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The Coloniality of Neoliberal English: The Enduring Structures of American Colonial English Instruction in the Philippines and Puerto Rico

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This article highlights two relationships in regards to neoliberalism and second language. First, it examines the connection between English and neoliberalism. It focuses on the idea of English as a global language and the linguistic instrumentalism (Kubota, 2011; Wee, 2003) of English as a necessary tool for economic viability in the globalized market. Second, it explores this relationship by tracing English in the contemporary neoliberal context to the history of English as an element of overseas colonial rule. It employs Peruvian sociologist Anibal Quijano's notion of coloniality of power (2000) to illustrate that the colonial context of neoliberal global English serves not merely as a historical legacy but as an enduring structure of oppressive power that continues to establish hierarchical difference through linguistic othering.

This article highlights the historical context of colonial English instruction to demonstrate how English imposition served as the foundation for the neoliberal privileging of English as a global language. Specifically, it presents the cases of American colonial English instruction in Puerto Rico and the Philippines as a developmental link to the current neoliberal status of global English. It illuminates how American colonial administrations established English instruction in a manner that mystified its imposed nature and the context of conquest. This article thus depicts both how English is bound with neoliberalism and how claims of global English's neutrality belie the historic colonial inequalities, which created the conditions for its existence. It concludes with an examination of the coloniality of global English and the enduring colonial structures of hierarchical difference established through English.

Sooner or later all the business and commercial transactions of this island will be with the United States, and the people are even now attempting to become familiar with our language, and the quickest and most certain method of transferring its language is through the coming generation and through the public schools.

-Insular Affairs Commission, Puerto Rico, 1899

English is the lingua franca of the Far East...It will be more used within the next ten years, and to the Filipino the possession of English is the gateway into that busy and fervid life of commerce, of modern science, of diplomacy and politics in which he aspires to shine.

- David P. Barrons, Superintendent of Public Instruction, Philippines, 1904

INTRODUCTION

Calling the customer service number for American business operations increasingly results in an international conversation with an overseas labor contractor. Often times, the customer service agent is a Filipino worker, one of many in the numerous call centers that have redefined Metro Manila's Makati district. In fact, the Philippines is now home to most of the world's call center workers. In 2011, the *New York Times* reported, "More Filipinos—about 400,000—than Indians now spend their nights talking to mostly American consumers," detailing how "companies like AT&T, JP Morgan Chase and Expedia have hired call centers here, or built their own." (Bajaj, 2011, n.p.)

The transformation of Manila into an overseas outgrowth of American businesses, and other predominantly western corporations, serves as a tangible representation of the contemporary "global economy." Filipino call center workers adjust their lives according to U.S. time, getting off work when the rest of the archipelago's residents are just beginning their day. Many restaurants, cafes, and bars in Makati stay open 24 hours, serving happy hour at 8am. Looking at the case of the Philippines, it is apparent that globalization—and its neoliberal foundations of deregulation and economic borderless-ness—is alive and well. To be clear, I refer to Harvey's (2005) definition of neoliberalism as the political economic principal which purports that a system—sanctioned by the state—of free market competition, trade, and the privatization of public goods will best enhance human well-being (p. 2).

However, it is another element of neoliberalism that makes the global outsourcing of labor to the Philippines possible and desirable: the dominance of English as a global language. More specifically, the country's contentious history with the English language, as established through U.S. colonialism, has continued to position the Philippines vis-à-vis the West as a site for cheap labor. "It helps that Filipinos learn American English in the first grade," noted the *New York Times* article, "eat hamburgers, follow the N.B.A. and watch the TV show "Friends" long before they enter a call center" (Bajaj, 2011, n.p.). The role of English in this former American colony, then, provides an important revelation, highlighting the connections between neoliberal globalization—and its complementary concept of global English—to the historic power structures of colonialism.

In this article, I locate the current global growth of English within the framework of coloniality—defined as "long-standing patterns of power that emerged as a result of colonialism, but that define culture, labor, intersubjective relations, and knowledge production well beyond the strict limits of colonial administration" (Maldonado-Torres, 2010, p. 97)—to highlight two relationships in regards to neoliberalism and second language. First, I examine the connection between English and neoliberalism, focusing on the idea of English as a global language and the linguistic instrumentalism (Kubota, 2011; Wee, 2003) of English as a necessary tool for economic viability in the globalized market. Second, I explore this relationship by tracing English in the contemporary neoliberal context to the history of English as an element of overseas colonial rule. Specifically, I present the historical cases of American colonial English instruction in the Philippines and Puerto Rico, the latter of which remains a commonwealth of the U.S. and has been referred to as the "oldest colony in the new world" (Monge, 1997). I highlight these cases to provide detailed accounts of the co-constituting histories of American conquest and U.S. overseas English instruction and to illuminate how colonial English imposition served as the foundation for the neoliberal privileging of English as a global language.

I argue that rather than exemplifying a neutral language of international communication, the global domination of English during the contemporary era of neoliberalism evidences coloniality, as it continues a colonial pattern of language and power beyond the period of formal colonial administration. After examining the historical cases of colonial English in the Philippines and Puerto Rico, I find that American colonial administrations established English instruction in a manner that mystified its imposed nature and the instructional backdrop of conquest. I demonstrate how the colonial policies of English instruction normalized colonial occupation and the unequal dimensions of imperial power that initiated the global spread of English. I then illuminate how the colonial dynamics of language, power, and invisibilization persist in the current period, neutralizing the neoliberal global privileging of English as merely a factor of being “in the right place at the right time” (p. 110), as David Crystal (1997) notes in *English as a Global English*¹.

This article, therefore, depicts both how English is bound with neoliberalism and how claims of global English’s neutrality belie the historic colonial inequalities, which created the conditions for its existence. It illustrates that the colonial context of neoliberal global English serves not merely as a historical legacy but as an enduring structure of coloniality that, when not critically examined, continues to establish hierarchical difference through linguistic and racial othering. It makes the case, then, that by situating neoliberal employments of global English within the framework of coloniality, we can begin to intervene in the longstanding colonial curriculum of English as an imperial pedagogy for invisibilizing conquest, creating a break in the historical process, and opening up opportunities for decolonial options (Kumaravadivelu, 2014). Thus, pedagogical implications include an explicit and intentional effort to make visible the dynamics of coloniality and the histories of colonial conquest in which English instruction has been encapsulated, the de-naturalization of the rhetoric of English as linguistic instrumentalism in the global marketplace, and, relatedly, the active centering of English teaching strategies on decolonial techniques for liberatory language practice by linking English lessons to supporting community justice projects.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND METHODOLOGY

This work draws from theories of coloniality established by scholars from and of the Latino Caribbean diaspora. Coloniality as a concept is located within Peruvian sociologist Anibal Quijano’s (2000) notion of the “*colonialidad del poder* [coloniality of power].” This notion asserts that what we now understand as the Americas were produced “as the first space/time of a new model of power of global vocation” during the first period of global conquest, “and both in this way and by it became the first identity of modernity” (p. 533). This new model of power consisted of at least two axes. “One was the codification of the differences between conquerors and conquered in the idea of ‘race,’ ” which established physical markers of difference as a justification for domination and which “the population of America, and later the world, was classified within the new model of power” (p. 534). The second axis was capitalism, or “the constitution of a new structure of control of labor and its resources and products...around and upon the basis of capital and the world market” (p. 534).

¹ See also Selma K. Sonntag’s (2003) investigation of Crystal’s declaration in regards to the role of place and time in gaining a nuanced understanding of the politics and culture of global English. “While we do not necessarily need to join in Crystal’s celebration,” Sonntag notes, “we can agree that focusing on specifics of place and time can be productive in the study of the politics of global English” (p. 1).

From this concept, coloniality emerged as a vocabulary to express the hegemonic structures of power first established through the conquest of the Americas and normalized through the mechanisms of settler colonialism and colonial administration, structures which continue to shape our contemporary institutions, global practices, and individual livelihoods. It also refers to the dependent relationship between modernity and systems of domination. As Mignolo (2000) notes, coloniality is “quite simply, the reverse, and unavoidable side of ‘modernity’—its darker side, like the side of the moon we do not see when we observe it from earth” (p. 22). Coloniality was enacted through the assertion of Eurocentric models of knowledge, with language and literacy serving as primary vehicles for instating notions of European superiority and disseminating ideologies of race and human inferiority (Mignolo, 2003).

I find the framework of coloniality to be useful for the analysis of neoliberalism and English for two reasons. First, it demonstrates the foundational relationship between neoliberal ideology/practices and the colonial conditions from which they sprang forth. This allows us to understand that despite the end of formal colonial administration and the idea of post-colonialism (as well as the closely related notion of the “post-racial society”), colonial relations of power (and, thus, racial inequality) still exist. Second, coloniality is useful in the way it highlights the centrality of knowledge production and language in establishing hegemonic systems of power. In other words, as I will demonstrate in this article, coloniality illuminates the darker side of modern global English, the side that has been hidden precisely through histories of colonial language imposition. Indeed, the realm of language is of critical concern in this framework.

In using coloniality as a lens for analyzing educational policy, Shahjahan (2013) explains that it “refers to an enduring logic of domination” and references Mignolo to highlight how the logic is “‘disguised in the language of salvation and progress...and being good for everyone’” (as cited in Shahjahan, 2013, p. 679). It is a pattern, Shahjahan finds, perpetuated through current educational practices: “This language of salvation and progress is central in the justification of educational policy today” (p. 679). In this article, I examine language on the level of English policies and practices. I also examine language on a historical level, focusing on English as a hegemonic tool for normalizing colonial ideology through notions of “progress,” as demonstrated through the colonial campaigns of “Benevolent Assimilation” in the Philippines and “Americanization” in Puerto Rico. Relatedly, I draw from Harvey’s critical definition of neoliberalism to exemplify the manner in which English is entrenched in Shahjahan’s notion of “the language of salvation,” and demonstrates coloniality by representing oppressive relations of power as serving the best interest of human well-being. Through the historical cases of English instruction in the Philippines and Puerto Rico, I illustrate how neoliberal economies of English create deleterious effects for the human well-being of many of the world’s speakers, especially those from the Global South, despite the long running history of colonial promises of salvation. This work, therefore, contributes to the newly-developing literature on English instruction, colonialism, coloniality, race, and decolonial strategies. Additionally, it draws from a larger project in which I investigate U.S. empire and the colonial policy of English in the Philippines as instructions for invisibilizing the violence of occupation.

I employed historical research methods and analysis to provide a brief portrait of the colonial cases of English instruction in the Philippines and Puerto Rico in this article. Data sources for the case studies include primary and secondary materials regarding the establishment of the system of American schools in the islands, the English policies, and the

American teachers. Primary sources include materials located during archival fieldwork conducted at the José Rizal Library in Ateneo de Manila University, Philippines; the National Archives at College Park, Maryland; and the Bancroft Library at the University of California, Berkeley. The American Historical Collection, the Records of the Bureau of Insular Affairs, and the David P. Barrows Papers housed at the respective archives proved particularly relevant to my research inquiries. I drew from internal and public commission reports from the administrations in the Philippines and Puerto Rico, memos from colonial administrators, reports from Superintendents, documents from the Departments of Education, and memoirs from the first American English teachers, in addition to other materials found in these collections.

ENGLISH AND NEOLIBERALISM

As the growing phenomenon of the international call center industry demonstrates, English has become a central mechanism for negotiating global transactions in the neoliberal world market. As Tsui and Tollefson (2006) have pointed out, the global economy is dependent upon English as a “mediational tool” (p. 1). This section provides a brief exploration of some of the research, from a range of disciplinary fields, that has explored the deeply interwoven threads between English and neoliberalism. It then expands to include a discussion of the role of colonialism, and coloniality in particular, in the establishment of global English.

Language, Heller (2010) argued, has become increasingly commodified through globalization, representing more than social and cultural value but direct exchange value as a form of material capital. Focusing specifically on English, Majhanovich (2013) demonstrated how English as a lingua franca has been tied to particular neoliberal development strategies imposed by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. Structural Adjustment Programs in Africa, for example, influenced the establishment of English as the medium of instruction—with its embedded ideological superiority of Western education—in local schools. Not only has English been commoditized, but in Majhanovich’s view, it has been “co-opted” as an accomplice in neoliberal globalization (p. 92).

Investigating the political effects of global English, Sonntag (2003) detailed how English, as transformed by the contemporary world economy, has reestablished the terms and articulations of power on an international scale. Finding global English to be “part of the cause, the process, and the product of globalization” (p. xii), Sonntag described both the hegemonic domination of English and the risks posed to linguistic diversity as well the counter-hegemonic possibilities it offers when “consciously politicized and democratized” (p. 121). During the political struggles in South Africa in the 1990s, for instance, English proved useful in fostering international support for the anti-apartheid movement. Yet, the increasing support for global English in post-apartheid South Africa also posed serious concerns for the risk of cultural domination. Quoting Webb, Sonntag highlighted its hegemonic implications, “English can easily become an instrument in a process of cultural assimilation and homogenization” (p. 91).

Linguistic Instrumentalism

Paralleling the idea of English as an instrument in cultural assimilation, Wee (2003) explored the role of economics in shaping the linguistic value of English through what he

terms *linguistic instrumentalism*, defined as “a view of language that justifies its existence in a community in terms of its usefulness in achieving specific utilitarian goals, such as access to economic development or social mobility” (p.214). Wee illuminated how, in the context of economic development in Singapore, English is viewed as “necessary for attracting foreign investment and providing access to scientific and technological know-how” (p. 214). Kubota’s (2011) study of adult English learners in Japan situated the linguistic instrumentalism of English within an explicit discourse of neoliberalism, noting how via the global market, English has been translated into an economically viable skill (p. 249). Despite promises of economic benefit, Kubota’s findings demonstrated that linguistic instrumentalism does not necessarily guarantee financial rewards. Rather, it may be associated with creating and maintaining systems of hierarchy.

Filler and Cho (2013) detailed how in the realm of higher education in South Korea and the broader context of academic corporatization, neoliberalism has become the basis for language policy. Reforms to establish English as the medium of instruction (MoI) have been ushered in at several universities as a strategy for global competitiveness. Such English policies have had tremendous effects on students and staff who have little decision making power in the matter, contrary to the celebrated neoliberal principle of free choice upon which global English was normalized (p. 29). Within the specific circumstance of language acquisition through TESOL, Flores (2013) noted how neoliberalism functions as both a macro-level economic policy and an individual-level mode of corporatizing bodies for global capitalism (p. 504). Though certain shifts in TESOL have facilitated a fluid understanding of language learners as plurilingual, Flores argued that without careful attention to the commodification of multilingual individuals to suit the needs of transnational corporations, purilingualism can unintentionally serve a neoliberal agenda. “In short,” Flores observed, “whereas neoliberalism is the continuation of economic imperialism, plurilingualism as currently conceptualized could be part of the continuation of cultural and linguistic imperialism in the service of neoliberal economic interests” (p. 513).

Flores’ reference to *linguistic imperialism* highlights a commonly-used description to portray the historical spread of English across the globe. The term was popularized by Phillipson (1992) who conceptualized the phrase to describe the manner by which “the dominance of English is asserted and maintained by the establishment and [the] continuous reconstitution of structural and cultural inequalities between English and other languages” (p. 47). Building from theories of imperialism and hegemony established by Johan Galtung and Antonio Gramsci’s, Phillipson asserted that the linguistic imperialism of English functioned as an oppressive form of cultural imperialism. In a more recent work, Phillipson (2008) situated the notion of linguistic imperialism within the neoliberal context to describe a process of linguistic neoimperialism where English is employed as a product, process, and project that maintains the neoliberal order (p. 39).

Global English, Colonialism, and Coloniality

Though Phillipson’s notion of linguistic imperialism garnered much debate, it highlighted the importance of the historical conditions which enabled the initial spread of English across the world, namely that of colonial domination. Indeed, language has served as a tool for achieving colonial rule since the start of global conquest in the 15th century, imposing Western systems of knowledge to justify foreign rule (Mignolo, 2003; Wiley, Garcia, Danzig, & Stigler, 2014). The colonial strategy of linguistic imposition was used to

establish empires from the onset of conquest through the 20th century, despite resistance to its hegemonic subjugation (Fanon, 1967/2008; wa Thiong'o, 1994), shaping the disciplinary study of language itself (Errington, 2001). The spread of English, in particular, is tied directly to British and American colonial enterprises in Asia, Africa, Australia, Europe, and the Americas. This fact continues to influence the teaching of English and arguments for its imposition—both abroad and within what has been traditionally conceived as the imperial home—during the current period of neoliberal capitalism (Pennycook, 1998, 2002; Phillipson, 2008).

In his evaluation of the English-only debate in the United States, for example, Macedo (2003) argued that the movement to assert English dominance in American schools is a form of colonialism. He found the ideological underpinnings of English-only to be representative of a colonial knowledge structure that creates and substantiates ideas of difference in relation to a Western norm. “Colonialism,” he wrote, “imposes ‘distinction’ as an ideological yardstick against which all other cultural values, are measured, including language” (p. 65). In regards to language, Macedo noted that the enforcement of distinction was rooted in the colonial implementation of English instruction during American overseas empire. “If it were not for the colonial legacy,” he pointed out, “how could we explain U.S. educational policies in the Philippines and Puerto Rico?” (p. 66). He referred to the establishment of English as the medium of instruction in the Philippines and in Puerto Rico as part of the same colonial hegemony that enabled the English-only debate.

Colonialism has also served as an important analytical framework to contextualize contemporary practices of English teaching and learning during the era of globalization. Finding colonial and postcolonial struggles to be defining moments of world history, Pennycook (1998) situated his analysis of English language teaching (ELT) within the structures of colonial power and argued, “ELT theories and practices that emanate from the former colonial powers still carry traces of those colonial histories both because of the long history of direct connections between ELT and colonialism and because such theories and practices derive from broader European cultures and ideologies that themselves are products of colonialism” (p. 19). Similarly attuned to the colonial realities that define the neoliberal commoditization of English, scholars concerned with the teaching of English have raised concerns and possibilities for practices that promote just and liberatory engagements with English (Canagarajah, 1999; Flores, 2013; Lin & Luke, 2006; Makoni, 2013; Motha, 2006). They demonstrated that though global political-economic initiatives are no longer organized through formal institutions of colonial administration, there is nothing “post” about colonialism as the systems of power that formal colonial administrations set forth continue to shape global relations.

The notion of coloniality, then, is a useful tool for understanding both the pervasiveness of systems of power—race, knowledge production, the global division of labor, and, as Lugones (2007) demonstrated, gender—established through colonial modernity—specifically the conquest of the Americas—and their interwoven relational development. “[C]oloniality survives colonialism,” explained Maldonado-Torres (2007). “It is maintained alive in books, in the criteria for academic performance, in cultural patterns, in common sense, in the self-image of peoples, in aspirations of self, and so many other aspects of our modern experience” (p. 243). In their study of English-Spanish asymmetry, for example, Cervantes-Rodriguez and Lutz (2003) highlighted the utility of coloniality in enhancing their understanding of the influence of empire and colonization in structuring contemporary language asymmetry and immigration within the United States.

In the remainder of this article, I employ the concept of coloniality to explore the relation between American empire and neoliberal uses of global English. I begin by highlighting the historic implementation of colonial English instruction in two overseas American colonies, the Philippines and Puerto Rico, at the turn of the 20th century. As Macedo emphasized, these two cases prove powerful in uncovering the manner by which colonial power structures continue to inform the global spread and imposition of English more than a hundred years later in the context of neoliberal globalization. My main finding here is that in both colonies, the policy of English instruction attempted to invisibilize U.S. imperial occupation under the guise of benevolence and democratic Americanization. I then demonstrate that an understanding of coloniality enables us to identify how the process of imperial invisibilization enacted by colonial English positioned global English as natural and neutral—merely “in the right place at the right time” as Crystal observes (1997, p. 110)—in this current neoliberal stage of capitalism.

U.S. COLONIAL ENGLISH INSTRUCTION IN OVERSEAS COLONIES

Following the end of the Spanish-American War in December of 1898, the United States acquired the former Spanish territories of Cuba, Puerto Rico, the Philippines, and Guam through the terms established in the Treaty of Paris. After a brief period of American military occupation, Cuba was granted independence in 1901 through the Platt Amendment, which stipulated conditions for preserving American political and economic ties to the islands. Guam was established primarily as a strategic station for American ships in the Pacific en route to the Philippines and China.

As new colonial territories, the Philippines and Puerto Rico experienced extensive American colonial occupation and administration. In both territories, the U.S. was quick to establish a system of colonial education as part of its efforts in achieving the conquest of the islands. English instruction played a central role in both these educational systems and in maintaining the broader colonial project in the Philippines and Puerto Rico. This section provides a brief historical overview of the colonial implementation of English as the medium of instruction in the two territories in the early 20th century.

Philippines

Most of the provisions for schooling under the Spanish colonial government had focused on establishing religious-based primary education in the Philippines. Mirroring the sentiment of other imperial regimes in Asia at the time, the Spanish were apprehensive that education would incite rebellion (Bernardo, 2004) and therefore did not implement a widely-accessible system of schooling in the islands. Education—and Spanish language mastery, primarily in Castilian—was thus limited to the elite in Philippine society. Under Spanish rule, therefore, language imposition was not directly employed as a tool for distilling colonial ideology.

During the American occupation of the Philippines following the Spanish-American War, the American military regime established the foundations for a system of free public schools (Alonza, 1932). American soldiers, freshly off the battlefield, served as the initial teachers. In the makeshift schools, these untrained teachers taught Filipino students in English—a matter of colonial necessity, as few were fluent in Spanish let alone the Philippine languages, as well as a matter of colonial inculcation. Indeed, military leaders

acknowledged that the main objective of the army-directed schools was to pacify Filipino resistance to American occupation (May, 1980). Mounting Filipino rebellion to American foreign rule led to the Philippine-American War in 1899 and posed a threat to the establishment of U.S. administration in the islands.

English was viewed as an expedient method for communicating American rule as benevolent tutelage rather than foreign domination, thereby distinguishing U.S. occupation from Spanish imperialism. “English-language instruction,” Kramer (2006) noted, “became one element in the regime’s broader national-exceptionalist claims” (p. 204). It exemplified what President William McKinley had declared as the U.S.’s Benevolent Assimilation campaign in the Philippines, in which American governance was articulated as preparation for eventual self-rule (McKinley, 1898/1913). As the language of the American republic, English was upheld as a democratizing mechanism, one that would transform the Philippines—following a period of American tutelage—from a dependent colony to a self-sufficient, civilized nation.

From early on, English, was a seminal element in the colonial education system in the Philippines (Bernardo, 2004; Kramer, 2006; Martin, 1999; Martin, 2001; Paulet, 2007; Tupas, 2008). In 1900, the First Philippine Commission, a body of American officials sent to the archipelago on a fact-finding mission, advised that English be established as the official language in the islands. “The young Filipinos display a considerable aptitude for learning new tongues,” Philippine Commissioner Dean C. Worcester declared, “and it is believed if this policy is followed out, English can within a short time be made the official language of the archipelago. The commission strongly recommends that it be done” (Tinio, 2009, p. 67). President McKinley echoed this recommendation in April of 1900, directing the Second Philippine Commission, which was charged with systematizing the military run schools, to establish English in Philippine classroom.

Citing the great linguistic diversity in the islands, McKinley highlighted the potential for English to serve as a method of unification. “In view of the great number of languages spoken by the different tribes,” he noted, “it is especially important to the prosperity of the islands that a common medium of communication may be established.” “It is obviously desirable,” McKinley continued, “that this medium should be the English language” (Instructions of President the Commission, 1900, p. 8). Though McKinley advised that initial instruction be carried out in “the language of the people,” English was immediately implemented in the newly-reorganized schools. Under the Second Philippine Commission and the first Superintendent of Public Instruction, Fred Atkinson, English as the medium of instruction was made official educational policy less than a year later (Philippine Commission, 1901).

On January 21, 1901, the Second Philippine Commission approved Philippine Public Law Act 74, also referred to as the Organic School Act. The bill created a Department of Public instruction, centralizing the system of education under the department (Philippine Commission, 1901). Additionally, the act mandated, “The English language shall, as soon as practicable, be made the basis of all public school instruction,” formally instituting English in the schools. To provide instruction in English was seen as a matter of benevolent uplift rather than a colonial imposition (Philippine Commission, 1903, p. 103).

“To teach them the English language and open them to the views of the world that may be gained through the use of that tongue,” noted Philippine Commissioner of Education Bernard P. Moses, “is not to subject them to any intellectual loss, but, on the other hand, to

furnish them a most powerful stimulus to intellectual progress” (cited in Hsu, 2013, p. 54). David P. Barrows, the archipelago’s third Superintendent of Instruction, strongly concurred with Commissioner Moses. In his 1903 Report of the General Superintendent, Barrows (1904) proclaimed English to be imperative to the intellectual, political, and economic viability of the Filipino people:

English is the lingua franca of the Far East. It is spoken in the ports from Hakodate to Australia. It is the common language of business and social intercourse between the different nations from America westward to the Levant. It is without rival the most useful language which a man can know. It will be more used within the next ten years, and to the Filipino the possession of English is the gateway into that busy and fervid life of commerce, of modern science, of diplomacy and politics in which he aspires to shine. (p. 717)

As Barrows illustrated, English had been touted as the lingua franca even at the dawn of the 20th century.

Public Act 74 also provided for the employment of teachers from the U.S. to replace the initial soldier-teachers and perform the actual teaching of English in the classrooms (Philippine Commission, 1903). In the summer of 1901, just over 500 teachers departed from San Francisco aboard the U.S.S. Thomas for the new colony of the Philippines (Hollnsteiner & Ick, 2001). The Thomasites, as they were called, represented a new army of sorts. They were a corps of teachers, some with teaching experience in other colonized territories of the U.S., whose aim was to instill their Filipino charges with the democratic values embodied by the English language (Gleason, 1901). In addition to instructing Filipino school children, these American teachers were also responsible for teaching a new generation of Filipino teachers in the colonial medium of instruction.

The English curriculum in the schools was focused on developing literacy with materials representing American values and traditions (May, 1980). Banned basal readers from California were incorporated into the curriculum to teach Filipinos both English and American cultural norms (Flores, 1998). Due to the need for texts specific to the learning context in the Philippines, some American teachers and colonial administrators, such as Barrows, began to write curricular materials which would be incorporated as part of the standard curriculum (Barrows, 1905). The publishing house, World Books, Co. (now Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, and a TESOL Global Partner) was established in Manila to meet the demand for English content materials, producing many of the texts written by the Thomasites and educational administrators.

Though English instruction was imposed on a systemic level, there were those who resisted the policy and American education in general. Individual teachers and priests, who refused to accept the embedded ideology of American superiority and secularism, departed from the system, choosing to work through private or church run schools (May, 1980). Others learned English but employed it for the purposes of promoting Filipino nationalism. For example, Camilo Osias, the first Filipino Superintendent studied in the United States and with his English fluency, addressed the U.S. Senate to present his case for Philippine independence. As Superintendent, Osias was responsible for a series of English readers, the Philippine Readers, which were produced in the islands and contained stories that promoted nationalist ideals and celebrated Filipino revolutionaries (Coloma, 2013).

Despite promises of elevating Filipino intellectual and democratic development, the program of English proved unsatisfactory. In 1925, Paul Monroe of the Teachers' College at Columbia University issued a report on the effectiveness of the system of education in the Philippines. His commission found that English instruction had failed dismally to prepare students in a mastery of English. "In reading their inferiority is so great," Monroe Commissioner George Counts relayed, "as to bring into question the fundamental procedures of the school and even to raise doubts regarding the wisdom of the present expenditures for education" (Counts, 1925, p. 99). Despite the report's findings, colonial administrators continued to enforce English as the medium of instruction until 1940 (Martin, 2001). Though colonial English had failed in regards to academic preparation, it had succeeded in establishing English as the language of power and status in the Philippines. Business, legislative and judicial proceedings, all of these matters were conducted in English, securing English's position in the Philippines through the century even after the end of American rule in 1946.

Attempts at incorporating Philippine languages in the curriculum began in 1940 with the instruction of Pilipino, the national language, in the high schools. The Revised Philippine Education Program established in 1957 introduced mother languages as the medium of instruction for the primary grades in elementary school, while maintaining English in the other grades (Bernardo, 2004). By the 1960s, amidst the development of a growing Filipino nationalist movement, the primacy of English was challenged. Citing the colonial conditions for its dominance in the Philippines, Filipino scholars such as Constantino (1966) denounced American education and English as a weapon of oppression. English, he argued, was responsible for the construction of a system of social hierarchy based on linguistic othering. "English has created a barrier between the monopolists of power and the people," he noted. "English has become a status symbol, while the native tongues are looked down upon" (p. 19).

In response to mounting criticisms of English, the Department of Education established a system of bilingual education in 1974, known as the Bilingual Education Policy, where both Filipino (formerly Pilipino) and English would be used for instructing different subjects in the classroom. Over the three decades of bilingual education, various reforms were adapted to reconfigure the relationship between the two languages and their associated content areas. For the most part, English remained the language of science and technology (Bernardo, 2004). More recently, in 2009, the Department issued Order No. 74, or Mother Tongue Based Multilingual Education, shifting the media of instruction from a bilingual model to one attuned to the various local languages (Tupas, 2011).

Puerto Rico

The Spanish policy for education in Puerto Rico reflected that of its colonial counterpart across the Pacific. Schooling was underdeveloped, limited, and centered on religious instruction (Navarro-Rivera, 2009). "There is no question but that there is great ignorance throughout the entire island," declared the Insular Affairs Commission in 1899, "of a population of 800,000 it has been variously estimated that from 10 to 20 per cent [sic] only of the people can read and write" (Insular Affairs, 1899, p. 6). Unlike in the archipelago of the Philippines, however, Puerto Ricans were fluent in Spanish despite a lack of formal instruction. It was the language used for business, government, and daily conversation, and Puerto Ricans had developed a strong cultural and national identity as Spanish speakers. This

identity, however, was challenged through the establishment of American schools and English instruction with the U.S. occupation of Puerto Rico after the Spanish-American War.

Just as was the case in the Philippines, American education in Puerto Rico served as a primary mechanism for carrying out a program of colonial domination. As the Commissioner of Education strategically noted in 1902, “Colonization carried forward by the armies of war is vastly more costly than that carried forward by the armies of peace, whose outposts and garrisons are the public schools of the advancing nation” (Walsh, 1991, p. 6). While colonial education in the Philippines was deployed to cultivate the notion of American occupation as benevolence, education in Puerto Rico was a mechanism by which to enact a process of Americanization. Puerto Ricans were not educated for eventual self-rule, but rather, to become Americans.

This was evidenced politically through the Foraker (Organic) Act of 1900, which declared Puerto Rico an unincorporated territory of the U.S. and tied the islands economy to the interests of American corporations (del Moral, 2013). Puerto Ricans were thus placed under the administrative control of the U.S. Congress, yet without the full protections of the American constitution. Schooling in Puerto Rico, therefore, was established to impart a campaign of Americanization. Education was employed to instruct Puerto Ricans to accept and fulfill their new colonial roles as developing Americans (Negrón de Montilla, 1975), or “tropical Yankees” (Navarro, 2002). Provisions for reforming education were established through the Foraker Act, including the creation of the Department of Education and the position of Commissioner of Education (Schmidt, 2014). Americanization was a policy explicitly supported by the administration as the primary objective of colonial education in the island. “[T]he door of the public schoolhouse,” declared Martin Grove Brumbaugh, the first Commissioner of Education in Puerto Rico, “is the door to statehood” (Navarro, 2002, p. 61). Within this context, English served as a crucial mechanism for instructing the colonial curriculum of Americanization.

Educational directives regarding the primacy of English had already been established before the Foraker Act under the purview of Military Governor General Guy V. Henry in 1899. Henry directed that new teachers be instructed in English and that high schools and colleges require verification of English proficiency (Navarro, 2002). The military governor’s mandates were inline with recommendations established earlier that year by the Insular Affairs Commission (1899), also known as the “Port Rico Commission,” which advised that schooling in Puerto Rico be conducted in English:

That this education should be in English we are clearly of the opinion. Porto Rico is now and is henceforth to be part of the American possessions and its people are to be American. There would therefore appear to be no good reason for attempting to fasten upon them the Spanish language, and especially as they are themselves exceedingly anxious to learn to read, write, and speak the English language.

Sooner or later all the business and commercial transactions of this island will be with the United States, and the people are even now attempting to become familiar with our language, and the quickest and most certain method of transferring its language is through the coming generation and through the public schools. (p. 53)

The Commission’s heavy endorsement of English displayed the entangled relationship between colonially-imposed English, Americanization, and the goals of economic

subjugation that undergirded American imperial conquest in Puerto Rico. English instruction in the classroom enforced the bonds of colonial capitalism and prepared Puerto Ricans to accede to their new dependent relationship under the paternal guidance of the U.S.

English instruction, and the larger goal of Americanization, was presented as a magnanimous American gift of social uplift, in much the same manner that English and benevolence was articulated in the Philippines. Americanization through English was positioned as a great social equalizer, one that held promises of racial egalitarianism. “[W]ith the children speaking the English language, and the young people reading American books using the American tongue,” the Porto Rico Commission assured, “will the great gulf between the races be safely crossed, and all will strive to be first to obtain an education and become full Americans” (Insular Affairs, 1899, p. 62). The reality was, as illuminated by the Porto Rico Commission, that English was part and parcel of a colonial project that sought to institute a system of political, economic, and social hierarchy that would render Puerto Rico reliant on American rule.

Though English was positioned to become the official language in Puerto Rico, its initial implementation was proceeded with caution. Colonial administrators recognized that they would face considerable antagonism from many Puerto Ricans who held strongly to their linguistic and cultural identity. Commissioner Brumbaugh, therefore, established a bilingual system of education for the transitional period, which allowed for instruction in Spanish up to the 8th grade (Maldonado, 2000; Walsh 1991). This policy, however, was revised in 1905 when Commissioner Roland Faulkner established English as the medium of instruction in all grades.

American teachers, particularly female teachers, were determined to be the most qualified to teach English on the island, and their labor in the Puerto Rican classrooms was sought as a valuable resource (Osuna, 1949/1975; Negrón de Montilla, 1975). “By military law,” Commissioner Brumbaugh explained in his 1900 annual report, “one teacher of English, whose native tongue is English, must be employed in each city or town having a graded school” (Brumbaugh, 1900, p. 12). As in the Philippines, the first teachers “were mostly young men who came to Porto Rico with the American army” (13). “Gradually,” Brumbaugh noted, “the quality was improved by the addition of groups of teachers, mostly women, from the United States” (p. 13). The arrival of female teachers proved especially significant in the eyes of the colonial administration: their gendered presence, and notions of the inherent female capacity for discipline and domesticity, would aide in the amelioration of teacher-led political activity in the classroom—an issue that developed under Spanish rule, where teachers often served as “political agents” (Navarro, 2002, p. 50).

In 1901, while the Thomasites departed San Francisco for the Philippines, another group of American teachers set sail on the East Coast for colonial teaching engagements in Puerto Rico. Some one hundred and twenty American teachers, dubbed by the Commissioner as an “army of peace” (Silver, 2007, p. 278), embarked on an educational journey to teach English in the Puerto Rican classrooms and impart a sense of American values. Puerto Rican teachers were soon expected to emulate the American teachers by teaching English and a curriculum of Americanization. Summer programs in the U.S., billed as “Porto Rican Teachers Summer Study Trip to the United States,” were developed to train these teachers in the American way of life (Walsh, 1991, p. 9). Under the encouragement of Superintendent General John Eaton, who had previously served as a commissioner of the Freedman’s Bureau, and Commissioner Brumbaugh, Puerto Rican teachers were sent to the Hampton,

Tuskegee, and Carlisle Industrial schools for instruction in English and American (industrial) education (Navarro-Rivera, 2009).

In 1905, Commissioner Faulkner implemented the Philippine Plan, based on a colonial system of teacher training used in the Philippines, to further prepare Puerto Rican teachers in English. It was a high stakes system that punished teachers who failed to pass content testing in English (Pousada, 1999, p. 38). Mounting resistance grew in response to what Puerto Rican teachers saw as cultural encroachment through English and Americanization. In her study of Puerto Rican teachers during the U.S. colonial era, Del Moral (2013) notes, “The resistance to English was not a myth but a fact. Teachers led the opposition to English-language instruction and suffered the consequence—professional repression, blacklisting, and firings” (p. 16). A large-scale organized resistance movement challenging American education and English developed early on, led by Puerto Rican teachers who were conscious and cautious of the racial logic of white superiority that sustained the American imperial project on the island. They established the Asociación de Maestros de Puerto Rico (AMPR) in 1911 to contest the imposition of English and Americanization. It remains an active political voice for Puerto Rican teachers today.

In response to decades of increasing public discontent with English and demands for reforms, the Department of Education sought evaluative studies on the status of schooling in Puerto Rico. Teaming with the University of Puerto Rico, the International Institute of the Teachers College at Columbia University released their one-year study (1925-1926) on the educational system on the island. Their conclusions echoed that of the Monroe Commission’s 1925 report on Philippine education. English as the medium of instruction, the study determined, had proven ineffective and was not recommended until after the 7th grade (Pousada, 1999, p. 40).

Despite the conclusions, English remained the primary medium of instruction until 1931 when, under Commissioner Paul Miller, Spanish was used for instruction in grades 1-4 (Maldonado, 2010). A series of reforms followed in that decade. In 1934, Commissioner José Padín established Spanish as the medium of instruction throughout elementary schooling (Schmidt, 2014). Commissioner José Gallardo adjusted this policy in 1937, relegating certain content areas to be taught in English and others in Spanish while maintaining Spanish at the elementary level. A momentous shift occurred in 1949, when Spanish was instituted as the medium of instruction at all levels.

FINDINGS/CRITICAL COLONIAL CONSIDERATIONS

As the historic cases of the Philippines and Puerto Rico reveal, the enduring qualities of English—that is, its globally recognized economic and social value—represent a coloniality of power and the maintenance of systemic domination rather than static features of the language itself. In both sets of islands, English instruction was implemented as an integral part of the colonial education system established during the period of American occupation immediately after the Spanish-American War. English policies in both the Philippines and Puerto Rico functioned on a curricular level—to establish the basis of instruction in the colonial classroom—and on a broader social level—to justify conquest by invoking the political economic language of salvation as expressed through the campaigns of Benevolent Assimilation and Americanization in the respective islands. These historical cases demonstrate that the colonial English policies provided a curriculum and rhetorical language of salvation, which served to invisibilize empire and mystify the oppressive dynamics of

American conquest through the grammar of benevolent tutelage and American republicanism.

However, it is important to note that the two colonial campaigns, of which English played a central role, were met with fierce resistance. In the Philippines, organized action was most directly expressed by the Philippine-American War as a refutation of the general project of U.S. colonial rule. In addition, there were, as noted earlier, individual acts of defiance towards colonial English, which included the reappropriation of English to voice demands for independence. In fact, at the start of the American occupation, English was strategically employed as a method for responding to the contradictions posed by the Philippine Commission in particular, and by the coexistence of U.S. foreign rule and ideals of American democracy in general. In a letter penned by Filipino nationalists—in English—to the First Philippine Commission, resistance leaders challenged the American rhetoric of conquest as benevolent tutelage and noted “the violent and destructive character of American people in their dealings with the colored race, quoting as example the extermination of the Indians in the different states of North America...” (cited in Hsu, 2013). Thus, English was also employed collectively as a decolonial expression for liberation, an act that also made visible the axis of race within the coloniality of U.S. power.

In Puerto Rico, resistance was mostly directed at the specifics of English and Americanization rather than at the general initial occupation of American troops and officials. Instead of armed rebellion led by soldiers, teachers—especially the AMPR—served a crucial role in establishing organized movements against the hegemony of English and the program of Americanization. English directives encountered fierce opposition, as demonstrated by the frequency of policy changes in the language of instruction. The role of English in Puerto Rico remains a heated matter of debate to this day and is closely tied to the island’s longstanding status as a commonwealth (whereas the Philippine islands were granted independence in 1946). Referendums on the possibility of Puerto Rican statehood have often stipulated the designation of English as the official language as a condition for formal inclusion in the Union. To illuminate the deeply interwoven dimensions of English, colonialism, and political status in Puerto Rico, Zentella (1998) highlights a 1997 letter to the Governor of Puerto Rico in which then President Clinton firmly declared, “English will be the common language of understanding in all the states, including any newly admitted ones” (cited in Zentella, 1998, p. 164). In both historical cases, despite differences in contemporary political status in relation to the United States, policies of English have persisted in different forms. In Puerto Rico, they continue to be directly influenced by the ongoing colonial relationship with the U.S. In the Philippines, they are shaped by the broader neoliberal global order, and the omnipresent shadow of U.S. coloniality.

“Coloniality Survives Colonialism”

The cases of English instruction in the Philippines and Puerto Rico are helpful in evidencing the utility of colonial English in invisibilizing the imperial structures of power and the violent processes that established English across the globe in the first instance. That English continues to reign dominant in neoliberal capitalism illuminates the ways in which “[c]oloniality survives colonialism” (Maldonado-Toress, 2007, p. 243). “[N]eoliberalism, with its imperative to compete,” Piller and Cho (2013) noted, “is a covert form of language policy, which imposes English as a natural and neutral medium of academic excellence. In

this guise, neoliberal economic restructuring has managed to impose English on ever-more domains of global life while actually dissimulating its operation” (p. 24).

This erasure, I argue, was engendered through a process of colonality in which colonial English was employed to naturalize and neutralize imperial domination. Thus, it translated the space/time (Quijano, 2000) of American conquest in the Philippines and Puerto Rico as “Benevolent Assimilation” and “Americanization.” This, in turn, naturalized and neutralized the neoliberal positioning of global English in the current time period. Superintendent Barrows’ celebration of the global spread of English, “from Hakodate to Australia...from America westward to the Levant,” provides a most excellent example of the manner in which colonial English naturalized and neutralized the process of imperial conquest. When understanding his statement within the historical realities of American imperialism, it becomes apparent that English did not suddenly appear in various global locales by mere virtue of its perceived superiority as a unifying language, nor did any special attributes of the language inspire a voluntary proliferation across the world. Rather, English was spread through particularly violent processes of colonial domination that maintained a colonial power structure, which privileged western knowledge systems, secured the global division of labor, and established racial, gender, and sexual hierarchies. English, then, was not simply, as Crystal has stated, “in the right place at the right time” (as cited in Sonntag, 2003, p. 1), but rather, it was positioned through the co-constituting function of English and empire in establishing a stratified global order which has persisted since the modern/colonial world system initiated in the 15th century.

In the case of Puerto Rico, the commonwealth status, Grosfoguel (2003) observes, “poses a particular kind of coloniality” (p. 5). Since it elides more traditional colonization/decolonization and traditional colony/nation-state categorization, it demonstrates how coloniality not only survives colonialism but how coloniality can preserve colonialism within modern discourses of democratic realization and neoliberal global development. In fact, English instruction continues to play a significant role in the dependent positioning of Puerto Rico vis-a-vis the U.S. and the global economy. More than a century after the initial establishment of English in Puerto Rican schools, English was reinstated as the official medium of instruction in 2012 as part of Republican Governor Luis Fortuño’s “Generation Bilingual” plan to graduate a fully bilingual cohort of students in 2022.

In explaining its new English program, the Puerto Rican Department of Education clarifies that Puerto Rican students “should communicate orally and in writing in the English language; and interact according to the high expectations and demands of contemporary global society” (Department of Education, 2014, n.p.). Through the reformed bilingual education program, students are assured that they will be able to “face new challenges and be able to seize the opportunities of the global world, that is integrated into the educational approach of the XXI Century, aspiring to the mastery of two or more languages” [my translation] (Department of Education, 2014, n.p.). The primacy of English in Puerto Rico was, thus, reinstated in the school system with a nod to the current neoliberal global market. In fact, Fortuño’s efforts to reestablish English in the schools parallels his campaign to solicit international corporate investment in Puerto Rico, where, as Barreto (2001) notes, “many American multi-national firms on the island conduct their operations in English” (p. 92). His Generation Bilingual plan for English instruction also eerily echoes the 1899 Porto Rico Commission’s colonial directive on English, which established that “[t]he principal work of the schools [was] to be conducted in the English language, which should be taught

in all schools supported by public funds, yet not prohibiting the teaching of the Spanish language...” (Insular Affairs, 1899, p. 62). The Department’s references to global opportunities opened by English fluency, moreover, harken back to colonial sentiments of English as a *lingua franca*—“without rival the most useful language which a man can know”—articulated by Superintendent Barrows (1904, p. 717) during the early period of American overseas military occupation.

Situating Governor Fortuño’s Generation Plan within Grosfoguel’s notion of a “particular kind of coloniality,” illuminates the multilayered manner in which colonial English naturalized his Bilingual program, and how in purporting to prepare students for global opportunities, the program naturalizes and neutralizes Puerto Rico’s subjugated status as the “oldest colony in the world” (as cited in Silver, 2000, p. 269). Indeed, neoliberal practices of global English mystify the fact that for many communities that have historically experienced colonial stratification, no level of English fluency can guarantee an equal footing in a world order that has been, and continues to be, predicated on the hierarchical difference of coloniality.

The development of the Philippines exemplifies this reality. In her study of neoliberalism and labor in the Philippines, Rodriguez underscores the manner in which former Philippine President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo prided herself on being both the “head of state responsible for a nation of 80 million people” and “the CEO of a global Philippine enterprise of 8 million Filipinos who live and work abroad and generate billions of dollars a year in revenue for our country” (as cited in Rodriguez, 2010, p. ix). Arroyo’s tongue-in-cheek remark hints at the system of coloniality that continues to shape the growth of the islands according to previously established colonial institutions. Specifically, it demonstrates the manner by which colonial English instruction at the start of the 20th century has had persistent effects in determining labor in the Philippines in the 21st century. Although Superintendent Barrows had ardently declared that in regards to the Filipino, “the possession of English is the gateway into that busy and fervid life of commerce, of modern science, of diplomacy and politics in which he aspires to shine” (Barrows, 1903, p. 717), more than a hundred years later, many Filipinos have been limited to performing service work on an international scale (Choy, 2003; Parrenas, 2001; Tadiar, 1997), transforming the Philippines into what Rodriguez terms a “labor brokerage state” (Rodriguez, 2010, p. x).

English has played a central role in developing Filipinos into overseas workers. Rodriguez details how one brochure produced by the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration advertises how Filipinos are “ideally suited in any multi-racial working environment given a facility with the English language” (Rodriguez, 2010, p. 50). As the advertisement illustrates, in many ways, English fluency has fulfilled its promises of economic benefit, translating into a marketable skill in the neoliberal global economy. However, global English continues to exact a colonial difference by marking Filipinos as low-wage international laborers. As a 2012 BBC article entitled “The Philippines: The World’s Budget English Teacher” reported, English has now become a linguistic indicator of the economic value of Filipino labor: “The Philippines is fast becoming the world’s low-cost English language teacher—with rapid increases in overseas students coming to learn English or study in English-speaking universities” (McGeown, 2012, n.p.). In detailing the reasons for the growth of this new industry, the article reveals how the English enterprise in the Philippines is shrouded by the trappings of coloniality, “Another major advantage is the accent. Filipinos speak with a clear American accent-partly because the Philippines was a US

colony for five decades, and partly because so many people here have spent time working in call centers that cater to a US market” (McGeown, 2012).

Coloniality and English-Only in the U.S.

When Filipino laborers then immigrate to the United States, however, the notion that they “speak with a clear American accent” is often supplanted with critiques of their heavy foreign accent. English then becomes a marker of perpetual foreign-ness, as part of what Kim (1999) describes as a system of racial triangulation that positions Asian Americans vis à vis whites and blacks, rather than a linguistic sign of the legacy of U.S. overseas colonialism. The invisibilizing function of the program of colonial English in the Philippines, therefore, survives the end of colonial rule and provides an illustrative example of coloniality in action in the United States. Indeed, as Macedo (2003) has explained, English-only policies in the U.S. draw from a pattern of colonial relations of power that can be directly traced back to American overseas occupation in the Philippines and Puerto Rico and to longer histories of English imposition during initial settler conquest.

Contemporary neoliberal English-only policies are derived from the coloniality of settler relations of power, which Hermes and Bang (2015) note, were predicated on a specific intent to exterminate indigenous people and languages in order to normalize settler identity and culture (p. 160). Though most accounts of the English-only movement trace its development back to the 1980s and organized efforts to legalize English as an official language, the historical and ideological foundations for English-only were established through the coloniality of settler occupation and violent domination. Proclamations of the unifying effects of English-only policies, therefore, must be understood within the context of racial extermination and coloniality’s trademark “language of salvation.” The first English-only policies in the U.S., after all, were implemented as part of a broader educational program to “kill the Indian, save the man” (Pratt, 1892/1973).

Similarly, the imperial takeover of the American Southwest in 1848 resulted in Americanization and English-only policies intended to terminate the dominance of Spanish (Gonzalez, 1999). “The Americanization program in California, for example, initiated in 1915,” noted Gonzalez, “targeted language because it was believed that all non-English speaking sectors of the population held the potential to develop a class consciousness capable of evolving into radical, even communistic, organization and activities” (p. 58). This practice of English imposition signaled linguistic techniques of coloniality carried out through settler colonialism within the U.S. and via the overseas Americanization and English instruction campaign in Puerto Rico. Walsh (1991) further demonstrated that the “goals and tactics” of xenophobic English-only groups of the 1990s, such as “ ‘English First’ and ‘U.S. English’,” “can be likened to the Americanization campaign of the 1900s,” as well as to “the efforts to impose English in Puerto Rico” (p. 56).

The colonial cases of English in the Philippines and Puerto Rico, then, help to illuminate the structures of coloniality that maintain both neoliberal practices of global English and English-only in the U.S. They also serve to highlight the violent invisibilization of American colonial history when it comes to the contemporary language classification policies as applied toward many Filipino immigrants and Puerto Ricans in the domestic U.S. “Many teachers in U.S. schools consistently place Filipino immigrant students in Non-English Proficient (NEP) classes without understanding the students’ schooling experience,” Flores observes (1998, p. 29). Policies of English domination and classification in the U.S.,

therefore, continue to enact coloniality by mystifying the foundational structures of empire and erroneously employing English Language Development classification as a “language of salvation” and educational uplift.

Pedagogical Implications

In their introduction to a 2006 issue of *Critical Inquiry and Language Studies* focusing on the topic of colonialism and TESOL, Lin & Luke (2006) observe, “There is a danger that in the new eduspeak of ‘education for new economies,’ language teaching comes to reflect the logic of globalised capital” (p. 69). Therefore, in this current period of neoliberal hegemony, critical teachers of English, both in a global context and in U.S. classrooms, must be exceedingly conscious of the instructional practices that they engage with, and of the historical origins and functions of these practices. In addressing the concern of English instruction practices, colonialism, and the voices of the subaltern, or those who continue to be marginalized by the historical structures of coloniality, recent work by Kumaravadivelu (2014) and Flores (2013) provide decolonial pedagogical options to supplant the normalized neoliberal manifestation of coloniality. Contributing to the possibilities of such a decolonial turn, I urge for two pedagogical interventions in the area of curriculum.

First, it is crucial that colonial histories of English are explicitly included in teacher education and TESOL programs. This might be done through reinvigorating an emphasis on Social Foundations courses, which have fallen to the curricular wayside as a consequence of the neoliberal privileging of English instrumentalism. In *Race, Empire, and English Language Teaching*, Motha (2014) provides the following sobering observation:

In spite of its complex sociopolitical terrain, as the English language has spread around the globe, assuming steadily increasing international political power, the teaching of English has historically most frequently been represented within language teacher education as a race-neutral, apolitical, ahistorical endeavor in which learners work to produce appropriate sounds, master correct grammatical structures, and acquire larger vocabularies. Such a focus on accuracy and form has contributed to the invisibility of the language’s complicated history and has made it possible for teachers to complete their teacher-education programs without ever having an opportunity to engage with the broader social, racial, economic, and political implications of their practice. (p. 2)

When teachers of English engage in such seemingly “race-neutral, apolitical, ahistorical” practices of instruction, we maintain the invisibilizing mechanisms of coloniality. Therefore, intentionally including the historical facts of English and conquest as part of the teacher education curriculum provides a critical, and critically urgent, means for disrupting the primacy of neoliberal articulations of English instrumentalism and the embedded structures of coloniality. “In other words,” Kumaravadivelu argues, “merely tinkering with the existing hegemonic system will not work, only a fundamental epistemological rupture will” (2014, p. 15). This rupture requires the explicit integration of colonial histories of English in the curriculum.

Finally, English lessons in the classroom can provide interventions to the standard neoliberal curriculum by integrating opportunities to support community projects for justice and for the development of liberatory English practices. This shifts the focus from achieving the unequal objectives of English instrumentalism to facilitating empowering uses of English

and an engagement with the histories and needs of our surrounding communities. Returning to the case of Camilo Osias and his speech before the U.S. Senate provides a historical example of the ways in which English instruction can be employed to literally advocate for liberation. With the integration of colonial histories of English in teacher education and TESOL curriculum, we can look to these earlier practices and to the decolonial English methods established by formerly and continuously colonized groups—especially indigenous scholars, educators and activists—to support ongoing movements for justice and the disruption of structures of coloniality.

CONCLUSION

“The three elements of colonization, education, and immigration have aligned to create a ‘perfect policy storm,’ resulting in the rise of overseas trained Filipino teacher flows into the United States,” Bartlett explains in her study of migrant teachers in the U.S. (Bartlett, 2014, p. 32). In recent years, there has been a notable recruitment of Filipino teachers by school districts in the U.S. seeking to fill shortages in hard to staff schools. A similar phenomenon has developed with the targeted hiring of Puerto Rican teachers for bilingual education positions in the continental U.S. (Drumm, 2014). English and coloniality lie at the center of both the recruitment of Filipino and Puerto Rican teachers. Their migration retraces the steps of the American teachers who had travelled to the islands in the Pacific and the Caribbean to teach English in the early 1900s. The global crossings of both generations of English-speaking teachers demonstrate how blurred the distinctions between colonial conquest and neoliberal globalization actually are and how they are linked through global English.

Though the overseas teachers retrace the colonial pathways, they are not destined to become reinscribed within a totalizing framework of global English’s coloniality. Here, I want to be clear that I am not arguing that global English can only be oppressive. Historical conditions have created a reality in which a knowledge of English wields the potential for power, and for powerful change. I am, however, urging for the incorporation of the analytic of coloniality to understand neoliberalism and its relation to English; not, though, for the purpose of establishing deterministic valuations, but rather, to identify and make visible the systems of power that have been naturalized and neutralized as our default methods of learning and teaching English in the era of globalization. In doing so, we can critically reflect upon the histories enacted and sustained by particular oppressive practices of English and engage in collective formations of liberatory possibilities.

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