

**CODE-SWITCHING IN PHILIPPINE TABLOIDS:  
SUBSERVIENCE AND RESISTANCE IN A  
POST-COLONIAL SOCIETY**

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*What is the link between social values and linguistic features in the real world that students are being prepared for? With the range and depth of cultural interaction in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, our learners find themselves in a multilingual society where the mixing of language in daily conversation finds its way to written work. By analyzing a corpus from the tabloids or compact newspapers, it is possible to further describe the reality of code-switching in the Philippines. The corpus is comprised of seven consecutive cover stories from the tabloid, *Abante*, whose base language is Filipino. The study investigates the syntactic categories code-switched, the linguistic assumptions the text makes regarding its readers, and possible reasons for switching to English. The analysis of the multiple motivations for code-switching conveys a connection between linguistic features and cultural values of a post-colonial society. The analysis from a historical-political context reveals conflicting views on the role of English. As an implication, a multicultural orientation to language teaching is suggested in order to prepare students with communication strategies for diverse multilingual contexts outside the classroom.*

**1. Introduction**

Learner writers should not be acculturated unquestioningly into the ideologies that support particular social orders. Rather, pedagogy should bring to surface the issue of which values and beliefs are embedded in certain writing practices, discourses and genres, and what alternatives there might be.

(Clark and Ivanic, 1997, p. 251)

In their book, *The Politics of Writing*, Clark and Roz Ivanic assert the role of the written word in shaping society through the various and conflicting socio-political values that they carry. The written text is a venue for the struggle for identity. If citizenship is a goal of education, then the

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classroom ought to prepare students for the real world where the contact of ideologies in written texts reflects the rest of the social world where linguistic codes come in contact with each other.

Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin (1995) insist, “language is a fundamental site of struggle for post-colonial discourse because the colonial process itself begins in language” (p. 283). The Philippines is a multilingual country with a colonized history where regional languages are spoken along with the official languages.

In this light, Tupas (1999) notes “the mixing of languages to express legitimate thoughts and feelings emerges out of the entangled ‘realities’ of Filipinos in the midst of global, neocolonial, nationalist, and ethnic concerns” (p. 78). Code-switching is common in the ordinary life of a Filipino. It is not surprising that the mixing of languages in daily conversation finds its way to the written text.

This paper addresses the challenge to describe linguistic features of contemporary texts and analyze what they reveal about the context in which the text and its readers are situated. Bolton (1995) believes that Philippine newspapers are “the most important source for contemporary language... particularly, at a less formal level” (p. 101). According to Tuazon (2002), among newspapers, it is not the broadsheets but the tabloids that have a higher circulation in the country. Thus, tabloids can reveal far more of contemporary language use in the Philippines.

The term “tabloid” pertains to a specific type of newspaper size and quality. Tabloids are newspapers that are smaller in size compared to the broadsheets. Mitchell (1997) notes that in the early 18<sup>th</sup> century Britain, the *Daily Mirror* was the first newspaper introduced as a tabloid, with the term borrowed from the trade name of “compressed, easy to digest medicine” or compact tablets (p. 203). Unlike broadsheets, tabloids often contain sensationalized news and emphasize celebrity scandal and gossip (Cuozzo, 1996, p.7). Thus, they are considered to be the medium of “popular” journalism (Mitchell, 1997, p. 203).

This research primarily is concerned with code-switching from Filipino to English in the tabloid, *Abante*. This type of media was chosen as an object of study because it is geared towards the masses, the ordinary men and women in the Philippines. Because writing for print media requires more planning, language choice is not accidental but deliberate.

This study seeks to answer the following questions:

- What syntactic categories are code-switched in the tabloid *Abante*?
- What linguistic assumptions does the tabloid make about its readers?
- What are the possible reasons for code-switching?

## CODE-SWITCHING IN TABLOIDS

The corpus of this study consists of seven consecutive cover stories of the tabloid, *Abante*. Although there are many sections in the tabloid, the focus is on the news, particularly the headline story, or main article. This research thus does not attempt to arrive at a general description of code-switching in tabloids overall, as patterns of code-switching vary according to domain, or in this case, in different sections of the newspaper.

This paper is located within the theoretical paradigm of world Englishes. It follows the framework of Li (1996) in his Hong Kong case study. Li's discourse analysis describes domain-specific code-mixing by focusing on word class (syntactic categories), compromise forms, and names. Li also provides a taxonomy of linguistic motivations in code-switching. The study aims further to analyze the motivations for code-switching from a post-colonial perspective.

## 2. Background

### 2.1 Historical-political context

Like many colonized nations, the Philippines' colonial history has influenced its linguistic environment. The Philippines first became a colony of Spain from 1521 to 1898. Constantino (1978) notes that under the Spanish rule, education was a task of the parish priests who concentrated only on children learning religion in their local dialects and that there was "no system of national education until 1863" (p. 33). The effort to keep Filipinos away from the Spanish language was the colonizers "way of maintaining social distance, of keeping the *indio* in his place" (p. 35).

Soon, Spanish developed into the language of the Filipino elite. Thompson (2003) mentions Bonifacio Sibayan's observation that it "never became a language with mass appeal... but remained the language of a tiny elite as an intellectual language..." (p. 33). Pinon's (1990) analysis questions the intentions of the elite Filipinos who were behind the revolts in the last years of Spanish colonization: "No racial hatred separated the Spaniards of the ruling exploited aristocracy from the wealthy and most educated of the Tagalog population... [The Tagalogs] felt themselves capable of being equals, actually aspired to that state" (pp. 64-65). However, Spanish as a language of power and prestige was not just limited to the Tagalog elite. Thompson (2003) also notes that throughout the countryside it had been the language of the rich (p. 60).

At the beginning of the American colonial period, United States president McKinley received reports that Filipinos were "uneducated, divided by several local languages, and susceptible to the tyranny of the Spanish speaking elite" (Thompson, 2003, p. 14). The United States, as an emerging world power, reshaped imperialism by taking the 'white man's burden'

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(Crokaert, 1990, p. 47) to the level of social engineering. As a colonial power, it promised to prepare the Philippines for a Jeffersonian democracy that “rested on the backs of hard working, educated citizenry, not in the hands of an elite few” (Thompson, 2003, p. 15). Along with the participation of natives in the American-run government, this new colonization presented itself to the locals as an antithesis to the Spanish rule (Pinon, 1990, p. 68). To make this possible, a public education program was established. McFarland (1995, as cited in Thompson, 2003) notes that there was a plan to use the existing local languages for instruction, but having around 250 languages made this virtually impossible (p. 20). Thus, English became the logical choice of medium of instruction.

Scholars have conflicting views on English education in the Philippines. On the one hand, it is seen as a great equalizer, where both rich and poor had chances of learning and achieving progress (Sibayan, as cited in Thompson, 2003, p. 56). On the other hand, it is seen as a medium of defilipinization: “A single generation of English education suffices to break the threads of tradition and to create a nondescript superficial being deprived of all roots” (Wilson, as cited in Constantino, 1978, p. 67).

Although English was the language of public education, a national census showed that two decades after the start of American colonization, Spanish was still the language of private education. “Spanish remained the language of the elite while English became the language of the masses.” In 1950, Clifford Prator suggested that the power of Spanish was due to its “snob appeal” (Thompson, 2003, p. 63).

With the increasing utility of English and the spread of the Tagalog-based Filipino language due to President Manuel L. Quezon’s establishing of a national language, Spanish use decreased in the country after the Second World War (Gonzalez, 1998, p. 514). The present 1987 Constitution states that Filipino and English are both official languages of the Philippines. Until this day, the Philippines remains a multilingual society, home to over 170 local languages (Gordon, 2005).

Consequently, multilingualism in the country reflects the various cultural tensions and interactions embedded in Philippine history. Tupas (1999) asserts that code-switching does not only occur in the mixing of Tagalog and English – it is not only between the foreign and local but also among regional languages as well (pp. 78-79).

He adds that the reasons why Tagalog-English code-mixing is studied more than other language combinations is that scholars are often either dominant in English or Tagalog, or that they are from a major university in Manila. The researcher falls under both categories and this partly explains the venture into Filipino and English code-switching.

There are a number of studies that explore the mixing of the Filipino and English languages in various domains. Martin (2006) explored actual language use in the classroom, Bautista (1998) examined e-mail exchanges, Dayag (2002) analyzed local print ads, and the language of television hosts were observed by Chanco, Francisco, and Talamisan (1998).

### 2.2 Language in media

Linguistic and cultural interactions are also reflected in media. Ideologies are constructed linguistically in word choices and thus, “the analysis of language can provide insight on how mediation can affect the representation of people, places, and events” (Thornborrow, 2004, p. 56).

Tuazon (2002) wrote that when it comes to newspapers, broadsheets seem to cater to a more affluent audience. This is why broadsheets are usually written in English, while tabloids are in Filipino. “Tabloids are usually directed at lower-class readers ...with an average cost of half the broadsheets [tabloids] enjoy a higher circulation and seem to be preferred by readers in the C, D and E income brackets.” Tabloids provide the busy working class a “reality check” with a concise version of the news (Cuozzo, 1996, p. 7). Mariano (2006) observed that while the top-selling broadsheet enjoys a circulation of 230,000, the top three tabloids (*Remate*, *Bulgar*, and *Abante*) have an average circulation of 610,000 copies (p. 5). Thompson’s (2003) study of Philippine newspapers notes, “to the English-speaking outsider, the Tagalog tabloids appear to be cesspools of sex and violence. However, a closer look shows that they are assuming the role of helping Filipinos improve their lives” (p. 255).

Among the many sections of the newspaper, study of the language in the news section has its advantages. Bell (1991) states that “news is determined by values, and the kind of language in which news is told expresses those values” (p. 3). Furthermore, news language provides commentary on the uses of language and their acceptability in society (p. 7). For instance, from Thompson’s (2003) study of language use in Philippine newspapers, he concluded that Tagalog tabloids present English as “the language of violence, sex, drugs, and various corrupt practices” (p. 251). His findings can be traced to the specific historical-political context in which the corpus of his study is situated.

### 3. Method

The corpus for the current study consists of seven consecutive cover stories that span one week from September 20-26, 2007. These represent the front-page news that a team of reporters usually prepares. Hence, the front-page story is assumed to be one of best-written articles in the tabloid. During the seven days of data gathering, the news was filled with reports on the

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political scandal of the national broadband network deal between the Philippine government and the Chinese corporation, ZTE. The deal was allegedly brought about by corrupt activities involving high-ranking government officials. All cover stories used in this study pertain to this topic.

The corpus is taken from *Abante* (Advance), one of the leading tabloids in the Philippines. According to the Association of Accredited Advertising Agencies of the Philippines, it was one of the circulation leaders in 2002. More recently in 2006, the publications disclosed their estimated number of readers from the number of copies printed daily: *Remate* - 630,000, *Bulgar* - 600,000, *Abante* - 600,000 (Mariano, 2006).

From a preliminary, informal comparison of ten different tabloids, *Abante* appeared to be one of the less trivial tabloids. Among its regular columnists are two news anchors and three senators (Mar Roxas, Chiz Escudero, and Manny Villar). Manny Pacquiao, an international boxer considered as “the people’s champ”, even has his own column. The advertisements seem to point that this tabloid is directed towards the working class. Advertisements include those of motor oil, local beer, and mobile phone budget plans. Although many portions show code-switching and a few articles are written in English, the base language of *Abante* is Filipino.

Code-switching itself can be an ambiguous term. Research in the topic of mixing languages has brought about a variety of terms such as code-switching, code-mixing, diglossia, mix-mix, etc. To simplify matters, this study uses the definition by Poplack (2000): “Code-switching is the alternation of two languages within a single discourse, sentence, or constituent” (p. 224).

This research adapted a method of text analysis used by Li (1996) in his case study of domain-specific code-mixing (code-switching in this study). The sentence is considered as the discourse unit in this study. Then the code-switched items are identified in each discourse unit.

Not all items in each article were considered. For this research, the title and the headings were not considered. Only the body of the article was analyzed. Direct quotations in English were not considered in this study because it was not the writers who chose the language used. Also, they properly belong to the spoken and not the written discourse. The term “Sen.” was not considered because there is no certainty if the abbreviation referred to the English term “senator” or the Filipino term *senador*.

Li (1996) classifies code-switched items according to word class to describe syntactic categories in the corpus. Instead of simply marking nouns, Li identifies nouns and noun groups. Li also classifies noun phrases. Hence, in this study nouns and noun groups are grouped together, but noun groups or phrases are noted. Noun groups are complex phrases consisting of more than one word. This is comprised of noun and its modifiers. Collectively, they act

as a noun. Thus, there is a distinction between single-term nouns and noun groups. This distinction was also applied to verbs and verb phrases, adjectives and adjectival phrases, adverbs and adverbial phrases.

After determining the frequency of code-switching occurrences and classifying them according to syntactic categories, the availability of translation equivalents is described. Then, commonalities among code-switched items are explored. Compromise forms or mixing within word-boundaries are also investigated. Then, linguistic motivations are examined in the corpus. After examining the findings, post-colonial functions of code-switching (henceforth, CS) in English are analyzed from a historical-political perspective.

**4. Results and Discussion**

**4.1 Occurrence**

**Figure 1. Occurrence of CS in sentences**



- Sentences with code-switched items
- Sentences in Filipino

The corpus yielded a total of 197 sentences. The figure above shows that among them 152 contained code-switched items, comprising 77% of the total number of sentences. The breakdown per headline story is shown in the next table.

**Table 1. Occurrence of sentences with CS per article**

Article	Number of sentences	Number of sentences with CS	Percentage of sentences with CS
Sept 20	42	27	64.29%
Sept 21	32	26	81.25%
Sept 22	16	15	93.75%
Sept 23	39	22	56.41%
Sept 24	20	13	65.00%
Sept 25	33	22	66.67%
Sept 26	34	27	79.41%

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Table 1 above, along with Figure 1, presents the prevalence of code-switching in the corpus. Table 1 further shows that in each article, more than half of its sentences contain code-switched items. The prevalence of code-switching in the corpus concurs with the conclusion of Martin’s study (2006) that code-switching is a valid means of delivering content knowledge (p. 62). While her study was concerned with the delivery of content knowledge in Science classes, the present study is concerned with content of news.

As mentioned in the methodology, the analysis did not include direct quotations. However, for the purposes of further describing language use in the research locale, the following figure is presented:

**Figure 2. Language use in quotations**

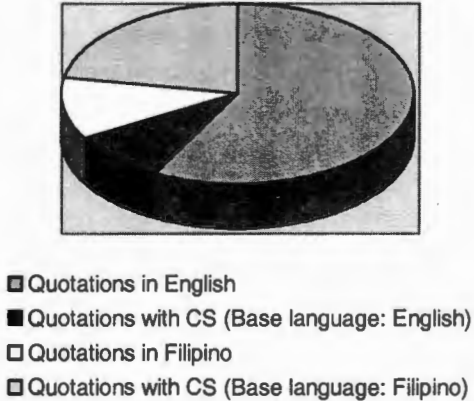


Figure 2 partly explains the prevalence of code-switching in the text. Out of the 45 direct quotations in the corpus, 26 are in English, four have occurrences of code-switching with English as the base language, five are in Filipino, and ten have instances of code-switching to English with Filipino as the base language. If the bilingual culture in the locale is reflected in the direct quotations of speech, then it is not surprising that this, too, would find its way to the written text because writing originates from speech (Daniels, 1995, p. 34).



4.2 Description

4.2.1 Word class

Table 2. Syntactic categories

Article	Noun	Noun groups	Verb	Verb groups	Adjective	Adjectival groups	Adverb	Adverbial groups	Total
IX-20	18	41	3	0	0	0	0	0	62
IX-21	10	41	0	0	1	0	0	0	52
IX-22	6	19	0	0	0	0	0	0	25
IX-23	13	28	1	0	0	0	0	0	42
IX-24	3	14	2	0	0	1	0	0	20
IX-25	6	33	1	0	1	0	0	0	41
IX-26	10	39	0	0	0	0	0	1	50
<b>Total</b>	66	215	7	0	2	1	0	1	292
%	22.60%	73.63%	2.40%	0%	0.68%	0.34%	0%	0.34%	

The table above indicates that within the 152 sentences containing code-switched constituents, there are 292 code-switched items. Out of these 292 items, 217 phrases (coded as groups) constitute 74.31% of what is code-switched.

The use of code-switching in texts makes a statement about the writer and the reader. Romaine (1989, p. 114) asserts that although there is a dispute in the precise relationship between competence and the types of code-switching, switches of single-word constituents occur in speakers with monolingual competence, while switches in higher syntactic levels of constituents occur more among those with some degree of competence in the two languages.

Although full sentences are not the most commonly switched items, there are still much more groups than single-word constituents. Thus, there is an assumption that *Abante's* readers are competent in both Filipino and English languages.

Table 2 also reveals that most of the code-switches involve nouns and noun groups. The following is a representative list of code-switched English words from the corpus coded as nouns and noun groups:

- administration bloc
- corroborative witness
- fixer
- go signal
- neophyte
- open-heart surgery
- presidential husband
- reconciliatory meeting

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solon  
speakership

After examining the nouns and noun groups, a peculiarity in the verb forms was noticed. Because of the particular form of code-switched verbs found in the corpus, this will be discussed in the section on compromise forms (4.2.3)

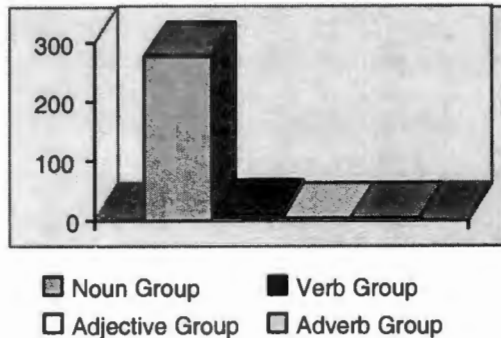
The following code-switched adjectives and adjectival phrases were found in the corpus:

aboveboard  
null and void  
last-minute

As for adverbs, there was only one found in the data: the phrase, “out of *delicadeza*” (*Sentence 11 from Sept 26, 2007 article*).

Figure 3 shows the dominance of nouns and noun groups among code-switched items in the corpus. The findings concur with the study of Berk-Seligson (as cited in Romaine, 1989) that revealed nouns (nouns and noun phrases in this study) as the most-often switched constituents (p. 114).

**Figure 3. Clusters according to parts of speech**



### 4.2.2 Domain

Out of the 292 code-switched constituents, 156 (53.42%) particularly belong to the domain of politics (excluding specific terms like “broadband deal”). Here is a representative list of these terms:

budget hearing  
executive agreement  
government officials  
house leadership  
impeachment  
joint senate hearing  
ouster move

political statement  
senate president  
temporary restraining order

It can be inferred that when referring to the field of politics in the Philippines, code-switching is common practice. The switched terms are political jargon and they are used for precision in meaning. This is expected since the news genre demands accuracy because the content deals with issues of national interest.

Furthermore, a large number of code-switched constituents are found to be positions of authority. There are 95 titles, one-third of the total code-switched items, in the corpus including “Archbishop,” “Executive Secretary,” “Makati City Mayor,” “Presidential legal counsel,” and “Socioeconomic planning chief.” Perhaps a reason for the preference for English terms would be economy. This will be explained later in section 4.4.

### 4.2.3 Compromise forms

In his study, Li (1996) also looks at code-mixed writing within switched items. This can also be explained as “mixing within word boundaries... for example, English words with inflectional Punjabi morphology, e.g. *shoppa* – ‘shops’” (Romaine, 1989, p. 113). The corpus yielded eight items that are written in compromise forms:

*i-corroborate* (corroborate)  
*na-involve* (was/were involved)  
*mai-involve* (will be involved)  
*mag-move-on* (will move on)  
*ma-intimidate* (will be intimidated)  
*magpa-pressure* (will allow oneself to be pressured)  
*i-terminate* (terminate)  
*ka-meeting* (fellow participant in a meeting)

It is worth noting that except for the final item, which is a noun, all are verbs. They are formed by adding a Filipino language element to the root English verb. Except for the terms ‘corroborate’ and ‘pressure,’ the translation equivalents of the other terms are accessible to the average Filipino. For example, *i-terminate* could have been easily translated to *tigilan* or *tapusin*. However, termination seems to have a more specific meaning and impact as it refers to ending a contract. The writers could have chosen to use the direct English equivalents for these words, but perhaps that would require a longer English translation, making the compromise form the best possible alternative.

#### 4.4 Linguistic motivation

##### 4.4.1 Specificity

The previously mentioned example of choosing to use the term *terminate* because of its more appropriate connotation is probably motivated by specificity. Li (1996) notes that many scholars attribute lexical borrowing to a lack of equivalence of the term in the foreign language and the mother tongue (p.83). One will be more or less specific than the other. Morrow adds “loanwords allow speakers to express certain nuances, which could not be expressed by the [native] word” (as cited in Li, 1996, p. 83).

##### 4.4.2 Availability

Related to specificity is the issue of availability, or the lack of a translation equivalent in a local language (p.83). Out of the 292 code-switched items, 61 (20.89%) do not have Filipino translation equivalents. The lack of availability is primarily found in three terms. The first term is “broadband.” This is a contemporary technology-specific term that is not in the Filipino language vocabulary. Consequently, other items that have to do with “broadband” will not have Filipino translations (i.e. “broadband deal,” “National Broadband Network (NBN) deal,” “NBN project”). This accounts for 41 code-switched items.

The second term is “ZTE”. This refers to Zhong xing Telecommunication Equipment (ZTE) Corporation,” the international name of the Chinese company □□□□.

The third term is “golf.” Since this is a sport of western origin, it does not have an equivalent Filipino language term. There are two code-switched items in the corpus that have this: “golf course” (*Sentence 4 from Sept 26, 2007 article*) and “golfing buddies” (*Sentence 5 from Sept 26, 2007 article*).

##### 4.4.3 Style

Romaine (1989) contests this idea of lack of availability because “it is often the case that switching occurs most often for items which people know and use both languages. It is also true that one of the most-common discourse functions of code-switching is to repeat the same thing in both languages” (p. 132). It is not that the terms are likely to be missing in the local language. Code-switching is employed in spite of knowing the equivalent in the host language as a matter of word choice or style.

The findings of the present study concur with Romaine’s (1989) study on Punjabi and English languages in the United Kingdom where speakers code-switch in spite of knowing the equivalent in their native language. Romaine (1989) also notes that her data showed the repetition of the Punjabi equivalent along with the English in the same speech event (p. 133). This also

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occurs occasionally across the corpus. The following code-switched terms appear in the September 20, 2007 article, along with their Filipino equivalents:

- chief executive – *punong ehecutibo*
- first gentleman – *unang ginoo*
- house speaker/speaker – *lider ng kongreso*
- majority bloc – *kaalyado ng pangulo*
- mayor – *alkalde*
- project – *proyekto*
- speakership – *liderato ng kamara*

### 4.4.4 Linguistic creativity

Li (1996) mentions linguistic creativity as a reason for code-switching in texts. “English expressions are preferred because they bear intrinsic rhetorical features... [these] include alliteration and internal rhyming” (p. 97). There seems to be no instance when linguistic creativity appeared to be a motive for code-switching. Since the text in the corpus is news writing, perhaps creativity is of less importance in that particular section.

### 4.4.5 Principle of economy

Aside from creativity, Li (1996) mentions the principle of economy. The term in the foreign language is shorter and simpler than the term in the native language (p. 99). This is important to note especially in newspapers where space has a price tag. Included among the code-switched items in the corpus are 24 abbreviated terms. Compare the following abbreviated English terms to their Filipino language counterparts:

**Table 3. Economized terms**

Abbreviated term	Unabbreviated variation	Filipino equivalent
Atty.	Attorney	Abogado
COMELEC chairman	Commission on Elections chairman	Puno ng Komsiyon sa Halalan
Socioeconomic planning sec.	Socioeconomic planning secretary	Kalihim para sa Pagaplanong Sosyo-Ekonomiko

In the first example it is obvious that “Atty.” is a much shorter term than *abogado*. In the second example, “COMELEC chairman,” the Filipino language equivalent is longer, even longer than the unabbreviated version in English. However, the abbreviation COMELEC could only be used in

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reference to the English term. In the third example, the unit “sec.” is used as part of the phrase “socioeconomic planning sec.” The phrase in itself is already lengthy but it is not as long as *Kalihim para sa Pagplanong Sosyo-Ekonomiko*.

Although not all titles are abbreviated, the choice to switch to English made the abbreviation and shortening of the printed word possible. Perhaps economizing space may not necessarily be the reason for abbreviation but their use points to the simplified presentation of the content of the words.

Because most code-switched terms are political jargon, economy is one reason why the English terms are used at the expense of the Filipino language equivalent. Although it does not apply to all, most government agencies and officials have titles and names in Filipino that are longer than their English counterparts.

However, the principle of economy might not be the case since political terms are often mentioned in English. Even in Filipino conversations, the English term of president seems to be used more than *pangulo*, perhaps that because the latter term sounds less modern. But there might be reasons deeper than that, as explored in the following section on macrolinguistic factors.

### 4.4 Macrolinguistic factors

#### 4.4.1 English as a language of power

The findings in the previous section lend themselves to a post-colonial analysis. Given that most code-switched items are related to politics and authority, a further analysis can be made in the light of the historical-political context in which the corpus is situated.

Thompson’s (2003) study found that English is used sparingly in the news and opinion sections of tabloids where most English terms denote crimes, dishonesty, and sex. He asserts that “from the viewpoint of the Tagalog speakers, English is not the language of noble activities but of decadence” (p. 248).

The present study yielded related but different results. The subject matter of the seven cover stories is a case on alleged corruption. However, most code-switched terms involve nouns that denote power. Why do writers switch from Filipino to English when referring to political terms? Since the corpus is taken from a tabloid that caters to the masses, it seems that this practice of switching to English when referring to such terms is socially accepted.

Since the Philippines has two official languages, Filipino and English, all government institutions and positions have their translation equivalents in both languages. This is important to note since most code-switched items in

the corpus pertain to Philippine politics. An example from outside the corpus would be the Philippine Science High School, a government-run school which also carries the name *Mataas na Paaralan ng Pilipinas sa Agham*. The school paper even uses both acronyms -- PSHS and MPPA. Within the corpus, the name of the government institution, Commission on Elections, has a Filipino equivalent *Komisyon sa Halalan*.

### 4.4.2 English as a language of subservience

The preference for the English terms instead of their Filipino counterparts, especially for the nouns that pertain to positions of authority, reflect a continued attitude of subordination towards the previous colonial masters, the Americans. Power is associated with English more than Filipino. It is a sign of a prevailing English linguistic imperialism, which Phillipson (1997) defines as English language dominance “asserted and maintained by the establishment and continuous reconstitution of structural and cultural inequalities between English and other languages” (p. 47).

In Tollefson’s 1986 study, he noted that the emphasis on English language use during the martial law years from 1972 to 1983 under deposed Philippine dictator Ferdinand Marcos showed how English causes “social divisions that serve an economy dominated by small Philippine elite and foreign economic interests” (cited in Pennycook, 1995, p. 40). In the corpus, the choice of English for nouns pertaining to power points to a divide between the dominantly Filipino-speaking masses and the English-speaking ruling class. Also, note Figure 2 that describes the direct quotations found in the corpus. Out of the 45 quotations spoken by public officials, 26 are in English and 10 contain items switched to English with Filipino as the base language. Code-switching to English accentuates the inequality between the dominant classes in Philippine society and the masses, which happen to be the target readers of the Filipino language-based tabloid.

### 4.4.3 English as a language of resistance

However, one may ask – would the use of the Filipino equivalents promote equality? Why not Filipino? Why prefer ‘attorney’ to *abogado* or ‘Department of Foreign Affairs’ to *Kagawaran ng Ugnayang Panlabas*? Do the Filipino equivalents connote anything contrary to equality? The Filipino equivalent of attorney is a borrowed word from Spanish, the language of the Philippines’ first colonizers. Perhaps terms like *abogado* and other Filipino translations of authority-related jargon seem to have a negative connotation since they are archaic. Such terms may invoke the collective memory of Spanish colonization. Contrary to the prior analysis of English as a language of subservience, it can also be viewed as a language of resistance. Although

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English continues linguistic imperialism, it is also a form of cultural and linguistic emancipation (Gonzalez, 1976, p. 454).

Tupas (as cited in Bautista, 1998) claims that Filipinos code-switch because of their “multiplicity of identities and desire to struggle against hegemonizing forces” (p. 30). In this case, English is used as the resisting language against the memory of the Spanish colonial past where passive Filipinos would discuss their experiences of oppression in the vernacular. This is in contrast to the active Spanish-speaking elite who constituted the “special sub-domain of protest’ demanding independence” (Thompson, 2003, p. 17). This passivity of the “colony of exploitation” (Lebon, 1990, p. 23) under Spanish colonial rule is something that we do not want to remember.

Kachru (1995) notes that English, as a post-colonial language, has a capacity to neutralize. Neutralization is defined as “a linguistic strategy used to unload a linguistic item from its traditional, cultural and emotional connotations by avoiding its use and choosing its item in another code” (p. 292). English thus can serve as a filter from negative connotations of political jargon in Filipino.

Furthermore, and ideologically in direct contrast to the first view of the language of imperialism, the choice of English for terms denoting power points to English as a language of democracy. Historically, the American occupation gave Filipinos government participation and systematized public education, both of which the former colonizers deprived the natives of, and aside from that, the promise of independence (Constantino, 1978, p. 66; Piñon, 1990, p. 68). As mentioned earlier, English developed into a language of the masses as a result of these social, cultural, and political factors.

English was made into an official language in 1935 alongside Spanish. It was only in 1939 that Tagalog-based Pilipino was proclaimed as the *Wikang Pambansa* (national language). Years went by and the colonizer’s language was slowly nativized into a valid new English, Philippine English (Bautista and Gonzalez, 2006, p. 130). Perhaps the link between democracy and the English language is so strong that English is the preferred language for political terms, even among the masses who also have an ownership of the English language, and who constitute the target audience of the tabloid.

### 4.4.4 Linguistic schizophrenia

English is a language of both democracy and imperialism. It can suppress and empower. The ambivalent role and contrasting views towards English in the Philippine setting are symptomatic of what Kachru (1994) describes as linguistic schizophrenia, where “one view considers hegemony of English as cultural and linguistic imperialism,” while the other “considers English as part of the local and literary traditions” (p. 116). These two



perspectives directly oppose each other, yet they exist in the same speech community. In understanding the case of linguistic schizophrenia in the Philippines, it is important to take note of the country's unique historical-political context.

First, the Philippines did not have a strong pre-colonial civilization. The communities were divided. Hence, Filipino historian Renato Constantino (1978) asserts that there was no nation before Spanish colonization. A national consciousness began to develop as a result of the shared experience of colonial oppression (p. 213). Second, the country was ruled by two colonizers. English entered the picture after the Spanish colonization and during the American regime that was described by Thompson (2003) to have borne the image of "humanitarian imperialism" (p. 13). As expected in a society where English has developed from a colonizing to a prestige language, "a complex pattern of acceptance exists in [the target culture]" (Kahane, 1982, p. 235).

While English as a language of power symbolizes resistance to Spanish colonization and the memory of having no freedom, it also symbolizes American linguistic and cultural imperialism. Historically, the dominance of English in public education came before the arrival of Filipino. The language of Philippine nationhood is problematic. Having no prior consciousness of nationhood before colonization, a unifying language among divided communities was not established. The Spanish-speaking Tagalog elite who led what is known as the Philippine Revolution does not represent the entire country. Constantino (1978) asserts that "the real base of Filipino culture must be sought in the continued struggle of the people against colonial oppression and the pervasiveness of poverty" (p. 213) English finds itself in a unique position. On one hand, it manifests the triumph of democracy over Spanish feudalism and the opportunity for progress. On another hand, it is a medium of imperialism and economic stratification.

### 5. Conclusion

This paper shows that within a corpus of newspaper articles from a Philippine tabloid, code-switching is a common occurrence. Indeed, switched items are found in most sentences. Most of these items are noun groups that denote political power and authority. The use of code-switching beyond the level of single-word constituents indicates that *Abante* exhibits a linguistic assumption that its readers, who are mostly from classes C, D, and E, are competent in both Filipino and English languages. The present study also discusses how the issues of specificity, availability, style, and economy are multiple motivations for code-switching. The findings were further analyzed from a post-colonial perspective. The analysis reveals conflicting roles of English as a language of power for both subservience and resistance. The

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complexities of the role of English are embedded in the unique historical-political context of the twice-colonized Philippines and its problematic sense of national consciousness.

Given this indication that the Philippines is indeed a multilingual and multicultural community where socio-cultural norms and attitudes shape linguistic choices, there is a need to re-examine the goals of English language teaching. The audience that *Abante* addresses is the ordinary Filipino, the kind that students meet outside the classroom. Students presently find themselves in a historical milieu where tensions in language education exist because of seemingly opposing realities of the need for decolonization and globalization (Canagarajah, 2005, p. 196). After this examination of identity, politics, and power, how can we make students engage in a critical relationship with texts and various forms of colonial masters that threaten personal and national identity decades after colonialism has gone?

Canagarajah (2006) asserts that, “postmodern globalization may require us to develop in our students a multilingual and polyliterate orientation to writing” (p. 587). He then proposes new goals for the higher-level composition classes: Instead of being prepared for a homogenous audience, students must be taught to shuttle between various audiences in ways that are appropriate and relevant. Instead of focusing on grammatical accuracy, students must learn communicative strategies for diverse contexts (p. 593). Through this, they are able to maintain their identity while adapting to the needs of a multicultural audience who have various historical-political contexts that influence their linguistic choices.

In order for post-colonial language education to be effective, it is the teachers who must first be critical of the struggles of identity, power, and nationhood that serve as the fire that forged a text. Otherwise, teaching would end up barren and cold. In the words of Clark and Ivanic (1997),

Treating writing as a ‘decontextualised,’ neutral technology does not prepare students for the real demands that are placed on them when they write in everyday life. Further, it robs them of its social power, which is what makes it really worth learning. (p. 232)

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