



A linguistic biography of an English-dependent Filipino migrant in Japan

Mikhail Alic C. Go & Ariane Macalinga Borlongan

Abstract

In this article, we present a linguistic biography of an English-dependent Filipino migrant in Japan. His multinational company stationed him in its Japan office even if he is not proficient in Japanese. He moves to Japan with almost no knowledge of Japanese, and we document his struggles, and, in particular, his language issues during his posting in Japan. We reflect on his experience and provide a discussion on how many other migrant workers may have similar experience as his. We end this article by providing recommendations as to how migrant workers could be supported in their destination countries.

Keywords: Migration linguistics, language and migration, labor migration, overseas Filipino migrant, migration to Japan

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Corresponding author
Mikhail Alic C. Go
Tamagawa University
mikhail_go11@hotmail.com

Ariane Macalinga Borlongan
Tokyo University of Foreign Studies

Additional information is available at the end of the article

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University of Santo Tomas
Manila, The Philippines

1. Aims and Outline

Language is, needless to say, an essential factor for a successful migration to a new country, particularly if movement is motivated by employment. In this article, we look closely into the case of a Filipino who migrated to Japan because the multinational company he works for took him from his initial post in Manila to Tokyo. As we present his linguistic biography, we learn of his struggles in terms of language and how he coped with them. Stories like his provide interesting lessons for crafting policies relevant to migrants, particularly in terms of language.

2. Language and Labor Migration

Research and scholarship on the social phenomenon of migration is gaining interest; because migration itself is becoming more and more common than ever. There were around 150

million migrants in 2000 whereas 2020 had an estimated 272 million migrants (International Organization for Migration, 2019). Of course, this phenomenon could also be attributed to globalization and technology, which has led to more opportunities for migration for people as their choices and options have likewise become more diverse (Czaika & de Haas, 2013).

Of the 272 million migrants of the world, 164 million move from one country to another for work and employment. There are a variety of reasons as to why migrants choose to work and stay overseas. The majority of migrants offer their skills and services to foreign countries in hopes of improving their living standards (De Brauw, 2007; Malyuchenko, 2015). Others, most especially the younger migrants, study in other countries to learn skills and eventually earn qualifications to become more employable in the future (Mihi-Ramirez & Kumpikaite, 2014; Mulholland & Hernández-Julián, 2019). The more affluent ones decide to do so because they would like a change of pace or find better options in other places (Benson & O'Reilly, 2009; O'Reilly & Benson, 2016). The rest, like the elderly, simply want to retire in a more affordable and comfortable location (Dwyer, 2000; Repetti, Phillipson & Calasanti, 2018).

As a matter of course, most, if not all, migrants need to adhere to the societal rules of their host countries. However, moving from one country to another is not a simple matter. These people bring with them different sets of values from those of the local residents of the host countries they would be living in. Due to this, they often experience difficulties in several aspects, including education, discrimination, and language. Language barrier, in particular, has been a major problem for most migrants across the world.

Communication is vital to interpersonal relationships. This is especially true today as the world becomes increasingly interconnected as a result of globalization. As such, language proficiency is the key to access more and better opportunities all over the world. In fact, one's proficiency level is directly correlated to one's employability (Rao, 2016; Ting et al., 2017). In an ideal world, everyone should be employed based on their qualifications. However, this is not often the case for migrant workers whose employability is not only based on their qualifications but equally so their proficiency in the destination language.

Unfortunately, most migrant workers do not have enough proficiency to be employed in the job suitable to their qualifications and skills simply because they are not proficient enough in the language. The vast majority of employers view communication as crucial in the workforce. That is why professional migrants often have limited access to employment and welfare benefits due to the lack of language proficiency as these employers believe that it would negatively affect the workforce due to language barrier (Allan, 2013; Tannock, 2015). In many ways, language proficiency, or lack thereof, becomes a reason for migrants to be discriminated in employment. This is because potential employers are worried that language barrier could possibly decrease the efficiency level in the workplace (Oishi, 2012).

Most migrants also do not have resources and do not get enough support to learn the language of their destination countries. Most migrant workers risk staying and working in a different country to improve their lives as well as their families, so they usually lack resources before they come to and immediately when they arrive in their host countries. Many of those who have less proficiency tend to have fewer opportunities to learn the language due to the nature of their respective jobs (Piller & Lising, 2014).

Migrants all over the world experience a plethora of problems such as the ones stated above. The same concerns among migrant workers in Japan have been documented as the country has experienced an influx of migrants over the past few years. Today, Japan could be considered as an emerging ‘migration state’ as the services of migrant workers have become a necessity for it to continue to prosper economically (Hollifield & Orlando-Sharpe, 2017). However, while this phenomenon is beneficial to the country as a whole, it has also highlighted the general lack of support which could help migrants across the nation feel more comfortable. Language support, in particular, still needs further improvement before such people could feel more secure (Go, Saure, Kurusu, & Borlongan, 2021).

3. A Case Study on ‘Mon’

In this article, we are particularly interested in the case of Mon, his pseudo-name, and his story as a migrant is largely dependent on English in Japan, a dominantly Japanese-using society. Mon was born and raised in the Philippines. He lived in Quezon City, Metro Manila with his parents and two siblings. He is 34 years old this year. He is also a Filipino citizen. He has an introverted personality and is normally shy around others.

That being said, his parents are both Chinese so, technically, he is a Chinese person living in the Philippines. Filipino society usually calls people of Chinese-Filipino descent like him as ‘Chinoy’. The Chinese Filipino communities, for their part, consider themselves as ‘Lannang’ or those who have Chinese-Filipino mixed heritage (Gonzales, 2021). Like many Chinoys, he often communicates with his peers using a unique style of communication. Gonzales (2017), in his study, calls said styles Philippine Chinese English (PCE) and Philippine Hybrid Hokkien (PHH).

Mon completed his basic education in a school which caters primarily to Chinese Filipinos. These schools still follow the Philippine basic education system, including the prescribed medium of instruction, and further enriches their curriculum by offering Mandarin Chinese as well as giving emphasis on Chinese culture relevant to Chinese Filipinos. In the Philippines, schools like his are called as ‘Chinese Schools’. The majority of well-to-do Chinoys like Mon study there. That way, they would be able to mingle with their fellow brethren and, at the same time, establish long-term relations with them.

Mon graduated in 2010 with a bachelor’s degree in electronics and communications engineering (ECE). After which, he was hired by a multinational company in 2011, where he still works for up to the present. His company operates in over 50 countries. He worked his way up the corporate ladder for about six years before he was relocated to Japan. He was 29 years old when he first came to Japan.

He currently works as Associate Manager (AM). His team is tasked to handle software development for a popular retail store in Japan. He is considered as a ‘highly-skilled’ migrant in Japanese immigrant visa categories. The infrastructure team in which Mon is a part of is mostly responsible for overall client support. His team usually handles clients’ requests for fixing problems related to system errors. It is also his job to always be on stand-

by and take calls when an emergency situation arises. Additionally, as an associate manager, he has the authority to delegate certain tasks to his subordinates to maximize the efficiency of the team. As of writing, he has been living in Japan for four years and five months.

4. Previous Language Learning Experiences

Mon had 16 years of English language learning experience in the Philippines. He had six years of primary, four years of secondary, and six years of tertiary education. Also, being a Chinoy, he has been exposed to three different languages since he was a child. These languages are English, Tagalog, and ‘Lánanguè or Philippine Chinese (Gonzales, 2021).

When he was still a student, he usually took his school lessons in English. He studied many subjects such as science, mathematics, English, social studies (civics), and more, with the English language as the medium of instruction. His elementary and high school lessons were mainly divided into two parts, English and Chinese. English classes in his school usually start at around 7:20am and end at 2:20pm. This timespan covers a total of 6 lessons. Chinese classes, on the other hand, start at 2:35pm and end at 4:35pm.

His school had implemented during ‘English time’ an English-only policy where the students were fined a certain amount (i.e. one peso, during his time, which could buy him a piece or two of candy then) every time they were caught using Tagalog or Filipino. This policy was enacted both inside and outside the classroom. Although such a policy was not carried out anymore during his time in his university, English remains to be the preferred mode of communication.

Additionally, Filipino/Tagalog was used as a medium of instruction in high school subjects such as Drafting, Physical Education, Filipino, and Home Economics. The teachers normally made use of Tagalog during these subjects because it would be much easier for them to explain the contents better. This language, together with English, was also widely used by his university instructors to teach their respective subjects during his time there.

In elementary and high school, he attended two-hour Chinese language classes every day. Some of the contents taught in these classes are Chinese calligraphy, Chinese vocabulary, Chinese stories and folklore, as well as Chinese listening and speaking. The Chinese teachers mostly made use of ‘Lánanguè’ (or Philippine Chinese) as their way to communicate with their students. Students were usually punished for not speaking the said language during this time. Nevertheless, such a policy did not hinder him nor his friends to speak amongst themselves using their preferred way of communication.

5. Migration to Japan

Even before he eventually migrated to the country, Mon had always dreamed of living and working in Japan. This is because he had always wanted to personally experience the country’s culture and tradition ever since he was a teenager. So when the opportunity came

through an internal recruitment ad, he did not hesitate to express his interest to be transferred to Japan. His application was seen by the hiring committee in Japan around two months after he submitted it online. It was then screened by the said committee for about three months. After the screening was over, he got interviewed for about an hour as to the position he applied for. He had to wait for another month before he was notified that his application was accepted by the Japan branch of his company. His visa was then processed, and he was eligible to work in Japan as a highly skilled migrant. It should be noted that he had zero proficiency in Japanese before going there.

Mon started working in the company's Japan branch in July 2017. One of things he first realized in his first few days in the country was that almost everything was written or spoken in Japanese. Of course, as a new migrant worker, he was willing to learn new, practical ideas which would help him survive in Japan since he understood that he had to adapt to the Japanese environment. There were so many things that he had to understand and get used to since the majority of what he encountered in his surroundings were foreign to him. Fortunately, he was dispatched in Japan together with his other Filipino colleagues so they were able to help each other out by sharing useful information such as the location of the nearest English-speaking barbershop and the best foreigner-friendly bank. However, even with his friends' assistance, he still struggled because of his difficulties in expressing himself in Japanese.

Prior to coming to Japan, Mon had done his research and had already anticipated that he would have some trouble conversing with the locals. This is especially true for him since his Japanese proficiency level is very low. Still, he never expected that he would experience many problems in terms of communication since he believed that the locals could, at the very least, speak or even just understand basic English.

6. Challenges in the Public Domain

Perhaps one of, if not, the most troublesome part of Mon's stay in Japan is the lack of available English-translated resources and English-using locals. This could be seen in his encounters with the local government offices and private establishments. One thing to note though is that, despite his lack of Japanese language ability, the Japanese civil servants he talked with were, for the most part, friendly and understanding. That being said, he and his friends found out that state-run establishments such as the city office, the post office, and the police office are not foreigner-friendly. It was especially surprising for Mon when he found out that even government officers working in the immigration bureau could hardly express themselves in English.

In general, Mon often has a hard time getting hold of Japanese English speakers in government offices to provide him with the assistance he needs. He also cannot find sufficiently-translated English documents to aid him in filling in the necessary paperwork. He has experienced countless difficulties with regard to communicating with the people in these offices because of this.

Mon has also met some difficulties with regard to phone calls from public officers who hardly speak English. Although this only happens on rare occasions, it nevertheless makes him feel anxious every time he is called by these people because he is afraid that he might have done something he should not have. It could also be that he might have failed to submit a document or pay a bill.

Another reason for his language struggles is the complexity of the transportation system in Japan. The public train transportation system in urban areas is well-developed, albeit a little confusing at times, especially in the Greater Tokyo area. So it is easy for Mon and his friends to move around the city. All they needed to do is follow the Global Positioning System (GPS) using Google Maps or other similar applications in their mobile phones. But the same could not be said with taxis and buses, especially those situated in the rural areas.

Mon likes to travel a lot, so he often goes to the countryside to experience what Japan has to offer, but he usually faces difficulties in asking for directions from bus and taxi drivers alike since they could barely speak English, if at all. Without the help of technology, when translating from English to Japanese and vice versa, he believes it would be almost impossible to communicate with these drivers. This also extends to the locals since they are unable to express themselves in English, which is understandable.

Furthermore, when it comes to postal mails and such, he usually ignores any and all Japanese-written ones which are not about his utility bills and other important documents because he would not be able to understand them. However, he realizes that this is a risky habit since he may miss out on important information which he may need to be apprised of. One good example of this was when the local government sent a mail to him about the COVID-19 vaccine registration (cf. Borlongan, in press). Had his friends not brought up this matter to him, he said that he most likely would have never found out how to register to this program.

7. Challenges in Private Establishments

Mon's experiences with the public sector in Japan were lukewarm, to the say the least. However, his language-related problems were not limited to local government units. It extends to private establishments as well. He initially had a hard time adapting to his life in Japan especially because many big and small businesses that sell the essentials are ill-equipped to accommodate the language needs of foreigners like him. That is why he often found it difficult to communicate effectively with the majority of the staff of shopping centers and local stores in his area.

He was also initially distressed when he found out that the vast majority of shop clerks in Japan have limited English communication skills. While some of them can answer basic questions in English, they find it hard to provide a more comprehensive explanation of their products, even with the aid of translation tools. That is why he just avoids talking to them unless it is extremely necessary for him to do so. Of course, there are some shop employees who could speak English well, but the stores they work for are very few and far between, even in urban areas.

Such difficulties also extend to customer service support offered through telephone or online. For instance, when Mon tried to contact some of them via phone call, he was barely able to understand what the company representatives were saying because they only spoke in Japanese. Unfortunately, whenever Mon requested to talk to an English-using agent, it is more likely that they would not have any, and he would only be offered an apology for not having anyone to speak to him in English. Even if there is one who could do so, that person is usually busy attending to other English-only customers, too.

Mon also had difficulties talking with Japanese real estate agents. When he first started working in Japan, he was unable to avail the services of a real estate agency with English language support. Fortunately, a Japanese agent accepted his and his friend's applications to rent two of their apartments. However, everything after that was a struggle for them as they both had little to no Japanese ability at the time. For example, apartment rules and notices were all written in Japanese. Additionally, every time he had a question or concern with regard to the place he lived in, he would only be able to get an answer in Japanese. It should also be noted that he was anxious about signing the apartment lease because there could be provisions in the contract which could be unfavorable to him.

8. Challenges in the Workplace

Mon spends most of his time in the workplace, although he has been staying and working at home for the past year due to the pandemic. He usually has plenty of tasks to accomplish and deadlines to meet. It is also not uncommon for him to do overtime work. Sometimes, he has to work on weekends. It is worth pointing out that his company values output over others, so finishing his projects takes precedence.

He has no qualms about the nature of his work as he is already used to it. However, his lack of Japanese proficiency makes it almost nigh impossible for him to communicate well with his Japanese peers. This is especially true when his counterparts also cannot speak in English all that well themselves. Nonetheless, they were still sometimes required by the company to sit through business meetings in which Japanese was the language used. Of course, they all felt left out since they were unable to understand the explanations given by their Japanese colleagues and superiors.

Additionally, most company memoranda, instructions, signages, and materials of similar nature are all written in Japanese. This makes it tough for him to get by as he has to constantly rely on other people to interpret these written materials for him. He sometimes just ignores them since he cannot understand them at all. This also somehow restricts his movement within the company as he is unsure if he is breaking the rules or not.

Nowadays, Mon and his other Filipino colleagues have been working at home due to the pandemic, and they only have to attend business meetings if need be. Even now, most of the briefings via e-mail are still in Japanese, but because these briefings are written, they can use Google Translate to get by.

However, the company has plans to make them go back to the workplace as the situation stabilizes. That means he and his fellow Filipino colleagues in Japan will have to mingle again with their Japanese counterparts. He is worried about this since, previously, the vast majority of local employees in his company were unable to fluently express themselves in English. He is skeptical that his Japanese colleagues have improved their English proficiency in one to two years.

9. Challenges in Socializing with Japanese

As has been said earlier, Mon has very limited Japanese communication skills. For this reason, he has been dealing with problems communicating with the Japanese since he started staying and working in Japan. That being said, he always tries his best to understand them. Still, it remains a fact that language barrier has made communicating with the Japanese an arduous task for him. This is especially true for him since he is an introverted person, so he is quite shy around strangers. Further, he always has to constantly analyze both verbal and non-verbal communication of people he talks with.

Mon usually concentrates hard just to understand what the Japanese are saying. He constantly has to read their body language, hand gestures, and facial expressions, and derive meaning out of them. He also makes an extra effort to read between the lines to have a better grasp of what they are conveying to him. However, misunderstandings, as a result of miscommunication, often happens because the Japanese have a different culture than him.

For instance, when he started working in Japan, he noticed that many Japanese avoided him. At first, he thought that maybe these people hardly like foreigners. He realized though, over time, that the Japanese are simply shy or anxious when talking to foreigners like him. Perhaps they are also unconfident about their proficiency in English. The same could be said to his Japanese co-workers. That is why he knows that he needs to be more proactive in engaging his Japanese colleagues in English conversations so that they would also feel more relaxed around him.

10. Coping Strategies

Fortunately, the advancement of technology in numerous fronts has made it easier for Mon to cope with his language issues in Japan. Oftentimes, he would purchase items he needs via Amazon which offers online shopping services. The necessary details for the said products are already posted on the website so he could use either Google Translate or simply change the language setting to English in the site itself. That way, he would not need to ask sales clerks about the products he would like to buy. In addition, it is a very convenient method of purchasing goods since the company would simply deliver it right at his residence. In case of brick-and-mortar stores, he would ask some of his friends who are more proficient in Japanese than him to help out. The same thing could be said as to Japanese emails.

His friends who assist him in the situations mentioned earlier also help him in the filing of documents with the concerned public offices. His company already helped him out in this matter so he was able to go through the process without any issues thus far. It could be said that he heavily relied on his friends to get through many situations in Japan simply because he could not use Japanese.

Moreover, whenever he travels within the country with his friends, he carefully plans everything using travel guides and maps he found on the internet. He even purchases most of his tickets and travel passes through the help of his friends who are more fluent in Japanese. This way, he and his companions would be at ease going on a trip even if they could not fluently speak Japanese.

He also has to use his commonsense to get through everyday life. For instance, he always follows conventional Japanese rules and etiquette where applicable. This is so that he could blend in the crowd as much as possible. He also refrains from going out late at night and avoids walking along narrow paths, most especially in dark alleys, even if the navigation app in his mobile phone tells him to do so. This is because he is aware that these streets could be a risk to his safety and well-being, no matter how seemingly safe Japan is.

Lastly, he also had to learn the most basic Japanese words to order food in restaurants and buy goods in department stores as well as food and drinks in the supermarket. He has further learned how to avail the services of companies with English language support even though such businesses usually charge more. This way, everything would be much easier.

11. Future Plans

Even though Mon still struggles communicating effectively with the Japanese due to language barrier up to this day, he still wants to stay and work in Japan for the foreseeable future. Although it is not ideal, he still expresses liking for his current arrangements and would like to continue to work for his company in Japan until it decides to recall him back to the Philippines. Initially, he intended to stay for only about a year, but he has learned to love Japan for many reasons: convenience, security, culture, tradition, and the many opportunities the country has to offer, which will be difficult to have in the Philippines.

At present, he is still undecided whether he should permanently stay and work in Japan or not. On the one hand, his family and friends are waiting for his return in his home country. On the other hand, he is already starting to feel comfortable in his host country. That said, if he eventually chooses the latter option, he is aware that he needs to adapt to the Japanese environment more. Even though more and more young people can speak English, he believes it would be better if he could learn to speak Japanese more fluently to fully adjust to life in Japan. As such, he has decided to bridge that communication gap by beginning to study Japanese on his own. He believes that this is the first step to finally assimilating himself to the Japanese community.

For now, he has also incorporated his study plans in his busy work schedule. However, it has been inconsistent as he is often given a heavy workload. Despite this, he has

been steadily, albeit slowly, improving his Japanese language proficiency. He also has plans to formally study in a language school. However, this seems quite uncertain as well since he hardly knows when his company might want him to work overtime or on weekends due to urgent deadlines.

Another reason why he wants to study Japanese is that his company is providing incentives to migrant employees who could speak Japanese fluently. His company could grant a permanent position in its Japan office if migrant employees could demonstrate sufficient Japanese language proficiency to stay. In fact, it is actively looking for highly-skilled migrant workers who have better Japanese communication skills. His company also encourages them to study Japanese, and it has even offered him some Japanese language learning programs.

Any and all migrant workers in Japan currently working for the company could sign up to Japanese language lessons for free if they are interested in doing so. Mon understands that learning Japanese is one of the best ways for him to climb up the company hierarchy, and he said Japanese language lessons could help him achieve that goal sooner. That is why he is seriously thinking about enrolling himself in the Japanese classes offered by the company. The only problem he has with this plan is that he might miss many lessons because of the unpredictable nature of his job, specifically, his schedule.

As of writing, he is aiming for the Japanese Language Proficiency Test (JLPT), N3 level (the middle of five levels). He believes this would be enough to help him communicate more effectively with the Japanese, whether it is with his co-workers or with the locals in his area. However, he is not ruling out the possibility of reaching N2 or even N1 (the highest level) in the future.

In terms of learning Japanese, he believes that it would be somehow easier for him compared to other migrant workers since he has had Chinese lessons for at least ten years. For this reason, it is already quite natural for him to write even the more complex Chinese characters. However, the same could not be said with reading and pronunciation in Japanese, which may have the same meaning for the same character in Chinese but read and pronounced differently. In this case, he will have to learn them again, which could be quite challenging.

He also plans to immerse himself more in Japanese communities by communicating and mingling with the locals. This way, he would be able to practice what he has learned in the classroom. At the same time, he would be able to pick up new expressions from them which he would not have known before. He thinks that talking with Japanese locals would also make him feel more comfortable and confident about his Japanese skills.

Of course, he realizes that his busy work schedule would make it difficult for him to execute his plans. He also understands that his productivity and efficiency are of utmost importance to enable him to meet deadlines, complete his tasks, and make ends meet. He is aware that he is partly responsible for his current situation since he has not yet done everything he could to adapt to his surroundings as well.

He acknowledges the fact that there are so many challenges ahead of him regarding this matter. However, he is determined more than ever to give it his best in learning Japanese. By doing so, he could become an even better asset to his company and, at the same time, be able to befriend more locals.

12. Discussion

The writing of a linguistic biography of a migrant allows us to look more closely into the specific case of an individual, particularly the myriad of experiences related to language in the course of his mobility. Needless to say, in the same way as migration itself is complex and dynamic, each migration story is different from the other. It is difficult to generalize from the case of Mon what other migrants, workers or not, probably experience. However, we took interest in his story because we believe that his story echoes a number of commonalities with stories of other migrants. First and foremost, like many transnational workers of the world, he was propelled to embark on his migration journey in the hope of bettering his life even if he knew early on language could possibly be an issue. Of course, Mon would have not needed to move to Japan to earn a decent living. His Philippine-based work was enough for him to live a good life in his home country. Yet he saw the offer to move to Japan as an even greater opportunity he did not want to miss. Many migrant workers do not have such privilege back home and, for them, the only way to survive is to work overseas. Yet as we have said, Mon and these many other migrant workers took the bold step to carry on with their migration journey all too aware that language could be an issue.

It is Mon's and any migrant workers' instinct to at least try to pick up a few words and expressions which they think might be helpful to them for survival in their new country of residence. This would work, but, like Mon himself, only to a certain extent. Needless to say, most especially in the workplace, proficiency beyond beginner's level is necessary to carry out important daily tasks and responsibilities.

The linguistic biography of Mon tells us that some migrant workers are allowed to take on their positions in their destination even with very limited proficiency. This is not uncommon among highly-skilled workers whose competence and expertise are definitely the reasons why they have been invited to work in their destination countries. Because the opportunities offered to them may seem too attractive to be let to pass by, and since it seems that work is necessary for the worker and the company getting them, often, the need to ensure the worker has suitable level of proficiency to survive life in the destination country is overlooked. Sometimes, this might be too late for the company and the migrant most especially to realize. Sometimes, too, they are not given much assistance at a time when these workers realize they need language support. Fortunately for Mon, his company makes such an offer.

However, as the case of Mon also makes apparent, even if support is available for workers to study the language of their destination countries, because work is the primary reason for their coming to their destination country, if they have to choose priorities, their language studies will definitely come second. Mon expresses his worry over missing too many classes, if his work requires, that he would not be able to catch up eventually.

We highlight here the fact that Mon is dependent on English for survival in his life in Japan. We are not questioning the significance and prominence of English as the global language and definitely the language of mobility, if we might say. However, Mon's linguistic biography also tells us that English is only useful to a certain extent and that he could not

possibly rely on it for all the personal and professional functions and transactions he needs to accomplish in his life in Japan. He realized it for himself — and this is definitely a realization he shares with other English-dependent migrants — that English is not enough, particularly in countries where English is not a very important or dominant language. We say this all the while realizing that English did help him in his life, but only to a certain extent.

13. Implications and Recommendations

Reflecting on the experiences of Mon as an English-dependent migrant in Japan, we therefore recommend that language be taken up as an important matter in labor migration by all stakeholders, not only the migrant, not only their employers, but also governments of both the origin and destination. In the process of facilitating movement, they all must factor in the required proficiency for the worker not only to fulfill his or her tasks in the workplace but also to survive life in the new society he or she will live in. It is important to define and regulate standards for language proficiency not necessarily for the proper execution of the migrant's occupational tasks but more so for the his or her well-being.

We also learn from the experience of Mon that provision of support for language training is not enough. Such support must likewise include time appropriated for his studies and that he should not eventually made to choose whether he should attend to his work or sit in his language classes.

In theory and in practice, the question which remains is that how much importance and how much provision should be given to language in the context of labor migration, most especially if language training for the migrant worker will mean less time for the services he or she could render and/or more costs for his or her employer to spend. A truly insightful methodology in migration linguistics (Borlongan, 2020, in press b), linguistic biographies such as this, reveals many dimensions and facets often missed out broad, comprehensive needs analyses, but these details about experiences of migrants are necessary in making a sound decision not only for their linguistic well-being but more importantly for migration and mobilities to serve what they are worth.

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Mikhail Alic C. Go completed his Bachelor of Secondary Education major in English at the University of Santo Tomas (Manila, the Philippines) and his Master of Arts in Education major in English Language Education at De La Salle University (Manila, the Philippines). He has taught in De La Salle-College of Saint Benilde (Manila, the Philippines) and Far Eastern University (Manila, the Philippines) and is now Lecturer at Tamagawa University (Tokyo, Japan) where he teaches English as a lingua franca. He also has experience teaching migrant children in Japanese high schools. His publications and presentations focus on applied linguistics, migration linguistics, and world Englishes.

Ariane Macalinga Borlongan's education and experience across the world have inspired him to passionately work with English speakers in non-Anglo-American contexts and multilingual migrants in contemporary global societies. As a sociolinguist, he has analyzed variation, change, and standardization across Englishes and has investigated the linguistic dimensions of human mobility, eventually conceptualizing a framework for doing what he calls 'migration linguistics' and proposing a linguistic theory of migration. He earned his Ph.D. in Applied Linguistics at age 23 via a competitive accelerated program in De La Salle University (Manila, the Philippines) and is presently Associate Professor of Sociolinguistics and Founder and Head of the Migration Linguistics Unit at the Tokyo University of Foreign Studies (Japan).