

# Overcoming Language Barriers: Filipino/Japanese Youths as Transmigrants in the Philippines

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*No child should suffer from stagnant absorption  
of knowledge due to language.*

(Hiroshi Ono)

## **Abstract**

This article presents the results of a preliminary study on young members of transmigrant families who shuttle between the Philippines and Japan, particularly those who have migrated from Japan to the Philippines at least once during school age, and are residing in the Philippines at the time of data gathering (2010–2013). It profiles what, if any, language/s Filipino/Japanese acquire and to what extent they do so. This essay inquires into the implications of migration of children/youths of transmigrant families in terms of language/s at school, when they migrated from Japan to the Philippines in the advent of the introduction of Mother-Tongue Based, Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE) in 2012. It aims to raise awareness of the positive and negative impact of migration on minors' cognitive development and to help understand emerging features of migration, transmigration, and shuttling for more effective policy making and advocacy.

Those who demonstrate the symptoms of proficient multilingualism migrated less frequently, underwent consistent education in a certain sociolinguistic environment from Grades 1 to 4, and benefited from a support system (such as lowering of school year level, tutorial etc.) that facilitated the foundation of mother-tongue literacy. The proficient multilinguals are more articulate and have clearer ideas about their

future. On the contrary, those who presented multi-limited inclinations migrated more often (shuttling) and did not seem to acquire a mother tongue. They seem to have difficulty expressing themselves and have vague ideas about their future.

The result implies that the existing theories in bilingualism are largely applicable to the participants in this study, despite the uniqueness of the features of their migration experience: from a more economically developed country with a language which is not prominent internationally, to a less developed nation in which English, a globally dominant language, is used but is not necessarily a primary language of the community.

In order to understand and address the issues (particularly the cases of multi-limited ones) more appropriately, collaborative researches, among social scientists across disciplines and language education specialists, are indispensable.

Keywords: Japanese-Filipino children, nikkeijin, Filipino migration, bilingualism, mother-tongue literacy.

## Introduction

THE PHILIPPINE STATISTICS AUTHORITY reports that there were 177,368 foreign citizens in the Philippines (defined as those residing in the country for one year or more) in 2010, a figure that represented 0.2% of the total population (92,097,978).<sup>1</sup> Most foreign citizens in the country came from the United States (29,959), China (28,750), Japan (11,583), and India (8,963). “Koreans,” whose presence in the country is quite visible today, include those from South Korea (5,822) and North Korea (4,846) (Philippine Statistics Authority 2012). These figures contrast with those from the Korean Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, which pegs the number of Koreans living in the Philippines at 115,400 (quoted in Office of Asian and Pacific Affairs 2011, 8). Meanwhile, data on visitor arrival by country of residence (note: not by nationality) shows that the largest number of visitors (considered “tourists” in a broad sense) in 2012 traveled from “Korea” (not distinguishing North and South; 1,031,155),

followed by those from USA (652,626), Japan (412,474), China (250,883), and Taiwan (216,511) (Department of Tourism n.d.). It is safe to assume that the Japanese are one of the significant foreign groups in the Philippines today.

It is estimated that approximately 100,000 to 200,000 children have been born out of Japanese and Filipino unions since the 1970s (Hara 2011, 5–6, citing Hashimoto 2009). Some of them live in the Philippines, others in Japan. Their nationalities vary: Filipino, Japanese, or both.<sup>2</sup> It is also estimated that about 45,000 descendants (so-called *nikkeijin*) of pre-WWII Japanese migrants to the Philippines<sup>3</sup> reside in the Philippines, if not in Japan or elsewhere (Ohno 2008, 4). Many of them hold Philippine citizenship.

Since the 1990s, Japanese laws (e.g., *Immigration Control Act* amendment in 1990, *Nationality Law* amendment in 2008) have slightly expanded the definition of “Japanese.” This can be interpreted as the Japanese government’s humble response to, among other things, the challenges arising from aging, such as labor shortage, while in principle controlling the entry of nonskilled foreign workers. As a result, some *nikkeijin* in the Philippines who were not able to acquire Japanese nationality could now have a chance to do so, or at least, could qualify for a Long Term Resident visa in Japan. Either way, these *nikkeijin* would no longer face restrictions in their labor prospects in Japan. Subsequently, some Filipino nationals, like spouses and children of the *nikkeijin*, came to live and work in Japan with a more stable visa status. Meanwhile, the Philippines has been formally and informally promoting its citizens for overseas labor since the 1970s. And recognizing dual nationalities through the so-called “Dual Citizenship Law” (Republic Act 9225, *Citizenship Retention and Re-acquisition Act of 2003*) can be interpreted as the Philippines’ pragmatic strategy to maximize benefits from emigrants who settle in their host countries. For one thing, the law conveniently allows them to invest their financial resources in the Philippines. Republic Act (R.A.) 9225 encouraged some *nikkeijin*, who were otherwise afraid of losing their Filipino nationality and all its attendant benefits—property,

professional license, business, and the like in the Philippines—to “come out” as descendants of Japanese migrants. Through R.A. 9225, these *nikkeijin* at least had a chance to regain, if not to retain, their Filipino nationality even if they had or would become Japanese nationals.

Until the late twentieth century, international migration usually meant a once-in-a-lifetime decision, and the movement was predominantly one-way: from a less economically developed country/ area to a more developed one, and often from a (former) colony to its (former) colonizer. Also, since around the 1990s, experts point out that international migration has largely been feminized (Castles and Miller 2009). Correspondingly, since around the 2000s, more children have been involved in international migration. The movement of persons between the Philippines and Japan parallels these trends. Reflecting geographical proximity, as well as economic and demographic asymmetry between the two countries, particularly two phenomena are remarkable: “transmigrant families” (Sekiguchi 2007) and “shuttling migration” (Ohno 2008). Sekiguchi defines a “transmigrant family” as a family whose members “live in different places across national borders, and sustain a ‘family’ as a socially, emotionally and economically connected unit transnationally by utilizing the family network across nations and information and communication technology” (Sekiguchi 2008, 76–77). Sekiguchi also suggests that “members of transmigrant families constantly and subconsciously hold the possibility of migrating again “sometime somewhere” (Sekiguchi 2008, 76). Meanwhile, Shun Ohno terms the frequent, if not seasonal, movements by migrants between two countries as “shuttling migration” (2008). His close observation of the migration flow between the Philippines and Japan in the 2000s attests that some Philippine *nikkeijin* “shuttle” for various reasons such as marriage, divorce, employment, dismissal, child birth, education, or visa expiration.

This article presents the results of a preliminary study on the young members of transmigrant families who shuttle between the Philippines and Japan, particularly those who migrated from Japan to the Philippines at least once during school age, and reside in the Philippines at the time of data gathering (between 2010 and 2013).

Numerous works on migration in the Philippines have been almost entirely concerned about the Filipinos who have left the country. Little attention has been paid to the foreign population within the Philippines, except for a cohort of historical studies on the Chinese community, a few studies on Japanese and their descendants, and the emerging yet limited number of literature on Korean communities. Much less attention has been paid to the status of child migrants, including those at local schools. There is also a scarcity of interest in the foreign population in the Philippines across different sectors in the country. The mass media, NGOs and even the academic community produce few studies of the phenomenon. Likewise, official documents on the issue are limited. This relative invisibility is understandable since foreign communities in the Philippines remain small. Nevertheless, the Philippines is NOT unaffected by contemporary migration trends—in which migration is globalized, accelerated, differentiated, feminized, politicized, and proliferated (Castles and Miller 2009). Quite the contrary; Filipinos are significant actors and players therein. Therefore, the Philippines is likely to host transmigrant families and participate in the process of shuttling. This article attempts to elucidate this.

Studying the migration of children opens new dimensions in migrant studies. Education instead of work, and school instead of workplace (and not the ghetto and other forms of communities) become the significant loci of query. Children of transmigrant families, whether they shuttle or not, are inevitably exposed to multiple languages across borders. “A consequence of population mobility is linguistic, cultural, ‘racial’, and religious diversity within schools.” (Cummins 2001).

This article inquires into the advantages and disadvantages that these Japanese/Filipino youths<sup>4</sup> had in terms of language/s at school when they migrated from Japan to the Philippines, a move that took place before the introduction of Mother-Tongue Based, Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE) in 2012 (DepEd Order 16, 2012). It profiles what language/s Filipino/Japanese youths do or do not acquire and to what extent they do so, and aims to initiate discussions on migrant children in the Philippines, specifically their education and language.

This study is rendered in the framework of interdisciplinary migration studies. Because the central concern of the study is the welfare of migrants who are minors (e.g., below 18 years old), especially in terms of language and education, some concepts developed in the field of language education have been incorporated to a limited extent. But this article must be read not as a work in the field of language education but as a call from migration studies for an interdisciplinary collaboration on the subject with language education experts. Therefore, technical assessment of the data in linguistic and language education terms is beyond the scope of this study.

### **Japanese/Filipino Youths at School**

In Japan, the number of foreign students enrolled in elementary and secondary schools has been pegged around 70,000 each year for the past decade (Ministry of Education, Culture, Science and Technology, or MEXT hereafter, Japan 2012). Among them, approximately 27,000 students are reported in 2012 as “needing Japanese language training,” while even around 6,000 Japanese students themselves, including those who obtained Japanese nationality lately and migrated to Japan, are said to require Japanese language training (MEXT, Japan 2012). In the same year, those whose mother tongue is Filipino (approximately 4,500 of them) occupied the third largest group by language among foreign national students who require Japanese language training in Japanese schools (MEXT, Japan 2012).<sup>5</sup> Correspondingly, studies on children of mixed heritage (Filipino and Japanese) have developed, initially in Japan, since the 2000s. By “heritage,” this article refers not only to what children “inherit” from their parents biologically, but also, rather unconventionally, to what they absorb from society as they grow up. Participants in this study include children who have Japanese and Filipino parents; children of the second- or third-generation Philippine *nikkeijin*; a Filipino child formally or informally adopted by a Japanese father; a Japanese of Korean descent who migrated to the Philippines; and a child of Philippine and Brazilian *nikkeijin*.<sup>6</sup> I refer to such participants as “Filipino/Japanese youths” for

convenience unless specified, which is a handy label for a group whose ethnic and nationality background is diverse, but have experiences in common in that they migrated from Japan to the Philippines at least once during school age.

Largely benefiting from academic studies on (predominantly) female performing artists since the 1980s, researchers who were concerned with the welfare of Filipino workers in Japan eventually came to focus on these workers' children, examining their economic standing (Nuqui 2008), legal status (Suzuki 2010), and sociocultural conditions (i.e., identity) (Hara 2011; 2012; Ocaya 2012). Authors of these studies touched on the welfare of children with Japanese and Filipino heritage, who are the subject of assistance (financially, legally, or academically). Therefore, researchers often came to know their informants through organizations that render such help. The phenomenon also caught the attention of concerned teachers, social workers, local government staff, and NGO personnel in Japan. Volunteers—including students or housewives, among others—came to offer tutorial (on language and academic subjects) services, and translation and counseling assistance to migrant children, helping them adjust to the Japanese educational system and to society at large. Thus, the acquisition of the Japanese language by migrants who are minors (e.g., below 18 years old) in Japan, including those who have Philippine (and Japanese) heritage, has become one of the most important subjects of research in the fields of education and Japanese language education, especially in migration studies in Japan.

Kimi Yamoto (2013) advances the existing literature on education of “children who have Filipino parent/s” at schools in Japan. Yamoto is concerned about the shuttling pattern of migration, the learning of an academic language (aside from daily conversational skills), the retention of a mother tongue, and the difficulties that the children faced. But the strength of Yamoto's article lies in its reference to enjoyment. Fourteen of Yamoto's informants studied in both the Philippines and Japan, and were in Japan at the time of her research. Many had a hard time learning Nihongo and mastering the nuances of human relations in schools in Japan. Also, several

faced disadvantages in entering higher education institutions and had limited options in their respective career paths. However, her informants enjoyed friendship and exposure to multiculturalism and multilingualism. They considered advantageous Japanese schools' facilities, discipline, and system—including tutorial and translation assistance to students who have a foreign background like themselves. Yamoto also pays attention to some of the informants who found it difficult to adjust in Philippine schools, which usually provide little special considerations and assistance for students who come from abroad.

In an essay, Melvin Jabar (2011) analyzes Japanese elementary school life from the point of view of the children with Philippine (and Japanese) heritage; his essay serves as a handy introduction for non-Japanese readers on the subject. Jabar informs Japanese readers what aspects of Japanese schools seem “different” in Filipino eyes; namely, prohibitions of bringing a miniature eraser, of wearing bracelet, or of using fingers in counting; the class recitation of rules; the use of a contact notebook (*renrakuchō*); a parent's obligation to inform the teacher of absence of a student in the morning; and so forth. Himself having been an assistant and tutor both at school and home for an (then) 11-year-old boy with mixed heritage, Jabar observed that language barriers and differences in disciplinary methods were some of the most challenging matters not only to the pupil but also to his Filipino mother. He suggests that students and their parents be informed in advance about school rules, which are taken for granted by Japanese students, teachers and parents, and that communication between teachers and parents of non-Japanese students be facilitated through translation.

Marriane Ubalde (2013) examines “Japanese-Filipino children” (as she terms it) who grew up in the Philippines and do not receive assistance from, or belong to, any organization. Ubalde presents the life histories of Japanese/Filipino children, most of whom have lived with, or at least known, their biological fathers. They are relatively well-off, and often have opportunities for higher education and a professional career. Thus, she breaks the stereotypic image of Japanese-Filipino children as socioeconomically



disadvantaged who are often involved in family problems. Ubalde's eight participants, aged between 20 and 25 as of 2013, are generally satisfied with their lives in the Philippines and enjoy their dual identity (Japanese and Filipino), though most of them do not speak Japanese fluently and do not think of working in and/or migrating to Japan.

The following sections in the essay shall present the a) review of the notion of bilingualism and other related concepts of language acquisition of migrant children; b) profile of the informants; c) summary of the language test result; and d) brief reflection on the result.

### **Understanding Bilingualism**

This section briefly introduces basic concepts on bilingualism as part of the discourse of second language learning, which lies at the crossroads of linguistics and language education. These concepts—the CF/ DLS/ ALP model (conventionally known as the BICS/CALP model) and the Interdependency model—have been appropriated in this study to help understand the conditions facing young migrants. However, it must be noted that extensive discussions on these concepts in linguistic terms are beyond the scope of this article. I also consider that concepts in bilingualism can also be applied in theory to trilingualism, quadrolingualism, or multilingualism, which are useful frameworks to “borrow” for this study. Therefore, in this essay, the terms bilingual(ism) and multilingual(ism) and variations thereof are in most cases used interchangeably.

In her review of the diverse definitions of bilingualism, Masayo Yamamoto emphasizes that bilingualism is not a “static attribution” but a “dynamic process” (Yamamoto 1991, 8, quoting Yamamoto 1987). Different types of bilingualism can be categorized and defined at the individual or societal level, and in accordance with the relation between the two languages (Yamamoto 1991; Nakajima 2010). This article focuses on bi/multilingualism at an individual level. Although understanding features of Philippine bi/multilingualism on a societal level is also

important in examining the issues this study addresses, it goes beyond the scope of this article and is left for future research.<sup>7</sup>

I tentatively adopt three variations of bilingualism (proficient, partial, and double-limited) against monolingualism as handy labels for a preliminary analysis conducted for this study (Nakajima 2010, 34–35). Proficient bilinguals have a high level of competence in two languages and usually enjoy cognitive benefits from being bilingual. Double-limited bilinguals have little competence in both of the two languages and, often, even suffer the negative effects of being bilingual. Partial-bilinguals experience neither positive nor negative impacts of their condition (Nakajima 2010, 34). At any rate, the premise is that any type of bi/multilingualism each participant has is never static and must be treated as a part of a dynamic process. In the context of migration studies, concerned researchers are apprehensive about “semilingualism,” often rephrased as “double-limited” today; semilingualism refers to the state in which competency in neither of the two languages is sufficient to be considered the mother tongue. Jim Cummins problematizes double-limitedness, which is a symptom of the absence of a mother tongue in some migrant children/youths, because it deprives them of chances to develop their cognitive abilities. In other words, “children who come to school with a solid foundation in their mother tongue develop stronger literacy abilities in the school language. ... Mother tongue promotion in the school helps develop not only the mother tongue but also children’s abilities in the majority school language” (Cummins 2001). Cummins’ notion of significance of a mother tongue as the foundation of school language is further consolidated by his several important concepts: a) the CF (Conversational Fluency), DLS (Discrete Language Skills) and ALP (Academic Language Proficiency)<sup>8</sup> and b) Interdependency model.<sup>9</sup>

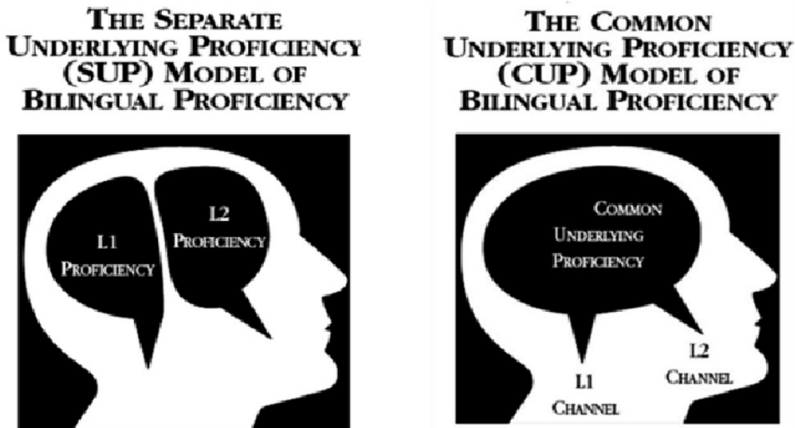
CF, similar to what is known earlier as BICS, refers to the ability to converse in a familiar situation. It involves limited but frequently repeated vocabulary and the use of simple syntax. Therefore, CF can be usually acquired in one or two years if a learner is exposed to a certain language

daily at school or in other social settings. DLS refers to writing skills; reading basic letters (i.e., understanding the relation of letters and phonetics), words and phrases; and knowledge of basic syntax. DLS can also be learned in a relatively shorter period (one or two years). On the contrary, ALP, similar to what is earlier known as CALP, refers to proficiency in reading, composition, expression, and application. It seems that ALP is almost synonymous to “academic language,” which “accompanies general knowledge of a subject needed to function in the contest of school and meta-cognitive strategy” (Cummins and Nakajima 2011, 31) (See Butler 2011 for extensive discussion on “academic language”).

In the Common Underlying Proficiency (CUP) model, the knowledge learned through one language is shared and used in another. The CUP replaced the Separate Underlying Proficiency (SUP) model, which used to be popular until around the 1970s. CUP considers knowledge learned in one language to be stored separately from that learned in another. The SUP was once the basis of understanding the poor academic performance of (often bilingual) migrant children, explaining the hindrances to their intellectual development (Figure 1). On the contrary, Cummins asserts that bilingualism “has positive effects on children’s linguistic and educational development” (Cummins 2001). Cummins expounds that

Children’s knowledge and skills transfer across languages from the mother tongue they have learned in the home to the school language. From the point of view of children’s development of concepts and thinking skills, the two languages are interdependent. Transfer across languages can be two-way: when the mother tongue is promoted in school (e.g., in a bilingual education program), the concepts, language, and literacy skills that children are learning in the majority languages can transfer to the home language. In short, both languages nurture each other when the educational environment permits children access to both languages. (Cummins 2001)

FIGURE 1  
The CUP/ SUP Model (Cummins 2000, 208)



### Profile of Participants and Data Evaluation

From 2010 to 2013, Yoneno-Reyes, Hara, and Ocaya conducted a survey of 31 youths (all of whom were between 13 and 25 years old at the time of data gathering) who had migrated from Japan to the Philippines at least once in their earlier years at school and were residing in the Philippines at the time of data gathering. Eighteen of them have a Filipino (read as Filipino descent) mother and a Japanese (read as Japanese descent) father; eight have a *nikkei* Filipino (second- or third-generation descendants of pre-WWII Japanese migrants to the Philippines) and his/her Filipino spouse as parents. One has two *nikkei* Filipino parents.<sup>10</sup> One has two Filipino biological parents, and currently living with the Filipino mother and a Japanese stepfather. One has a Japanese mother and a Korean-national father who is a special permanent resident in Japan. One has a *nikkei* Filipino mother and a *nikkei* Brazilian father.

For each of them, the researchers conducted a survey, semistructured interview, and a read-aloud test. The eight-page survey has 44 questions (including both multiple choice and narrative form questions) on participants'

perceptions of themselves and their daily life, including self-assessment of their commands of different languages; sense of belonging; family; future prospects and plans; and thoughts on Japanese and Philippine societies. It was prepared first in two languages (English and Japanese), and a Tagalog version was only later added. Each participant chose one version. Thirteen chose the Japanese version, and 18 opted for the English. No one selected Tagalog. Participants were allowed to answer in any language. Interviews were conducted by two native Japanese speakers who have a good command of English and conversational Tagalog, and by one English/Tagalog/Cebuano-speaking Filipino. The language of the interview was spontaneously chosen by the interviewer and interviewee. On-the-spot code-switching between or among the comfortable languages took place frequently.<sup>11</sup> Initial findings were presented in 2011 as a poster presentation in a conference (Hara, Yoneno-Reyes, and Ocaya 2011).

This article focuses on the results of the read-aloud test. Participants were asked to read aloud an excerpt from the Bible, “The Parable of the Sower and the Seed,” in three or four languages (Japanese, Tagalog, English, and Cebuano) when applicable. The excerpt was selected because it has reliable and consistent translations in all of the four languages. Although the chosen verses can be easily recognized by many Christians as biblical, it also lacks overt religious references, making it suitable for those with different religious persuasions. The test was recorded.

The read-aloud test is a preliminary attempt to gauge a participant’s ease with the languages that those who live in both the Philippines and Japan would likely be exposed to, and would be expected to be competent in. The read-aloud test particularly measures, albeit subjectively and in a limited extent, basic literacy and “naturalness” of the tone. In 2013, 24 (out of 31) valid data was rated by four native speakers for each language in terms of smoothness, naturalness, and clarity (hereafter “Native Speaker Check”). Four native speakers designated to each language were asked to listen to the recordings of the read-aloud test, and to rate them in terms of the comprehensibility by choosing one from the following four options: a)

TABLE 1: Profile of the Participants

	Age	Sex	Nationality	Residence in Japan	Residence in the Philippines	Occupation information	Additional
<b>A</b>	23	F	J	Saitama	Makati	Computer programmer/ Translator	Holds BS Computer Science
<b>B</b>	16	F	J	Fukushima	Davao	HS 4	
<b>C</b>	15	F	F/J	Kanagawa	Davao	HS 4	
<b>D</b>	16	F	F	Shizuoka	Davao	HS 4	
<b>E</b>	16	F	F	-	Davao	HS 4	
<b>F</b>	16	F	F/J	Saitama	Davao	HS 4	
<b>G</b>	13	M	F/J	Hiroshima	Davao	HS 1	
<b>H</b>	14	F	J	-	Davao	HS 1	
<b>I</b>	14	F	F/J	-	Davao	HS 2	
<b>J</b>	14	F	F	-	Davao	HS 3	
<b>K</b>	15	M	F/J	Chiba	Davao	HS 3	
<b>L</b>	16	F	F	Gifu	Davao	HS 3	
<b>M</b>	12	F	F	-	Davao	HS 1	
<b>N</b>	13	M	F/J	-	Davao	HS 1	
<b>O</b>	15	M	F/J	Osaka	Davao	HS 3	
<b>P</b>	15	F	-	Mie	Davao	HS -	
<b>Q</b>	13	F	F	Tokyo	Davao	HS 2	
<b>R</b>	14	F	F	Aichi	Davao	Coll 3	
<b>S</b>	16	F	F/J	Oita	Davao	HS -	
<b>T</b>	15	M	F/J	Tokyo	Davao	HS 3	
<b>U</b>	19	M	F/J	Saitama	Davao	Coll 1	
<b>V</b>	21	F	F	Chiba/ Tokyo/ Saitama	Antipolo	“Taking care of my baby”	
<b>W</b>	19	F	F	Chiba/ Tokyo/ Saitama	Antipolo	HS 3	
<b>X</b>	25	F	F/J	Kanagawa Saitama	Las Piñas	Coll 4	

Note 1. The age, nationality, and school year level correspond to those at the time of data gathering (A, September 2010; B-W, October 2010; X, May 2013). Under nationality, “F” stands for Filipino, “J” for Japanese, and F/J for both Filipino and Japanese.

Note 2. For those who did not provide birth date, but year, the age after the birthday of the year of data gathering is indicated.

Note 3. Residences in Japan are indicated by prefecture, while those in the Philippines by city. Some informants (E, H, I, J, M, N) did not provide their places of residence in Japan for various reasons (like being too young to remember, or did not understand the question, etc.) Similarly, P did not know her nationality.

Note 4. “HS” refers to high school in the Philippines’ education system before the implementation of the K-12 system, which consists of six (optional, seven) years of elementary education and four years of secondary schooling; “Coll” refers to college in the Philippines’ education system before the implementation of K-12 system in 2013. Numbers indicate school year level.

“very fluent and sound natural and pleasant (can pass as native speaker)”; b) “can be understood, though not very natural”; c) “hard to follow”/ “tiring listening to it”/ “frequent errors”/ “slow in reading;” and d) “cannot read at all”/ “can hardly read.”<sup>12</sup> The four native speakers to each language who evaluated the recording were: a) male 21–35 years old; b) male 36–50 years old;<sup>13</sup> c) female 21–35 years old; and d) female 36–50 years old. They are all college graduates. Some are teachers by profession, but none of them are language education specialists. As such, they can assess the comprehensibility to lay native speakers without using “professional” standards that language education specialists or linguists may apply. For English, considering that “Philippine English” is a variation of the various styles of World Englishes (See Tupas 2004 for sociolinguistic understanding of Philippine English), Filipinos who use English as their primary language in the workplace were selected as evaluators. The result was cross-checked in terms of the frequency of errors in each language (hereafter called “Frequency Count of Errors”). One representative of the four native speakers of each language was randomly chosen to do this task. The evaluators did not know any of the survey/test participants personally.

Table 1 presents the profile of the 24 participants in the read-aloud test. They were between 12 and 25 years old and were residing in the Philippines at the time of the research (any point between 2010 and 2013); twenty were high school students (equivalent to Grades 7–10 in the newly implemented K-12 Philippine education system); three were college students (in the previous educational system prior to the implementation of K-12 education). Eighteen were female and seven were male. At the time of research, 20 were based in Davao City and the rest were in Metro Manila or its suburbs. Among the 24 participants, 11 claim to have both Japanese and Filipino nationalities, while nine had only Filipino, three only Japanese, and one of them did not or could not provide his nationality. Their places of residence when they are in Japan are diverse. It is noted that some categories were left unanswered by some participants. Alarmingly, it was observed that some of them had difficulty in understanding and answering questions in any languages in the survey, and relevantly, in narrating about him/her self, his/her family, about future perspectives, and so on. It is plausible to suspect that they manifest the symptom of double- (or multi-) limited case.

Table 2 summarizes the migration trajectory of each participant. Each participant's nationality and residence at the time of research, and the members of the household each participant lives with at the time of the data gathering, is also provided. The profile implies that each participant belongs to a "transmigrant family" and is more likely to engage in shuttling migration. It is remarkable that at the time of research, none of them lived with their both (biological) parents. Only one (Q) lives in a quasinuclear family, with a stepfather, mother, half-sibling, and maids. The rest have a parent or two in Japan, and most of them live with their Filipino relatives and/or nonhousehold members (such as maid) when they are in the Philippines. To summarize their movements at the time of the research, eight of the participants experienced international migration once (Japan to the Philippines); seven of them twice (Philippines to Japan and back to the Philippines); four of them thrice (Japan to the Philippines, back to Japan, before returning to the Philippines), and three, four times (Philippines



to Japan, to the Philippines, to Japan, and to the Philippines). Two did not answer. The above tally does not include domestic migrations and short holidays between the two countries. Considering that a transmigrant family has the “possibility of migrating again sometime somewhere” and that all of the participants expressed their intention to study and/or work in Japan in the future, it is plausible that the participants’ residing in the Philippines at the time of the research was temporary and each of them could migrate (to Japan) any time.<sup>14</sup>

The data shows us that participants have been and/or are likely to engage in shuttling. The age at the time of each migration varies, from zero to 15 years old. As for schooling, all of them transferred at least once from a Japanese school to a Philippine one. The education of eight participants (A, B, G, K, N, V, W, X) was revealed through a semistructured interview (Table 3).<sup>15</sup> Three of them (A, K, N) shifted to a lower grade after migration; and two of them (B, N) did not attend school for a certain period of time. One did not begin education at all until the age of nine, and another one did not until the age seven (W). Above all, it is alarming that some of the participants were not able to answer the questions or even could not understand them (Table 1, note 3). Such limitations in communication and cognitive ability could be interpreted as symptom of double-limited bilingualism or multi-limited multilingualism.

### **Read-Aloud Test Result**

Table 4 shows the results of the “Native Speaker Check” of the read-aloud test. Four native speakers for each language evaluated each participant’s recording and rated the “smoothness and naturalness” of speech in any of four ways: “A” to “D” with A as the highest and D as lowest.<sup>16</sup> Table 4 summarizes these ratings for each language, which could also measure literacy to some extent. When tied, two ranks are indicated with a slash (i.e., “A/B”). Eleven participants among 24 have at least one A. They can be tentatively considered as having a mother tongue, but it is alarming that 13 of them did not get an A at all. That implies

TABLE 2: Migration Trajectory of the Participants

	<b>Country of Birth</b>	<b>Migration Trajectory</b>	<b>Nationality and Living Place of Father</b>	<b>Nationality and Living Place of Mother</b>	<b>Persons Currently Living together</b>
<b>A</b>	J	Born in Saitama in 1987 Moved to Laguna in 1997 Moved to Pasay in 2009 Moved to Makati in 2010	Japanese/ “I don’t know”	Filipino/ Kagawa	2 Filipino friends
<b>B</b>	J	Born in Fukushima in 1993 Moved to Davao in 2008	Korean (resident in Japan)/ Davao City	Japanese/ Fukushima	Father, Sister, Maid
<b>C</b>	J	Born in Kanagawa in 1994 Moved to Davao in 2007	Japanese/ Yokohama	Filipino/ Davao	Nieces
<b>D</b>	Ph	Born (in the Phils) in 1993 Moved to Shizuoka in 2003 Moved to Davao in 2010	Japanese/ Japan	Filipino/ Japan	(Boarding house)
<b>E</b>	–	–	Filipino/ Nagoya	Filipino/ Nagoya	–
<b>F</b>	J	Born in Saitama in 1993 [Moved to Davao in 2003]	Japanese/ Japan	Filipino/ Davao	Step-grandfather/ Mother/ Younger brother
<b>G</b>	J	Born in Hiroshima [1–2 times per year to the Philippines] Moved to Davao in 2010	Japanese/ Hiroshima	Filipino/ Davao	Mother, Uncle
<b>H</b>	J	Born in Japan in 1996 Moved to the Phils when 1 yo Moved to Japan when 5 yo Moved to the Phils when 13 yo	Japanese/ Shizuoka	Filipino/ Davao	Grandmother, 2 Cousins, 3 Siblings
<b>I</b>	Ph	Born in Davao in 1996 Moved to Japan when 1 yo Moved to the Phils when 9 yo Moved to Japan when G7 Moved to the Phils (Davao) now (G8)	Japanese/ Nagano	Filipino/ Nagano	Grandmother Uncles, Aunts
<b>J</b>	–	–	Japanese/ Gifu	Filipino/ Gifu	–

	<b>Country of Birth</b>	<b>Migration Trajectory</b>	<b>Nationality and Living Place of Father</b>	<b>Nationality and Living Place of Mother</b>	<b>Persons Currently Living together</b>
<b>K</b>	J	Born in Chiba in 1994 Moved to the Phils when 10 yo	Japanese/ Chiba	Filipino/ Chiba	Cousin and Maid
<b>L</b>	Ph	Born in General Santos in 1994 Moved to Gifu when 9 yo Moved to the Phils when 15	Japanese and Filipino/ -	Filipino/ General Santos	-
<b>M</b>	Ph	Born in Davao in 1997 Moved to Japan when 8 yo Moved to Davao in 2010	Filipino/ Japan	Filipino/ Japan	Uncle, Aunt, Cousins, Siblings, Niece
<b>N</b>	J	Born in Japan in 1997 Moved to the Phils when G8 Moved to Japan when G9 Moved to Davao in 2010	Japanese/ Chiba	Filipino/ Chiba	Grandparents, Aunt, 2 Cousins, Nanny
<b>O</b>	J	Born in Osaka in 1995 Moved to Davao in 2000	Filipino/ Osaka	Japanese/ Kyoto	Grandparents, Brother
<b>P</b>	Ph	Born in Davao in 1995 Moved to Mie in 2006 Moved to Davao (year not known)	Filipino/ Japan	Filipino/ Japan	-
<b>Q</b>	J	Born in Tagum in 1996 Moved to Tokyo in 2006 Moved to Davao in 2008	Filipino/ Cebu (step-father, Japanese / Davao)	Filipino/ Davao	Sibling and maids
<b>R</b>	Ph	Born in Davao in 1990 Moved to Nagoya in 2000 Moved to Davao in 2002	Brazilian/ Japan	Filipino/ Japan	None
<b>S</b>	J	Born in Oita in 1994 Moved to Davao in ca. 2002	Japanese/ Oita	Filipino/ Oita	Grandparents, Aunt
<b>T</b>	Ph	Born in Butuan in 1995 Moved to Tokyo when 3 month old Moved to Butuan City in 1999 Moved to Davao in 2010	Japanese/ Japan	Filipino/ Japan	Aunt, Brother
<b>U</b>	J	Born in Saitama in 1991 Moved to Butuan in 2000 Moved to Davao in 2010	Japanese/ Saitama	Filipino/ Saitama	Cousin, Aunt

	<b>Country of Birth</b>	<b>Migration Trajectory</b>	<b>Nationality and Living Place of Father</b>	<b>Nationality and Living Place of Mother</b>	<b>Persons Currently Living together</b>
<b>V</b>	J	Born in Chiba in 1989 Moved to Tokyo in 1990 Moved to Saitama in 1992 Moved in Saitama in 1997 Moved to a place not known Moved to Tokyo in 2001 Moved to Quezon City in 2001 Moved to Negros Occidental in 2005 Moved in Negros Occidental in 2006	Japanese/ “I don’t know”	Filipino/ Antipolo	Mother, Step-father, 5 Siblings, Son
<b>W</b>	J	Moved to Antipolo in 2009 Born in Tokyo in 1991 Moved to Saitama in 1992 Moved in Saitama in 1997 Moved to Tokyo in 2001 Moved to Quezon City in 2001 Moved to Negros Occidental in 2003 Moved in Negros Occidental in 2006 Moved in Negros Occidental in 2007	Filipino/ Antipolo	Japanese/ Japan	2 nuns (Japanese and Filipino)
<b>X</b>	J	Born in Kanagawa in 1988 Moved to Las Piñas when 3 yo Moved to Kanagawa when 12 Moved to Las Piñas when 21	Japanese/ Kanagawa	Filipino/ Kanagawa	Grandmother, [cousins]

Note 1. Place names are indicated by prefecture (for Japan) or province (for the Philippines). However, city names are used for major cities such as Antipolo, Butuan, Davao, Las Piñas, Makati, Pasay, Tagum, Nagoya, and Yokohama.

Note 2. Missing data in the table (marked as “ – ”) indicate that participants could not answer. Either they did not understand the question, or did not know the answer, or did not know how to articulate. These imply the symptoms of multilimitedness.

that half of the participants did *not* have a mother tongue, the foundation of further academic growth. Among the 11, three have two As (A, L, and R). They are possibly “balanced bilinguals.” Eight of the participants who have A/B are partially bilingual. Five that have B or B/C as the highest are possibly cases of multi-limited (or semi-lingual) bilingualism. Among 19 who have at least one A or A/B, seven have the highest (A or A/B) in Cebuano. In these cases, it is probable that the participants have established Cebuano as their mother tongue and might be weak in ALP (or an academic language proficiency in English and Filipino). In most cases, participants speak English and Filipino (Tagalog) when in the Philippines, and Japanese when in Japan.

The succeeding tables present the results of the “Frequency Count of Errors” in the read-aloud test. Tables 5 and 6 present data per category per language, and Table 7 provides the summary. Table 5 implies that generally speaking, the participants have a certain level of literacy and smoothness in speech in Japanese, but tend to have difficulty reading Japanese letters or characters. On the other hand, they seem to have less fluency in English and Tagalog, at least when reading aloud. It must be noted that during the read-aloud test, many of the participants who read the Cebuano text said that they found it difficult to read, as they are not used to doing so. Cebuano (popularly called “Bisaya” by the participants) is essentially an oral language. In fact, even in the towns where Cebuano is spoken, such as Cebu City, available texts are predominantly in English or Filipino, and printed Cebuano texts hardly exist. In this connection, it is noted that since 2012, Cebuano has been certified as one of the recognized mother tongues to be used as media of instruction from Grades 1 to 3 under the Mother Tongue Based-Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE) program of the Philippines. Textbooks and other teaching materials for these lower grades are becoming available. The MTB-MLE could benefit such students whose mother tongue is Cebuano but who are not used to reading (and writing in) it. But this program has immense room for improvement. For example, Thomas and Collier (2002, cited in Taura

TABLE 3: Education Trajectory of Some Participants

(Age)	Migration Trajectory	Education history
A (23)	Born in Saitama in 1987 Moved to Laguna in 1997 Moved to Pasay in 2009 Moved to Makati in 2010	Grades 1–4 in Japan. A year of home tutorial in the Philippines. Grade 5–College in the Philippines. Holds BS in Computer Science.
B (16)	Born in Fukushima in 1993 Moved to Davao in 2008	Grades 1–9 in Japan. Grades 9– in the Philippines.
G (13)	Born in Hiroshima Moved to Davao in 2010	[1–2 times almost every year to the Philippines] Grades 1–6 in Japan. Grade 7 – in the Philippines.
K (15)	Born in Chiba in 1994 Moved to the Phils when 10 yo	Attended school in Japan Grades 1–4, then Grade 1 in the Philippines for one year, and Grade 5 in the following year.
N (13)	Born in Japan in 1997 Moved to the Phils when G8 Moved to Japan when G9 Moved to Davao in 2010	Bullying in Japan when Grade 8, then moved to the Philippines. Returned to Japan when Grade 9. After finishing middle school (G9) in Japan, attended senior high school for one month. Then came to Davao, as suggested by mother.
V (21)	Born in Chiba in 1989 Moved to Tokyo in 1990 Moved to Saitama in 1992 Moved in Saitama in 1997 Moved to a place not known Moved to Tokyo in 2001 Moved to Quezon City in 2001 Moved to Negros Occidental in 2005 Moved in Negros Occidental in 2006 Moved to Antipolo in 2009	Did not attend school until 9 years old

(Age)	Migration Trajectory	Education history
W (19)	Born in Tokyo in 1991 Moved to Saitama in 1992 Moved in Saitama in 1997 Moved to Tokyo in 2001 Moved to Quezon City in 2001 Moved to Negros Occidental in 2003 Moved in Negros Occidental in 2006 Moved in Negros Occidental in 2007	Did not attend school until 7 years old
X (25)	Born in Kanagawa in 1988 Moved to Las Piñas when 3 years old Moved to Kanagawa when 12 Moved to Las Piñas when 21	Finished junior college in Japan Pursuing BS of Elementary Education in the Philippines

2012) state that it is only when education is done in the mother tongue from Grades 1 to 4 constantly that it becomes effective. Confirming the research of Thomas and Collier, Taura (2008, cited in Taura 2012) notes the same pattern among 64 bilingual Japanese high school students who “returned” to Japan from English-speaking countries. As for individual variations, the results show that the Frequency Count of Errors often corresponds with that of the “Native Speaker Check.”

It is safe to conclude that three of the participants (A, K, X) show the features of proficient multilingualism, four (I, N, V, W) of multi-limitedness, while the rest may be considered partial multilingual.<sup>17</sup> Such linguistic features seem to be associated with the cognitive development of the individuals, in correspondence to each participant’s profile, particularly age/s of migration and varying linguistic environments such as those in family, school, and work. However, the relation between linguistic ability and other elements must be analyzed and discussed more thoroughly in a separate study.

TABLE 4: Result of Native Speaker Check

	<b>Japanese</b>	<b>English</b>	<b>Tagalog</b>	<b>Cebuano</b>
<b>A</b>	A	A	A/B	N/A
<b>B</b>	A	C	C	B
<b>C</b>	A	B	B/C	B
<b>D</b>	C	A/B	A/B	A
<b>E</b>	N/A	C	A/B	N/A
<b>F</b>	B	B	B/C	A
<b>G</b>	B	D	D	D
<b>H</b>	A/B	C	C	C
<b>I</b>	C	B/C	C	B/C
<b>J</b>	C	B/C	B/C	A/B
<b>K</b>	A	B	B/C	A/B
<b>L</b>	A	A/B	A/B	A
<b>M</b>	C	B/C	B	A
<b>N</b>	D	B/C	B/C	B
<b>O</b>	C/D	B	A/B	A
<b>P</b>	D	B/C	B	A/B
<b>Q</b>	D	B	B	A/B
<b>R</b>	B	A	A	A/B
<b>S</b>	C	B	A/B	A/B
<b>T</b>	D	A/B	A/B	A/B
<b>U</b>	C	B	A/B	A
<b>V</b>	N/A	C	B/C	N/A
<b>W</b>	B/C	B	B	N/A
<b>X</b>	A/B	A/B	A/B	N/A

A: 3 (out of 4) evaluators marked A (very good)

B: 3 (out of 4) evaluators marked B (good)

C: 3 (out of 4) evaluators marked C (poor)

D: 3 (out of 4) evaluators marked D (very poor)

A/B: 2 (out of 4) evaluators marked A and 2 marked B

B/C: 2 (out of 4) evaluators marked B and 2 marked C

C/D: 2 (out of 4) evaluators marked C and 2 marked D

N/A refers to the cases where participants could hardly read the text.



TABLE 5: Result of Frequency Count of Errors for Japanese and English

	Japanese				English		
	Wrong Pronunciation	Unnatural Pausing	Letters	Total	Wrong Pronunciation	Unnatural pausing	Total
<b>A</b>	No data	No data	No data	<b>No data</b>	0	0	<b>0</b>
<b>B</b>	0	0	2	<b>2</b>	7	0	<b>7</b>
<b>C</b>	0	0	0	<b>0</b>	4	1	<b>5</b>
<b>D</b>	0	2	20	<b>22</b>	2	0	<b>2</b>
<b>E</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A	<b>N/A</b>	10	0	<b>10</b>
<b>F</b>	0	0	7	<b>7</b>	5	0	<b>5</b>
<b>G</b>	0	1	5	<b>6</b>	N/A	N/A	<b>N/A</b>
<b>H</b>	0	0	2	<b>2</b>	5	13	<b>18</b>
<b>I</b>	3	1	24	<b>24</b>	4	1	<b>5</b>
<b>J</b>	0	0	14	<b>1</b>	1	2	<b>3</b>
<b>K</b>	0	0	1	<b>1</b>	2	1	<b>3</b>
<b>L</b>	1	1	4	<b>6</b>	1	1	<b>2</b>
<b>M</b>	2	1	10	<b>13</b>	4	5	<b>9</b>
<b>N</b>	(3)	(3)	(16)	<b>(22)</b>	6	2	<b>8</b>
<b>O</b>	2	1	22	<b>25</b>	2	0	<b>2</b>
<b>P</b>	2	3	21	<b>26</b>	3	0	<b>3</b>
<b>Q</b>	1	2	29	<b>32</b>	4	1	<b>5</b>
<b>R</b>	7	0	9	<b>16</b>	2	1	<b>3</b>
<b>S</b>	3	3	30	<b>36</b>	4	1	<b>5</b>
<b>T</b>	(3)	(0)	(9)	<b>(12)</b>	4	0	<b>4</b>
<b>U</b>	3	0	23	<b>26</b>	3	2	<b>5</b>
<b>V</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A	<b>N/A</b>	2	4	<b>6</b>
<b>W</b>	0	0	17	<b>17</b>	5	1	<b>6</b>
<b>X</b>	0	0	2	<b>2</b>	3	0	<b>3</b>

Note 1: Participant A read a different Biblical text (John 1: 1–3); therefore the Japanese evaluator did not count, while others did. A's test result, though incomplete, is included here because it helps us see the tendency. A read the assigned text in Japanese with natural speed and pausing.

Note 2: "N/A" refers to the cases where participants could hardly read the text (in E, G).

Note 3: Parentheses (in N, T) indicate that only half of the text was read.

TABLE 6: Result of Frequency Count of Errors for Tagalog and Cebuano

	Tagalog			Cebuano		
	Wrong Pronunciation	Unnatural Pausing	Total	Wrong Pronunciation	Unnatural pausing	Total
<b>A</b>	2	0	<b>2</b>	N/A	N/A	<b>N/A</b>
<b>B</b>	5	4	<b>9</b>	15	1	<b>16</b>
<b>C</b>	6	1	<b>7</b>	20	2	<b>22</b>
<b>D</b>	2	0	<b>2</b>	7	1	<b>8</b>
<b>E</b>	4	0	<b>4</b>	N/A	N/A	<b>N/A</b>
<b>F</b>	6	1	<b>7</b>	15	2	<b>17</b>
<b>G</b>	N/A	N/A	<b>N/A</b>	N/A	N/A	<b>N/A</b>
<b>H</b>	15	2	<b>17</b>	14	3	<b>17</b>
<b>I</b>	7	1	<b>8</b>	12	6	<b>18</b>
<b>J</b>	2	X	<b>2</b>	6	5	<b>11</b>
<b>K</b>	3	0	<b>3</b>	13	1	<b>14</b>
<b>L</b>	3	2	<b>5</b>	3	3	<b>6</b>
<b>M</b>	3	1	<b>4</b>	7	1	<b>8</b>
<b>N</b>	2	4	<b>6</b>	6	5	<b>11</b>
<b>O</b>	2	0	<b>2</b>	5	0	<b>5</b>
<b>P</b>	1	0	<b>1</b>	4	0	<b>4</b>
<b>Q</b>	1	2	<b>3</b>	8	1	<b>9</b>
<b>R</b>	0	1	<b>1</b>	1	-	<b>1</b>
<b>S</b>	2	0	<b>2</b>	5	0	<b>5</b>
<b>T</b>	3	1	<b>4</b>	5	0	<b>5</b>
<b>U</b>	2	0	<b>2</b>	4	1	<b>5</b>
<b>V</b>	2	3	<b>5</b>	N/A	N/A	<b>N/A</b>
<b>W</b>	3	1	<b>4</b>	N/A	N/A	<b>N/A</b>
<b>X</b>	3	1	<b>4</b>	N/A	N/A	<b>N/A</b>

Note 1: “N/A” refers to the cases where participants could hardly read the text (in A, E, G, V, W, X).

Note 2: “X” (in J) indicates that it is “too frequent” and that the evaluator could not count.

TABLE 7: Summary of Frequency Count

	<b>Japanese</b>	<b>English</b>	<b>Tagalog</b>	<b>Cebuano</b>
A	No data	0	2	N/A
B	2	7	9	16
C	0	5	7	22
D	22	2	2	8
E	N/A	10	4	N/A
F	7	5	7	17
G	6	N/A	N/A	N/A
H	2	18	17	17
I	24	5	8	18
J	14	3	2	11
K	1	3	3	14
L	6	2	5	6
M	13	9	4	8
N	(22)	8	6	11
O	25	2	2	5
P	26	3	1	4
Q	32	5	3	9
R	16	3	1	1
S	36	5	2	5
T	(12)	4	4	5
U	26	5	2	5
V	N/A	6	5	N/A
W	17	6	4	N/A
X	2	3	4	N/A

Note 1: "N/A" refers to the cases where participants could hardly read the text (in A, E, G, V, W, X).

Note 2: Parentheses (in N, T) indicate that only half of the text was read.

This study reveals that the participants who are proficient multilinguals (A, K, X) commonly stayed in one country (Grades 1–4 either in the Philippines or in Japan) until they were old enough to establish mother-tongue literacy. That was followed by migration, after which they acquired second (and third/ fourth) language/s during their low-teen years. Two of them (A and K) studied at a lower level, and all three had tutorial assistance in learning the language/s of the destination. They also received support to retain and improve their first language (their mother tongue).

Those with multi-limited tendencies (no A score in native speaker's check) had multiple migrations between the two countries ("shuttling") and/or received no sufficient support for the acquisition of a second language/s (e.g., Filipino, English, Cebuano) and for retention of the first language (e.g., Japanese) in their destination (e.g., Philippines). Also, three of them did not attend school for some time. Participant V, who was marked C in English and B/C in Tagalog in the native speaker's check and could hardly read Japanese, did not attend school until she was nine when she was in Japan. Participant N did not attend school between the age of 13 and 14 when he was in the Philippines.

In short, the results confirm the significance of the establishment of mother-tongue literacy and its retention after migration for one's growth as a multilingual person (in order to prevent them from becoming multi-limited). It also informs us that flexible adjustments to a school system (including downgrading) and various forms of support (such as tutorial) seem effective for the acquisition of the second (and third and more) language/s (e.g., Philippine languages) and the retention of one's mother tongue (e.g., Japanese). Such a result demonstrates that the theories of bilingual education proposed by Jim Cummins (i.e., 2000; 2001), based on the data primarily from Canada since the 1970s, also fit the participants who grow up in the Philippines and Japan. However, Cummins' suggestions for the establishment of mother-tongue literacy is not easily applicable to the children of Japanese and the Philippine heritages

because Philippine languages are oral in nature in general and are featured, if at all, only in a few written texts. It is only today that at least several languages in the Philippines are being “formalized”—with standard spelling, grammar, and syntax—and recognized as media of instruction and as the focus of mother-tongue literacy education from Grades 1 to 3 under the MTB-MLE program.

### **Reflection and Conclusion**

This article presented the results of the read-aloud test, together with demographic information of the participants, Filipino/Japanese youths who migrated at least once from Japan to the Philippines during their schooling years and were residing in the Philippines at the time of research between 2010 and 2013. This study is a humble attempt to respond to an unconventional phenomenon. It deals with the migration from a more-developed country to a less-developed one and from a monolingual nation to a multilingual one. The test is a preliminary exercise in understanding the status and situation of Filipino/Japanese migrant youths in the Philippines in terms of language proficiency in school. The data confirms existing theories for which the mother-tongue literacy (at the level of the fourth grade) is the foundation for proficient bilingualism.

Those who demonstrate the symptoms of proficient bilingualism shuttle-migrate less, undergo continuous education in a certain sociolinguistic environment from first to fourth grades, and have a support system (such as lowering of school year level, tutorial etc.), all of which facilitate the foundation of mother-tongue literacy. The proficient bilinguals are more articulate and have clearer ideas about their future. On the contrary, those who display multi-limited inclinations have shuttle-migrated more often, and have not acquired Japanese, English, Filipino, or Cebuano as their mother tongue. They have difficulty expressing themselves and have vague ideas about their future (like imagining a career path). In Japan, the national government does not have a systematic education policy (including that of language learning) for migrants, despite the presence of

more than two million foreign residents and about 72,000 public school students whose mother tongue is not Japanese (as of 2012). Currently, support for such migrant children at schools is almost solely rendered by volunteers with the humble assistance, if any, of local governments and nonprofit organizations (Yamoto 2013). In the Philippines, where support for migrant children at schools is much more scarce, more support needs to be rendered.<sup>18</sup>

As for mother-tongue literacy, the current Aquino administration in the Philippine government initiated in 2012 the Mother-Tongue-Based Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE) for the K-12 curriculum. Such a reformation must be appreciated as a great leap. In fact, those who live in a community of transmigrant families (and shuttle between two countries), including participants to this research, are likely to benefit from this program. However, improvements to the program must be vigilantly and continually observed. For one thing, the number of years the MTB-MLE is conducted (currently for Grades 1–3) seems too short to be effective. At least, the extension of the MTB-MLE for one more year seems plausible.

It is imperative that experts in migration studies, linguistics, language education, and education collaborate to illuminate the cognitive development of migrants who are minors (e.g., below 18 years old), particularly those who migrate between Japan and the Philippines. This is an emerging subject of study, which would address the implications of the presence of English in the Philippines, the politico-economically “weaker” country between the two. Existing studies on the language learning of migrant children/youths have assumed that their mother tongue is a “minor” language, which is politico-economically considered “weaker,” while the language they need to learn for integration in the destination community is a “major” one, which is politico-economically considered “stronger.” The hitherto studies on migration and language often treated the former as “heritage language,” while the latter is seen as the standard language which everybody is expected to be fluent in. With the presence of English as a colonial language and that of Taglish as a creole language in the Philippines, the social conditions of

Philippine bilingualism/multilingualism deviates from such an assumption. Masayo Yamamoto summarizes three variations of societal bilingualism: a) coexistence of two monolingual communities; b) bilingualism of all members of a community; and c) coexistence of a monolingual community and a bilingual community in which the language of the monolingual community is one (Yamamoto 1991, 22–25). The Philippine situation is close to b), with presumably quite a large population speaking more than one language. Obviously, more politico-economic power lies in Japan. But English, as one of the languages of the Philippines, is certainly a “stronger” language than Japanese in the international arena. In other words, the power relation between English and Japanese does not correspond to that of the socioeconomic power between the Philippines and Japan. Nevertheless, English is not necessarily the language Filipinos are most intimate with. This layered twists of power relation are challenging. Most Filipino-Japanese youths who participated in this research expressed their dream or wish to study and work in Japan in the future. If so, none of the languages they face daily in the Philippines— at home and at school—seem to be compellingly important enough to be learned. Relevantly, the presence of Taglish as a growingly dominant mode of speech among Filipinos across the nation furthermore twists the power relation among the languages concerned (Bautista 2004; Rafael 2000). Nozomi Tanaka aptly addresses the issue of uniqueness of this situation from a linguistic perspective. To Filipino/Japanese youths who migrate between Japan and the Philippines, it is not clearly known which language is the language for integration and which one is for heritage. They are neither heritage language learners nor second language learners (Tanaka 2012). Tanaka thus proposes a creation of a new category to cater to the unique group of Philippine language learners in the contemporary Philippines.

To address the issue, crucial is the interdisciplinary collaboration of specialists in migration studies, linguists, language education, and education in general, among others. It is a welcome sign that migration studies has established the concept of transmigration, and that its specialists are more concerned about language and education of transmigrant children/youths

today (Sekiguchi 2008 and Barea et al. 2010), while more specialists of language education are paying attention to transmigration, including that between the Philippines and Japan (Yamamoto 2007; Kawakami 2010; Nishihara 2013).

Why pay attention to language acquisition of such a small group of children? Because the language learning of transmigrant and shuttling children/youths pertains to rights, resources, and policy (Ruiz 1984). And every child has the right to have her talents recognized and promoted within a school (Cummins 2001). These talents are social and individual resources and assets.

What is relevant is the well-supported findings that the continued development of bilingual children's two languages during schooling is associated with positive educational and linguistic consequences. This "additive bilingualism enrichment principle" (Cummins 1996) highlights the fact that bilingualism is not just a societal resource, it is also an individual resource that potentially can enhance aspects of bilingual children's academic, cognitive and linguistic functioning. (Cummins 2000, 175)

Multiethnic nations—such as Canada, USA, Australia—have formulated policies and established an educational system that nurtures both the major language and heritage languages through immersion programs, heritage language initiatives, and the like (Cummins and Nakajima 2011; Nakajima 2010). Meanwhile, the European Union has been promoting "bilateral-multiculturalism" since 2001, which considers the ideal acquisition of a mother tongue as a utility language and two languages of neighboring communities as comprehension languages (Nakajima 2010, 43).

Both the Philippines and Japan are yet to respond to the reality of accelerated migration within Asia (Castles and Miller 2009), in which transmigration and shuttling are taking place. Both countries need to shape policies to protect the rights of (trans)migrant children/youths and to nurture the coming generations by equipping them with multiple languages at



both individual and societal levels. This is so because each language is a tool of knowledge production and transmission, and is a resource not only to a nation but also to the globe (Butler 2011). It must be reminded that neglecting the education of migrant children does not only violate the human rights of such children but also could lead to waste of potential resources. And the establishment of mother tongue literacy at the fourth-grade level is the foundation of education.

### Notes

- <sup>1</sup> This article is a compilation of the lectures and papers presented under different titles in the following occasions and revised; The Regional Conference of International Society of Family Law, Tsukuba University, Japan, 2010; the 3rd International Conference on Filipino as a Global Language, De La Salle University, Philippines, 2012; the Symposium “Aging and Migration in 21st Century Asia: Issues in Intimate and Public Spheres,” Asian Center, University of the Philippines Diliman, 2013; and the 3rd Philippine Studies Conference in Japan, Kyoto University, 2014. I thank the Japan Society for Socio-legal Studies on Family Issues for the opportunity and financial assistance for travel. The study was conducted with financial assistance from the Japan Foundation and the Asian Center, University of the Philippines Diliman. I also thank my colleagues; members of a research group the Bilingual as a First Language led by Masayo Yamamoto for their intellectual guidance and sharing of knowledge; Megumi Hara, Raissa Ocaya, Nozomi Tanaka, Mariko Okeda, and Tina Clemente, among others, for their technical and moral support. I also thank the participants in the research and supporting organizations, though I do not mention their names here for confidentiality.
- <sup>2</sup> For the children of Philippine and Japanese heritage who were born and live in either the Philippines or Japan, the chances of getting the nationality of a third country are scarce.
- <sup>3</sup> Most of the Japanese residents in the Philippines then were repatriated during and after World War II. But most of the children of Japanese and their local spouses were left in the Philippines. The term *nikkeijin* here largely refers to the descendants of those children.
- <sup>4</sup> This article employs “Japanese/Filipino youths” in referring to the participants who carry heritage of the Philippines and Japan, broadly defined. The use of “/” implies the neutrality of the two country names. They are interchangeable and are of equal importance. These are neither hyphenated nor placed in a specific order to imply that none is adjective to another.
- <sup>5</sup> In the survey of MEXT, pupils and students whose mother tongue is any of the Philippine languages seem lumped together and labeled as those whose mother tongue is “Filipino.” The author believes it is necessary to bring attention to the fact that their mother tongues are plural, which have to be labeled more appropriately as, for example, “Philippine languages.”

- <sup>6</sup> “Descendants” here include those of different generations, but largely within the traceable ranges, roughly from the second to the fifth generations. This paper does *not* distinguish the so-called *nikkeijin* in the Philippines (descendants of Japanese emigrants to the Philippines in the early twentieth century) and *shin-nikkeijin* (“new second generation Japanese-Filipinos” in Hara 2011) often used to refer to the second-generation children with a Japanese father and a Filipino mother born in the context of the fad of so-called “sex tourism” in the Philippines in the 1970s and the prominence of Filipino entertainers in Japan from the 1980s to the early 2000s.
- <sup>7</sup> Tupas 2007 is one of the materials that establish the foundation in understanding bi-/multi-lingualism of the Philippines at a societal level.
- <sup>8</sup> Earlier known as “BICS (Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills)/ CALP (Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency) model” (Cummins 2000; 2008).
- <sup>9</sup> Earlier known as “CUP (Common Underlying Proficiency) / SUP (Separate Underlying Proficiency) model” (Cummins 2000; 2008).
- <sup>10</sup> That is to say, they are the third- or fourth-generation *nikkei* Filipinos.
- <sup>11</sup> Code-switching is one of the characteristics of the Philippine bilingualism at the societal level. See Bautista 2004 for the sociolinguistics behind English-Tagalog code-switching and Rafael 2000 for his insights on Taglish’s socio-politico-cultural meaning. Namba n.d. suggests theorization of grammar of code-switching (Namba 2012).
- <sup>12</sup> It is hardly possible to rate “naturalness and smoothness” objectively; thus, a subjective measure was employed in this study. It is worth noting that among the four evaluators for each language, there were no considerable discrepancies in their evaluations.
- <sup>13</sup> Since language use differs by generation and by age generally speaking, the evaluation was designed in such a way that evaluators belong to the generation the informants are likely to be engaging with in the workplace in the future.
- <sup>14</sup> Although Filipinos are found in a number of countries in the world as guest workers as well as long-term residents, none of the participants in this research expressed their interest in studying or working in countries other than Japan.
- <sup>15</sup> The eight cases are those with special remarks to mention.
- <sup>16</sup> For the advantages and limitations of a read-aloud test in a second language from linguistic point of view, see Ullakonoja 2009.
- <sup>17</sup> In my gut instinct, participant G’s case may be explained as something else (e.g., learning disability) than multi-limited multilingualism. However, this is only speculation and beyond the scope of this study.
- <sup>18</sup> In my own experience of managing a Japanese language school in Metro Manila in the late 2000s, there has been an increasing demand for Japanese language lessons for Filipino-Japanese youths who migrated from Japan to the Philippines during their school years and whose first language is Japanese. This demand aims to help retain the mother tongue. Ken’ichiro Ogata of Nihongo Foundation Inc., shares similar experiences (Ogata 2013).

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