openness, and tolerance of cultural diversity, they may also further render inequalities painfully apparent in classrooms with far less access to disposable income. In the absence of alternative materials, critical reflection, and appropriate teacher training, implementing FL materials such as these may lead to associations between language

and cosmopolitan lifestyles, the exclusion of one's own lived experiences, and the reinforcement of aspirational values linked to labor out-migration and the devaluation of one's heritage, contrary to the higher education policy goals stated above.

Even if these materials often make use of themes reflecting a semblance of everyday life to expose the learners to language used in "real" contexts, it cannot be denied that these textbooks have limitations and do not adequately cater to the needs of all Filipino learners—in this case, university students. Although a far cry from the propagandistic content of colonial-era language learning materials in the Philippines, textbook examples such as the above illustrate how instructional materials, appropriated unreflexively, may foster fragmentation (see Lugones 1994)[12] and can be ill-suited as an interstitial space of intercultural encounters. While they are not necessarily imposed on the class as a primary source material for language learning, they may not often consider flexibilities that a change in context requires.

Further, textbook publishers with a global reach are typically situated in nation-states with one dominant language and, therefore, largely reflect single-nation experiences linked to one particular language or have a "deep-seated habit of assuming monolingualism as the norm in a nation" (Gogolin 1997, 41).[13] As such, they only capture a subset of multiple possibilities of additive language learning. There are certainly benefits to a monolingual approach to pedagogy in many source language countries, which is supported by the practical needs within a largely monolingual environment. However, years of punitive English-only policies in the Philippines have demonstrated that despite the constant development of Philippine English, the ubiquity of creative language mixes such as Taglish and pervasive multilingualism, monolingual pedagogy has surfaced as the highest normative standard of "language" teaching in the country.[14] This does not come as a surprise considering that code-switching as well as bi- and multilingual experimentation is something humans engage in as an art of resistance, an affirmation to being active subjects who are not consumed by the logic of control or purity (Lugones 1994). While we are not arguing that textbooks ought to be multilingual, it ought to be recognized that they are inadequate to achieve either the lofty goals of CHED or to accommodate particularistic cultural-linguistic realities.

Decolonizing FL pedagogy should ideally break away from the notion that language learning is a unidirectional exercise, a "one-way" transmission of knowledge based on standardized (Western/center)

practices. Filipino learners do not exist in a vacuum. They come from a history of being treated as passive receivers of information, intended to "master" a foreign language, English, through non-reflective imitation often "privileging sound over sense" (Rafael 2016, 50) in the name of global competitiveness. To decolonize is to divest language teaching approaches and materials from these characteristics.

We have thus observed that even when the fact that FLT must necessarily be bidirectional—a transactional site (between the teacher and the student) for the creation of meaning, self-reflexivity, and intercultural exchange referenced in higher education goals—the content of materials and the lack of critical engagement with them undermines such policies in practice, necessitating critiques from a practical level.

In sum, two problems arise from center-produced materials that discourage over-reliance on them: First, the lack of interest and support from commercial publishers poses a great challenge for authors interested in materials development for smaller niche groups. This is in addition to the fact that teaching manuals, particularly those for European languages, are often expensive and seldom produced in an appropriate quality for a low-income market, leading to instances of "black market" reproduction.

Second, according to Canagarajah (2002, 135), the West "hold[s] an unfair monopoly over less developed (or periphery) communities in industrial products, [and] similar relations characterize the marketing of language teaching methods." He adds that it is no longer surprising that many teachers from the peripheries tend to believe that the methods propagated by center communities are the most effective, efficient, and authoritative for their purposes. This consequently plunges them into a "vortex of professional dependence" in which periphery institutions spend more resources for getting the assistance of center experts for training their teaching staff (ibid.). This dependence on the center communities or the acceptance of the "superiority of the West" makes itself known in the process of developing the SPFL curriculum guides, during which the CEFR[15] was also employed in the Asian language programs due to the lack of other viable frameworks (Agcaoili et al. 2019). Furthermore, many reservations surround FL teacher training programs precisely because they may serve to further exacerbate existing hierarchical dynamics, as seen in the case of SPFL teachers of French (Cao, forthcoming)[16].

Therefore, the decolonization of FL materials hinges upon the FL teacher's recognition and resolution of these issues to divest language teaching of the monolingual habitus (including the

reinforcement of the role of the native speaker) and the incorporation of the educator's familiarity with cultural contexts. After all, the value of learning languages is not in recycling the functionalist arguments of commercial and neoliberal approaches to language nor asserting and reinforcing cosmopolitan ways of life and standardized approaches. Truly dialogical and democratic sharing of cultures should align with the same values in materials creation and practices.

As decoloniality is a process of liberation, we must rethink these limiting encounters in the Philippine context. Suggested solutions to these issues may be as follows: First, educators challenge the monolingual habitus by acting as trans-creators in the classroom instead of mere translators, thus permeating foreign language instructional materials with local meaning and encouraging the notion that there is more than one way of viewing things. This can also be done when they allow the classroom to transform into a "translanguaging space," as will be expounded in the next section. Stimulating dialogical and democratic sharing of meaning not only occurs between teachers and students but also among fellow teachers. For this reason, associations of FL teachers in the Philippines may be created for sharing best practices and self-reflective activities and materials, thus diminishing the dependency on foreign cultural institutions.

Second, in veering away from a neoliberal and commercial approach to materials development, and in overcoming the financial burden on the part of teachers that may arise from the production of local FL materials, a solution may be to make context-sensitive FL materials available and downloadable online through open access platforms, instead of following the traditional route of publishing materials in print or paper format. While several FL materials may already be available online, central repositories or websites specifically for educators in the Philippines or the immediate region may be developed for the SPFL and higher education.

Third, it is necessary to reimagine the content of these materials, eschewing the perspective that language automatically equates to grammar, and that learning a language is primarily about correctness and exclusively prioritizing its standard form. In employing a decolonial approach that is multi-sided and multisensory in nature, teachers can eradicate the primacy of text by focusing on languages holistically. For example, they can highlight different concepts pertinent to the reality of the target learners (such as migration, poverty, and ecology) and create tasks that offer space in addressing and negotiating cultural differences, which removes both assumptions

grounded in the nation-state and redirects the focus of activities toward direct and personal exchange with learners (see Weidemann 2017).[17]

In becoming mindful and self-reflexive of the restrictions brought about by structural and planning issues in FL teaching in the Philippines, educators develop a self-consciousness that enables the deconstruction, redefinition, and reimagination of the current reality by breaking away from dependency on foreign cultural institutes and their materials or books. In light of this, it becomes crucial to acknowledge and validate the role of local educators and students alike in crafting and shaping FL materials and practices in the Philippines that will encourage authentic and meaningful dialog, enabling true intercultural and transcultural learning.

V. TRANSLANGUAGING AND OTHER DECOLONIAL PRACTICES IN THE FL CLASSROOM

We have so far discussed how the Philippine postcolonial linguistic context has shaped local policies on and programs in FL teaching. Likewise, we have shown how pedagogical materials currently employed in Philippine FL classrooms align with such policies. We have proposed ways by which we can confront the monolingual assumptions that said materials reproduce and address the issues of appropriating materials in their entirety. This section discusses more ways in which the FL enterprise can challenge prevalently monolingual Western pedagogical practices by capitalizing on the classroom as a "translanguaging space" (Li Wei 2014).

FL learning is defined as learning a non-native language in an environment where the language is not spoken and often in a more formal setting like the confines of a classroom (Gass and Selinker 2008). In recognition of FL learning as transpiring in a formal setting with non-native learners, the DepEd recommended monolingual policies at the basic level to expose the students to the target language as much as possible (Agcaoili et al. 2019). In so doing, Filipino teachers run the risk of patterning the classroom on monolingual models, championing the native speakers of the FL, suppressing the local languages, and rendering them and their respective speakers inferior in the process. In any case, DepEd's non-preference for local languages as the MOI is evident in its push for

English as an alternative MOI in SPFL since apart from the target FL, the only other language recommended is English, whose (non) foreignness will be discussed shortly. Marginalizing native language(s) in the FL classroom implies that local languages are less valued compared to the foreign and consequently instills in the learners the idea that they are also less than others[18] (cf. Spernes 2012; Sibomana and Uwambayinema 2016). In a largely multicultural setting with severe resource constraints, such an MOI policy brushes aside any multilingual or translingual approaches.

Other reasons for attempting to teach the FL as a monolingual native speaker—ramifications of the monolingual habitus—would be the idealization of the monolingual native speaker and the idea of the multilingual as having multiple monolinguals in one body, which is implicitly reinforced by the Bilingual Education Policy's compartmentalization of languages into specific subjects. The assumption that a multilingual person is two (or more) monolinguals has long been refuted and cannot be artificially reconstructed in a context such as the Philippines, where even everyday speech involves seamlessly switching from one language to another (cf. Bautista 2000). The suppression of these basic facts of identity and language use in favor of monolingual assumptions that were more befitting of early-twentieth century circumstances in the West and other largely monolingual spaces is not only a legacy of outdated assumptions but insists upon the hierarchy that English, and not a combination of English and Filipino and other known languages, is the only appropriate transitory language to FL, even for Asian languages.

Filipinos are multilingual by default. Given that adolescents and adults learn and make sense of an FL through the languages that they already know (Selinker 1972), FL teachers can capitalize on all their previously learned languages and consider the multilingual mind as a point of departure (Cenoz, Hufeisen, and Jessner 2001). This is nothing new as linguistic diversity is the norm in the Philippines, thereby making the imposition of a single language as an MOI a difficult ideal. Even more so in the case of SPFL teachers, who, as reported in a previous section, have only reached an A1–A2 proficiency level after training. Far from being independent users of the FL, they concurrently learn the FL they are tasked to teach. The translingual use of local languages as the MOI in the FL classroom seems to carry a heavy stigma, as its practice is either denied (see Agcaoili et al. 2019) or unarticulated (e.g., Cao, forthcoming).[19] Hence, the classroom as a translanguaging space (Li Wei 2014)

must be legitimized for both the teacher and student. The process of translanguaging (Canagarajah 2011) or the allowing of learners to draw on their various linguistic, cognitive, and semiotic resources to make meaning and to make sense (Li Wei 2018) is not only beneficial but turns out to likewise be an inevitable strategy that most, if not all, students use in FLL.[20]

Translanguaging represents a step toward decolonizing the FL not only because it subverts the hierarchy of languages and the monolingual habitus, but because it allows (1) recognition of multiple pathways for sense-making, which negates the idea that there are advanced or "more scientific" languages that reflect on the capabilities of the people who speak it; (2) it allows for voices to participate in a classroom that cannot be heard due to either lack of training, competency, or opportunities, rather than silencing them. The decolonial objective is democratization and participation rather than colonial-style linguistic gatekeeping.

Independent from choosing the MOI is the role of the teacher. Aside from offering opportunities for reception and production practice (i.e., listening, reading, speaking, writing) in the FL (Muranoi 2007), the teacher's role is to elevate metalinguistic awareness by encouraging students to access their mother tongues and other previously learned languages, examine comparable linguistic elements and cultural concepts (Jessner 2006), and identify gaps in knowledge (Philp 2003). The mandatory presence of mother tongues hence decentralizes the monopoly of the target FL and empowers all the languages present in the classroom. However, it is important to note that metalinguistic awareness does not always come naturally (Flavell 1987; González 2010). Experience helps a learner know how to use the languages that he or she knows (Jarvis and Pavlenko 2008), a language learning reality that justifies the DepEd's apparent partiality toward English. One of the requirements of the SPFL for both its teachers and students is a certain proficiency in English. Throughout the archipelago, English largely remains a second language learned in school at the elementary level. As this paper resists hegemony, coming to the defense of English may seem counterintuitive. However, it underscores that decolonial praxis need not be synonymous with the boycott of imperial cultures, but rather can be a critical espousal of such hegemony that allows for the bringing of periphery cultures to the fore (see Canagarajah 1999).

Notwithstanding, arguing for the appropriation of an imperial language such as English to postcolonial societies such as the Philippines to participate more actively in dominant discourse, though significant in decolonizing FLT, is entirely beside the point in FL acquisition. This experience of acquiring a language intricately tied up with questions of the self (English in the case of the SPFL), aside from their mother tongues, develops a linguistic consciousness in childhood that creates fertile ground for FLL in the future. Ergo, in the learning of FL in the Philippines, not one language is more important than the other: both English and the local language(s) are equal parts essential.

After having gone through the process of FL learning themselves and having previously acquired Filipino, English, and perhaps a regional language makes Filipino FL teachers very suitable language instructors to multilingual Filipino students. Being proficient multilinguals themselves, they can "draw from both *received* knowledge, gained through training and education, and *experiential* knowledge obtained via the process of language learning" (Calafato 2019, 4). If they subscribe to this multilingual identity, they are most likely to take advantage of affordances unique to multilinguals and possess high metalinguistic awareness, "allowing them to more effectively identify and adapt materials and strategies to suit their learners' needs (Jessner 2008; Svalberg 2016)" (Calafato, 2019, 4). Unfortunately, as previously seen, policies do not celebrate multilingualism but rather continue to promote a monolingual ideology. Favorable experiences as a multilingual are hence negated by experiences in teacher training programs oriented by such policies, with the likelihood of engendering native-speaker norms, thereby questioning their legitimacy and abilities as language teachers. This has grave repercussions as another generation of students inherits these unchallenged colonial beliefs in FL teaching and learning.

Careful consideration of experience is an invitation to critical self-reflection to keep FL teachers from falling into the same linguistic essentialism that the present paper seeks to challenge. This consideration of how biases are passed on in the FL classroom likewise illustrates that language learning is not merely learning grammar rules but rather the learning of ways of dealing with the unfamiliar. If language education is "a practice of *translingual activism*, [where] the traffic of meanings [is] far better served," (Pennycook 2006, 113),

then the FL classroom is a site for negotiation and transcreation of meanings, where language learning serves intercultural goals, not merely communicative ones. With the foregrounding—not the suppression—of cultural backgrounds that students bring to the classroom comes the development of their intercultural competence (van Ek 1986; Oliveras 2000), a competency intimately linked to the learning of ways of dealing with the unfamiliar and the tolerance of cultures foreign to one's own.[21]

The FL classroom is a third space (Kramsch 1993). Here the spatial metaphor of place is reframed as "symbolic competence, an ability that is both theoretical and practical. . . . A multilingual imagination opens up spaces of possibility not in abstract theories or in random flights of fancy, but in the particularity of day-to-day language practices, in, through, and across various languages" (Kramsch 2009, 200–201). Furthermore, it is these "day-to-day language practices, in, through, and across various languages"—extant translanguaging practices—that turn the FL classroom into a space of intercultural awareness, where we likewise "actively transform knowledge rather than consume it" (Giroux 2011,7), and hence where FL users (both teachers and students) are afforded agency. The validation of our multilingual Filipino selves through the appreciation and the legitimization of existing translanguaging practices and intercultural reflection encourages language teachers to think about cultures and how they encounter them. From dispensers of FL knowledge, they become (critical) mediators of said knowledge. The consequences of reframing the constraints presented by the plurality of cultures are twofold: Aside from lessening the language teacher's burden, this poses an alternative way of addressing the lack of government resources in funding teacher training and language immersion programs.

Decolonial praxis in the FL classroom manifests that every educational act is political and that every political act is pedagogical" (Giroux 2011, 176). Translanguaging resists neoliberal constructions of education in the interest of justice and equality. It allows us to reflect on how (much) we contribute to "neoliberalism as an order of normative reason" (Brown 2015, 31) to rethink the standards and standardization that neoliberal globalization has brought about. It is a step toward bringing education back to serving the nation and countering people's commodification in the service of the global labor market. "It is praxis that makes the path" (Mignolo and Walsh 2018, 19).

VI. CHALLENGES FOR FL'S FUTURE IN THE PHILIPPINES

The postcolonial nations that constitute contemporary Southeast Asia, most of whose boundaries emerged as a result of the Western empires' cut-and-paste policy on colonial territories, are unsurprisingly composed of multilingual and multicultural societies. With 183 living languages, the Philippines is an excellent example of the sociocultural and linguistic diversity that characterizes most of the region. In a pluralistic society where "colonial and national tensions are translated into the politics of language" (Melchor, forthcoming), we observe a hierarchization of the existing principal languages.

Given this already strained context wherein regional languages, the national language, and the imperial language are contending actors with varying degrees of ascribed prestige, it is noteworthy to interrogate the *mise-en-scène* of an additional foreign language through FLL. As languages are vehicles of culture, introducing a foreign language signifies the arrival of new ways of being and thinking. Integral to the West's *mission civilisatrice* was the imposition of its epistemologies and ontologies upon subjugated cultures. Despite the survival of most Philippine languages, it cannot be negated that the Philippines' colonial history (or histories) nevertheless resulted in the displacement and transformation of indigenous ways of being and thinking. Within this context, we situate the discussion of FL teaching and learning in contemporary Philippines and bring to the fore its potential decolonial dimension.

What constitutes decoloniality in the teaching of foreign languages in the Philippines? How can decoloniality be articulated by FL practitioners and stakeholders, namely, policymakers, teachers, and students? What are the challenges that deter the full articulation of a decolonial framework in the FL classroom? These inexorably linked concerns were examined in the different sections of this paper and most exhaustively in the two sections that drew attention to the decolonizing potential of developing context-sensitive didactic materials and encouraging student-centered practices in the FL classroom. Moreover, such concerns have been recurrently examined under the themes of goal-setting and pedagogy, both central to this paper.

In order to contextualize and subsequently problematize its current praxis, it is foremost necessary to interrogate the primary objectives that shape FL teaching in the Philippines. What are the goals, and who sets them? As detailed in the second section of this

paper, the two driving institutions behind FLT in the country are DepEd, through the establishment of the Special Foreign Language Program in 2009, and CHED, through the crafting of policies, standards, and guidelines for a BA in Foreign Language program that is offered by a few HEIs. A look at the objectives set forth by these institutions points to a disjunct in their ideation of what we as a nation stand to gain in promoting FLL among Filipinos.

DepEd has created a starkly commercial rationale for promoting FLL among Filipino high school students since competency in a foreign language is perceived to aggrandize Filipinos' employability. This is unsurprising and is apparent in the ample literature on the politico-economic implications of education policies, such as David Michael San Juan's (2016) article on the K to 12 program as a neoliberal restructuring of the education system in response to demands of the global labor market. The plurilingual Filipino who is proficient in a foreign language cannot but become "globally competitive" and "equipped with 21st-century skills," which are also recognizable signposts of neoliberal thought.

This study's second section highlighted the neoliberal rhetoric that underpins CHED's AB Foreign Language program, which is deemed as "a response to the felt need in the academe to develop experts in foreign languages who can bridge cultural boundaries and help the country gain global competitiveness in the region" (CHED 2017, 3). CHED's policies, standards, and guidelines for the FL degree program reflect an envisioning of FLL that is at once pragmatic and humanistic. While the program is expected "to equip the students with the different language skills and vocabulary needed to carry out business negotiations, [and] translate and interpret various types of communications," it is also envisioned to "expose the students to the history, literature and culture of the foreign language" and to encourage knowledge production by enabling the students to "conduct research and other academic activities using the foreign language" (ibid.). The relative autonomy of the few HEIs that offer AB Foreign Language programs ensures the safeguarding of FLL as an avenue for critical elaboration. This is exemplified by the Linguistics Department of the University of the Philippines, Diliman, which offers basic to advanced courses in select Asian languages yet whose main thrust is preserving and promoting the Philippine languages. In the same vein, the University of the Philippines' Department of European Languages primarily aims to develop contributors to the

production of knowledge and cultural mediators who are cognizant of intercultural processes and identities.

In contrast, DepEd's SPFL was designed as a tool to increase the global marketability of the Filipino worker, which regretfully encourages rather than redresses the now longstanding hyperdependence of the Philippine economy on the export of human labor. Thus, the learning of a foreign language figures into the wide-scale tradition of commodifying education. Equally significant is the program's institutional dependence on foreign state agencies, such as embassies and cultural organizations. So crucial is the role that these foreign institutions play in capacity building (e.g., teacher training and materials provision) that DepEd owes them the logistical initiative to institute almost its entire foreign language program. This high degree of dependence brings about two consequences that might slow down the process of integrating a decolonial approach in FL education. First, it ensures that only the languages of nations that are economically capable and ideologically motivated to boost their soft power in the Philippines are represented, as evidenced by the fact that all the SPFL's language options are those of countries that are developed and belong to the Global North (i.e., China, Japan, Korea, France, Germany, and Spain). Second, it precludes an overturn of the current goal-setting dynamic from employing a top-down approach to a bottom-up one. Within the context of goal-setting in FL policy, decoloniality can thus be articulated by prioritizing the nation's intellectual gains rather than aiming solely to serve the global market. However, this is an illusory ideal that probably necessitates a structural shift in the nation's entire education system.

If there are challenges in integrating a decolonial framework in the institutional conceptualization of FL teaching and learning in the Philippines, then there are, without a doubt, equally challenging concerns in its praxis. The obstacles to be overcome in articulating decoloniality in the classroom through a more critical pedagogy are essentially rooted in the myth of the monolingual habitus, which, on the one hand, implicitly reinforces associations between the foreign languages and nation-states, and on the other, encourages a didactic mode based on assumptions of homogeneity among the students. Again, this can be traced to Western epistemology and ontology purveyed through colonial discourse, specifically from early conceptions of the nation-state that privilege monolingual individuals belonging to a homogeneous whole. As Nectoux (2001, 93) puts it:

> In the industrialized Western world, the phenomenon of nationhood is often perceived as a monadic archetype—one nation, one ethnic group, one mythological, historical framework, and one national language—as if the collective mind that created the 'imagined community' had been working with homogenous material. Diglossia and pluri-linguistic practices are presented as deviations from the archetype, rather than the norm that they are. This is not surprising, especially at the linguistic level, as older European nations (especially the three classic examples of France, England, and Germany) have evolved within such a model.

Such an archetype cannot be farther from the lived realities in plural postcolonial societies, where the Western imprint of this mythical monolithic still somewhat endures, as exemplified by the case of FLT and FLL in the Philippines. This myth's operationalization, which arrests rather than promotes the decolonization of FL education in the country, is most observable in pedagogy, as discussed lengthily in sections three and four.

As prefaced in the fourth section, the most evident problem posed by the persistence of the monolingual habitus in the FL classroom is the systemic downplaying of the plurilingualism of the Filipino student. Even the imposition of a single language as the medium of instruction in a multilingual context carries problematic implications not just from a pedagogical viewpoint but also from a political perspective. Instances of privileging the global language to the point of penalizing students for taking recourse in their native languages have been reported. Moreover, the tendency of using the national language to promote a rather Manila-centric Filipino identity, a process that pushes regional vernaculars (and by extension, regional cultures) further to the periphery, is just as problematic. Again, this is rooted in the perceived homogenization of FL learners, which the monolingual habitus promotes, alongside its idealization of the monolingual native speaker. Rather than suppress the plurality of identities that Filipino learners possess, FL teachers must capitalize on the learners' rich linguistic repertoire from which they could draw on as they grapple with a new language system. This can be done by promoting translanguaging in the classroom, a process that proves constructive both pedagogically and politically, encouraging metalinguistic awareness among students and equalizing the various languages present in the classroom.

One major point of contention raised in the third section is the cultural appropriateness of the instructional materials that FL teachers in the Philippines have at their disposal. While FL practitioners and FL policy generally concur that thematizing local culture in the FL classroom and incorporating intercultural content are integral to fostering meaningful learning, "Filipino" culture is loosely defined, if not altogether overlooked. Nevertheless, an encompassing problem is the lack of context-sensitive materials, as most pedagogic tools prove inadequate to fit the diverse contexts within which Filipino FL learners find themselves. Most of these imported didactic materials are perceived by both FL students and teachers to be largely divorced from local realities, thus diminishing the possibility of employing an affective-humanistic approach to FL education. An immediate and cost-effective solution is to veer away from a text-based approach, instituting classroom activities that permit the negotiation of cultural differences. Although a Herculean enterprise within the bounds of a largely neoliberal approach to materials development, a more enduring way to articulate decoloniality in FL education is through creating our own instructional materials. These locally produced texts must be sensitive to the Filipino learner's diverse realities, henceforth challenging the prevailing unidirectional relationship between the native speaker and the "non-speaker," which simultaneously hampers intercultural exchange and facilitates the observed monopoly in knowledge production of cultural and political hegemons.

NOTES

1 This essay draws from a roundtable discussion held in April 2019 at the University of the Philippines. It was sponsored by the Decolonial Studies Program of the Center for Integrative and Development Studies (UP CIDS). This roundtable discussion focused on the possibilities of decolonial perspectives in foreign language pedagogy and policies in the Philippines. It was attended by representatives from higher and secondary education institutions offering foreign languages as well as the Department of Education (DepEd) and the Commission on Higher Education (CHED), who went on to discuss the roles of local educators and the inclusion of intercultural and context-appropriate instructional materials in foreign language teaching, paying special attention to pernicious assumptions about language teaching that reinforce, rather than undermine, linguistic hierarchies and monolingual assumptions in multilingual contexts. The authors would also like to acknowledge UP CIDS funding for the roundtable and publishing an earlier version of this paper. Future references to the roundtable discussion will be cited as Agcaoili et al. 2019. For the earlier version of this essay, see: Bautista, Naidyl Isis, Kristine Cabling, Frances Antoinette Cruz, Anna

Marie Sibayan-Sarmiento, and Jillian Loise Melchor. 2019. "Pedagogy and Goal-Setting in Foreign Language Policy: Potentials for a Decolonial Framework." UP CIDS Discussion Paper 2019-11. Quezon City: Decolonial Studies Program, UP Center for Integrative and Development Studies. bit.ly/cidsdp201911.

2 In the Philippine context, we take this to mean languages learned beyond one's L1s (first language) or native languages, additional regional languages spoken in the Philippines, and English.

3 Spanish, despite its long history in the country, has a limited impact in the contemporary linguistic landscape of the Philippines compared to English, with its speakers confined to a few regions and families (Sibayan-Sarmiento 2018). Similarly, Arabic and Mandarin Chinese, while significant languages for minority groups in the Philippines, are not subject to the same levels of nation-wide institutionalization as English or Filipino.

4 Decoloniality is not spared from universalist tendencies. Indeed, Cusicanqui (2012) has critiqued known proponents of decoloniality for appropriating ideas from the Global South and using their institutional capital to publish widely on these ideas in the Global North. The dynamics of power are thus not broken despite the common articulated goal for decolonizing.

5 The perfunctory translation of neoliberal rationales into actual and sufficient units in the curriculum has the unintended effect of allowing private institutes to amply fill the gap by offering intensive and at times work-oriented language courses (Language for Specific Purposes). Case in point: Goethe-Institut Philippinen largely serves nurses recruited to work abroad under the Triple Win agreement between the Philippine and German governments.

6 For SPFL teachers in Metro Manila recruited in 2009 and 2013, the initial French language course had a one-month duration. Those recruited in 2019 were only taught in a ten-day intensive program (Cao, forthcoming).

7 The CEFR, promulgated by the Council of Europe in 2001, details what learners can do in the four macro skills, from the basic to the proficient levels. The A1–A2 levels describe basic users of the language; at this stage, learners can understand and communicate with familiar expressions and sentences relevant to their immediate and concrete needs.

8 In this article, we are only arguing for European languages, as there are many affordable and locally made materials for Asian languages available in the Philippine market.

9 *Nuovo Espresso 1*, published by Alma Edizioni in 2014, contains approximately 90 hours worth of lessons composed of oral and written classroom activities, a series of videos (on DVD), sections on culture ("*caffè culturale*"), summaries of grammatical points, and grammatical exercises.

10 The Bachelor of Arts in European Languages program of the Department of European Languages in UP Diliman makes use of a combination of FL

textbooks published in France (*Alter Ego +*), Italy (*Nuovo Espresso 1* and *Mi Piace A1-A1+*), Germany (*Studio D* and *Studio 21*), and Spain (*Nuevo ELE*) as principal materials with a variety of supplementary materials, either taken from other sources or created by the teacher. The common topics for the books mentioned in this note—all of which follow the CEFR (which accounts for the shared thematic content) used at the elementary level—are as follows: introductions, travel and vacations, family, eating outside, hobbies or leisure activities, housing and the home, jobs, telling time, purchasing clothes or groceries, common locations and directions (Cruz 2017).

11 Naidyl Isis Bautista, personal communication, July 26, 2020.

12 According to Lugones (1994, 474), fragmentation within a group occurs when "one's interests, needs, ways of seeing and valuing things, persons, and relations are understood not as tied simply to group membership, but as the needs, interests, and ways of transparent members of the group." She defines transparent members as those whose perception is dominant, while those aware of their otherness in the group are referred to as thick. By means of fragmentation, thick members "are marginalized through erasure, their voices nonsensical" (ibid.).

13 This is particularly true for European languages. Gogolin (1997, 41) explains that the monolingual habitus is an intrinsic part of the classical European nation state, specifically "of those nation states which we established in the 18th and 19th centuries and to all nations established in that tradition (cf. Heckmann, 1992 and Hobsbawm, 1991 for reflections on the concepts of nation)." She further elaborates that the establishment of these nation states was accompanied by the foundation of their public school systems, developed for "linguistic homogenisation: the establishment of one national language and of a monolingual national society honouring one standard form of a language. This was seen as essential for the ultimate economic success of the nation state idea" (Ibid.).

14 This monolingual mentality continues to be reinforced through the punitive language practices Filipinos recount then and now. Benjamin Pimentel (2013, 7–8) in his essay collection *How My Sons Lost Their Tagalog* recalls: "When I was growing up in Manila, pretty much all the TV newscasts were in English. When I was growing up, we got fined for speaking Tagalog on campus. Five centavos a word!" The penalty has gone up to a peso for every Tagalog word in more recent undocumented anecdotes.

15 Regardless of how open the CEFR claims to be due to its descriptive nature, we ought to be cautious before applying it across languages, supported by the appropriate data and language or writing system-relevant indices.

16 Cao (forthcoming) writes that the bulk of the teacher training programs organized by the foreign cultural institution was geared toward a generalist perspective of solely developing language proficiency and mastering communicative competence in the shortest possible time (which, ultimately, still harks back to neoliberal and functionalist ideas), instead of focusing on reflexive pedagogical aspects of teaching French

as a foreign language in a different context. Nevertheless, even if these teachers undergo "proper" training by native speakers of French (again reinforcing their role), what is the likelihood that the training programs will not be governed by France's monolingual habitus?

17 Weidemann (2017, 290) argues that paying attention to how class activities are framed offers potentials for creating the "third space"—one could, for instance, talk about the favorite dishes and meals of those present in class, as opposed to representative food of particular countries.

18 UN Charter on the Rights of the Child. Article 29. "State Parties agree that the education of a child shall be directed to [among other goals] . . . The development of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms," the child's "cultural identity, language, and values," and "peace, tolerance, equality of sexes, and friendship among all peoples, ethnic, national and religious groups and persons of indigenous origin." Article 30. "In those States in which ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities or persons of indigenous origin exist, a child belonging to such a minority or who is indigenous shall not be denied the right, in community with other members of his or her group, to enjoy his or her own culture, to profess and practice his or her own religion, or to use his or her own language" (United Nations 1989).

19 It is important to note, however, that there is quite a number of published studies advocating codeswitching practices in Philippine classrooms to teach not only English but content courses as well (e.g., Bernardo 2005, Martin 2006, Borlongan 2012).

20 Though this paper is heavily skewed toward the benefits of translanguaging, we acknowledge that the practice can likewise put translingual speakers at a disadvantage, especially migrants who live in a largely monolingual community—as Sender (2020) points out in her interview on her most recent research project, "The Darker Side of Translingual Speakers." On the one hand, such intolerance is proof that there is yet much activism to be done. On the other, it necessitates reflection on the sociolinguistic limits of translanguaging. As MacSwan (2020, 10) argues, we may accept translanguaging for its conceptual and pedagogical aspects, but "should reject the deconstructivist strain," as it "undermines and confuses critically important civil rights claims related to non-dominant language groups [at least] in the United States." In this paper, we appreciate translanguaging as a practical means for multilinguals to capitalize on their full linguistic repertoire, to effectively and efficiently make sense and make meaning, and most importantly, to confront extant monolingual ideologies in the learning of a foreign language.

21 It is in the FL classroom that students are made aware of the variety that exists not just externally, but within the global language that they are learning: that there is not a single English language but English*es* (see Crystal 2007; Schneider 2007); not one Spanish but many (see Moreno-Fernández 2017). Some varieties are upheld as the standard, such as British English and Peninsular Spanish, while the rest fall by the wayside, such as our very own English (for unequal Englishes, see Tupas and Rubdy 2015; Tupas and Salonga 2016) or the Spanish in America.

Parallel to the didactic concern on the MOI is the question of which variety to teach, which is not a barrier, but an avenue to instill cultural sensitivity. We need not look far: what is collectively called Bisaya is in reality Cebuano, Boholano, Waray, and Ilonggo, among many others. The students' awareness of this local practice of lumping together diverse language varieties may lead to a different appreciation of Mexican, Argentine, and Peninsular Spanish and, possibly, a realization that one is not better than the other, and that it is a context that warrants the "correct" variety. The proficient FL user, after all, adapts his language behavior accordingly (Grosjean 2004), a common goal that secondary and higher education have for the Filipino FL student.

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