

**IMPACT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING AND NATIONAL IDENTITY ON  
FILIPINOS IN THE CALL CENTER INDUSTRY**

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## **DEDICATION**

To God

To my parents

To my wife Maria Jinky Enoroba Zagabe and my daughter Zawadi Sophie Enoroba Zagabe

Whose presence give a new meaning to my life.

To all CSRs, trainers, all employees in the BPO sector and BPO training schools, and to all people who work and participate in the development of a better world.

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## ABSTRACT

The Call Center Industry (CCI) in the Philippines has been attracting employees from different national and linguistic backgrounds. The industry requires employees to have a strong command of the English language, more specifically, American English, which serves as the model for the English language requirements. However, these requirements may have a negative impact on the linguistic and national identity of Filipino employees.

This study explored the Filipino English language trainers' and Customer Service Representatives' integration with the American culture and language and whether this has any influence on the way they teach or use the language. It also investigated whether training in the business process outsourcing (BPO) and training schools has any impact on the language and national identity of Filipino employees through strategies used to teach, transact amongst themselves, and with the American customers, and through the ways these employees perceive themselves as call center employees, as employees in the BPO training schools, and as Filipinos.

Data were gathered using the following instruments: participants' profile form, one interview schedule, two observations, quality assurance forms, call flow forms, and job postings. Research locales were five call centers and two BPO training schools purposefully selected within Metro Manila where more BPO companies and training schools are located than in any other region of the Philippines and where Filipinos from different regions are employed. The sample consisted of 15 participants, five of whom are trainers in the BPO sector, three in BPO training schools, and seven Customer Service Representatives (CSRs).

Data from interviews and observations, job postings, quality assurance metric and call flows were analyzed through triangulation. Data were summarized, then, grouped into three sections according to the research questions. Findings were categorized into four themes divided into eight sub-themes.

The results of the study showed that Filipino English language trainers in the BPO sector and BPO training schools use cognitive, metacognitive, memory-related, affective, and social strategies to learn and teach the English language and to transact between themselves or with American customers. Their views vary about the American versus Filipino English accent. They integrate the American English and culture in the call center industry and in the BPO training centers through emphases on American accent, the use of English only policy, the promotion of the American culture, emphasis on time management, and the use of business English. As such, training has influenced the Filipino English language trainers' and customer support representatives' perceptions of themselves as Filipinos through acceptance of the English language and training as a skill, preference for bilingualism or multilingualism as a response to the English only policy, increased awareness of being Filipinos, and commitment to take part in the development of the national community.

**Keywords:** Acculturation, Call Center Industry (CCI), Customer Service Representatives (CSRs), English Language Trainers, National Identity of Filipinos, Strategies

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTERS	PAGES
<b>Chapter 1: Introduction</b>	
Background of the Study .....	1
Statement of the Problem.....	2
Significance of the Study .....	3
Scope and Delimitations of the Study .....	5
<b>Chapter 2: Review of Related Literature, Theoretical Framework, and Definition of Terms</b>	
English as an International Language.....	7
English Language Teaching Approaches, Methods, and Strategies .....	11
Sociology of English Language Learning in the Philippines.....	20
Relationship between Language and Culture: The Case of Philippine English (PE).....	25
English language training in the BPO sector and the BPO training schools .....	32
Bakhtin’s Dialogic View of Language .....	42
Rosenblatt’s Transactional View of Language .....	47
National identity of Filipinos .....	51
Acculturation Model and National Identity .....	56
Theoretical Framework.....	63
Definition of Terms .....	65
<b>Chapter 3: Methodology</b>	
Research Design.....	67
Research Locale .....	67

Sample .....	71
Instruments.....	72
Data collection procedure.....	74
Data analysis procedure.....	76
 <b>Chapter 4: Data Presentation and Analysis</b>	
Research Question 1: Teaching strategies of Filipino English language trainers .....	77
Research Question 2: Ways of Integrating American English and culture in CCI and in BPO training centers .....	93
Research Question 3: Ways training has influenced the Filipino English language trainers' and Customer Support Representatives' perceptions of themselves as Filipinos .....	107
 <b>Chapter 5: Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations</b>	
Summary.....	119
Conclusions.....	120
Recommendations .....	128
References .....	131
 <b>Appendices</b>	
Appendix A: Authorization Letter .....	140
Appendix B: Research Locales .....	141
Appendix C: Interview Schedule .....	142
Appendix D: Observation Guide .....	146
Appendix E: Observation sessions .....	147
Appendix F: Excerpt of field notes of observations .....	148
Appendix G: Detailed Profiles of Participants .....	151
Appendix H: Extracts of the job postings of the five BPO companies .....	154

Appendix I: Call flow and Quality assurance metric .....	155
Appendix J: Training code of conducts and other rules .....	161
Appendix K: Reminders and integrity .....	163
Appendix L: Best Practices .....	164

## LIST OF TABLES

<u>TABLE</u>	<u>PAGE</u>
Table 1: Participants' profiles.....	71
Table 2: Summary of interviews .....	74
Table 3: Teaching strategies .....	77

## LIST OF FIGURE

Figure 1. Theoretical Framework of the Study.....	63
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## **CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION**

Workers in the Call Center Industry (CCI) in the Philippines face numerous challenges in their workplace. These challenges are related to the nature of their work and communication requirements (Friginal, 2009; Salonga, 2010). Customer Support Representatives (CSRs) in CCI are required to use English as the medium of communication. To this end, the teaching strategies of Filipino English language trainers in the Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) industry and the BPO training schools could reveal the dialogical aspect of English language where this language could empower CCI employees. This empowerment occurs as employees acquire technical skills, increase their knowledge of English, improve cross-cultural communication strategies, earn money to achieve personal goals, help local community attract investors, get to know and learn from the target culture and other speakers of English as a foreign language (EFL), fight for their rights when exploited, and contribute to a dynamic development of local and target culture (Friginal, 2007; 2009). As a result, trainers in the BPO sector and English language trainers for BPO firm, and Customer Service Representatives (CSRs) could be agents of change in the ways they use the English language.

### **Background of the study**

The offshore call center industry has grown in the past two decades worldwide (Friginal, 2007; Salonga, 2010). In the Philippine context, call centers attract employees with different professional experiences, academic backgrounds, and personal achievements. However, it should be noted that communication skills are key elements to get hired in the CCI. It is easy to observe that “oral communication ranks high among the ‘key’ or ‘core’ skills that are held to be indispensable for success in the present and future labor market” (Cameron, 2000, p. 125).

Likewise, having excellent communication skills is one of the most important skills for one to be hired or promoted. This usually means 'excellence' in writing but mostly in speaking. 'Excellent' oral skills in the CCI generally signify 'sounding like' a native speaker of the English language (NSE) or having a 'neutral' accent. For instance, Cowie (2007) shows that a neutral accent or a native-like accent is sought after and rewarded in offshore call centers located in India. Rahman (2009) also reports that CCI in Pakistan emphasizes that CSRs value speaking English with a neutral accent. Friginal (2007; 2009), Lockwood (2012), and Salonga (2010) also report that Filipino CSR applicants who speak the English language with a native-like or with a neutral accent have more chances to get hired in the BPO sector located in the Philippines.

### **Statement of the Problem**

American English is the yardstick that is used to determine the quality of English required for call center related jobs. This means that Filipino Customer Service Representatives are expected to speak with a native-like or a neutral accent when communicating with NSE. Moreover, these CSRs have to reflect the cultural background of NSE. The problem is that these requirements may have a negative impact on the linguistic and cultural identity of Filipino trainers and trainees or CSRs when offshore realities are invariably applied in different contexts and to different people (Salonga, 2010). This could explain why Patel (2012) defines the BPO companies as "sites of Western imperialism [and] dens of moral decay" (p. 38) and why Cameron (2000) and Townsend (2005) view the CCI as a communication factory.

Few employers hire Filipino English language or product trainers who are fluent in the English language to prepare qualified new employees for meeting linguistic, cultural, and service expectations of offshore customers. Plus, BPO training schools have multiplied across the

Philippines, especially in Metro Manila because not all BPO employers hire English language trainers (Friginal, 2007; 2009). On linguistic expectations, trainers in both BPO training schools and BPO companies aim to help trainees improve and 'neutralize' their accent and acquire communication skills.

This study therefore, answered the following questions:

1. What are the teaching strategies of Filipino English language trainers in the CCI and in BPO training schools?
2. How is knowledge and acceptance of American English and culture integrated in the English language trainers' teaching in CCI and in BPO training centers?
3. In what ways has the training influenced the Filipino English language trainers' and Customer Support Representatives' perceptions of themselves as Filipinos?

### **Significance of the Study**

Some studies particularly investigated realities in CCI and the brand of English language used at contact centers as a product of globalization (Cameron, 2000; Cowie, 2007; Friginal, 2007; 2009; Forey, 2013; Lockwood, 2012; 2013; Patel 2010; Rahman, 2009; Salonga, 2010; Sieben & de Grip, 2004). However, few studies, if any, tackled directly the issues of English language trainers' experiences when engaged in teaching at BPO sector and BPO training schools in the Philippines. The current study elaborated on the teaching strategies of Filipino English language trainers in the CCI and in BPO training schools, showed how the knowledge and acceptance of the American English and culture were integrated in the English language trainers' teaching in CCI and in BPO training schools, and analyzed the ways through which the training had influenced the Filipino English language trainers' and customer support representatives' perceptions of

themselves as Filipinos. Moreover, this research was conducted by a user of English as a second language (ESL) who was also a CSR with more than nine years of experience working at the CCI. The researcher's work experience in CCI then could help see English language teaching (ELT) and its implications on cultural identity with a new lens, thus providing more insights into teaching English as a second language (TESL).

The results of this study may be helpful to the Philippine government, particularly the DepEd and CHED and other departments and agencies concerned with English language planning and teaching methods from high-school through colleges. Likewise, the Philippines Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) can define additional means to solidify relationships between employees and employers in BPO.

The results could also be useful to school officials and curriculum designers to get insights on strategies which would be helpful in teaching cross-cultural communication and communication strategies to their students. Families and educators may also benefit from the results of this study. They could gain awareness about the lived experiences of CCI employees in the linguistic and cultural aspects of CCI work. They could then support BPO employees by understanding that generally the BPO sector — is not what Patel (2012) portrays as “sites of Western imperialism [or] dens of moral decay [and realize that] call center employment has the potential to reshape individuals' perceptions of themselves and of the community that surrounds them” (p. 38).

Language teachers may also benefit from this study. They can identify strategies they can implement in the classrooms taking into consideration the expectations of students on the use of the English language in the classroom, at workplace as well as the use of Filipino in the Philippines. Psychologists and counselors may also benefit from the psychological implications of this study.

By understanding the impact that the English language training in CCIs have on the Filipinos' language attitudes and cultural identity, they could look for ways to prepare Filipino students who might work in the BPO firm or in international companies in the future. For instance, psychologists and counselors can prepare and present practical strategies to help Filipino youth handle stress, resolve cross-cultural problems, and work in a highly stressful environment. Sociolinguists may also benefit from this study. They could investigate whether teaching strategies and the use of English in the BPO industry in the Philippines empower Filipino CSRs.

BPO employers, managers, trainers, and quality assurance (QA) analysts could also benefit from this study because they would know whether the language trainings given to the trainees empower or alienate their employees. They could gain insights in coaching and training non-native English speaking CSRs. Specifically, trainers in the BPO training schools could look for ways to prepare Filipino students who plan to work in the BPO sector or in international companies in the future. In short, this study might contribute to existing literature on sociolinguistics, world "Englishes", call center training, and TESL.

### **Scope and Delimitations of the Study**

This research built on Schumann's acculturation model of language (1986), Bakhtin's dialogic view of language (Bakhtin, 1981; 1984; 1986), and on the transactional concept of language (Rosenblatt, 2004). Its scope was on sociolinguistics, World Englishes (WE), TESL, and training in the BPO industry.

The study focused only on three trainers in BPO training schools, five trainers in the BPO sector, and seven customer support representatives. This paper presented the teaching strategies of English language trainers at and for the CCI and the meanings trainers and CSRs gave to their

experiences when using the English language. Understandably, the study did not include a survey that required a bigger number of participants. Moreover, it presented the teaching strategies of a specific group of people in and for the BPO industry. This means, teaching strategies trainers used in or for the CCI were not universal. The study aimed to elaborate on strategies that worked for these employees and those that influenced their lives and work.

The other limitation was putting two contexts together. Due to the difficulty to get informants and data from call centers alone, this study was reconfigured to include five call centers and two BPO training schools in Metro Manila. Generalization then should be taken with caution since Metro Manila houses a great number of the BPO companies and training centers. Also, numerous BPO companies and training schools are located in many other cities of the Philippines.

Another limitation was the research instruments. Some questions in the interview schedule and the checklist on the observation were not clear. For instance, the word strategy was not clarified at the beginning. The clarification was done after collection of data by separating the strategies from tools, and from language policy.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE, THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK, AND DEFINITION OF TERMS**

This chapter covers literature on the following topics: English as an international language; English language teaching approaches, methods, and strategies; sociology of English language learning in the Philippines; relationship between language and culture: the case of Philippine English (PE); English language training in the BPO sector and the BPO training schools; Bakhtin's dialogic view of language; Rosenblatt's transactional view of language; national identity of Filipinos, and acculturation model and national identity.

#### **English as an International Language**

To teach English as an international language means to be able to give credit to different teaching approaches and methods. It also means linking local with the global or "glocal" strategies and vice versa. In this way, local teaching strategies are integrated in the global and vice versa.

Teaching is part of ways people communicate, think, learn, and carry out some activities. Walker, Walker, and Schmitz (2003) believe that the thought of a people determines the way they communicate and the way they do business. For them, doing business is an expression of a specific culture by the fact that it engages persons with individual backgrounds. The BPO companies reveal one aspect of doing business in the modern time.

In her study on *International communication in a technology services call centre in India*, Lockwood (2013) focuses on the exploration of the nature of English communication between professional support engineers across "Inner, Outer and Expanding Circles" and how they used accommodation strategies to send and receive messages and get their work done. She used individual interviews and group discussions and recorded data. Her findings are presented in four

concepts: *Intelligibility* through difficulty to understand different accents due to differences in phonological systems, and linguistic and cultural background. *Comprehensibility* as a problem in understanding the highly idiomatic language of NSE or users of English with near-native fluency; *Interpretability* in getting the deeper meaning of the message; and *Accommodation strategies* termed as “adapting up” and “adapting down” as a way of clarifying the message between the speaker and the listener.

Lockwood (2013) concludes that the contact center in her study is different from the CCI’s perspective and requirements on communication because it does not require its employees to undergo accent neutralization. Moreover, the call center’s objective is not to achieve native speakers of the English (NSE) norms. This CCI focuses on the efficiency and effectivity of communication between their highly skilled IT support where English is the lingua franca.

To teach English as an international language in the BPO involves diversifying approach in training in the BPO as well. Like the World English (WE) paradigm, the approach to English as an international language is inclusive. This inclusivity is defined as the “tendency to go beyond what is known, definite, and comfortable; to consider different cultural and theoretical backgrounds, different points of view, different and even opposing values and arguments” (Davis, 2010, p. 22).

However, Junghare (2013) compares language to human nature to stress the inclusive and exclusive aspects of any language. For him, every language is inclusive and exclusive at the same time. That is, the English language like any language includes persons who use it yet excludes people who do not understand it. Moreover, levels of inclusions can be distinguished within the communities of users of English (Kachru, 1997) and within a circle (Martin, 2014).

To take a more inclusive approach, Guo and Beckett (2007) suggest changing from Teaching English to Speakers of Other Language (TESOL) to Teaching English to Globalized Communication (TEGCOM). Also, Phan (2008) recommends that the Inner Circle acknowledges, appreciates, and gives credit to different language teaching methods, and all English language teachers to respect and promote different cultures, to listen to voices of teachers of English from different backgrounds and build on and appreciate what Nonnative-English-Speaking Teachers (NNESTs) already know.

Furthermore, Seidlhofer (2009) believes that the WE and English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) models have much in common in that they both promote a pluralistic approach to English. Also, ELF and the WE paradigms hold that English belongs to all who use it. Seidlhofer (2009) adds that English as an international language should be viewed in terms of how English has changed to meet international needs and that many NNESTs have emerged around the globe. So, teaching English as an international language should be enriched with aspects from the inner, the outer, and the expanding circles.

To teach English as an international language builds on the dialogical reality of language and culture. This reality suggests that people “obtain knowledge about the uniqueness of others and show appreciation for that uniqueness” (Junghare, 2013, p. 76). This includes knowing about the time management of others which may be monochronic or polychronic. Thus, teaching English as an international language takes into respects and builds on the background of learners.

To teach English as an international language in the context of CCI and BPO training centers may then require English language trainers to know not only some aspects of the American culture and of Filipino cultures but also cultures that trainees or CSRs will transact with. For instance, Zhu, Nel, and Bhat (2006) explain how communication strategies in doing business differ

from one community to the other. They studied four cultures, namely Chinese, European South African, Indian, and European New Zealand cultures. They report that “different cultures tended to emphasize different values – such as marketing relationships and ‘old mates’ for the New Zealand culture, *guanxi* or friendship for the Chinese, *jan pehchan* or right connections for the Indians, and a mixture of business relationships and *utbuntu* [becoming a person by and through others or being interdependent] for South Africans” (p. 335, *italic in the original*). The findings show that communication strategies differ according to cultures.

Cambié and Ooi (2009) believe that to be successful in modern business, a company “needs a broader understanding of the world, which includes the ability to recognize the needs of local communities and the art of establishing sustainable relationships with them” (p. 39). According to them, international communications imply knowing the world we live in, rethinking public relations, knowing and using the global language of corporate responsibility, and participating in leadership communication. Moreover, success in international communication and in doing business streams from our capacity, for “including and inspiring people who in the past we thought did not belong” (Cambié & Ooi, 2009, p. 88). Trainers in and for BPO should, therefore, use a multidimensional approach to see the whole image of reality when, they teach English as an international language.

The other example of teaching English as an international language is expressed in a Vietnamese image of being a ‘daughter-in-law of a Hundred Families’ which highlights the dynamic nature in teaching approaches (Phan, 2008). In this case, teaching English as an international language includes being a moral guide, a sharer in knowledge, an inspiration, a researcher, and a positive-minded teacher (Hermosa, 2002; Kumaravadivelu, 2003; Phan, 2008). In the CCI, teaching English as an international language calls for an effective dialogue and

“connectedness” between the local and the target culture, and between Filipino trainers, CSRs, and American customers and employers.

### Summary

Teaching English as an international language is to build on and include local and global methods in the teaching activities. Teaching English as an international language model is built on the WE and ELF paradigms. It is also defined as TEGCOM and not as TESOL. It suggests that Native-English-Speaking Teachers (NESTs) respect, collaborate, create teaching materials, and teach with NNESTs as equal partners and vice versa.

In the BPO context, to teach English as an international language involves building on and presenting different communication strategies to BPO employees. Different communication strategies in this context means to be aware of and teach different ways of using the English language in business. This implies presenting different dialects within the English language and making use of different teaching approaches and methods.

### **English Language Teaching Approaches, Methods, and Strategies**

According to Anthony (1963), an approach is a set of theoretical views or assumptions on the nature of language, language learning, and teaching. Anthony and Norris (1969) define an approach as a set of “notions of what it means to acquire, teach, or learn language” (p. 2). Richards and Rodgers (2001) define approach as philosophical and rational standings about the nature of language, the nature of language learning, and how these apply to concrete educational contexts.

Approaches in second language (L2) teaching include, communicative language teaching (CLT), competency-based language teaching (CBLT), content-based language instructions,

cooperative learning, lexical approaches, multiple intelligences, the natural approach, neurolinguistics programming, task-based language teaching, and whole language teaching (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). This study focuses on CLT and CBLT approaches since training in BPO puts emphasis on communication and aims to equip trainees with competencies to perform their tasks.

CBLT shares some feature with CLT. Both focus on the functional and interactional view of the nature of language and aims to teach language based on social contexts in which the language is used. Competencies consist of a description of essential skills, knowledge, attitudes, and behavior that are required to effectively perform a specific task or activity in social or professional settings. CBLT focuses on a successful functioning of society, life skills, performance, modularized instructions, explicit outcomes, formative assessment, display of expected skills, and individualized instruction that focus on being student-centered (Richards & Rodgers, 2001).

CLT holds that language is “communication” and must be taught and learned through communication (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). Hymes (1972) defines communicative competence in four areas, namely: “whether (and to what degree) something is formally possible”; “whether (and to what degree) something is feasible”; “whether (and to what degree) something is appropriate”; and “whether (and to what degree) something is done” (pp. 65-67). This implies learning and knowing what to say and how to say it, at the right place, at the right time, and to the right person.

Moreover, Canale and Swain (1980) identify three aspects of communicative competence, namely, “grammatical competence, socio-linguistic competence, and strategic competence” (p. 28). They believe that a communicative approach must be tailored to the learner’s communication

needs and that the learner must be given opportunities to interact with native or highly competent speakers of the target language (TL). They add that the primary objective of CLT is to provide learners with information, practice, and experiences needed to serve communicative needs.

Communicative competence is different from Chomsky's (1965) perception of "competence" and "performance." On one hand, the former refers to the learner's knowledge of the rules of a given language whereas the latter focuses on a speaker's or a learner's actual use of the language. However, communicative competence targets learners' advancement in reading, speaking, listening, and writing (Richards & Rodgers, 2001).

Howatt (1984) divides CLT into two versions: the weak and the strong version. The weak version focuses on giving opportunities to learners to use English to communicate through different activities and in different circumstances whereas the strong version states "language is acquired through communication" and must focus on "stimulating the development of language system itself" (Richards & Rodgers, p. 155). Thus, the weak version of CLT emphasizes learning to use the language whereas the strong version targets using the language to learn it.

Phan (2008) sees CLT as a divisive force in many Asian contexts. She argues that CLT is developed from alien socio-economic and cultural milieus. CLT requires a lot of time, much money, and does not correspond to students' understanding of learning. Moreover, since CLT promotes a learner-centered approach, it goes against Asian values that favor respect for elders and for teacher where a teacher imparts knowledge to students.

Furthermore, Guo and Beckett (2007) believe that the ideology of the CLT approach to create more democratic, humanistic and egalitarian relationships between teachers and learners can be another form of oppression and control in Asian contexts. Xue (2013) agrees that CLT does not respond to the needs of Asian English learners. He presents the example of China where a

teacher-centered approach is mostly used. Being neighboring and Asian countries, the Philippines and China share many cultural aspects but their political, educational, and social contexts may differ. For instance, China is a communist country whereas the Philippines is a democratic one. Yet, both societies are hierarchic.

CLT promotes, democratic and equal relations between a teacher and the student. However, this may not be practical in the Philippine context. For instance, prior to CLT model, Mercado (1977) already pointed out the parent and child relationship that exists in the Philippine education. He specifies that this relation is a cultural value that promotes respect for elders and that the Filipino educators should build on and integrate Philippine culture and philosophy in teaching.

Richards and Rodgers (2001) define method as the way instructional design is created or delivered to learners based on a particular theory of language and of language learning. Some examples are: audiolingualism, counselling-learning, situational language teaching, the silent way, suggestopedia, and total physical response. Anthony and Norris (1969) point out that a method is a teacher's set of procedures, techniques, and structured strategies built on an approach or an axiom to concretize a lesson plan and meet the pre-established classroom objectives. Note that Richards' and Rodgers' (2001) definition of approach is similar to Anthony's (1963) definition. However, for Richards and Rodgers, method is interpreted as design and technique as a procedure.

Tupas (2009) classifies methods into three groups. The first group includes the methods that focus on the teacher. These are called teacher-centered methods. The second is the learner-centered methods that focus on learners, and the third is learning-centered methods which focus on learning. After analyzing different methods in L2 teaching, Tupas (2009) and Kumaravadivelu (2003) argue that no method should claim superiority over others. They exhort L2 teachers to be critical about methods they use in different classroom settings.

According to Anthony (1963), many methods may derive from one approach. However, the following elements must be considered to plan a method to teach L2 learners, namely L2 learners' age, cultural background, and proficiency level in L2. Likewise, other factors must be considered as well like L2 teacher's experience in the TL and the level at which s/he has mastered the L2, and the purpose of the lesson whether it is for speaking, reading, writing, or listening. Anthony and Norris (1969) believe that methods "are shaped by many different theories, and the popularity of a method may depend on the popularity of any of these theories" (p. 2). Anthony and Norris (1969) describe three methods that developed in the past and that were widely used on the basis of the language theories they supported.

First is the grammar-translation method. This method is defined as a "series of rules or generalizations that is intended to describe the target language [TL]" (Anthony & Norris, 1969, p. 3). The grammar-translation method aims to equip the students with skills to correctly use the grammar of TL. Oral production is not the primary purpose of teaching. L2 learners are usually trained to translate texts from the L2 into their L1. They are also assessed on their abilities to translate texts from their mother tongue (L1) into the TL. High performance is measured on being grammatically correct and using the right vocabulary.

Second is the direct method. This method clearly aims "at giving students sufficient control of a language to operate in the society which employs that language" (Anthony & Norris, 1969, p. 4). This method does not establish any relationship between the learners' L1 and TL. Learning instructions are provided only in the L2. The method is built on the belief that L2 could be acquired the same way L1 was, naturally (Krashen, 1981; 1982). It is not necessary then to translate the TL into the L1. Rather, it is necessary to expose L2 learners to input or content that is neither too

difficult nor too easy. The content to teach L2 learners should be a bit higher than their current level of proficiency.

Third is the audiolingual method. This method emphasizes that language is oral, a “system of contrasting structural patterns”, and a “communicative activity of human societies” (Anthony & Norris, 1969, p. 5). It focuses on producing the proper sound, using a correct structured pattern, and being accurate in speaking the way NSEs do. This method is built on behaviorism and advocates that language is a set of habit formation (Skinner, 1957). According to this method, the TL is acquired through memorization and practice drills. As such, L2 learners have to learn to use the TL in different contexts. The TL permits to function well in the target community at the same speed as the native speakers of the TL.

Kumaravadivelu (2003) also reports that throughout the years, the teacher has been portrayed with many terms that include “an artist and an architect; a scientist and a psychologist; a manager and a mentor; a controller and a counselor; a sage on the stage; a guide on the side” (p. 7). He adds that all these roles are complementary. He further explains that teachers have also been referred to in the field of language as passive technician or an executor of knowledge, reflective practitioners or problem-solvers, and as transformative intellectuals or proponents of an education that empowers teachers and learners (Kumaravadivelu, 2003). In the context — of the current study, the roles of a teacher imply that the — strategies language trainers use during training portray a certain image of how trainers perceive themselves and their work.

Anthony and Norris (1969) define techniques as a classroom set of activities, strategies, and exercises to implement a method or to lead learners to a desired language outcome. Learning strategies are “specific actions, behaviors and mental processes which learners deploy to facilitate efficient language learning” (Tupas, 2009, p. 180). Anthony (1963) defines a technique as a

“particular trick, strategem, or contrivance used to accomplish an immediate objective” (p. 65). Strategies are steps, actions taken, gadgets used to complete a specific action or achieve a specific goal in communicating, teaching or learning a L2.

As seen above, Anthony (1963) uses the term technique to refer to strategy as well. He explains that the actions, movements, assessments, materials used in the class during a lesson are techniques. He extends the term techniques to machines used to teach or learn, tape-recorders used in language laboratory, television, radio, airplane that transmit educational TV programs, teaching machines, and any other gadget used with the purpose of teaching or learning. Anthony (1963) claims that techniques depend on a teacher, on a teacher’s teaching experiences, and on the background of learners. For him, technique must be associated with a method. Thus, Anthony talks about teaching strategies.

Claxton (2008) gives a list of strategies to help L2 teachers engage their students, build a good relationship between teachers and L2 learners, and among students themselves. The list of strategies includes speeches, individual or group presentations, storytelling, debates, dialogues, open forum, role-plays, and simulations. According to Claxton (2008), deliberative techniques are aimed at helping L2 learners improve listening, speaking, reading, writing, and culture or social skills. In deliberative education, teachers are described as educational coaches who purposefully confront their students with new tasks and new ways of carrying out their tasks. Teachers help learners take part in the learning process. L2 learners are also active participants.

Oxford (2003) and Tupas (2009) talk about learning strategies. These strategies are the tricks or mental processes L2 learners perform or put in action to learn L2. When used by L2 teachers, these learning strategies become teaching strategies. This thesis used strategies to refer to both teaching and learning strategies. Moreover, this study used strategy to refer to technique

as well. Thus, this study conciliates both positions by presenting elements of strategies according to Anthony (1963), Claxton (2008), Oxford (2003), and Tupas (2009).

Oxford (2003) classifies L2 learning strategies into six groups, namely “cognitive, metacognitive, memory-related, compensatory, affective, and social” strategies (p.2). She associates L2 learning strategies with learning styles which are defined as a student’s preferred ways or steps to engage in learning L2. Learning styles are influenced by L2 learner’s personality, desired degree of generality, biological differences, and senses. Senses refer to sight, touch-oriented, hearing, and movement-oriented learning.

The discussion of Oxford (2003, pp.12-14) and Tupas (2009, pp. 180-182) about learning strategies are presented below:

- Cognitive strategies help L2 learners control L2 materials through thinking-related processes, namely, reasoning, analysis, note taking, summarizing, synthesizing, outlining, reorganizing information, practicing information and sounds formally, and reorganizing information and knowledge for better understanding.
- Metacognitive strategies are strategies used to manage the learning process. These strategies include: identifying one’s own learning style preferences and needs, planning for an L2 task, gathering and organizing materials, arranging a study space and a schedule, monitoring mistakes, and evaluating task success, evaluating the success of any type of learning strategy.
- Memory-related strategies involve memorization. They include acronyms, rhyming, a mental, picture of the word itself or the meaning of the word, keyword approach, body movement, use of mechanical means like flashcards, and locations (on a page).

- Compensatory strategies involve making up or repairing communication problems and breakdowns. They are like communication strategies. They include: guessing from context in listening and reading using synonyms, “talking around” the missing word to add speaking and writing, using gestures or pause words.
- Affective strategies refer to emotions, level of anxiety, or rewards. They include, identifying one’s mood and anxiety level, talking about feelings, using deep breathing, using positive self-talk.
- Social strategies deal with ways L2 learner uses to connect with others in learning or performing a task. These are asking questions to get verification, asking for help in doing a language task, talking with a native-speaking conversation partner, exploring cultural and social norms.

### Summary

Approaches are theoretical assumptions and beliefs about the nature of language, what it means to teach a language, and what it means to learn a language. Approaches are expressed through methods. Approaches are abstract whereas methods are concrete. Methods are the structured procedure to concretize classroom set objectives. The means used or steps taken to concretize the structured procedure are strategies. Strategies are set of exercises, actions, and practices used or observed when delivering a lesson or participating in a classroom activity and that can be linked to a method. These strategies change according to the contexts, L2 learners’ age, cultural background, proficiency level in L2, L2 teacher’s experience, level of proficiency of the TL, and the desired lesson outcome. Thus, strategies like methods evolve according to time and context.

## **Sociology of English Language Learning in the Philippines**

Filipinos interact with members of another community at a national level through Filipino or Cebuano, the English language, or any other local language (Tinio, 1990). In general, Filipinos transact with Americans and other nationalities using the English language. This discussion will focus on the influence of the American culture and American English on its users, particularly on Filipinos who use ESL or EFL.

The Americans introduced the English language to the Filipino society during the American occupation of the country from 1898 to 1946 (Gonzalez, 1997). During the American occupation and as early as 1900, it was decided to use English in education with the justification that the country had about 75 to 250 languages and that the Spanish language was understood by only a few Filipinos (Thompson, 2003). This decision was made public in an official letter by then US President William McKinley on April 7, 1900. He ordered the use of the English language as the medium of instruction at all levels in the Philippines (Bernardo, 2008).

The first English language teachers were American soldiers. However, the first professional American English language teachers reached the Philippines in 1901 and their number continued to grow. It was then believed that English would be the language that would unite and liberate Filipinos, and to empower and enlighten them (Bernardo, 2008; Gonzalez, 1997; Thompson, 2003; Tupas, 2009). Moreover, Gonzalez (1997) reports that based on the results of the census taken in 1901, English was still an unknown language to the Filipino people except for a few who had travelled abroad.

In a few years, the English language had been a privileged tongue in the Philippines. For instance, from 1901 to 1935, English was the sole medium of instruction. In addition, the first ratification of the Philippine Constitution in 1935 recommended to continuing the use of English

language in education even after the independence (Gonzales, 1997). Likewise, the current Philippine Constitution (1987) states that “for purposes of communication and instruction, the official languages of the Philippines are Filipino and, until otherwise provided by law, English” (Section 7, article 14).

Wa-Mbaleka (2014) notes that the Philippines continues to attract investors, tourists, and foreign students from different parts of the world thanks to the mastery of the English language that Filipinos demonstrate not only in the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) but also in the world. He also recommends highly trained teachers of ESOL to avoid fossilized errors of English that in-service teachers demonstrate.

However, Tupas (2004; 2009) argues that Filipino elites get access to a better education in the country or travel abroad to study. For Tupas (2004; 2008; 2009), the English language separates the rich and elite from the poor majority. Fishman (1998) also underscores that even though English is spread over the globe, only a few elites have access to it. Worse, “Globalization has done little thing to change the reality that, regardless of location, the spread of English is closely linked to social class, age, gender, and profession” (p. 28).

Fishman (2000) asserts that apparently English strengthens the social class system. He adds that a closer look into this situation may reveal that the influence of the English language will eventually slacken and sooner or later may fade (Fishman, 2000). Approximately 6,000 languages are spoken in Africa where 13 per cent of the world population lives. Moreover, some African nations do have a lingua franca other than English for communication. A good example is Swahili which is spoken in 12 neighboring African countries. Likewise, the spread of other languages in different areas of the world is also promoted and funded by different countries. Fishman (2000) adds that France funds the study of the French language in many countries around the world;

Germany also funds the study of the German language; China, especially Singapore promotes the study of Mandarin (see also, Tupas, 2009); Spain funds the study of the Spanish language. In short, each developed country supports the spread of its own language around the globe.

Although English is promoted as the language of globalization, the language of international trade and communication, and the language of science and technology, Fishman (2000) still argues that “local languages often serve a strong symbolic function in most communities as a clear mark of authenticity” (p. 13). He believes that the language of the future is not English as many may think but that multilingualism will flourish where each language will be assigned a specific function in society. This study supports this idea as well as that multilingualism is the ideal approach to language in human society. Furthermore, based on Fishman’s (2000) idea on the future of English, it can be deduced that the decline of the English language will eventually negatively affect the BPO firms around the world, and specifically, in the Philippines. In fact, the BPO is a byproduct of globalization which is part of the spread of more English all over the world (Salonga, 2010).

In the context of the Philippines, Donoso (2012) sees “diglossia”, instead of multilingualism. Wardhaugh and Fuller (2015) say that the term “diglossia” is used to describe contexts where two or more languages coexist with clear functional separation. They explain that “speakers’ choices of code also reflect how they want others to view them” (p. 88). Furthermore, a diglossic situation develops when the standard language or more classical and older language is given high functions (H) like being used in education and administration whereas an everyday variance is used in low (L) functions like in the home and in informal interaction (Ferguson, 2006).

Bernardo (2004; 2008), Donoso (2012), Salonga (2010), Tinio (1990), and Tupas (2004; 2008; 2009) believe that Filipinos learn English for instrumental ends. Indirectly this means that

if the Philippines were a developed country, one local language might suffice for all its communication needs. The English language may eventually lose its influence on Philippine society if Filipino (Tagalog) or Cebuano or any other local language could help Filipinos earn a living and get access to higher education.

That said, Donoso (2012) argues that the imposition of the English language on the Filipino people set the nation backward from a level where the Philippines was an emerging nation in Southeast Asia. Furthermore, Filipinos had to learn the English language usage and eventually forget their past and their culture in order to be incorporated into the American way of life and thus serve the American interest. English also became a language that eventually separates the elite and educated Filipinos from the poor majority (Bernardo, 2004; Donoso, 2012; Tinio, 1990; Tupas, 2004; 2009). For Tinio (1990), local values and mores could have been integrated in the consciousness of people if taught and learned in a local language or in local languages. Worse, the English language has brought the Philippines to be “poorer than all the other Asian countries educated in their own language” (p. 56).

Fishman (2006) believes that languages, like human beings, do not operate in isolation. He gives English as an example. English has borrowed from different languages like Celtic, Latin, Greek, German, French, even from Asian languages and African languages. Today, English has gained global influence. In this perspective, Fishman(2006) states that “Americans are linguistically ‘messier’ regarding their language than the British, who, in turn, are messier than the French” because American English places “higher value on folksiness and trendiness than on formality and purity” whereas “Francophonie lacks the ability to laugh at itself in the way that Anglophonie does” (p. 34). This means that French speakers are linguistically stricter than English users.

DeBose (2005) explains that the stigmatization of some brand of English is always at work in the American society. For instance, the American society has been judging the English brand spoken by black Americans over the past decades. Moreover, DeBose (2005) notes that when it comes to a different way of speaking or using a type of English that is looked down upon, American society tends to “express visceral reactions of horror and disgust, or make fun of the speaker” (p. 28). The American society terms these brands of English as non-standard or bad English. This explains why some people are made to believe that NSE are the best English language teachers which is not necessarily true (Phan, 2008; Tupas, 2009).

This means that some NSE are not tolerant of and open to speakers of ESL. However, as the lives of people and nations evolve and multilingualism takes place,

“English may well gravitate increasingly toward the higher social class, as those of more modest status run to regional languages for more modest gains[...] Most non-native English speakers may come to love the language less in the twenty-first century than most native English speakers seem to anticipate.[Therefore], there is no reason to assume that English will always be necessary, as it is today, for technology, higher education, and social mobility, particularly, after its regional rivals experience their own growth spurts” (Fishman, 1998, pp. 38-39).

Likewise, even when English does not subjugate local languages in countries where it is learned and used as a L2, yet it nevertheless weakens the values of the indigenous languages and the way they are perceived by the people who speak them. Native languages become mere markers of identity as “languages of informal, less prestigious fields” whereas English dominates higher education, scientific communication and transnational business (Ferguson, 2006, p. 129).

History clearly shows that the fall of a powerful language is not necessarily the end of the world. Yesteryears’ global language weakened like Greek, Latin, and French. However, scientific, technical, commercial, and military might of developing nations developed and new powerful languages were born. Moreover, even if English is indeed a global language, it has different

dialects and American English is one of them. That is, impartial linguistic and political approaches should acknowledge, value, respect and study other brands of English around the globe.

### Summary

Americans introduced the English language in the Philippines 117 years ago. They also initiated and supported education in the English language of Filipinos. From thereon, the English language is used in education, business, communication, and government in the Philippines and the current Philippine Constitution (1987) classifies it along with Filipino or Pilipino as the two languages for communication and instructions.

However, some Filipino scholars like Bernardo (2004; 2008), Donoso (2012), Tupas (2004; 2008; 2009), and Tinio (1990), believe that the English language did not contribute to the development of the Filipino people. They argue that the English language divides the educated and rich Filipinos from the poor majority. They add that the educational system is tailored to the needs of the rich Filipinos and to market Filipinos across English speaking countries at a lower price. In their eyes, the English language and culture have subjugated Filipino languages and culture.

### **Relationship between Language and Culture: The Case of Philippine English (PE)**

This section has two purposes. First, it shows the place that language occupies in each culture and how culture informs and shapes its language and its people's linguistic practices knowing that language is shaped by its culture too. Second, this section will explain how the BPO sector forms a subculture where western culture meets and informs eastern culture and vice versa.

According to Tupas (2009), culture is expressed in the language people speak. Language is an important part of any culture. People cannot help talking about culture without talking about

themselves, their values and beliefs. To teach also means to express culture. Like Bakhtin (1981; 1984; 1986), Rosenblatt (2004), and Vygotsky (1986), Tupas (2004; 2009) is confirming that the meaning persons give to things and to events is created based on personal and social background.

Granered (2005) defines culture as communication. In his investigation on ‘Global Call Centers’ and how to achieve outstanding customer service across cultures and time zones, he reports that communication is one of the main challenges that BPO employees encounter. He believes that as a vehicle of people’s culture, language can be a source of misunderstanding.

Culture denotes common beliefs, values, philosophy, tradition, music, writing, education, the way of speaking, and the accent shared by a specific group of people. This implies that the language of a community is a symbol and a part of all the above elements. This can be seen in the example of Peter trying to deny his Galilean origin in the Bible. However, his accent was a clear mark to reveal who he was. “After a little while the bystanders came up and said to Peter, “Certainly you are also one of them, for *your accent betrays you*” (Matt. 26:73, italic added). Accent here is a cultural mark.

Considering the interconnectedness of language and culture, Llamzon (1969) calls the brand of English spoken in the Philippines as Philippine English (PE). This English, he specifies, is neither British nor American English yet it is English (Llamzon, 1969). Furthermore, PE is “the type of English which educated Filipinos speak, and which is acceptable in educated Filipino circles” (p.15). This type of English is neither the spoken nor the written English mixed up with the local language, namely one of the vernacular languages of the Philippines, like Filipino or Cebuano. Moreover, PE respects the constraints of the English language. Promoting PE is a clear mark that Llamzon favors the use of the English language as an official language. He points to aspects this language enjoys internationally in trade, science, and information technology.

In the same perspective, Bautista (1997) published the lexicon of PE. She describes different words and expressions used by Filipinos that are intelligible among Filipinos. Some of the words are already in the *Miriam Webster's Dictionary* and others were added to the *Macquarie Dictionary*. These terms include 'pentel pen' to mean "color marker" or 'colgate' for "toothpaste." Other words are 'sleep' in the example of 'sleeping late' to mean "going to bed late" in the Filipino context. She also points to the problem of Filipino to differentiate the verb "come" and "go" since both are expressed by one Filipino verb 'punta'. Another instance is to use a noun as a verb like in 'traffic' and 'high blood' in informal PE where some Filipinos say, "Sorry, I am so late, it was so traffic. [Or] Why are you so high blood again?" She also gives a list of neologism to refer to Filipino words that have become part of PE (Bautista, 1997, pp. 50, 55, 67).

In contrast, Bernardo (2004, 2008) and Tinio (1990) believe that English should not be used as an official language in the Philippines. Using it as an official language would be more of a problem than a solution in education and in society. According to Tinio (1990), the Philippines will remain politically, culturally, and ideologically colonized as long as it uses the language of the colonizers. He argues that Filipinos are being held back not because of the experience of having been colonized but by the influence of education and the way of thinking brought about by the language of the colonizers. He regrets that Filipinos' joyful statement to be the third largest English-speaking country in the world is based on the fact that both the educated and uneducated Filipinos have the tendency to see the world through American eyes. Filipinos tend to view the American culture as the ideal way of life. Therefore, Tinio (1990) favors the use of a local language more than a foreign language in education and in cultural development.

Continuing in Bautista's (1997) and Llamzon's (1969) perspectives, Gonzalez (1997) narrates the history of the English language in the Philippines. This starts with the arrival of

Americans in the country (see *Sociology of English Language Learning in the Philippines* above). Moreover, Gonzalez (1997) presents some words and expressions of PE termed “Filipinism” like, “open the light” to mean ‘turn on the light’, “captain ball” to signify “team captain” of a basketball team, “common tao” to mean “the common man” (Gonzalez, 1997, p. 33). However, Llamzon (1997) adds that Filipino scholars have not yet agreed on what constitutes PE because English language teaching in the Philippines still builds on general American Standard English. Yet PE is a current indisputable reality.

Peña (1997) investigated the written PE and analyzed eight teacher’s manuals written by thirteen textbook writers. The results show that many aspects of the academic PE are also presented in the English used by Philippine mass media. Peña (1997) reports that the textbooks contained some syntactic and lexical forms that were erroneous or unusual, and awkward to native speakers of English (NSE). However, he wonders if what looks erroneous or unusual, and awkward to NSE might not be part of a Filipino Standard English in the future.

Dayag’s (2008) research on and analysis of English language used in the media in the Philippines shows that the media significantly contribute to the lexicon of the English language. Dayag (2008) stresses that media influence viewers, listeners, and readers as the languages used — even when English is used — refer to familiar realities. According to him, some media use inference and “non-visual type of direct evidence than the visual type” (Dayag, 2008, p. 62). He adds that newspapers or TV programs use the English language mixed up with Filipino to attract the attention of viewers or readers and to make an impact on them.

However, Tupas (2004) notes that all these studies took the path of Llamzon’s (1969) approach to PE. He argues that Llamzon’s description of PE is an exclusive perception. He then

suggests that PE should be inclusive so as to reflect the socio-political and multicultural faces of the entire nation.

Furthermore, Tupas (2008) pushes for the equality of all the varieties of English stating that “legitimized and institutionalized Englishes are, linguistically and sociolinguistically, all equal with erstwhile ‘old’ varieties of English, such as American English and British English” (p. 70). He classifies English into two types: the Western, Judeo-Christian as the colonizers and the Africans and Asians as the colonized. According to Tupas, the colonizers tend to claim the ownership of English. The colonizers can also be referred to as NSE.

To concretize the reality of English in Asia, Kachru (1997) distinguishes two types of nativeness, namely: ‘genetic nativeness’ and ‘functional nativeness.’ Genetic nativeness is determined by the historical relationship between the language and its speakers whereas functional nativeness applies to the range and depth of a language in a society. He applies this to English in the Asian context where it is used in different contexts historically, functionally, formally, creatively, educationally, socioculturally, and attitudinally.

Moreover, Kachru (1997) situates the three circles and corresponding countries where English is used in Asia. The inner circle includes Australia and New Zealand. The outer circle extends to Bangladesh, Malaysia, Philippines, India, Pakistan, Indonesia, Singapore, and Sri Lanka. And the expanding circle covers Bhutan, Fiji, Japan, Brunei, Hong Kong, Maldives, China, Indonesia, Myanmar, Thailand, and South Korea. Thus, the English language is not only present in Asia. It has become an Asian language through its diverse faces of incarnation.

Tupas (2008) critiques the elements Kachru (1997) uses to describe the range and depth of the English language. He argues that Kachru (1997) presents a horizontal side of English and ignores the fact that non-native speakers (NNS) of the English language are now the majority of

English users. Applying this to the Philippine context, Tupas believes that even if some changes have happened in education by adopting the bilingual education policy, the Philippines still prioritizes English through different programs, agenda, tests, and job opportunities. He regrets that Filipinos who are fluent in English, mostly the ones with the American accent, are looked up to. Thus, Tupas (2008) joins the group of Filipino intellectuals who deplore the situation that English language is used to market Filipinos across foreign English speaking countries for cheap labor (Bernardo, 2004; Tinio, 1990; Tupas, 2008). The booming of BPO companies and training centers across Manila is a proof of the role of the English language in Philippine society in general and in business in particular.

In the perspective of class divisions brought forth by the type of English spoken by Filipinos, Martin (2014) reviews Kachru's three-circle model of the English language around the globe. She applies this view to the Philippine society and agrees that the Philippines is, indeed, an outer-circle society based on Kachru's classification. However, Martin (2014) adds that Kachru's (1997) three circle model can be situated within the Philippine community. The inner circle consists of educated Filipinos who support the use of PE in Education. The outer-circle consists of some educated Filipinos who are aware of PE. Persons in this circle hold that the American brand of English is better than PE for practical reasons. The expanding circle includes Filipinos whose English is not useful in their daily lives like farmers, and some indigenous peoples.

Two elements hold Bernardo (2004; 2008) back from supporting the use of English in education and in the Filipino society. The first element is the colonizing and oppressive power of the English language. The second element is the damaging impact of the English language on Filipino students' learning. Bernardo (2008) describes the colonizing power of the English language through the findings and report of different empirical studies that show that the good

command of English is reserved to the elite class in Metro Manila and in urban areas. He also adds that accent plays a big role in labeling, nurturing discrimination against people, and thus fostering social stratification. His second argument against English to remain a language of education for Filipino learners is that most studies have proven that learners learn best when they study in their L1 or at least when learning is founded on L1. For instance, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) (2007) promotes teaching in learners' first language (L1) through its principle that supports mother-tongue instruction (principle 1, p. 14).

Bernardo's (2004; 2008) point of view may suggest queries on reasons why some Filipino college graduates are still required to take English language training or why some Filipino CSRs are reproached for sounding Filipino when they transact with American customers. It is true that the identity of people is also expressed and revealed through the way they talk.

For instance, Hymes (1996) believes that language is not just an attribute of men and mostly, language is what people who speak it have done with it. He suggests that language needs to be approached not only as something to praise, but also as a human problem. As a problem, language is then something to question and study. He presents four dimensions of language that he calls sources and foundations of inequalities in human society, namely: "diversity of language, medium of language (spoken, written), structure of language, and functioning of language" (p. 27, *italic in the original*).

### Summary

Filipino culture is expressed in each Filipino language including English. As such, the English language is no longer a foreign tongue to the Philippine society but a local language. The brand of the English spoken in the Philippines is thus the PE (Llamzon 1969).

Some Filipino scholars like Llamzon (1969; 1997), Bautista (1997), Gonzalez (1997), Peña (1997), Dayag (2008), and Martin (2014) support the acceptance of the PE. However, other Filipino scholars like Bernardo (2004; 2008), Tinio (1990), and Tupas (2004; 2008; 2009) hold that although the PE exists, it does not contribute to the development of all the Filipinos. Bernardo (2004; 2008) and Tinio (1990) believe that the Philippine education should be carried out in a Filipino language to help Filipinos develop national awareness and internalize local values.

### **English language training in the BPO sector and the BPO training schools**

In the context of learning, Krashen (1982) exhorts L2 teachers to avoid putting L2 learners on defensive attitudes in order to help them acquire more input. To help an L2 learner lower affective filter, L2 teachers need to focus on comprehension, be patient with the L2 learner speech, and be lenient on error correction in spoken language. This means that an L2 learner must be given tools that help her/him gain linguistic competence without L2 teachers.

Contrary to the above atmosphere, English training in the BPO sector and in BPO training schools in the Philippines emphasizes the English Only Policy (EOP) (Friginal, 2009). A critical approach to this policy uncovers its basis in Fishman's (1994) remark on the influence of powerful languages, specifically the English language versus indigenous languages and cultures. Fishman (1994) laments and warns against the loss of weak languages. He is convinced that more emphasis on the English language leads to the loss of local languages where people lose the "sense of sanctity, of kinship, and a sense of moral imperative" (p.74). He argues that the English language must not subjugate local languages. This view opposes the EOP in and for the BPO industry.

Cameron (2000) portrays the CCI as a communication factory. She explains this through the routine job performance in call centers, the aim for quantity, the standardization of interaction,

and the style of communication. She notes that workers at CCI are not only told what to do but also given scripts to use by way of how to perform a task. This is what she calls “codification.” Another trait of CCI is “surveillance”, which means that “workers’ performance is constantly being monitored and measured” (p. 98). She explains that quality in the call center setting does not usually mean high standard but being correct and straight to the point within a short time. Quality here also means that each CSR portrays the image or the brand of their company. As such, each CSR has to speak and behave the way the company wants. She describes training in call centers as a way of alienating and controlling employees.

Furthermore, Cameron (1995) classifies the style of talking in CCI as one of the cases of verbal hygiene where the speech of CSRs is artificial. She believes that people can reprogram their brain and mind through the style they use language. She argues that the ways of communicating nurture people’s desires and fears. This also means that through their voices, some people have the ability to make themselves understood whereas others fail to do so (Blommaert, 2005). He believes that people judge or are evaluated by others on the basis of the way they sound. That is why Blommaert calls for the study of functions of language in the society through ethnography to “investigate phenomena of globalization” (p. 70). Likewise, Cameron (1995) believes that the study of language use is important to help explore types of verbal hygiene. Verbal hygiene in language refers to all the rules set and that must be observed when using or speaking a language like academic writing, presentation during a conference, reporting news on a TV program, and teaching. Verbal hygiene also refers to all the beliefs that surround the language to emphasize the power of language like pronouncing some words or reading a text during oath taking, a Mass celebration, saying a prayer, blessing, cursing, praising, and a giving a speech during a ceremony.

The current qualitative study is an effort at investigating teaching strategies and national identity of Filipino English language trainers and CSRs in the BPO sector and in BPO training schools.

Through their transaction with their employers, customers, and amongst themselves, trainers and CSRs may experience the English language as empowering or alienating. English language becomes alienating when NNS are required to lose the trace of their linguistic accent (Fishman, 1994; Rahman, 2009; Salonga, 2010; Tinio, 1990), or to look at the world and interpret it only through the eyes of Americans or British or Australians (Kachru, 1997; Phan, 2008; Phillipson, 2008; Salonga, 2010; Tinio, 1990; Tupas, 2004).

The English language can also empower its users which applies to trainers and CSRs as well. For instance, Bolton (2013) reports that BPO is viewed as a “sunshine industry” in the Philippines due to the country’s high unemployment rate (p. 498). He justifies this by stating that ten per cent of Filipinos are overseas’ workers, known as Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs). The positive side of the BPO sector is that the industry easily provides job to Filipino applicants and promotes employees who are fluent in the English language. As such, the BPO sector is then one of the solutions to boost local employment.

Bolton (2013) observes that Filipino call center employees speak a variety of English that range from mid-level to high-level “mesolectal” PE and that most call center applicants speak English with a Filipino accent. He points to other problems related to working in the BPO industry such as those associated with sleep, health issues, and family life dysfunctionality.

Hannif (2006) highlights that many factors determine job quality in the CCI such as working time and hours, level of monitoring, training and career development, managerial style and work strategies, relationship with co-workers, the nature of work, identification with the work, income and benefits, and work and life-balance. For him, CCI is diversified based on working

conditions. He then recommends investigating various aspects of CCI to determine the key elements of job quality and the impact they have on workers. Taking a different viewpoint, this study investigates the linguistic and socio-cultural aspects of BPOs and the impact they have on call center employees, especially on trainers in the BPO sector and on CSRs.

Learning the TL through communication underscores the context of Filipino CSRs in the BPO sector. Lockwood, Forey, and Price (2008/2009) believe that BPO employment contributes to the development of the Philippine society. They suggest that Filipino CSRs acquire skills and language competencies that are above the average of the everyday spoken English in the Philippine context. They recommend that Filipino “new recruits must be provided with training that factors in the development of specific competencies for the CSRs in the practice of customer service, while at the same time acknowledging the linguistic diversity of English in the global workplace” (p. 238). They invite educators, language teachers, the government, and employers to collaborate and so help Filipino youth aim for communicative competence and skills that allow them to compete locally and internationally in the global marketplace. Likewise, Sieben and De Grip (2004) believe that as part of general training, language training and skills development empower CSRs in the CCI.

Incorporation of some 21<sup>st</sup> century literacy skills in training and coaching may help trainers and CSRs aspire for high achievements in their job. According to Binkley, Erstad, Herman, Raizen, Ripley, Miller-Ricci, and Rumble (2012), 21<sup>st</sup> century literacy skills are paths to guide learners through decision making and help them adjust to today’s challenges. There are ten skills grouped into four categories. The first group applies to “ways of thinking”, namely (1) creativity and innovation, (2) critical thinking, problem solving, decision making, (3) learning to learn, and metacognition. The second group is the “ways of working” like, (4) communication, and (5)

collaboration (teamwork). The third group involves the “tools for working” which are (6) information literacy, and (7) ICT literacy. The fourth group applies to “living in the world” which lists (8) “citizenship – local and global, (9) life and career, and (10) “personal and social responsibility – including cultural awareness and competence” (Binkley et al., 2012, pp. 18-19). The 21<sup>st</sup> century literacy skills point to collaboration between educators, researchers, employers, and the government for a better world.

Employers in the BPO usually set skills they expect from applicants. They also define values they prioritize to conduct business. At the same time, applicants and employees have different factors that motivate them to apply for a job in companies and to stay in a company. Gager, Bowly, Nayak, and Chhabria (2015) report that professionals want “flexible work/life balance”, “good relationship with” their colleagues and supervisors, a “culture that fits” their “personality”, “excellent compensation [and] benefits”. Gager et al, (2015) believe that these values are sometimes aligned with what employers think young professionals want in a job and at times not. They then invite recruiters and employers to always strive to match candidate preferences and job to succeed in business. This can be possible when the academic formation includes the realities of the labor market in the curricula.

On colleges, universities, and employments to empower persons and help them develop the nation, Wa-Mbaleka (2015) stresses that “to see the Philippines rise steadily economically will depend on more collaboration between universities and industries” (p. 126). This statement applies also to the BPO industry and universities and colleges in the Philippines. Being a current trend in the Philippine society, the CCI needs researchers’ attention as well. Moreover, it is only with the collaboration of the BPO management that researchers can explore realities within BPOs and bring to light its challenges to the country. For instance, Hannif (2006) says that in Australia, call center

employees reported that people with little knowledge about the call center employment look down on call center workers. These people demoralize call center employees and fail to recognize the interpersonal and communication skills associated with call center work. This means that working in the CCI is already a training.

However, Cameron (2000) and Townsend (2005) label CSRs as emotional laborers. According to Townsend, recruitment and training in CCI focus on getting or training employees who will fit this culture. He reports that the key focus of recruitment, in the view of the CCI's recruitment officers, is to find the best employees who can easily adapt to a highly stressful environment. Moreover, Townsend reports that qualities that the company searched for in its applicants included display of good communication skills, readiness to work in team, a sense of good customer service, the ability to be trained, and willingness to exceed customer's expectations. He then concludes his study by showing that recruitment and training in call centers aim not only on selecting the right employees but also on dismissing employees who do not meet the company's established performance target.

Since CCI generates many jobs in the country, the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) (2011) classifies employment in the BPO industry as one of the plans of the Philippine government in general and of DOLE in particular to increase local employment. Furthermore, DOLE (2011) argues that a decent job is any work that provides incomes to individuals and lifts them and their families out of extreme poverty. In DOLE's eyes working in the BPO industry is equivalent to getting a decent and productive employment.

Specifically, 455, 643 jobs were generated by BPO activities in 2012 according to the final results of the 2012 nationwide census by the Philippine Statistic Authority (PSA, 2015). This census covered 1,456 establishments for different employments in the BPO sector. The same report

says that BPO activities generated a total income of 355.5 billion Philippine Pesos (PHP) or 7.9 B US dollars (USD) in 2012. Moreover, PSA (2015) states that PHP 161.9 billion or 3.6 B USD was the total compensation paid by BPO activities in 2012. The said amount was equivalent to an annual compensation of PHP355, 521 (7, 900.46 USD) per paid employee but each employee in software publishing industries received the highest annual compensation of PHP651, 080 (14, 468.44 USD) (PSA, 2015).

Linking employment with culture, Mercado (1977) underscores that Filipinos value interpersonal relationships. Their way of doing business and of working consists of establishing a relationship between the members of the group. Moreover, the social prevails over the self and the fulfillment of the “sakit” (social or community) is also the fulfillment of the self. For Mercado (1977), a good Filipino manager or teacher is a kind of a ‘parent’ to his personnel or students who are also like his children. He is charismatic, treats all team members equally, inspires and facilitates a smooth relationship. They are bound by a parent and child relationship. To apply this to training in the BPO firm will infer that trainers need to build a good relationship with trainees. Employers also need to promote cross-cultural atmosphere in the BPO sector.

Friginal (2007) believes that intercultural communication and comprehension are useful skills for Filipino CSRs and all BPO employees. Cross-cultural communication requires active listening, self-awareness, knowledge of one’s identity and culture. Gorjup, Valverde, and Ryan (2008) explain that self-awareness is the foundation of an effective cross-cultural communication because it allows people to understand and be aware of how their background shapes the way they judge and react to the events around them. This aspect of awareness of one’s background applies to CSRs and trainers as well in a multicultural context.

However, Salonga (2010) fears that one of the most difficult challenges Filipino CSRs face revolves around the issue of language. She sees the English requirements put on Filipino CSRs as a new way to control them. Salonga (2010) adds, “not only do they have to speak of certain things in a certain way, they also have to speak in a language that masks, denies, and finally erases who they really are” (p. 7). On the other hand, Salonga (2010) perceives the CCI as “a dynamic, diverse, and liberating space where one can grow both professionally and personally” (p. 13). This means that training to achieve communication competence empowers and reshapes CSRs and trainers’ self-perception.

Furthermore, Lockwood (2012) underscores the issue on English language problems relating to recruitment process in BPOs located in Manila where the focus is on accent and mother tongue interference (MTI). She was surprised to see American interviewers who came over to the Philippines for the purpose of interviewing and looking for Filipino applicants with the American accent. She remarks that training itself aimed for a neutral accent. She also reports that Quality Assurance (QA) and coaching had no specific processes on how to help CSRs improve their communication skills. After analysis of data, she recommends CLT in BPO located in Asia.

Lockwood (2012) also stresses the politics of offshoring call center jobs. She believes that some CCI employers are unaware that some American customers get angry during transactions or give negative customer satisfaction survey (CSAT) to Filipino CSRs because they are not happy when local jobs are offshored. For instance, a USA congressman wrote a letter to the Congress of the US, House of Representatives urging the USA Agency for International Development (USAID) to stop funding CCI training programs in foreign countries, including the Philippines. For him, it is a negative practice that American taxes serve to support offshoring local jobs while Americans are losing their employment.

In response, USAID promised to stop funding the training project. Friginal (2009) adds that Americans prefer buying local products and being served by Americans. This study supports that the cultural sensitivity of American customers can be one of the factors that motivate American employers to require Filipino CSRs to display near NSE communication skills.

Singh (2005) presents cultural, political, linguistic, and religious factors to show why Indian CSRs are losing out to Filipinos in the BPO sector. These factors include sick and vacation leaves where Filipino CSRs have fewer leaves than Indians. The reasons extend to superior English skills illustrated by the fact that most Filipinos are bilingual or multilingual. In addition to this, the Philippines has a high literacy rate. Moreover, Filipinos spend fewer days in training than the Indians. The Filipino culture is already in a way 'westernized'.

For Singh (2005), the Philippines is the only country where the BPO sector exports exceeds IT exports, thanks to the Filipinos' good command of the English language. He then concludes based on the findings of the Australian Communications Association (ACA) research and Kelly services that Filipinos make better BPO agents than Indians. However, Singh adds that these findings apply only to the call center domain in the Philippines because India leads the way in teleradiology, engineering design, and software development.

However, Nardin (2006) believes that most CEOs will point to cheap labor as the most important aspect of the CCI. He believes that contact centers become assets when employers define the priorities, and if they clarify the hiring and training processes. He recommends using multiple skill tests and behavioral interviews associated with the actual work during interviews to get the best applicants. Furthermore, Nardin (2006) clarifies that an effective training program prepares agents to perform multiple tasks. This means that agents become assets for the company as they can be put in different accounts or resolve customers' enquiries without any need to transfer calls

to other teams or place call centers on hold. He stresses that establishing and promoting a career path during training is one of the best ways to motivate career-oriented agents and keep the best.

Bolton (2013) also argues that CCI's managers and trainers may change recruitment, coaching, and training practices by emphasizing interpersonal attributes like empathy, friendliness, and rapport. Like Nardin (2006), he underscores that low cost, maximizing efficiency and profits are the heart of the existence of offshore CCI in the Philippines and in developing countries. Friginal (2009) and Lockwood et al. (2008/2009) also cite cheap labor, trainability of Filipinos, westernized Filipino culture, and government support and promotion of foreign investment in the country as factors that attract American investors.

### Summary

Some studies like Bolton (2013), DOLE (2011), Lockwood et al., (2008/2009), Friginal (2007; 2009), Lockwood (2012), and Sign (2005) present positive socio-economic, linguistic, and cultural aspects of the BPO industry in the Philippine society. These studies encourage Filipino BPO employees to aim for communicative competencies that are beyond the ordinary Filipino speech. Training in the BPO is then an empowering tool for Filipino BPO workers. Other studies highlight negative aspects of training in the CCI (Cameron, 2000; Townsend, 2005). Some of these are training makes CSRs emotional laborers. CSRs do not develop metacognitive skills because they are given scripts to use. CSRs are constantly monitored and lack creativity.

Linguistically, training in the BPO is built on the philosophy of speaking like a NSE. To reach the level of NSE speech, English only policy (EOP) is required of trainees, CSRs, and other BPO employees. The EOP requirements may help trainers and CSRs improve their communication

skills in the target language (TL). However, the same requirements may lead to alienation especially the way CSRs are required to use the TL (Salonga, 2010).

### **Bakhtin's Dialogic View of Language**

Bakhtin's dialogic view on language emphasizes the discourse aspect of language by focusing on "language in its concrete living totality" (Bakhtin, 1984, p. 181). In this study, the use of the English language in CCI is approached as dialogic transactions. Earlier discussions explained how CSRs and English language trainers work under different constraints that are nurtured by divergent linguistic, political, and economic ideologies. Yet these employees' practices can still show that they profit from the English language through the ways they transact in the English language. This section emphasizes the possibilities of the aforementioned changes through Bakhtin's concept of the dialogical view on language.

Bakhtin (1984) states that the study of dialogues is a metalinguistic study. He discussed this concept in the book entitled *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*. Bakhtin presents Dostoevsky as a creator of a new literary genre or artistic work called "*polyphonic*" (p. 3, italic in the original). According to Bakhtin, what matters in the metalinguistic or discourse study is not just Dostoevsky's multi-voiced novels or the mere presence of specific language styles or social dialects or other styles but the "dialogic angle at which these styles and dialects are juxtaposed or counterposed in the work" (p. 182).

For Bakhtin (1984), every utterance has its author who voices it out or who ponders upon it. Specifically, he (1986) sees a reciprocal relation between language and the speaker, between the speaker and his/her culture, the speaker's culture and other cultures. This means that utterance has three meanings: first a worldview of a given reality, second, a particular use, and third, the

defining quality of language. For instance, in the CCI, when trainers and CSRs communicate with American customers and with one another, they use the English language as a language that belongs to all who speak and understand it. At the same time, these employees represent their companies in such a way that the words they use belong to somebody else, especially when they use scripts. Lastly, every word these employees utter belong to them since it echoes their culture, accent, and expression.

In a dialogue, the utterance is the heart of communication the same way the sentence structure plays a vital role in the grammar of a language (Bakhtin, 1986). Above all, utterances occur in a specific situation and change according to contexts. Meaning is mutable and language is 'heteroglot' which may mean different connotations an utterance can take depending on the speaker and the listener, or the contexts.

Even if languages are numerous, complex, and sometimes very different from one another, still Bakhtin (1981) believes that languages are connected in some ways. Yet, no language can claim the monopoly of being superior to others because each language expresses or presents a "specific point of view on the world, forms for conceptualizing the world in words, specific world views, each characterized by its own objects, meanings, and values" (pp. 291-292). Languages by their nature or functions complete each other. Languages like all beings are interconnected. For this study, approaching all languages as equal is an invitation to English language trainers to be aware of varieties of English and teaching methods in the BPO firm and in training schools. Trainers need to establish a relationship between trainees' L1 and the TL.

According to Bakhtin (1986), the essence of language is in the dialogic relation between the speaker and the listener. Participants partake in the continuous dialogue. As such, every utterance expects some kind of answers and is open to new questions.

Bakhtin (1981) believes that language is owned not through “*authoritative discourse*” which are ways people are taught and expected to speak and sound but through “*internally persuasive discourse*” which are formed by personalizing and mastering the language with individual voice, style, and expressions (p. 324, italics in original). In the context of this research, CSRs need some degree of control of the English language. Even those who use scripts when transacting with customers need to understand the reason behind the use of scripts. Thus, it is the responsibility of trainers to analyze and clarify the content of the message to trainees.

The language people speak or the way they are expected to use language can influence not only how they are looked upon by others but also affect the way they view themselves. In other words, “a person has no internal sovereign territory, he is wholly and always on the boundary; looking inside himself, he looks *into the eyes of another or with the eyes of another*” (Bakhtin, 1984, p. 287, italics in original).

Bakhtin (1986) describes the importance of discourse in all spheres of human life. By utterances, Bakhtin means speech genres or ways of using language. He believes that “language enters life through concrete utterances (which manifest language) and life enters language through concrete utterances as well” (Bakhtin, 1986, p. 63). Dewey (1938) emphasizes the significance of experience in human life too.

Language lives through dialogue. Users of language give life to language through their dialogic interaction. In other words, language is shaped through peoples’ interaction in their daily activities in business, art, scholarship, and culture. Bakhtin (1984) promotes collaboration and dialogue within any society and throughout the world. For him, communication between two people is the minimum for life and existence. Language is a dialogue and dialogue is eternal. Dialogue goes beyond the sphere of language and extends to human actions and life itself

(Vitanova, 2005). Dialogue from a dialogical point of view then is the interdependence and interconnectedness of all beings.

Training in and for a BPO firm shows that employer, employees, and customers are interdependent. Likewise, when trainers teach or when CSRs communicate with co-employees or with customers, they also assert the act of human persons. To deny them communication is equivalent to putting their lives to a linguistic death because “to be means to *communicate*. Absolute death (nonbeing) is the state of being unheard, unrecognized, unremembered” (Bakhtin, 1984, p. 257, italic in the original). Moreover, the act of being and the act of communicating should lead people to a dialogical communion in society and in the world.

For Bakhtin (1986) a poor conception of a speech communication focuses on the speaker and a listener. However, the essence of language, he argues, lies in the dialogic relation between the speaker and the listener. The speaker actively engages in speech communication and expects some kind of answers. At some point, the speaker becomes the listener. Likewise, the listener also actively participates in the communication process and at some points she becomes the speaker. Participants partake in the continuous dialogue.

Dialogue leads to the highest form of being and living because “I cannot manage without another, I cannot become myself without another; I must find myself in another by finding another in myself” (Bakhtin, 1984, p. 287). To put this statement in the BPO context, it can be said that employers in the BPO firm depend on their employees who interact with their customers. Likewise, customers depend on employees who assist them in their queries. Employees also depend on the employers who invest in the country and hire them. Therefore, interconnectedness between employer, employees, and customers should be underscored during and after training.

Even when the roles of these communicating persons oppose, their dialogic relation is a relation of person- to-person.

The ideology of using others for personal interests or destroying foreign nations in order to promote local interests has no space in Bakhtin's dialogic view on language and on being. CCI employees, their employers, and customers are brought together through a dialogic relation that calls for the end of self-glorification. The emphasis of the relation between them is cooperation, communion, and openness to the other (Levinas, 1971). Each of them then is called to engage in "cooperative choice" with the other to build the society by taking "humanity as the ground of existence" (Gripaldo, 2009, p. 247). This also means that society or people have power over the language they use (Bakhtin, 1981; DeBose, 2005; Donoso, 2012; Fishman, 1998; 2006). At the same time, language has the power over people who use it (Bakhtin, 1984; Philipson, 2008; Salonga, 2010; Tupas, 2004; 2008; 2009). As such, language is communion with others and with the world and to teach dialogically in the context of this study is to partake in a community where each voice has the right to be heard.

### Summary

According to Bakhtin (1981; 1984; 1986) language is dialogue and this dialogue is the interconnectedness between people, societies, and the universe. Language is also a point of view of the world and no language is superior to the others. A person discovers himself through dialogue and reveals himself to others through dialogue. Dialogue is the foundation, expression, and life of any language. Dialogue is that which unites the speaker and the listener beyond any form of speech they utter. Each utterance carries the background of the speaker, his society, and the language used.

In the BPO context, a dialogical relation is the interdependence between employer, employees, and customers. This relation shows that neither an employer nor a customer, nor an employee can stand on his own. Each and all of them benefit from training and employment in the BPO. Furthermore, what matters in the current study is not only the styles or the scripts CCI employees use to communicate with one another and mostly with customers but the impacts that result from the reciprocal interaction between these CCI communicators and the meaning trainers and CSRs give to their work and their usages of English language, their culture of origin, and the American culture.

### **Rosenblatt's Transactional View of Language**

This section details Rosenblatt's concept of the transactional view of language. It draws from John Dewey's philosophy on both education and experience. The transactional concept in this study suggests approaching and defining trainers and CSRs as part of the BPO community where the CCI conditions them and they condition the CCI. The term transaction is used in this thesis to show that being a trainer or a CSR in the BPO sector becomes part of the life of these Filipino employees who work in CCI or in the BPO training centers. To put it in other words every worker shapes his work. At the same time, work influences the worker.

Rosenblatt's (2004) transactional view states that meaning has a private and a public dimensions. The public aspect is the definition of a term presented in dictionaries or a general knowledge about something whereas the private meaning is the sense each reader gives to the text. Meaning is arrived at through transaction between two or more persons or between a reader and the text. This view holds that "meaning is located in human practices — in other words, it is a human construction based on communication, cooperative action, and community relations"

(Connell, 2008, p. 104). Human beings internalize language in its two aspects, namely the public and the private meanings. Persons always consciously or unconsciously refer to their linguistic reservoir or life experiences whenever they write, read, listen, and speak (Rosenblatt, 2004).

Rosenblatt (2004) illustrates linguistic transactions with a face-to-face communication. She states that in a conversation two people contribute to the process of meaning making. “Both speaker and addressee contribute throughout to the spoken text (even if the listener remains silent) and to the interpretations that it calls forth as it progresses” (p. 1367). This echoes Bakhtin’s (1981; 1984; 1986) concept on a dialogical view of language that argues that meaning is constructed between two or more persons who communicate dialogically. For instance, some BPO accounts have what they call probing strategies when a CSR is talking to a customer over the phone. These strategies are short series of questions and answers to identify a customer’s problem so that the CSR can address the problem correctly. In the transactional approach, probing strategies illustrates that both CSR and customer construct meaning.

A face-to-face communication shares many similarities with a text even if a text lacks a physical presence, the voice, the nonverbal signs, and the tone. According to Rosenblatt (2004), readers, speakers, and listeners rely on their linguistic background to make sense of a text, a conversation, or an event. This also means that people may participate in one event, but each of them would understand and interpret the event differently. This is explained by the fact that the attributes readers or speakers bring into a conversation or to a text include selective attention which is what James (1890) calls a “choosing activity” (cited in Rosenblatt, 2004, p. 1368). De Mello (1990) also says that people are conditioned by the way they were taught to see things, to feel, to judge, and to speak. This means that the meaning people make depends on where their selective attention is focused. It is not a mechanical act but a dynamic focus.

Rosenblatt (2004) believes that one's selective attention depends on other individual's emotional attributes like fatigue, stress, or joy. These attributes can affect the quality of the meaning one makes out of a conversation or reading. Selective attention emphasizes Cameron's (2000) and Salonga's (2010) fear about the CCI's expectations of CSRs. Both lamented that CSRs are expected to vividly respond to each call and that this requirement disregards the individual's emotional state.

Each reading leads to an evocation which suggests a response and needs interpretation. Evocation is the meaning of the text which covers the aesthetic and the efferent transactions while "response" is the "stream of reactions to, and transactions with, the emerging evocation" (Rosenblatt, 2004, p. 1376). Making sense of, analyzing, illustrating, and understanding the response is called "interpretation" which allows the reader to connect experiences in the stream of meaning or in the whole process.

For Rosenblatt (2005), teaching language should cover all aspects of human life to make "comprehensible the myriad ways in which human beings meet the infinite possibilities life offers" (p. 26). This means that teaching or training needs to include other aspects of human life so learners can connect new acquired knowledge or skills with their past. If effective teaching or training requires building on learner's background (Bakhtin, 1984; 1986; Dewey, 1938; Vygotsky, 1986) and especially in seeing learners as a whole and not as a set of fragmented skills (Mercado, 1977; Rosenblatt, 2004; 2005), then CCI training should look beyond neutral accent.

Although Rosenblatt's (2004) transactional view of language shares many points with Bakhtin's (1981; 1984; 1986) dialogic view of language, — there are also differences. Bakhtin (1984) emphasizes a polyphonic approach to language and to reality or multiple ways of seeing and interpreting the world that streams from each individual's reciprocal influence with his socio-

political and cultural environment. On the other hand, Rosenblatt's (2004) transactional view emphasizes two main ways of approaching language and the world, namely the scientific and the aesthetic. The main factor they share is the relationship they see within the language, among people, in life, between events, the world, and the entire universe. Both the dialogic and the transactional views of language underscore the continuous and reciprocal connectedness, interdependence, and mutual influence of language and other human attributes, among people with the environment, the world, and life.

### Summary

Rosenblatt shows that meaning is not ready-made but must be discovered. Meaning is arrived at through a transaction of two or more communicating individuals and through a transaction between a specific reader and a text at a specific time in a specific context. The transactional concept of language holds that meaning is constructed between the speaker and the listener, between the reader and the text. This concept underscores two ways of approaching the world, namely the aesthetic and the efferent. To teach or to train in a transactional concept requires building on learners' background, helping learners connect new knowledge to their current situation and drawing critical synthesis of reality and of themselves.

In the BPO context, trainers and CSRs are human persons with personal background before, during, and after they perform their job. To teach in a transactional approach implies a continuous authentic dialogue between learners and teachers. In other words, to teach language 'transactionally' requires focusing on learners as human persons with personal background and not as homogeneous individuals or fragments skills.

## **National identity of Filipinos**

According to Majul (1969), Mulder (2013), Tinio (1990), and Weekley (1999), the colonization of the Philippines contributed to the Filipinos' lack of sense of nationhood because it prioritized the interests of the Spaniards, then the Americans, and shortly after the Japanese colonizers. Majul (1969) says that Filipinos lived in 'barangays' or small communities before the Spaniards came. At times, small communities quarreled against neighboring communities. At such, they did not have the notion of belonging to a nation.

Doronila (1992) uses three factors to define contemporary Filipino national identification, namely, personal identification with the nation which consists of a self-perception in relation to the nation, boundaries of inclusion, and boundaries of exclusion in relation to the nation. The social boundaries with reference to the national community consist of the levels of inclusion and exclusion. The levels of inclusion involve defining oneself in relation to one's social group. This implies understanding the context, history, problems, needs, and aspirations of that community. Boundaries of exclusion include all aspects that distinguish a nation from the others vis-à-vis local realities and the context of the historical development of that nation.

In the Philippine context, boundaries of exclusion include: "understanding of the Philippine history from a Filipino perspective, political interests and sovereignty, economic interests and self-reliance" (Doronila, 1992, p.16). Boundaries of inclusion consist of all the aspects related to good Filipino citizenship, events that bring or group Filipinos together as one nation across the history beyond personal interests, political ideologies, religious affiliation, linguistic and regional origins.

Doronila (1992) defines national identity as a set of "meanings and predispositions defining one's attachment or sense of belonging to a national community" (p.17). The set of meanings stand for characteristics that serve to define who belongs and who does not belong to a national

community by providing reasons to explain such standings. Knowledge of and about the national community serves as the key element to develop or hinder a people's national identity.

According to Majul (1969), national identity is the consciousness of belonging to one nation, commitment to a specific ideology as a nation, and the belief that the existence of the two first factors leads to individual happiness and social good. He believes that national identity is dynamic. It is nurtured when people experience social conditions free from exploitation, humiliation, and tyranny, and that the members of the national community work for the common good that goes beyond one's religious, linguistic, and local communities. He adds that the community as a nation must be guided by principles that promote unity, freedom, and social responsibility.

Doronila (1992) provides four parameters to bear in mind when defining Filipino national identity, namely the colonial history, the lack of any notion of nation prior to colonization, the diversity of ethnolinguistic groups across the archipelago where each group occupies a specific geographic territory except metropolitan centers with multi-ethnic groups, and the socializing or diplomatic conditions referred to as "the pattern of economic, political and increasing dependence upon other economies" like the US, Japan, China, the Middle East, and European countries (p.18).

Doronila (1992) distinguishes national identity from national consciousness. The latter is based on the awareness of having common aspirations and goals as members of a national community. The former is mostly on identifying oneself as being part of a bigger community called a nation, having and finding meanings in shared characteristics about social life, a common history, and economic development. Likewise, Majul (1969), Mulder (2013), and Weekley (1999) underscore that nationalism is different from national identity. Nationalism refers to the love for one's country and commitment to defend it from outsiders' oppression or occupation. National

identity is a developed awareness of belonging to one nation as a community where people are united by a set principles for individual development, common good, and freedom of all. Nationalism can also be referred to as “blind loyalty to the state” whereas national identity is spontaneously expressed, through “their sense of belonging to each other and their way of life” (Mulder, 2013, pp. 57 & 58). National identity is also seen as an integration of elements, practices, and tastes that set a person or a group apart as belonging to a common community which is different from others’. Weekley (1999) believes that the Philippines needs to redefine a national identity which is based not only on struggle and development projects but also on including contemporary Filipinos as active citizens without looking at the gender or social status.

On the issue of language of instruction, Doronila (1992) notes that 68% of adult participants preferred Filipino and English, 17% chose Filipino and other languages, and 9% preferred instructions in English, and the 5% were indifferent about the language of instruction. In descending order, she presents the following values as characteristics of Filipinos: ‘pakikisama’ [getting along with others], ‘utang na loob’ [debt of gratitude], ‘may sariling isip at bait’ [independence of mind and spirit], ‘marunong makiramdam’ [sensitive], and ‘madaling mapahiya’ [easy to be embarrassed]. She notes a decreasing importance of close family ties among young participants with the justification that a traditional family hinders development. Doronila (1992) attributes participants’ choice of the last aspect to the growing number of urbanized communities.

In other words, the identity of a people can also be referred to as their personality or general characteristics. Gines, Dizon, Fulgencio, Gregorio and Obias (2003) believe that aspects that define Filipino personality include “empathy with” and “generosity towards others.” Filipinos are family orientated and happy people. They are flexible, adaptable, creative, hardworking, and industrious. They have a strong faith in God and perform various religious practices which may

be factors that enable them to survive in hardships. Weaknesses observed among Filipinos include “extreme personalism”, “extreme family centeredness”, and “lack of discipline.” Some Filipinos tend to be passive and lack initiative. Their tendency to look up to foreign cultures and realities is referred to as “colonial mentality.” Other Filipinos tend to be “selfish” or have a “self-serving-attitude” expressed through the “crab-mentality.” Others demonstrate a “lack of self-analysis and self-reflection” (pp. 84-89).

Martinez (2007) also explains that the Filipino national identity finds its root in the local community called ‘bayanihan’ or belonging to a town or a community. Members of a ‘bayanihan’ are brought together through solidarity. This solidarity is manifested through mutual help and community work. However, she underscores the idea that because of the colonial history of the Philippines, Filipinos tend to give more importance to kinship and local community than to national unity. Mulder (2013) cites some religious feasts, national boxing or beauty events as circumstances through which Filipinos naturally express their national identity.

The following factors constitute the boundaries of exclusion in the study of Doronila (1992). First, Filipinos must understand the Philippine history from a Filipino perspective. Second, they must affirm political sovereignty. Third, they must be economically independent. Political and economic independence include the Filipino way of interpreting the American intervention in their war against the Spaniard occupation, the revolution against American occupation, the question on the presence of American bases in the Philippines like Clark base, and the ‘help’ foreign brings to Filipinos which includes a critical understanding of multinational companies.

The results of her study show that Filipino are proud of the following historical events in their struggle for sovereignty: MacArthur’s return, the Cry of Pugad Lawin, the war they fought against Japan in WWII, and the Philippine revolution of 1986. Participants believed that the most

significant events in the Philippines as a nation included June 12, 1898 which is the Philippine declaration of Independence Day from the Spaniard, Philippine Revolution of July 4, 1946 which is Philippine Republic Day, also known as Filipino-American Friendship Day, EDSA uprising or the People's Power Revolution on February 22–25, 1986, and September 21, 1972 or Martial Law Proclamation. Doronila (1992) notes that most adult participants chose July 4, 1946 as the most significant day for Filipino freedom but the supporter of Marcos chose September 1972.

On the question about foreign control of the Philippine economy, Doronila (1992) notes that a significant number did not know about or were not interested in the topic. Some participants acknowledged a certain control of the economy of the Philippines by foreign multinational and underlined this factor as an element that blocked national economic development. Other respondents pointed to developing a local model of development and generating local jobs.

On boundaries of inclusions, participants who did not belong to any political ideology favored the inclusion of all Filipinos calling for “transcending ideological and political differences” (TIP), “integrating Philippine ethnic minority groups into the national community” (IPE), “good citizenship” (GCP), and strong belief in the slogan “united stand as a people” (USP) (Doronila, 1992, p. 42). She reports that respondents believed that “equitable distribution is a basis for unity and peace and that authentic ‘pakikisama’ means sharing of property and wealth” (p. 43). She then suggests that leaders consider redistribution of wealth and land to unite Filipinos. Likewise, according to Timbreza (2008), Filipinos as a community are defined by their way of thinking, interacting with one another, interpreting events, and the world. He believes that to be fully liberated and mature as an integrated nation, Filipinos need to free themselves from four incestuous ties or idols, namely regionalism, religionism, colonial mentality, and closed nationalism or anti-foreignism. As such, he portrays Filipino national identity as a process.

National identity in this study sets the participants apart as members of a specific community, the Philippines. Filipino trainers and CSRs share common characteristics that define them as Filipinos. The shared elements are part of the background of these participants. Their identity also influences the way they train, learn, and transact with American customers. As they work in the BPO, they become active participants in the development of the nation.

### Summary

Filipino national identity is the awareness of belonging to and owning one nation, the Philippines. Through this awareness comes the responsibility to work for individual achievement and community development built on freedom, mutual aid, and other factors defined by the community. Filipino national identity draws from the history of the Philippines. It goes beyond religious affiliation, regional origins, linguistic communities, and political ideologies. It is the integration of elements and life that set the Filipino people as a nation different from others. The Filipino national community is still in the process of becoming a self-determining nation. At such, the formation of a national identity to define a Filipino presupposes a definition of the Filipino nation based on its history, aspirations, policies, economic and social problems, and achievements. For this study, national identity is the defining mark of the background of the participants.

### **Acculturation Model and National Identity**

Training and continuous transaction with American customers is also a way Filipino English language trainers and CSRs acculturate in the TL group through their work in CCI. Acculturation is a “social and psychological integration of the learner with the target language

(TL) group” (Schumann, 1986, p. 379). Acculturation can also be L2 learners’ adaptation and ownership of the TL like in the case of the PE which is already an element of national identity.

Schumann (1986) believes that L2 learner’s contact with, integration in, and psychological openness to the target group and the TL are factors that facilitate or delay L2 acquisition. He cites nine (9) factors that influence L2 acquisition, namely: social factors, affective factors, personality factors, cognitive factors, biological factors, aptitude factors, personal factors, input factors, and instructional factors.

Schuman (1986) distinguishes two groups based on the social factors of acculturation. The first is the L2 learners’ group and the second is the speakers’ of the TL group. The social, affective, and personal factors are relevant to this study. Social factors include “dominance; non-dominance; subordination; assimilation; acculturation, preservation; enclosure; cohesiveness; size; congruence; attitude; intended length of residence in TL area” (p. 380). Schumann believes that economic, political, cultural, and technical development of either group may facilitate or hinder acquisition of the TL. However, if L2 learner group is dominated by the target group, L2 learner group may lose its linguistic and cultural identity. It may then assimilate the lifestyle of the TL speakers.

In the BPO companies and training centers located in the Philippines for instance, Filipino CSRs or trainees may approach the American employers and customers as politically, culturally, technically, and economically superior. Some Filipino CSRs may resist this reality and thus hardly acquire the American English language. Other CSRs or English language trainers may decide to adopt or integrate the Americans’ lifestyle. They may hereby learn easily the American English and assimilate the American culture. Another group of Filipino CSRs and English language trainers may choose to adapt to the American English and culture. They may use the American

accent when talking to Americans but use the Filipino accent when communicating in English with fellow Filipinos. With this strategy, 2LL group “adapts to the lifestyle and values of the TL group, but maintains its own life style and values for intragroup use” (Schumann, 1986, p. 381). The acquisition of the TL can also be faster in this context.

“Affective factors” can also facilitate or delay the acquisition of the TL. These variables depend on individual learners whereas social factors depend on a group of learners. Affective variables include “language shock; cultural shock; motivation; ego permeability”. [To this], “personal factors” can be added, namely, “tolerance for ambiguity; sensitivity to rejection; introversion/extroversion; self-esteem” (Schumann, 1986, p. 380). When it comes to motivation, L2 learners succeed in L2 when they have integrative and “expressive motivations” rather than “instrumental motivation” (Schumann, 1978, p. 150).

Likewise, Gardner and Lambert (1972) stress that L2 learners are somehow the center of their learning. Like Schulman (1986), Gardner and Lambert believe that learners’ attitudes toward the TL and culture may facilitate or hinder L2 learner’s proficiency. This means that to master an L2 depends not only on a learner’ intellectual capacity and language aptitude but also and especially on a “learner’s perceptions of the other ethnocentric group involved, his attitudes towards the representative of that group, and his willingness to identify enough to adopt distinctive aspects of behavior, linguistic and non-linguistic, that characterize that other group” (Gardner & Lambert, 1972, p. 132).

Schumann (1986) adds that “instructional factors” may also hinder or facilitate acquisition of the TL. These variables are “goals; teachers; method; text; duration; intensity” (p. 380). In other words, incentive stimuli such as a class, a language teacher, a teaching method, fellow learners,

TL speakers, the TL culture, can help L2 learners be more involved in learning a L2 (Schumann, 2001).

To further explore ways of acculturation, Tupas (2009) presents numerous contexts of ELT and defines different cultures in learning or TESL. These contexts of acculturation are associated with national identity in this study:

- First, the culture of inferiority that promotes a negative image of L2 learners' culture. It makes L2 learners believe that their culture is bad or inferior and therefore to look up to the target culture.
- Second, the culture of pragmatism that believes that learning a particular language leads to earning much money and so focuses on "skills" in language use.
- Third, the culture of dependence that believes in the NSE "experts" in TESOL methodology that local teachers ask foreign "experts" for better teaching methods. Tupas believes that asking foreign Native English as Second Language Teachers (NESTs) to advise what is best to do in TESOL exposes Nonnative English as a Second Language Teachers' (NNESTs) lack of confidence in themselves or in the methods they use because the foreign "experts" know little or nothing about L2 learners background.
- Fourth, the culture of autonomy which aims to give much freedom to and put learners at the center of their learning process. It trusts that learners can develop preferred learning strategies in an L2.
- Fifth, the culture of passivity that puts authority in the hands of teachers, believes that L2 teachers are the sole bearers of knowledge, and that students are just receivers of knowledge.

- Sixth, the culture of silence as a culture that does not encourage much talking but that may encourage reflection and critical thinking.
- Seventh, the culture of social isolationism that ignores any talk about issues their students confront in daily lives and focuses on forms of language, or grammar of language believing this approach is free from any political or cultural influence.
- Eighth is the culture of elitism that favors and rewards particular languages and / or practices of language while stigmatizing others.

With the above elements, Tupas (2009) invites L2 teachers to go beyond the NESTs versus the NNESTs fallacy in the English Teaching Profession. Thus, according to Tupas, to teach English as L2 or as a foreign language is also to express a specific culture. Moreover, any L2 teaching or learning approach is a cultural act as well.

The acculturation model was designed for immigrants where the acquisition takes place in the TL community without formal instruction. But for this study, “instructional factors” invite English language trainers to take into consideration the contexts of teaching, their Filipino and the American cultures, and to be to be facilitators. They also need to have a critical approach to different strategies they learn or choose to use in TESL and to the instructional materials.

### Summary

Acculturation explains factors that facilitate L2 acquisition (Schumann, 1986). L2 learners play an important role in the process of acquisition of the TL through the ways they position themselves in the TL community, their emotional state, personality, intellectual capacity, and physical dispositions. Instructions L2 learners receive about and in the TL and community and the ways L2 learners view or are viewed in the TL community can facilitate or delay L2 acquisition.

In the BPO companies and training schools located in the Philippines, acculturation may not be limited to transaction with American customers and to being trained on how to transact with Americans. Acculturation takes place also through the attitudes of Filipinos trainers and CSRs towards American customers and employers, and towards the American English. This is expressed through different cultures in learning or TESL (Tupas, 2009). Acculturation is also the fashioning and owning the TL to the point of renaming it and calling it PE.

### General summary

This chapter developed 9 topics. English as an international language was highlighted to show that English belongs to all people who speak and understand it. To teach English as an international language implies a shift from TESOL to TEGCOM. It also means to align with the WE paradigm. English language teaching approaches, methods, and strategies were developed to show that strategies are the implementation of a method, and methods concretize an approach in the classroom setting or in a communication environment, and an approach theorizes about the nature of language and the meaning of teaching or learning a language.

The sociology of language showed that the American English has influenced Filipinos through education, communication, and politics. A relationship between language and culture was established with the example of the PE to show that PE is a brand of English that was created by Filipinos and that continues to develop like other brands of English. English language training in the BPO sector and the BPO training schools explained ways in which English can liberate or alienate its users, how the English language becomes an asset not only for trainers but also for trainees, and especially for CSRs.

Bakhtin's dialogic view on language was also presented to show the interconnectedness of language, a speaker, and the listener. Rosenblatt's transactional view of language explained that meaning is constructed between a reader and the text or between a speaker and a listener. The topic on the national identity of Filipinos showed that national identity is a process built on personal identification with the nation, boundaries of inclusion, and boundaries of exclusion in relation to the nation. The study centered on Schumann's acculturation model to show that L2 learners play an important role in L2 acquisition. Other factors that contribute to a faster or a slower L2 acquisition were highlighted in the acculturation model. Acculturation was also presented as factors of different cultures in learning or teaching a TL, especially as ownership of the TL to make it a local language.

## Theoretical Framework

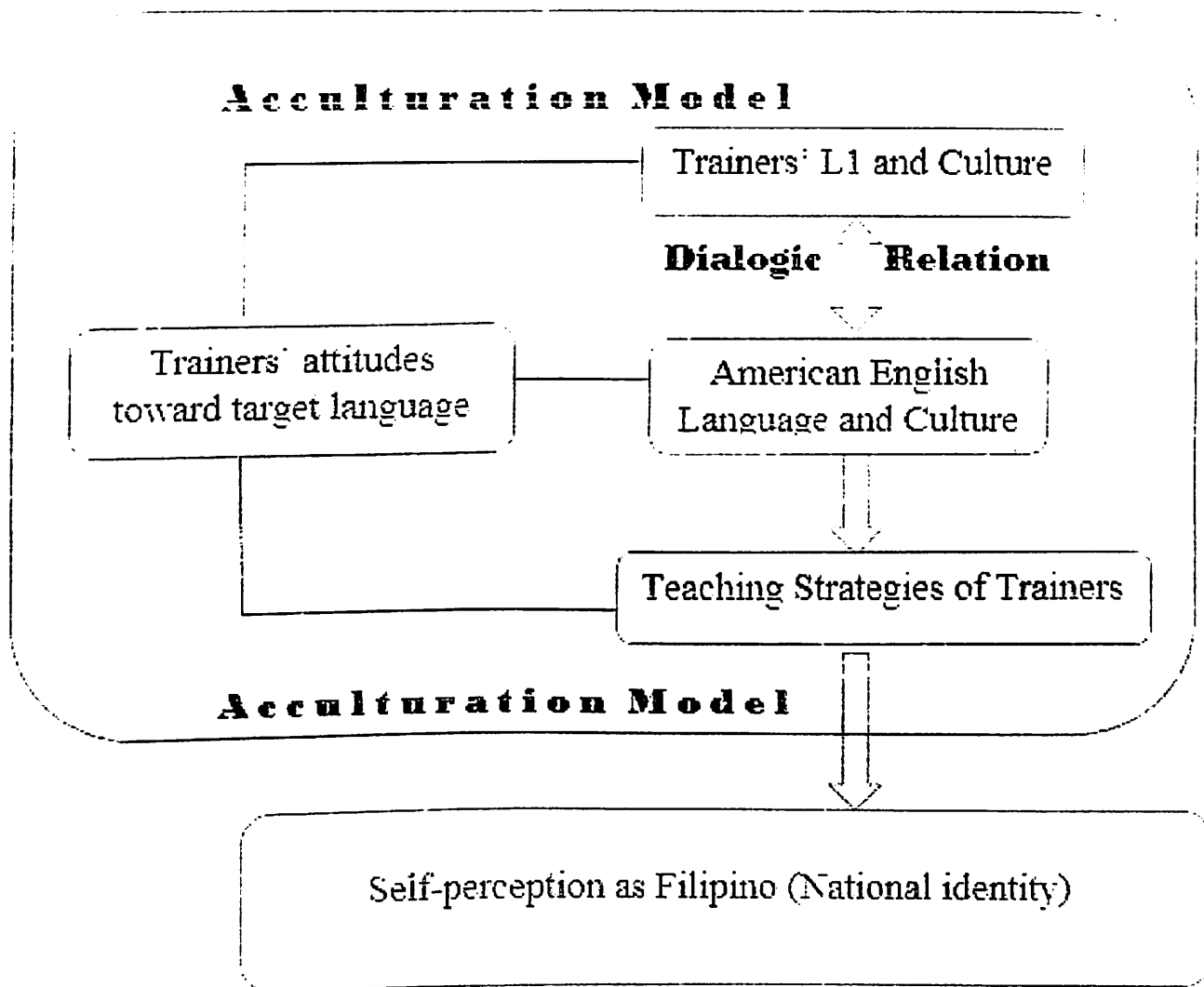


Figure 1. Theoretical Framework of the Study

In a CCI, culture plays an important part because the American culture and language permeate the atmosphere. Within this setting, there are several factors that need to be considered. First, English language trainers have their own L1 and culture. As they learn and teach the TL, they also go through a “dialogical” process (Bakhtin, 1981; 1984).

Another factor is the trainers’ level of acceptance of the target culture and language. The TL and culture transact with the trainers’ L1 and culture and impact their personal, social, and

professional lives. In this transactional process, “each element conditions and is conditioned by the other in a mutually constituted situation” (Rosenblatt, 2004, p. 1364). They receive knowledge and values from both cultures and both languages. All of these factors play a role in the way they teach the trainees. Thus, the acculturation model explains how language and culture are interconnected.

Trainers’ teaching strategies reflect their L1 and culture. At the same time, the teaching strategies are nurtured by trainers’ attitudes towards and knowledge of the TL and culture. Hence, strategies are important in the acculturation model.

Trainers who have the desire to socially integrate with the American English language and culture are more likely to easily adopt the values and lifestyle of the target group (Schumann, 1986). This favorable inclination makes it easier for them to learn American English. On the other hand, negative attitudes and the lack of desire to integrate with the TL and culture make them resist the influence of adopting and learning the language. These attitudes may subconsciously influence strategies they use when teaching the TL to trainees. In turn, the experiences in teaching and learning the TL have an impact on the knowledge and the meaning that trainers and the learners demonstrate about American English, PE, how they view themselves as call center employees, or as trainers in BPO training centers, and as Filipinos.

## **Definition of Terms**

'Acculturation' is the process through which Filipino trainers and customer service representatives face, negotiate with, reject, own, or adapt to the linguistic and cultural requirements of the American English. This definition is adapted from the term 'acculturation' as defined by Schumman (1986).

'Call Center Industry' or 'CCI' is an agency called the business process outsourcing that employs Filipino trainers and CSRs where the telephone is used to conduct business by placing or receiving a high volume of calls. This definition can be associated with the term 'call center industry' according to Dawson and Bodin (2002).

'Customer Service Representatives' or 'CSRs' are Filipino employees who receive, make telephone calls, or use emails or chat messages in a call center industry to conduct business with offshore clients. This definition is adapted from the terms operators, attendants, analysts, customer service representative (CSR), sales representative, technical support representative (TSR), and telemarketer as defined by Dawson and Bodin (2002).

'English language trainers' are Filipino employees who work in the BPO to prepare or give English language training or entry level product and service training to new employees. They may conduct an ongoing training in the English language for existing employees or for clients of a specific BPO company. They can also be English language teachers who conduct training in BPO training schools for students who want to work in BPO. This definition was created by this researcher to

refer to a particular group of people. It can be understood in relation to Teaching English as a Second Language or TESL as defined by Richards and Rodgers (2001).

‘National Identity of Filipinos’ is a personal identification of Filipino trainers and customer service representatives as Filipino nationals who have specific ways of speaking, behaving, living, relating to work and to others, and a common history as opposed to their American clients. This definition can be associated to the term ‘national identity’ as defined by Doronila (1992) which is a set of factors called boundaries of inclusion and boundaries of exclusion in relation to the Philippines.

‘Strategies’ are steps, actions, movements taken or assessments, materials, and devices used to complete a specific action or achieve a specific goal in communicating, teaching, or learning an L2 (Anthony, 1963; Anthony & Norris, 1969; Claxton, 2008; Oxford, 2003).

## **CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY**

This chapter covers six sections, namely, research design, research locale where the fieldwork was carried out, sample or the type of and number of participants in the study, instruments or means used to gather data, data collection, and data analysis procedure.

### **Research Design**

This study used a qualitative approach with some elements of ethnography. It sought to understand “the lived experience of other people and the meaning they make of that experience” (Seidman, 2006, p. 10). The study looked into the strategies of English language trainers and CSRs at the CCI by looking at different ways that they used the English language. The study aimed to present, explain, and create awareness of the lived experiences of CCI employees. It also examined the impact of power relation on the English language teaching perspective between members of a community to suggest ways on how to develop or change that relation (Blommaert, 2005; Creswell, 2012).

### **Research Locale**

Five call centers and two BPO training schools were purposefully selected within Metro Manila, Philippines. Criteria for selection included: must be offshore call center industry; provides service to American customers via phone calls; conduct products training or English language training for new employees; with CSR employees who use ESL. Training schools should be BPO training centers or schools where language and or technical training related to working in BPO was provided to students.

Call center offices in Metro Manila are usually located in business centers. Buildings are usually several stories and give an impression of modernity. Some companies may employ as low as 50 employees and as high as 10,000. Within the buildings, the floor is usually an open space like in big stores. However, employees sit in cubicles. Workspaces are usually set into ranks so that two employees face each other or sit next to each other yet remain separated by a small wooden wall. On the table, each employee usually has a telephone and a computer connected to the internet to document each transaction and answer calls (inbound) that are automatically distributed to them or make outgoing calls (outbound). Five to ten employees usually have a team leader who also reports to a manager. The manager may have another manager to report to and so on. Employees are usually encouraged to talk in English even among themselves as a way to practice the English language.

Five BPO companies and two training schools were selected from different cities in Metro Manila to diversify the background and points of view of participants. For ethical reasons, companies were assigned codes based on the city as BPO-C1, BPO-C2, BPO-C3, BPO-C4, and BPO-C5. Furthermore, the two BPO training schools codes were BPO-T1 and BPO-T2. Data included were number of years of operation, estimated number of employees, sites or locations worldwide, locations in the Philippines, services provided, and operation' hours.

BPO-C1 is one of the pioneer BPO companies in the Philippines. It has 15, 000 employees. The company operates in 20 countries worldwide. It has six locations in the Philippines including Metro Manila and cities in other provinces of the Philippines. Its services extend to communication, financial services, leisure, healthcare, technology, transportation, and customer satisfaction surveys, classroom training, on-the-job training, and on-going professional development. The business is carried out through Inbound and Outbound calls, Customer

Satisfaction Surveys, Classroom training, On-the-job training, and On-going professional development. The company provides services in different international languages among which English is the lead. The company operates 24 hours, seven days a week.

**BPO-C2:** is a BPO software company that provides services for goods and services. The company's Philippines branch was established ten years ago. It has 300 employees. The company is located in North and Latin Americas, Europe, and the Philippines. The business of the company is on customer support, invoice processing, purchase order processing, technical support, training services, proactive monitoring, and on-going professional development provided through inbound, outbound, quality assurance, and training. The company provides services in different international languages among which English is the lead. The company operates 24 hours, seven days a week.

**BPO-C3:** is a BPO company, its Philippines' branch was established seven years ago, and it employs 500 employees. The business is on real estate, appointment setting, training, and sales or customer care support. The company provides services in English. The services are carried out mostly through outbound calls or back office. The company gives employees the chance to work from home. Employees come from different places of Metro Manila and in the other provinces. Employees meet on different occasions for business and for pleasure purposes. The company's clients are Americans. This company operates 24 hours, seven days a week as well.

**BPO-C4:** is a BPO company that was established 27 years ago in the USA and eight years ago in the Philippines. It has 9,300 employees worldwide. The company provides services in different international languages among which English is the lead. It operates in North and Latin Americas, and in the Philippines. The company's services include order processing, customer support, product and technical support, financial consultancy, telecommunications, appointment setting, selling, satisfaction surveys, classroom training, on-the-job training, and on-going

professional development. These services are provided through inbound, outbound, quality assurance, and training. The company operates 24 hours, seven days a week.

BPO-C5: was established 81 years ago in the USA and its BPO branch in the Philippines seven years ago. The company has 6,000 employees. The company provides services in different international languages of which English is the lead. Its services extend to communications, insurance, healthcare, satisfaction surveys, classroom training, on-the-job training, on-going professional development through inbound and outbound voice, and back office processing. These services are provided through inbound and outbound calls, customer support, technical support, retention, training, and quality assurance. The company operates 24 hours, seven days a week.

BPO-T1 is a private school established in 1980. It is one of the first schools in the Philippines that focus mostly on computer sciences and computer engineering studies. It offers other courses like AB Mass Communication and BS Business Administration. One of the school's sites is in Quezon City which has offered special English language training for Filipino youth aiming to work in the BPO sector. The school teaches 'English Proficiency Program for Call Center Representatives' (100 hours in 25 days). It also teaches English Communication Skills 1, 2, and 3 (per semester). It is open Monday through Friday and, on Saturday and Sunday for special events.

BPO-T2 is a public school or training center that was established in 1994. It has different sites in Metro Manila. The training center provides training mostly to Filipino youth in different fields including 'English Proficiency for Customer Service Workers (100 hours in 25 days). It operates Monday through Friday and Saturdays for special events.

## Sample

Fifteen (15) participants were selected using purposeful sampling (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2000; Creswell, 2012; Seidman, 2006). The participants were eight English language trainers and seven customer service representatives. English language trainers included product trainers who conduct training in the English language since training is implicitly included in product or content training in some call centers. Trainers also included teachers for BPO at call center training schools and who may have had a BPO background. The seven CSRs who were selected included CSRs and Technical Support Representatives (TSRs) who had experience taking calls and communicating with American customers.

Participants were code-named. Customer support representatives and technical support representatives code-named CSR1 to CSR7. Trainers in the BPO companies were code-named Trainer-C1 to Trainer-C5 and the trainers in the BPO training schools, Trainer-T1 to Trainer-T3.

Table 1: Participants' profile

	Trainers in the BPO	Trainers in BPO School	CSRs
Number	5	3	7
Years in BPO	7.2	1	5.07
Male	2	1	2
Female	3	2	5
Age	31.8	41.3	30.57
W/o B.A. or B.S.			2
With B.A. or B.S.	3	2	4
With M.A.	2	1	1

Table 1 shows that the number of trainers (8) was slightly higher than the number of CSRs (7). As a qualitative study, the crucial point for this researcher was to have informants who could provide more reliable data about the phenomena being investigated (Creswell, 2012; Seidman, 2006). Trainers (5) in the BPO companies were either English or product trainers with 7.2 years

average of experience and answer offshore customers' calls. One trainer in a BPO training school had experience working in the BPO sector while two others did not which is why their average years of experience working in BPO became one. The seven CSRs, namely six CSRs and one technical support representative (TSR) had experiences answering American calls in their respective BPO company and their average years of experience in BPO was 5.07.

Concerning ethical issue, samples were informed of the purposes of the study and asked to sign a consent form. The selection of samples was also facilitated through "friends of friends" (Salonga, 2010; Seidman, 2006), and samples were contacted via email, Skype messages, LinkedIn, Facebook, text messages, and word of mouth.

## **Instruments**

### **The participant's profile**

This tool was a short profile form and filled out by each participant before the interview (see Table 1 and Appendix G). It was used to gather each participant's name, age, gender, education background, number of years working in BPO, and position.

### **Interview schedule**

This tool contained 16 open-ended questions (see Appendix C). It was used to gather information from English language trainers and CSRs. The interview schedule was adapted from the structure of in-depth, phenomenological interviewing of Seidman (2006).

The interview focused on the life history of the participants, and their reflections on the meaning of their experiences (Seidman, 2006). The interview had the following aims: 1) to find out the teaching strategies of Filipino English language trainers in the CCI and training schools;

2) to show how knowledge and acceptance of American English and culture were integrated in the English language trainers' teaching in the BPO sector and training schools, and 3) to analyze the ways by which training in the BPO sector and BPO training school has influenced the Filipino English language trainers' and CSRs' perceptions of themselves as Filipinos. The interview schedule provided data to partially answer the three research questions, namely 1, 2, and 3.

### Observation guide

This tool contained a checklist of elements to observe at the participants' workplace (see Appendix D). This tool focused on the participants' teaching strategies and their language use at the work place. A checklist of strategies to observe was developed. Through the observation, more insights were gained to answer the research questions 1 to 3.

Observations were included in the tools because most studies in the BPO sector are based on recorded calls or interviews only (Friginal, 2009; Salonga, 2010). Studies that include observations are usually case studies (Lockwood, 2012; 2013; Sieben. & De Grip, 2004; Townsend, 2005). This is why, this researcher used two observation sessions for each of the eight (8) observed participants to see if participants could use different teaching or transaction strategies on day one and day two.

### Unobtrusive data or documents

This tool included Quality Assurance (QA) audit forms and sample call flow to analyze how productivity was measured in the BPO firm; job postings to enumerate qualities and skills prioritized at the CCI, and a document on training conduct (see Appendices H to L). It was used to gather factors and skills emphasized in CCI. "Their collection does not interfere with the

ongoing events of everyday life” (Hatch, 2002, p. 116). Through the collection of unobtrusive data, additional information was gathered to answer research questions 2 and 3.

**Data collection procedure**

Permission to conduct research from both the CCI management team and from potential participants was sought through a letter from an authorized faculty member of the University of the Philippines Open University (UPOU) was requested to present at the site.

More than 30 contacted BPO companies did not give authorization because of strict privacy policy observance. Companies were contacted through friends, friends of friends, emails, and through researcher’s walk-in.

Data collection followed once the authorization was granted in the five selected call centers and two BPO training schools. Data collection included one interview schedule with both trainers and CSRs, two observations of eight participants that lasted one to two hours, and collecting unobtrusive data (Hatch, 2002).

At the beginning of the interview, each participant was reminded of the consent form. Each participant signed the consent form and the researcher cosigned it. A summary of interviews done is shown in Table 2.

**Table 2: Summary of interviews**

Name and Role	Company	Interview date	Duration (Minutes)
CSR1	BPO-C1	Dec 21, 2015	16:05
CSR2	BPO-C1	Sept 1, 2015	58:54
CSR3	BPO-C1	Dec 21, 2015	38:33
CSR4	BPO-C4	Jan 2, 2016	33:31
CSR5	BPO-C3	Feb 01, 2016	14:54
CSR6	BPO-C2	Dec 27, 2015	30:52
CSR7	BPO-C2	Oct 30, 2015	26:28

Table 2: Summary of interviews (continued)

Name and Role	Company	Interview date	Duration (Minutes)
Trainer-C1	BPO-C5	Dec 31, 2015	39:25
Trainer-C2	BPO-C2	Dec 29, 2015	26:09
Trainer-C3	BPO-C4	Jan 2, 2016	26:48
Trainer-C4	BPO-C2	Nov 19, 2015	11:47
Trainer-C5	BPO-C2	Jan 06, 2016	48:13
Trainer-T1	BPO-T2	Sept 8, 2016	18:44
Trainer-T2	BPO-T1	Oct 07, 2016	19:44
Trainer-T3	BPO-T2	Sept 8, 2016	32:04
<i>Total</i>			<i>470.96</i>

E-mail interview was conducted for two participants who were assured that their privacy and confidentiality would be kept. Email was deleted from the researcher's e-mail box once data were received. However, a 30-minute face-to-face interview was set once both participants answered via email to verify each respondent's answers. Both face-to face interviews were recorded and transcribed too. Priority was given to what the participants said in a face-to-face interview because more detailed answers were given.

The interviews took seven and a half hours and were conducted from October 2015 to October 2016. The individual interviews spanned between 11 and 59 minutes. Each interview was scheduled based on each participant's availability. The venue and time were negotiated between interviewee and interviewer. The interview was transcribed the same day or the day after. The interview was coded and the date of the interview was indicated.

Observations were carried out only for those with the permission of their employing company or school. Observations provided data to partially answer the research questions 1 to 3. Each observation was coded based on a checklist. Observed participants included three CSRs and five trainers. Three trainers came from BPO training schools with or without prior BPO work

experience. The first observation session was carried out on November 17, 2015. The last observation session was on October 7, 2016. The total time spent for observations was 20 hours and 39 minutes and was accomplished in 11 months.

Unobtrusive data were collected by photocopying the documents, taking photographs or asking willing participants to email them to the researcher. These data included call flow, quality assurance metric, job postings, and a document on training

### **Data analysis procedure**

Data were analyzed and categorized into themes or sub-themes. Data were compared using “triangulation” of all data collected from the instruments used. Triangulation is used to lessen biases, to reach a more balanced analysis and interpretation of data, and to gain a deeper understanding of the phenomena being investigated (Harklau, 2005).

Data from the 16 open-ended questions or interview schedule and data from the observation were first summarized and grouped according to the three research questions, namely 1, 2, and 3. Data from Quality Assurance (QA) audit forms, sample call flows, job postings, and a document on training conduct were also summarized and incorporated in the answers to research questions 2 and 3. To group data into themes, common patterns were identified, differences were highlighted in the answers of participants, observation and other collected data. All data were categorized into four themes divided into eight sub-themes based on different implications of the results on the English language teaching approach and national identity in the BPO context located in Metro Manila. Categorizing data into themes and sub-themes came from the factors most referred to in the interviews, the observed and expressed common strategies, and common skills or elements in the call flow or quality assurance metric, and documents on training.

**CHAPTER 4**  
**DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS**

This chapter presents and discusses collected data. Organization was based on research questions.

**Research Question 1: Teaching strategies of Filipino English language trainers**

Filipino English language trainers use different teaching strategies. The strategies include cognitive, metacognitive, memory-related, affective, and social strategies.

**Table 3: Teaching strategies**

Strategy	Activity	Participant
Cognitive	Giving reasons, analysis, practicing or role play, and summarizing.	CSR1 to CSR7, Trainer-C1 to Trainer-5, and Trainer-T1 to Trainer-T3.
	Imitation or Simulation	CSR1, CSR2, CSR3, CSR4, CSR5, CSR6, CSR7, Trainer-C3, Trainer-T1, Trainer-T2, and Trainer-T3
	Note-taking	CSR1, CSR2, CSR3, CSR4, CSR5, CSR6, CSR7, Trainer-C4, and Trainer-C5.
	Impromptu speaking	CSR6
	Playing games	CSR4
Metacognitive	Evaluating task success or the success of any type of learning strategy (e.g. Giving oral or written assessments)	CSR1 to CSR7, Trainer-C1 to Trainer-5, and Trainer-T1 to Trainer-T3.
	Identifying one's own learning style preferences and needs	CSR5, CSR6, Trainer-T2
Memory-related	Memorization (e.g. memorizing the call flow, some vocabulary)	CSR1, CSR2, CSR3, CSR4, CSR5, CSR6, CSR7, Trainer-C1, Trainer-C2, Trainer-C3, Trainer-C4, Trainer-C5, and Trainer-T2
Affective	Sharing experiences	CSR1, CSR4, Trainer-C1, Trainer-C2, Trainer-C3, Trainer-C4, Trainer-C5, Trainer-T1, Trainer-T2, and Trainer-T3.
	Use of humor	Trainer-C2 and Trainer-C5
Social	Exploring cultural and social norms (e.g. Teaching or learning how to speak to Americans)	CSR1, CSR2, CSR3, CSR4, CSR5, CSR6, CSR7, Trainer-C1, Trainer-C2, Trainer-C5, and Trainer-T1

## **Cognitive strategies**

- **Analysis** allows L2 learners to examine learning materials being used (Oxford, 2003; Tupas, 2009). For example, L2 learner can study the structure of a sentence to determine whether a sentence is grammatically correct or wrong. L2 learners can also find out whether an utterance is contextually appropriate and acceptable. In the BPO context, analysis can help CSR determine the root cause of a problem.

CSR4 explained that, “We study how Americans behave.” Trainer-T1 said they were also using “character analysis [and] picture clips.” During observation, Trainer-T3 wrote down examples or sentences given by the students before inviting them to analyze the sentences. Likewise, CSR7 asked permission to put the caller on hold. After this, CSR7 logged into a system or platform to search for the client’s information and analyze the request. Then, she turned to a colleague to ask for clarification since she did not know which resolution to give. During training, Trainer-C5 also associated a good analysis of the client’s problem with a better solution. This strategy was noted in all participants during interviews and observation sessions.

- **Giving reasons** allows L2 to justify a performed action, a statement, or an event. Giving reasons happens through thinking related processes (Oxford, 2003). This strategy can help L2 learners develop critical skills.

Trainer-C1, “[As CSR], we are not just talking to customers... but we are trying to explain everything to them, for them to know. Like, why is my bill so

high? Why my TV is not working?” Trainer-T2 said, “I require them to explain, their quiz is in English and not in vernacular.”

During the observation, the researcher noted that Trainer-C5 underscored that questioning skills could help a CSR gather more information from the client, lead the client to dig deeper and give more reasons about a problem being reported. For instance, on questioning skills, Trainer-C5 classified close questions that needed a yes or no answer, open questions that required explanation, and probing questions that fuse both open and close questions. He drew charts and diagrams to show where each question was appropriate within an actual transaction between a client and a CSR transaction.

Likewise, in providing a resolution, Trainer-C5 emphasized that CSR should be able to justify why a provided resolution to resolve a case was the best. One of the assessments Trainer-C5 gave trainee was to match and explain concepts or solutions to specific tabs related to the platform their company used for business, filling the blanks. Then the trainee had to justify each answer using his/her own words. The other assessment was to match and apply the patient-doctor interview with a Customer and CSR interaction. The trainee had to justify each answer using his/her own words. This practice is a way that helps Trainer-C5 verify the level of understanding of the trainee.

- **Practicing** is associated with imitation. It helps L2 learners practice information or sound (Oxford, 2003). Role-play is included in this strategy because it can be used to practice the language or the information being learned. Practicing can help L2

learners master the sound and knowledge associated with their work (e.g. speaking, interpersonal communication, and the grammar of the TL).

Trainer-T3 said, “I give them tongue twisters, especially those who have native language [sic, mother tongue] interference.” CSR2 reported that, “When I was a teacher, I always tell my students, if you surround yourself with English, you speak it, you eat it, you smell it, and when you start dreaming in English, you have learned the language... You use all the four skills because if you miss one, you will not develop completely.” CSR4 also said that they spoke English during training which “allows you to practice English with, amongst your peers.” According to Trainer-T2, “I am requiring them to use English at all time [sic]...so to practice their speaking skills.” Trainer-C4 also said they were using “role play... to help them [trainees] practice what they are learning.” Trainer-T1 said “We use role play. [Trainees] were quite shy during our first days of training... That is why we have a lot of presentation, dramatization, listening, film viewing.” CSR2 said, “English trainers ... [use] role play. This is on using language properly. I really like it”

- **Imitation or simulation** is an activity that asks L2 learners to repeat an action or reproduce an utterance (Anthony, 1963). For example, an L2 teacher may read a paragraph in a book using the American accent, then the teacher may ask students to read aloud and imitate the way it was read. The teacher also may let students watch a video to see how NSE transact amongst themselves and then ask the students to imitate the way NSE speaks. This strategy can help L2 learners develop speaking.

Trainer-T1 said, "I am not a native speaker of English. I show them how native speakers speak... So, imitation... and apply... I do not encourage them to speak in Filipino because if they think in Filipino, then translate it in English, they get it wrong, they start doing, uuuh! Hmm!" Furthermore, Trainer-C3 underscored that, "When you apply in BPO, trainers will teach you ... on how Americans speak and they ask you to speak that way." Likewise, Trainer-T3 said, [I use] role play with simulation.... I listen to them and tell them they have little problems with [pronunciation of letters] c, a, p and f, b and v."

The researcher noted during observation that at times, CSR6 performed the work of both the CSR and the client. Trainees had to observe what CSR6 was doing and possibly imitate the way CSR6 was speaking.

Ten out of 15 participants, namely CSR1, CSR2, CSR3, CSR4, CSR5, CSR6, CSR7, Trainer-C3, and Trainer-T1, Trainer-T2 referred to imitation or simulation. Imitation and simulation are cognitive strategies because they help L2 learners control L2 materials through thinking related processes like practicing sounds formally (Oxford, 2003; Tupas, 2009). Asking L2 learners to utter the sound like a NSE is a way to practice that sound. Listening to trainees and providing them feedback shows that Trainer-T3 wants to establish a connection between L2 learners' linguistic origin and the demands of the TL which might be associated with the concept of the schema theory (Tierney & Pearson, 1986). The purpose of listening to L2 learners here is to determine who among them has a MTI. Trainer-T3 had no work experiences in the BPO industry yet her teaching strategy implied that she was preparing her trainees to fit the language requirements of the BPO

companies. Trainers in the BPO companies aim to eradicate any MTI from the trainees' speech (Cowie, 2007; Frigal, 2007; 2009; Lockwood, 2012; Rahman, 2009; Salonga, 2010). As such, trainers aim to develop learners who are fluent according to the requirements of the employers and the clients. However, Bakhtin (1981) also reminds us that language is owned through personalizing and mastering it with individual voice, style, and expressions and not through ways people are taught or expected to speak and sound. Krashen (1982) also exhorts L2 teachers to focus on comprehension, be patient with the L2 learners' speech, and be lenient on error correction in spoken language.

- **Summarizing** is an activity that asks students to give the main idea of a text, a conversation, a scene, a story, or a book. Summarizing involves analysis and comprehension. Thus, summarizing as a cognitive strategy also helps L2 learners control L2 materials through thinking-related processes. In the BPO context, paraphrasing can be viewed as summarizing the problem the customer wants to be resolved.

CSR6 said, "You listen [to American recorded calls]... then they [trainer and other trainees] will ask you a lot of things." During observation, the researcher observed that Trainer-C5 was summarizing each topic before moving to the next. CSR6, Trainer-C4, and Trainer-C5 told trainees they had to paraphrase the statement of the client to make sure they understood the customer's request. During observation also, CSR7 paraphrased the customer's statements.

- **Note-taking** is a strategy that helps L2 learners control L2 materials through thinking-related processes (Oxford, 2003). This strategy can help L2 learners develop correct spelling and organizational skills. CSR1, CSR2, CSR3, CSR4, CSR5, CSR6, CSR7, Trainer-C4, and Trainer-C5 referred to note-taking that took place either during training or during transaction with the clients.

During observation, the researcher noted that CSR5 and CSR7 were taking notes during every call and documenting the transaction in a specific system. The application of note-taking in some companies was observed in CSR7 during an actual call. In answering an English Call, CSR7 started with greetings and stated the name of the company. She opened a note pad on her laptop, listened to the client and wrote down the information the client gave at the same time. She asked the client to spell his/her name. Then, she repeated the information to validate with the client. Likewise, CSR6, Trainer-C4, and Trainer-C5 took down notes when they were training new employees. Trainees also took down notes. For instance, during one training session, CSR6 explained how to do a specific online business transaction to a Filipino trainee. CSR6 used a laptop. She talked, read, and wrote while navigating the website. Trainee was observing CSR6 and the trainee wrote the process in a notebook. After this, CSR6 asked the trainee to refer to his notes and create a similar case on his own using his laptop. CSR6 sat next to the trainee, listened to and observed the trainee.

During the interview, Trainer-C2 said, "I think the main thing I try to always tell them is writing using bullet points." During training, some BPO companies exhort trainees to take personal notes, especially during training about the product

or service and refer to those notes during real calls with clients or when sending emails to their clients.

- **Games** are also cognitive strategies because they help L2 learners control materials or the situation through thinking-related processes (Oxford, 2003; Tupas, 2009). Games can help the learners develop imagination, creativity, spontaneity, logical thinking, and association skills.

CSR4 said they played the game called “‘Pinoy Henyo’ [genius Filipino]. This is done in the English language.” According to CSR4, the ‘Pinoy Henyo’ game has been used in all the five BPO companies she has worked in.

- **Impromptu speaking** asks L2 learners to give unprepared speeches or arguments about a topic. CSR6 said, “You listen, then they ask you to go there [in front], then they will ask you a lot of things.” Giving unprepared speeches can help L2 learners develop spontaneity in speech which is generally the way the target community transacts in the TL.

Imitation, simulation, impromptu speaking, and practicing as cognitive strategies show that the training CSR1, CSR2, CSR3, CSR4, CSR5, CSR6, CSR7 receive and the training Trainer-C3, Trainer-T1, Trainer-T2, and Trainer-T3 give focuses on the NSE speech. In this context, language proficiency is believed to be acquired through imitation (Skinner, 1957). Claxton (2008) believes that imitation or simulation can help teachers engage L2 learners in the learning process. Simulation and tongue twisters could be associated with different language teaching methods,

especially with the audio-lingual method (Anthony & Norris, 1969). It could also be associated with CLT (Richards & Rodgers, 2001).

Furthermore, all the participants namely CSR1 to CSR7, Trainer-C1 to Trainer-5, and Trainer-T1 to Trainer-T3 cited practicing or role-play, note-taking, giving reasons, and analysis which show that training in the BPO help L2 learners control L2 materials through thinking-related processes. These strategies are used to lead learners to a desired language outcome (Anthony & Norris, 1969). The language outcome in the BPO context is to effectively communicate with the American customers.

### **Metacognitive Strategies**

- **Evaluating task success or the success of any type of learning strategy** is a metacognitive strategy that is used to manage the learning process (Oxford, 2003; Tupas, 2009). This strategy helps learners develop critical skills.

CSR6 said that strategies used included “Trainee evaluation via mock calls and written tests. You listen, then they ask you to go there [in front], then they will ask you a lot of things.” Trainer-C3 said they used “role play. [As a trainer] I can rate your proficiency and will know your weakness and strength and know where to focus during training.” Trainer is the one who rates trainees. Through role-play, trainees also discover their weaknesses. CSR3 also said that trainers evaluated them through “preliminary exams like quizzes [during] the first week, or the second week. They want to know who is fit for the job...and there will be a grading system.”

- **Identifying one's own learning style preferences and needs** is also a metacognitive strategy that is used for self-assessment (Oxford, 2003; Tupas, 2009). This strategy can help L2 learners understand and be critical towards his/her learning style. This strategy can also help an L2 learner select learning materials based on his/ her needs.

CSR1 believed that "Filipinos learn better when mixing English with local language. We learn more when you use examples we will relate to." CSR7 also said, "I think the one I would say I strengthened is to discern different ways of speaking." Trainer-C5 responded that "I attended several courses that helped me become a good trainer. I attended a seminar in [a local] university business school on teaching adult learners. This seminar equipped me with information and strategies I did not know before." Trainer-T1 said, "I attended a lot of seminars, and training... I always make sure I am updated with strategies... when I was in college, I got bored. So, I do not want my students to get bored." Metacognitive strategies are reflective. The above statements are metacognitive because each participant reflects on and shares about his/ her learning experience.

CSR1's statement uncovers her learning style as well. By expressing her learning style and generalizing it to all Filipinos, CSR1 places the use of the English language mixed with some Tagalog words as a metacognitive and social strategies, and she acknowledges the success of these learning strategies. The experiences of CSR3, CSR4, Trainer-C1, and CSR6 show that BPO jobs are for a few persons. A CSR who gets hired must undergo a series of assessments. In the end, BPO employers select and keep the fittest employees (Townsend, 2005).

## Memory-related strategies

- **Memorization** is a memory-related strategy where a word, its mental picture, or its meaning is captured by and kept in the memory. It includes a keyword approach (Oxford, 2003; Tupas, 2009). Memorization can help L2 learners develop memory through sight, touch, smell, taste, and hearing.

During observation, CSR6, Trainer-C4, and Trainer-C5 gave and defined new words while conducting the training. This consisted of giving the abbreviation of a word, its meaning, and using it in a sentence. For example, 'SLA' to refer to 'service level agreement' between the company and the client, 'AHT' to mean 'average handling time' of a call. Trainees had to write down each word and memorize it. The words were keywords to remember once trainees start taking calls. Other words were associated with different tabs in different platforms. For example, 'PO' was used to refer to a purchase order and 'RFQ' to refer to a request for quotation. Trainees also had to memorize the names of different applications the company used. It was also noted that CSR5 and CSR7 had memorized the call flow. Specifically, CSR5 calls sounded similar and he knew what to say after each answer and which question to ask.

The use of specific terminologies shows that any trainee in the BPO context must be introduced to the language spoken in the BPO. Memorizing those words and the way to use them may make the transaction between CSRs and the customers appear as a scripted conversation. However, knowing different terminologies that are used in different places can enrich L2 learners' lexicons as Trainer-C2 put it. Likewise, using appropriate words when speaking to a NSE can minimize misunderstanding between the client and the CSR. This can help L2 learners develop

grammatical competence (Canale & Swain, 1980) as they learn, understand, and use appropriate words (Hyines, 1972). Therefore, CSRs use memory-related strategies not only to memorize scripts but also to learn new words associated with their work.

### **Affective Strategies**

- **Sharing experiences** implies emotions, level of anxiety, or rewards. As such, sharing experiences is an affective strategy that includes, identifying one's mood and anxiety level, talking about feelings, using deep breathing and using positive self-talk (Oxford 2003; Tupas, 2009). This strategy can help learners develop empathy, courage, compassion, patience, understanding, humility, self-acceptance and acceptance of others, tolerance, ability to motivate oneself and others, and positive thinking about others.

Talking about assessment in the BPO, CSR3 said that during training “Whoever fails, this is true, will be quicken out of the job [sic] [to mean that any trainee who fails during assessments is dismissed from work]. Just like that. So, you basically do not have much choice but to learn everything.” For CSR4, “It really takes a lot of patience, especially if you will be supporting Americans because they are short tempered. At first, on my first experience I cried. One of the customers was calling me a stupid, a bitch... It really hurts! What to do, is let your customer talk and you listen, you compose yourself, your thoughts, then you tell them what to do” Trainer-C2 believed that “Listening skills is a big cultural thing to teach.” According to Trainer-C1, “Every trainer uses different strategies but as

for me, I would prefer using personal experiences and not basing training on what the book says.”

- **Use of humor** is classified as an affective strategy because it refers to emotions. In language learning, using humor can lower affective filter (Krashen, 1982). Trainer-C2 said, “I make jokes during training but not necessarily related to showbiz to keep their [trainees’] attention.” Trainer-C5 explained, “I try to make jokes, just to establish a connection.”

Schumann (1986) includes affective factors among elements that facilitate or delay L2 acquisition. In the context of learning, Krashen (1982) exhorts L2 teachers to avoid putting L2 learners on defensive attitudes in order to help them acquire more input. The use of humor in this context helped Trainer-C2 and Trainer-C5 establish rapport with trainees and keep trainees focused during training.

The level of anxiety led CSR3, CSR4, CSR5, CSR6, and Trainer-T2 to work hard on their English skills. CSR4 discovered that she could use affective strategies to connect not only with her feelings but also to identify the mood of the company’s clients. As such, affective strategies become not only psychological but also a spiritual force that help L2 learners monitor their reactions to internal and external forces associated to learning the TL, to communicating in the TL, and to transacting with the NSE.

Likewise, agents’ or CSRs’ assessments and monitoring system in the BPO add extreme pressure on their job performance (Cameron, 2000; Lockwood, 2012; Salonga, 2010). At the entry level, assessments in the CCI allow trainers to select employees who will fit the highly stressful

environment (Townsend, 2005). Once in the BPO, the continuous monitoring of CSRs' performance may lead to employees' promotion, or stagnation in the same position, or loss of employment.

Trainer-C2's point of view that listening skills are a cultural factor to teach can be justified in the work of De Mello (1990) who believes that people filter realities based on their background and Rosenblatt's (2004) who underscores that people or readers use selective attention when they read and listen. This also suggests that trainees in the BPO sectors and their trainers must undergo a form of acculturation (Schumann, 1986) to get accustomed to the way the American people communicate.

### **Social Strategies**

- **Exploring cultural and social norms** is a strategy that helps L2 learners or trainees get to know their customers, their way of transacting, and their behavior in order to adopt, adapt to, reject, or compromise with the target community's work or linguistic requirements. It deals with ways L2 learners use to connect with others in learning or performing a task (Oxford, 2003; Tupas, 2009). This strategy is added because it can help trainees socialize within their L1 community and with people from the TL. It can help trainees develop interpersonal and cross-cultural skills.

CSR2 said, "English trainers ... [teach] about the background of [our] customers. You have to know they are not Filipinos, you need to know about different kinds of persons and how to talk to them." CSR4 explained that, "We study how Americans behave. We classify the types of Americans...the laid-back people [and] the savvy people." CSR7 added, "As customer care, you have to

discern where they are from.” Trainer-C2 said, “For this company, I usually give a difference when speaking to European and to Americans. Americans tend to be much [sic] casual whereas Europeans are more formal.” Trainer-C5, “most of the time you are not dealing with Filipinos, you are teaching trainees how to communicate with someone who is of a different culture. You need to know people’s culture and the way they talk.”

During the observation sessions, CSR6, Trainer-C5, Trainer-C4, and CSR7 spoke in Filipino or in English mixed with some Tagalog words either to talk to fellow Filipinos or to clarify a point with trainees. For instance, CSR6 was speaking English only when she was training a foreign employee. However, CSR6 spoke in English language mixed with some Filipino words when she was training a fellow Filipino.

Social strategies focus on ways L2 learners use to connect with others in learning or performing a task and in transacting with a NSE or exploring cultural and social norms (Oxford, 2003, Tupas, 2009). CSR2, CSR4, Trainer-C2, Trainer-C5, and Trainer-T1 underscored the social aspect of teaching. On one hand, they knew the cultural and social norms of the Philippine community. On the other hand, they underscored the importance of introducing trainees to the norms of the target culture and the target community. Trainer-C2, CSR7, and CSR4 believed that the strategies to teach depended on the position of the agent. They highlighted the importance of knowing the customers’ origin and culture to have a better transaction with them which emphasizes social strategies.

On formality and informality in discourse, Trainer-C2 reinforced Fishman’s (2006) belief that Americans are generally informal when using the English language compared to the British.

Trainer-C5's and CSRI's answers reveal interesting aspects about the use of the English and the Filipino languages. Their answers point to a multilingual nation and a multilingual world as the state of language for the future as predicted by Fishman (2000). The use of the local language to establish connection can be justified by Vygotsky (1986) who believes that learning an L2 is built on the knowledge of the L1. Walker et al. (2003) suggest that knowing a people helps to communicate effectively with them. Oxford (2003) encourages teachers to challenge learners to go beyond his/her comfort zone because the L2 learner tends to use only strategies that correspond to his/her learning style.

### Summary

Trainers mostly use cognitive, metacognitive, memory-related, affective, and social strategies. Compensatory strategies were not seen which might have been due to the minimal number of observations done: only two observation sessions and eight participants were observed. Metacognitive strategies are generally used for assessments conducted by trainers, trainers' and CSRs' self-assessment, and study of the clients' ways of talking and their culture. Cognitive strategies are mostly used in activities that allow students to learn or practice the TL or work related activity. Emphasis is put on each set of strategies depending on the goal trainers want to achieve. Social strategies are meant to help CSRs create connection among themselves, with the trainers, and with the clients. As such, training in the BPO also helps CSRs develop interpersonal and communication skills (Hannif, 2006).

The answers of the participants reveal that employment in the BPO sector requires a strong training in communicative competencies which Lockwood (2012) recommends for BPO located in Asia. The answers also show that comprehension and intercultural communicative strategies are

important skills that must be promoted and taught during training in the BPO sector (Friginal, 2007). Contrary to the belief of Patel (2010) that presents a negative image of the BPO, working in the BPO sector can change the way individuals perceive and define themselves.

Keeping quiet, listening, and composing one's thoughts while listening to the complaints and requests of angry or frustrated customers suggest the need for a training type that connects language teaching, cross-cultural communication skills, and other courses like psychology, counseling, and spirituality. This emphasizes the theme of psychological and spiritual implications that is discussed in the general conclusions of this study. This theme will be connected to other types of implications drawn from the results of this study and will be discussed in the last chapter.

### **Research Question 2: Ways of Integrating American English and culture in CCI and in BPO training centers**

American English and culture are integrated in the English language trainers' teaching through emphasis on American accent, the use of English only policy, the promotion of the American culture, time management, and the use of business English.

#### **Emphasis on American Accent**

Emphasis is put on the American accent in most BPO companies. Participants who prefer American accent or neutral accent than Filipino accent advance practical reasons for their choice. However, the answers of all the participants reveal that the preference for the American accent is subjective in the BPO industry.

CSR6 said, "When I started [in the BPO firm] it was very hard. If you do [sic, did] not have the American slang, they would immediately know and would ask you, 'Where are you from, where are you located', or threaten 'I am going to sue you.'" CSR5, Trainer-C2, Trainer-T2, and

Trainer-C4 agreed that their previous companies preferred the American accent. CSR5 said that his previous company preferred "American accent because we are working with Americans. They do not want customers to notice that we are in the Philippines because some Americans, some people are still racists. So, if they find out that we are in the Philippines, they would ask to speak to an American." Trainer-C2 explained, "They preferred an American accent... I had a very British accent. Then I worked in an account which was an American company. So, they kind of forced me to speak in American accent... I think here in the Philippines because of the whole history with the USA, they tend to go overboard with everything that is American."

Trainer-C4 also said that "It's a general rule for American companies to require their employees to speak American English." Trainer-T2 believed to "at least acquire an American accent so our customers can understand what we are talking about... if we have for example, a 'Filipinism' accent, of course, they will have hard time to understand what we are talking about." Filipinism is not only a matter of accent, it is also a part of the lexicon of the PE (Bautista, 1997).

CSR6 said, "I believe, as long as you do not have a Filipino accent, companies will hire you. Because the first qualification of being a CSR is, I believe, being fluent in the English language... By fluency, it's given that you should not have a Filipino accent... In my experience, Americans would trust another American over the phone." CSR6 confused the American accent with fluency in the English language. She also associated leadership in the BPO like the managerial position to sounding and acting like an American. According to CSR6, speaking English with a Filipino accent displays incompetence.

On the other hand, CSR4, Trainer-C3, CSR1, and CSR3 observed the preference for a neutral accent in their previous companies. For CSR4, "They do not require you to speak or have any American accent, but a neutral accent." For Trainer-C3, "I worked as an outbound call center

agent before... [Then] I worked as customer service [representative]. They prefer neutral accent.” CSR3 also noted that “In most cases what they prefer is that customer service representatives or technical support representatives neutralize their accent.” CSR1 added, “I have worked with Americans, Australians, and British. The company itself would [sic, they] prefer that you speak with a neutral accent.” National and linguistic implications can be drawn from these preferences as well as psychological and individual implications on L2 learners. Implications drawn can be extended to the economic and political structures of a linguistic community. National and linguistic implications of American accent amongst Filipinos refer to ways Filipinos define themselves as a community based on the way they sound and the brand of English they speak. Second, the ways they sound is a symbolic mark to distinguish Filipinos from other nationals. Filipino accent is appreciated within the Filipino community whereas it is stigmatized by Americans. In the BPO context, stigmatizing Filipino accent is opposed to rewarding the American accent. Employees who sound Americans are easily hired and promoted whereas those who sound Filipinos are not. This affects the ways the two types of employees perceive themselves.

The other participants like Trainer-C1, and Trainer-C5, Trainer-T1, and Trainer-T3 believed that being understood was the most important factor when interacting with customers. Trainer-C1 explained, “I have worked for five companies up to now. As long as customers understand you, you are good to go.” According to Trainer-C5, “as long as you can speak straight English, that’s fine. I think that [the accent issue] applies only in some BPO where they prioritize American English.” These answers prove that the preference for the American accent is subjective.

Talking of the preferred accent in the respondents’ current companies, most of them said there was no preferred accent if one could be understood. CSR2 said, “They are not strict about it. What they want is someone who can speak proper English.” CSR3, CSR4, and Trainer-C3

mentioned the preference for a neutral accent. For CSR3, “Yes but this is debatable if you consider a neutral accent a type of accent.”

CSR5, CSR6, Trainer-C1, and Trainer-T2 believed that speaking English with an American accent showed proficiency in English. CSR5 explained, “That’s how words are said. However, it’s not just how you say it. It includes also your grammar, your sentence construction.” For Trainer-T2, “Since they [Americans] are the local [sic, native] speakers of English... I think so.” Trainer-C1 also clarified that “If you have a US accent, you have an advantage to understand US people.” Trainer-C1 associated proficiency with accent as her next sentence revealed, “I will be totally honest, when some of US people speak fast, I cannot understand.” These four participants had a misconception about accent as fluency.

However, CSR2, CSR3, CSR4, CSR7, Trainer-C2, Trainer-C3, Trainer-C4, Trainer-C5, Trainer-T1, and Trainer-T3 believed that speaking English with an American accent did not show proficiency in English. They considered any accent as part of factors any speaker needs to be proficient in any language. For CSR7, “It depends on who your client is.”

CSR3 added, “I can speak on behalf of my countrymen. The problem is most of my countrymen, my fellow Filipinos, especially those who are new in the industry, they focus more on the accent instead of focusing on their grammar.” Trainer-C5 stated his position in the following words, “I think for some people, it’s some sort of [amazement]. They believe that sounding American is being proficient. But it does not show proficiency.”

Trainer-C2 also underscored Trainer-C5’s statement through her experiences. She said,

“I have met people from all over the world, I spoke to people from all over the world, I went to international schools my whole life and I can tell you that I met people who were not Americans and who speak English with different accents but speak English much better than real Americans or people who speak English with American accent. So, no. I think superficially ... many Americans may think at the first plan... their English is good, but I don’t think, yeah, I’m sorry.”

Three viewpoints are seen based on the answers of the respondents whether speaking English with a Filipino accent showed proficiency in English. Some participants believed that accent was marketable whereas others thought it was a cultural element. Both positions prove that language is always approached from a specific point of view (Hymes, 1996). Each point of view has its own characteristics, portrays its own objects, bears mutual meanings according to the contexts the language is used in and values it is given (Bakhtin, 1981). For CSR1, CSR3, CSR4, CSR5, CSR6, Trainer-C1, and Trainer-C4 having a Filipino accent could be a challenge to a Filipino BPO employee. Some participants stigmatized the Filipino accent.

CSR3 stated that, "Having a strong Filipino accent could also be a challenge when it comes to this industry, especially if you are talking to Americans. Believe it or not there are a lot of racist Americans. If they find out that you have a different accent, they would already ask you, 'where are you from? I want to talk to an American.'"

Trainer-C4 said, "You can avoid speaking English with a Filipino accent, because for Filipinos, English is a second language... In a professional context, try, go the extra mile, try, [and] speak [the] American English." CSR1 argued that "If the person you are speaking to has a hard time to understand you, sometimes, you should improve."

CSR2, CSR7, Trainer-C5, Trainer-C2, and Trainer-T2 believed that accent did not reflect fluency. For them, a person could be fluent in English and still speak English with a Filipino accent. Trainer-C5 said, "For me in general, I do not believe that accent reflects your fluency." Trainer-C2 also said that "I don't believe speaking English with any accent shows proficiency in English... I think accent is purely superficial. I think it's just on the surface and you have to go beneath that."

Trainer-C3, Trainer-T1, and Trainer-T3 believed that speaking English with a Filipino accent displayed proficiency in English. Trainer-C3 said, "Professors do that. They are fluent in

English but speak Filipino English.” Trainer-T3 also added, “Still, [it] shows proficiency as long as the grammar is correct, it is with lexical accuracy.” Trainer-T1 underscored that “You can use a Filipino accent yet be proficient in English.”

At a personal level, most participants preferred the American accent. Others preferred neutral accent. However, few participants associated accent with a speaker’s identity and preferred their Filipino accent.

CSR1 said she preferred “neutral, [...] where you would be able to speak, and be understood by everybody.” Trainer-C2 added “I prefer the American accent.” For CSR5, “I prefer [the] American accent because it’s widely used and it’s easy to understand.” Trainer-T3 also stated, “I prefer [the] American accent because I communicate with Filipinos every day... I need to know the American accent as a trainer so I can adjust.” Trainer-C3 pointed to the practicality of her choice. She said: “To be realistic, nowadays, I prefer having an American accent.”

CSR1, CSR2, CSR3, CSR6, and CSR7 believed that a neutral accent was better because they would be able to communicate with every English-speaking person and make themselves understood. CSR7 said, “Which accent is best, depends on the nationality of your client. If your client is Filipino, the accent bonds you and the listener... and that helps [them] understand you quicker. If you speak with North Americans, then taking on their accent will do the same.”

However, Trainer-T2 and Trainer-C5 linked accent with the speaker’s origin. Trainer-T2 said, “Since I am a Filipino... I prefer to use the Filipino accent.” Trainer-C5 looked confused, and he repeated several times, asking “why, why, why?” Then with determination and a critical understanding about the language requirements in the BPO sector, Trainer-C5 clarified,

“I want to sound like myself. I feel like, for me, it has never occurred that I mask my Filipino accent... I do not want to become American. I am not an American. It would be good if someone tells me that I speak English very well without an American accent. That

would mean I am a representative of the Filipinos to show other people that Filipinos can speak English very well and you do not have to do it with an American accent.”

During observation sessions, CSR5 could put on a pretty acceptable American accent when he was talking to an American client. CSR5 also gave a USA address which covered up his real physical address. Talking to American customers, CSR5 used the pronoun ‘We’ are located... instead of the pronoun ‘I’ am located, or the possessive pronoun or determiner ‘Our’ company is located...’ and chose words to direct the customer’s attention to the company, not to himself. With this practice, CSR5 placed himself as the representative of BPO-C3.

Some CSRs are trained to provide a USA physical address when asked where they are located. According to Cameron (2000) and Townsend (2005), agents in CCI are trained to portray the image of their companies in the eyes of their clients. As such, CSR5 represented another identity. The language CSR5 used in this context was both his language and the language of his company. To put it in Bakhtin’s (1981) words, the language CSR5 used to transact with his American customers contained intentions and accents that partially belonged to him. The meaning of his words changed based on the context.

Twelve (12) out of 15 participants who preferred the American or the neutral accent can be said to have functional and instrumental approaches to the English language. These views still take the Americans or NSE as the owners of the English language. The functional and instrumental approach recommend CLT which Lockwood (2012) promotes for the BPO companies located in Asia and Friginal (2007) for Filipino CSRs.

On the other hand, the answers of CSR7, Trainer-C5, and Trainer-T1 challenge the acculturation model of the language (Schumann, 1986). This model holds that L2 learners who are willing to identify enough with and adopt the target culture can easily learn the TL. CSR7, Trainer-C5, and Trainer-T1 associated accent with culture because they found a connection between

language and culture, and the identity of speakers. For instance, Trainer-C5 demonstrated a critical understanding about the language requirements in the BPO sector. He was aware of his linguistic abilities. Yet, Trainer-C5 associated accent with his Filipino identity. In this case, the L1 community owns and transforms the acculturation model. These participants can be said to have an existentialist approach to language. Their approach to language also points to the principles of WE paradigm which Bautista (1997) and (Gonzalez, 1997) subscribe to as well.

### **Emphasis on the English only Policy**

CSR1 said that trainers emphasized, "Speaking English only [because] Filipinos are not English born [sic]." CSR2 said, "English trainers follow the policy: EOP, English only policy. They only allow us to speak in Tagalog in the bathroom...They were avoiding that clients can hear in the background people talking in the vernacular." CSR4 said, "We implement English only on the company premises. That means to speak English even in the rest rooms. You can see it everywhere, EOP, English Only Policy." CSR5 said, "[We] speak English only during training." CSR6 said, "[We, speak only English during training...They do not want the client to overhear.. I can speak English over the phone but when it comes to other people... since we're in the Philippines, I want to talk to you in Filipino." Trainer-C3 said, "[we speak English only during training...in order to communicate well with customer, you have to know how to relay the information" (see Appendix J).

Trainer-T1, Trainer-T2, and Trainer-T3 encourage their students to speak only English. Trainer-T1 said, "I do not encourage them to speak in Filipino because if they think in Filipino, then translate it in English, they get it wrong, they start doing, uuuh! Hmm!" Trainer-T2 said, "[We] speak English only during teaching. I am requiring them to use English at all time [sic]...

so to practice their speaking skills.” Trainer-T3 said, “Trainees have to speak English only, even during their breaks.”

During observations, Trainer-T2, Trainer-T1, and Trainer-T3 used English only when teaching (see Appendix F). At times, Trainer-T2 would allow his students to ask a question in Filipino. Then, Trainer-T2 would answer in the English language. Trainer-T1 and Trainer-T3 did not allow students in the BPO training school to speak in the vernacular. During students’ classroom presentation or exercises, both Trainer-T3 and Trainer-T1 prevented students from speaking in Filipino. Trainer-T2’s practice was perceived by this researcher as a way to remind the students that a classroom was a place to observe the policy.

Learning to think in the TL may reduce language barriers encountered by some Filipino trainees in the BPO sector, CSRs, and trainers in the BPO firm and in the BPO training centers. The emphasis on the EOP can be associated with the direct method. This method clearly aims “at giving students sufficient control of a language to operate in the society which employs that language” (Anthony & Norris, 1969, p. 4). Learning instructions are provided only in the L2. The method is built on the belief that L2 could be acquired the same way L1 was, naturally (Krashen, 1981; 1982). It is not necessary then to translate the TL into the L1.

The EOP underscores that the English language is important to work in English speaking BPO. Furthermore, the EOP reveals that speaking is given more emphasis in call centers (Friginal, 2007; Lockwood et al., 2008/2009; Lockwood, 2012). Socio-politically, the EOP can be a means to control learners and make them prefer the target culture than their own as Tupas (2009) explains about the different cultures of teaching the English language. The EOP can be a gateway for the English language to subjugate local languages (Ferguson, 2006; Fishman, 2000; Phillipson, 2008).

### **Promotion of the American culture**

Trainer-C1 distinguished the use of the EOP from the English only culture. She explained it in the following words, “We are using English only culture not English only policy... They are using culture itself for us to acquire, to inherit what the US is. Since our client is in USA, we make sure, and the company makes sure our agents are using the culture of USA.”

American culture is also promoted through dress code during office hours, the use of pop music, Hollywood films, of American idioms, and study of American states, and history. CSR3 said, “the first part of training is for one to two weeks, is on language proficiency, like an initiation type of training. What they do is, they give handouts to their employees.... who know nothing about the United States, the differences between the States, [and] the culture. CSR3 clarified, “it is very important for anybody who would like ...to have a job in English speaking [company] to have a knowledge of the American culture.” According to Trainer-C3, “In BPO companies, during training the first scope of training will be on communication skills, then they will teach you about the American culture before the account you’ll be handling.”

The promotion of American culture shows that any teaching, especially language teaching is also a transmission of that culture. There cannot be a neutral teaching approach or method (Tupas, 2009). This can also be associated with the acculturation model which views the integration of the target community’s way of life as a positive aspect in acquiring the TL (Schumann, 1986).

## **Emphasis on Time Management**

Trainer-T2 said, “[When I was a trainer in BPO], I am teaching speaking in terms of communication because it will be part of the metric. We have what they call the time limit. That’s why we have to be very particular in terms of communication.”

CSR2 said, “When I was teaching in school since it [English] is a second language, I was focusing more on comprehension. Here [in the BPO firm], they focus more on vocabulary. [...]. They want us to be more precise. I think they are concerned much with the talk time... Here, they teach us to pace according to the customer.”

Time management is also underscored in the unobtrusive data (see Appendices H, I, J, and K). Trainees must be present and on time during the whole training period. They must justify any absence from the training. Trainees are taught to use short statements and avoid putting clients on hold in order to save time.

During actual calls, CSRs are given call flows to follow. Their evaluation includes the speed at which they resolve each client’s concern or the time it takes them to resolve a case which is not resolved on the first call or through the first email sent to the client. This is called average handling time (AHT) or service level agreement (SLA). For instance, the call flow and quality assurance metric from BPO-C2 shows that a CSR is allowed 30 seconds of silence during a call with a client and 5 minutes maximum to put a client on hold. This time may vary from one company to the other (see Appendix I).

CSRs are required to provide a straightforward resolution because the emphasis is on time management as explained above. Friginal (2007; 2009) points out that Americans are solution-oriented people. Mercado (1977) underscores that Filipinos are relation-oriented people. Filipinos concept of time is cyclic whereas the American concept of time is linear. Sequencing and the value

of events are underscored under the linear concept of time whereas the cyclic concept of time stresses fluidity of events where many things may be done one at a time (Junghare, 2013). Thus, BPO companies have a monochromic or linear concept of time.

### **Emphasis on Business English**

According to CSR2, CSR3, CSR6, Trainer-C3, Trainer-C5, and Trainer-T2 the English learned in school focuses on enhancing the students' grammatical skills whereas the English learned at the BPO sector focuses on communication skills that include the accent, precision, comprehension, and real situation. CSR3 said,

“When I was in school, what they normally teach [sic taught] there, is the formal way of speaking, they're more on grammar, how to speak right... But when I was already working using English language as medium of communication, I found out that customers you speak to over the phone, appreciate the fact that if you could speak simple English... the simple it is, the more concise it is, the better.”

According to Trainer-C3, CSR2, CSR3, Trainer-T2, CSR6, and Trainer-C5 the grammar of the language and the formal way of speaking the English language were more highlighted at school than in the BPO sector. The teaching methods were more on acquiring the English language.

Trainer-C2 added literature as another aspect of the English taught in school. She said, “The English I learned at school, I learned much about literature. The English used when talking to customer is more conversational. The vocabulary is much [sic straight] to the point.” C1 said, “When you are speaking with a customer, you empathize.” According to CSR7, “When it comes to clients, obviously you need to follow the company requirements on how to speak to your clients which is business like. So their level, their standard should be [observed] in every single call....polite, which is not the case when you speak to a friend.” Trainer-C2 said, “Americans tend

to be much [more] casual whereas Europeans are more formal. Yeah, I do not use “sir” and “ma’am”. In Europe, they don’t use that. In America, some use it.”

CSR1, CSR2, CSR3, CSR5, CSR6, Trainer-C1, Trainer-C2, Trainer-C3, Trainer-C5, and Trainer-T2 believed that business language is the English taught in the BPO industry. This language focuses on the trainees’ needs to communicate to American customers. Communication between the CSRs and the clients has to be direct to the point because Americans are solution-oriented people (Friginal, 2007; 2009). This means that there are different types of business English. However, the one used in the BPO is tailored to the American way of doing business.

During observation in an actual call with an American client, CSR5 used specific words to keep the conversation going, “great, interesting, amazing, and wonderful.” Likewise, during training, at times, CSR6 used examples related to their job and purposefully or unconsciously performed the role of a customer and a CSR to clarify a point. For instance, “Hi. I created this [X transaction] but cannot find [Y] data.” “I am sorry, you have to cancel [that case] and create a new one.” Examples of American business English is found in the scripts some BPO companies give their agents to use in the call flows. They underscore the proper ways to start a call, put a client on hold, offer further assistance, acknowledge, empathize, and end a call (see Appendix I). Some sample statements are provided to use in different contexts like, “I apologize... I am very sorry...I understand your frustration... This is what I am going to do to fix it” (see Appendix L).

The answers of these participants highlight the following elements: the English language taught in school is the academic language. It focuses more on the grammar of the language. The BPO industry uses more conversational English. Plus, the BPO sector focuses more on the business English. The use of vocabulary, reading, writing, listening, and speaking are part of both the English as an academic language and the English language taught in the BPO industry.

Zhu et al. (2006) report that each culture has its way of communicating and of doing business. The business English in the BPO sector underscores more the American culture. The emphasis is that CSRs should learn to provide service as expected by the Americans (Friginal, 2007; 2009; Lockwood, 2012). As such, the essence of teaching English as international language as promoted by the WE paradigm and Phan (2008) is reduced. The emphasis on the business English to be done the American way is one-sided. It focuses more on integrating the TL and culture but fails to promote local aspects of communication as defined by Cambié and Ooi (2009).

Filipino aspects in this study refers to the national identity built on Filipino characteristics (Doronila, 1992; Martinez, 2007). People develop or are helped to develop awareness of belonging to one nation as a community where they are united by a set principles for individual development, common good, and freedom of all (Majul, 1969; Mulder, 2013; Weekley, 1999).

The business English in BPO does not promote a pluralistic approach that promotes English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) (Seidlhofer, 2009) or Teaching English to Globalized Community (TEGCOM) (Guo & Beckett, 2007). On the contrary, emphasizing business English the American way promotes the Teaching English to Speakers of Other Language (TESOL) paradigm. Generally, the TESOL paradigm is built on the Native English as Second Language Teachers (NESTs) versus the Nonnative-English-Speaking Teachers (NNESTs) fallacy in the English Teaching Profession (Tupas, 2009). Thus, the promotion of the business English the American way can limit CSRs to gain a broader understanding of the world and of the English language.

### Summary

American accent is sought after in the BPO sector located in the Philippines because most employers and customers are Americans. The emphasis on time management shows that time has

a quantitative aspect in the BPO sector. The quality of time is measured through the quantity of work accomplished within a specific time. Rules to foster the strict compliance to the time are introduced to trainees during the training period and enforced by disciplinary actions or rewards. Transaction between CSRs and clients has to be direct to the point which reflects the American way of doing business (Friginal, 2007; 2009).

The use of English only Policy is underscored mostly in the BPO. Trainees and CSRs are forbidden to speak in vernacular for three reasons namely to learn to think in the target language, to improve their English proficiency, and especially to avoid being heard by clients when they start taking calls of American customers. Although constant practice of the TL is supported by some L2 approaches like the CLT, CBLT, and the natural approaches, and by some L2 methods like the audio-lingual and the direct methods (Richards & Rodgers, 2001), Kumaravadivelu (2003), Phan (2008), and Tupas (2009) exhort L2 teachers to be critical about methods they use in different classroom settings.

The promotion of the American culture also show that each language is taught along with the culture of the people who speak it (Tupas, 2009). It also shows that each culture has its own way of doing business (Zhu at al., 2006). Emphasis on the business English the American way points back to the connection that exists between every language and culture. Thus, teaching business English in the BPO is more on TESOP than on the WE, ELF, and TEGCOM paradigms.

### **Research Question 3: Ways training has influenced the Filipino English language trainers' and Customer Support Representatives' perceptions of themselves as Filipinos**

Training has influenced the Filipino English language trainers' and Customer Support Representatives' perceptions of themselves in four ways. Firstly, they accept the English language

and training as a skill. Secondly, they prefer bilingualism or multilingualism as a response to the English only policy. Thirdly, they have an increased awareness of being Filipinos and not Americans. Fourthly, they feel committed to take part in the development of the national community.

### **Acceptance of the English language and training as a skill**

Training nurtured awareness among Filipino trainers and CSRs that Filipinos have a skill to be proud of and that is proficiency in the English language. Trainer-C1 defined training as the gateway to good performance. Trainer-C1 said, “If you are not trained and are going to speak to a customer, you are not going to help them out without training. Training includes products, feasibilities, cultures of the US itself, and so on. If you get a good trainer, you will be able to help customers, to get a good metric, and to get incentives.”

The responses of CSR3, Trainer-C1, Trainer-C2, Trainer-C3, and Trainer-T2 show that English language training in the BPO sector is not only a gateway to working in the CCI but it is a skill in itself. This supports Friginal’s (2009) argument that training and acquisition of English competency are for the benefit of Filipino CSRs to aim for and demonstrate a native-like fluency to ensure a long-term investment of American employers in the BPO industry in the Philippines. This also links the quality metric and call flow to training and performance as a CSR (see Appendix D). Good training can also help CSRs reduce the average handling time of calls with their clients.

Furthermore, all the participants, namely CSR1 to CSR7, Trainer-C1 to Trainer-C5, and Trainer-T1 to Trainer-T3 underscored the importance of the English language in the Filipino community and especially for BPO employment. CSR6 explained that “even if it’s not a call center, ... it is really important to train people in English because, ah, well it’s, it’s, you have to

accept it, it's like the language of the world now... No matter what your job is, it's better for you to work on your English and be proficient on it because, uh, yah, it's one of the things that you can be proud of, as Filipinos."

CSR1's and CSR6's answers support the idea that English is the most important language today by the fact that English is the language used in information and technology, trade, higher education, and international communication (Ferguson, 2006; Fishman, 2000; Llamzon, 1969). Compared to the results of the study of Doronila (1992) on the use of English as a language of instruction with 9% of respondents preferring instructions in English only, the results of this study show a growing consideration of the English language among trainers and CSRs. These participants present English as a skill important to the Philippine community pointing out that the English language is also considered as an investment for the Philippine society as cited by Lockwood et al. (2008/2009) and Wa-Mbaleka (2014).

Likewise, language training and skills development empower CSRs in CCI (Sieben & de Grip, 2004). These views support Tupas' view on culture of pragmatism and elitism (2009). Socio-linguistically speaking, the English language Filipinos use in the BPO is an element of Filipino national identity because the English used in the Philippines is the Philippine English (Bautista, 1997; Dayag, 2008; Gonzalez, 1997; Llamzon, 1969; Peña, 1997; Martin, 2014) even if English language teaching in the Philippines still builds on general American Standard English (Llamzon, 1997). If we use a common language as an element of Filipino national identity based on the study of Doronila (1992), PE in general then can be counted among the factors that comprise the boundary of inclusion of Filipino national identity because PE is attributed to the Filipino nation and the Filipinos.

### **Bilingualism or multilingualism as response to the English only policy**

From hiring interviews, throughout the training, and work in the BPO sector, BPO companies illustrate what a successful employee is. The way CSRs sound in the BPO sector could be a path to promotion or a reason to be fired and thus fail socially in the BPO world. Aware of the above realities, Filipino trainees or CSRs find ways to compromise between the linguistic requirements of the American employers and their identity. They use the English language and integrate the American style when transacting with Americans. However, they speak English the Filipino way, or speak Filipino, or 'Taglish', or with fellow Filipinos.

CSR7 pointed out that "[Each] company has set a standard, this is the way our agents should speak, regardless of who the client speaks to [and] that is the proficiency that needs to be reached. [This applies also] to level of quality of service."

CSR1, CSR2, CSR5, CSR6, CSR7, Trainer-C1, Trainer-C2, Trainer-C3, Trainer-C4, and Trainer-C5 said that the style, the accent, and the language used depended on the context. CSR2 said that she used the standard style and Standard English. According to CSR2, to communicate in the Standard English meant to speak English without any jargon and slang.

CSR2, CSR6, Trainer-C3, Trainer-C4 said they reverted to Filipino at home and when speaking to fellow Filipinos who spoke Filipino. CSR2 said, "When I am speaking to someone, I use the standard [English]. But when I speak to a Filipino, I automatically revert to the Filipino way of talking because there is this mentality that when you use [the] standard, they look bad at you."

CSR1 added, "I don't, because when you are speaking with a customer, you empathize. Like when you are speaking with a friend, it's different. But with my mom, it's Filipino." CSR5 also explained "I don't want to exaggerate when I talk to a friend. You know the culture here in

the Philippines, you have to talk the Filipino way. So, it depends if I am talking to a friend or to an American or to a foreigner.” CSR6 said she spoke English at work only “because they may say I am ‘maarte’ [artificial]. I am very shy to talk in English outside work.” Trainer-C2 added, “I should but I don’t. I think, it depends on the person I’m speaking to.”

The responses of CSR1, CSR2, CSR5, CSR6, and Trainer-C2 reveal some characteristics of national identity of Filipinos as classified by Doronila (1992) and used by Gines et al. (2003, Martinez (2007), Mercado (1977), and Timbreza (2008) such as ‘pakikisama’ [getting along with others], ‘marunong makiramdam’ [sensitive], and ‘madaling mapahiya’ [easy to be embarrassed]. Filipinos are concerned about how they are perceived by others when acting in a certain way. In general, the social prevails over the self in making decisions for Filipinos. They are bilingual in a multi-lingual community (Doronila, 1992; Llamzon, 1969; Tinio, 1990, Tupas, 2009).

CSR1, CSR2, CSR5, CSR6, and Trainer-C2 also reveal the polyphonic nature of language (Bakhtin, 1981; 1984; 1986). These participants find the middle ground with the requirements of the target community where the language they use and how they decide to use it depend on the context which they are in. They generally speak English at work.

According to Trainer-C1, “I am not using English when talking to friends. I use our language or ‘Taglish’ [Tagalog mixed with the English language].” Trainer-C3 also underscored that “it’s different. At home, we do not speak English.” Trainer-C5 explained that he uses English with his friends and customers and Taglish when talking to officemates.

The answers of the above respondents may be interpreted as ‘diglossia’ (Donosio, 2012). According to Wardhaugh and Fuller (2015), ‘diglossia’ is used to describe contexts where two or more languages coexist with clear functional separation. The answers of these participants may also be perceived as a love for multilingualism which Fishman (1994; 2000) illustrates as the

language of the future. In all aspects, the language they choose to speak reflects how they want others to view them (Wardhaugh & Fuller, 2015). The Filipino characteristics of being flexible, adaptable, and sociable (Doronila, 1992; Gines et al., 2003) can be inferred from the answers of these participants. The choice and use of any linguistic code within the BPO companies is a compromise with the American linguistic requirements. The work in the BPO puts them in contexts where they deal with realities that foster or challenge who they really are on linguistic, economic, social, and political aspects. Therefore, actions they perform personally show not only individual mark but also community orientation because they represent their companies (see Appendices I to L).

### **Increased awareness of being Filipinos and not Americans**

During the interview, all the participants, namely CSR1, CSR2, CSR3, CSR4, CSR5, CSR6, CSR7, Trainer-C1, Trainer-C2, Trainer-C3, Trainer-C4, Trainer-C5, Trainer-T1, Trainer-T2, and Trainer-T3 underscored their being Filipinos. This was inferred from answers they gave about the accent, the job requirements, and some characteristics of Filipinos. They were empathic that they were not Americans although some said they preferred American or neutral accent for business purposes.

CSR1 "Filipinos learn better when mixing English with local languages. We learn more when you use examples we will relate to." CSR2 added, "I was lucky with my English coach...She was focusing on pronunciation which made me aware of my P and F which is common for us Filipinos...They asked me to stop being too sweet... not to apologize too much. Americans do not like it. It's a Filipino way. So, I am trying." CSR3 added, "The problem is...most of my countrymen, my fellow Filipinos, especially those who are new in the industry, they focus more

on the accent instead of focusing on their grammar... I don't think that just having an American accent shows proficiency in English." According to CSR6, "[English language is] one of the things that you can be proud of, as a Filipino...because Filipinos are, they say, that in Asia we have the best accent...You know, in the Philippines we have an H...In my experience, Americans would trust another American over the phone." Trainer-C1 acknowledged that "thanks to my experiences in BPO, I can differentiate Filipino accent from American accent... [However], when I was a bank teller, it was a big difference because we were using our language, Filipino." According to Trainer-C3 "When you apply in BPO, trainers will teach you ... on how Americans speak and they ask you to speak that way... You must know how to speak English with the American accent, you must know the American culture so you can assist them well."

On the issue of accent, Trainer-C5 was more frank and open. He said,

"I want to sound like myself. I feel like, for me, it has never occurred that I mask my Filipino accent... I do not want to become American. I am not an American. It would be good if someone tells me that I speak English very well without an American accent. That would mean I am a representative of the Filipinos to show other people that Filipinos can speak English very well and you do not have to do it with an American accent."

Trainer-T2 said, "Since I am a Filipino... I prefer to use the Filipino accent." Trainer-T2 added, "I am not a native speaker of English. I show them how native speakers speak... [She clarified that] Filipino accent is nearer to the American accent."

CSR2 opined that "When you talk to other people, you have to know that everybody is not a Filipino." According to CSR1, "It is a fast-changing world where we are right now... BPOs give Filipinos a lot of opportunities to be more competitive."

During observation, the researcher noted that CSR5, CSR6, Trainer-C4, Trainer-C5, Trainer-T1, Trainer-T2, and Trainer-T3 emphasized common behaviors of Filipinos. For instance, CSR6 told her trainees that Filipino do not usually provide a yes or no answer because they do not

like to offend. However, that Americans like a straightforward answer. CSR6 unconsciously or maybe purposely demonstrated the way to answer American customers. She said, “Hi. I created this [X transaction] but cannot find [Y] data.” “I am sorry, you have to cancel [that case] and create a new one.” Trainer-C5 used words like, ‘kami mga Filipinos’, [we the Filipinos] to distinguish the ways Filipinos act from Americans’; ‘Halimbawa’ [for example] to give some examples during training. One of the examples he gave was of a doctor-patient interview and applied it to a CSR-client transaction.’

During observation, CSR5 put up a pretty acceptable American accent when he talked to his American clients. He revealed during the interview, “You know the culture here in the Philippines, you have to talk the Filipino way... [However in the BPO], they do not want customers to notice that we are in the Philippines because some Americans...are still racists, so if they find out that we are in the Philippines, they would ask to speak to an American.”

CSR6, Trainer-C4, and Trainer-C5 used Filipino mixed with the English language which they believed was a way to establish a relation with trainees in the BPO sector. Trainer-T2 allowed his students ask questions in Filipino. However, he answered them in English. Trainer-T1 and Trainer-T3 did not allow their students to speak Filipino. This shows that Filipino is a mark of authenticity to Filipinos, especially in Metro Manila.

Elements from self-identification to consciousness of being Filipinos as presented by Doronila (1992) and Majul (1969) are observed among these participants, especially from the answers of Trainer-C5. He portrayed himself/herself as a representative of the Filipino people to the world. It can be said that it is a factor of common national aspirations that each national identifies himself/herself with the nation and represents the national community to people who do not belong to that community.

### **Commitment to take part in the development of the national community**

Trainers and CSRs defined themselves not only based on the Filipino characteristics but also on achievements of successful employees according to the standard of the BPO companies. Training in the BPO is not only the entry level requirement but also a part of employment in the BPO. Each BPO company has an on-going training program which include training code of conducts and best practices (see Appendices J and L).

According to CSR1, “[Training] gives Filipinos the edge. It is a fast-changing world where we are right now. If you are not able to learn English and adapt, you will be left behind.” CSR3 believed that “the experience, the training you get is really incredible. You do not get this in school. Even some who finished high school get promoted.”

According to CSR6, “[Employment in the BPO is] basically my life. I grow up as a person... I develop a lot of skills. Also... it’s not only my bread and butter, but something I can be proud of, and something I can show to my parents that I achieved a couple of things, in this job.” CSR4 believed that “being a customer care support [agent] to Americans or to whomever is like communicating with people in your environment.... It’s like even here, this conversation, I treat you as my customer... I mean, it’s my life, it’s our everyday life. Whether you work in call centers or not, whatever you do in life, you are giving a service.”

CSR2’s, CSR4’s, CSR5’s, CSR6’s, Trainer-C1’s, and Trainer-C3’s answers may challenge researchers who portray a negative image of CSRs like Cameron (2000), Patel (2010), and Townsend (2005). These participants’ answers suggest that the BPO companies can provide an environment that liberates employees. The training which is a gateway to employment in the BPO industry contributes to a positive self-image of Filipino trainers and CSRs.

According to CSR2, "They say, when you are in a BPO, you are not growing. But it's not true. So actually, there is growth. For me, it's a new experience and a challenge." CSR1, CSR3, and CSR5 took the same stand as Trainer-T2's. CSR1 answered, "For me, that's bread and butter. Like what I said, the main reason I work is to earn more... It's a work but not a career... If I had to choose I would definitely do something else." CSR3 added, "If you ask me, what a CSR means to you, it's a high paying job, a lucrative job, especially if you know a lot of languages." For CSR5 being a CSR "means a lot to me because it brings food to the table."

Trainer-T3 associated teaching a language with being a moral guide. Being a trainer, according to Trainer-T3 means

"Inspiring individuals using English. Also, empowering learners, instilling confidence, helping them improve their confidence. Most of them came from broken or difficult families, hard experiences.... so that is why, aside from lack of confidence in speaking the language, they are struggling with some problems. For me as trainers, I do not only teach them how to speak, I also want them to become human.... [To] help them interact, at the same time remain as who they are, be comfortable with themselves."

The answers of Trainer-C2, Trainer-C4, and especially Trainer-T3 suggest approaching training in the BPO firm and the BPO training schools as part of life and as a life-giving experience to persons who aspire to work and those who are already working in the BPO sector. Training is already a form of active participation in their community's life. Teaching in this context invites trainers as well to be moral guides (Hermosa, 2002; Kumaravadivelu, 2003; Mercado, 1977; Phan, 2008).

Doronila (1992) reminds us that "the pattern of economic, political and increasing dependence upon other economies" like the US, Japan, China, the Middle East, and some European countries must be taken into consideration when setting parameters to define Filipino national identity (p. 18). She includes economic independence as a factor that defines the boundaries of exclusion in the national identity. Training Filipinos to work locally in the BPO

companies seems a factor that emphasize the Philippine government struggle to promote economic independence in a competitive, interconnected, and interdependent world. American employers invest in the Philippines because of low cost, trainability of Filipinos, some degree of westernized Filipino culture, and government support and promotion of foreign investment (Friginal, 2009; Lockwood et al., 2008/2009).

During observation sessions, the researcher noted that training continued even after entry-level. When needed, CSR5, CSR6, and CSR7 exchanged information among themselves to solve clients' requests. The researcher observed the spirit of mutual assistance among CSRs as well. For instance, CSR7 had a task to perform that fell on her scheduled vacation leave. She wanted to know how the task would be handled during her absence. She approached her team leader and presented her situation. The team leader asked CSR7 to talk to a teammate and request that the teammate performs CSR7's task during her absence. CSR7 went to a Filipino teammate, explained the case, and the teammate agreed to help her. The solidarity and the spirit of mutual help among Filipinos (Martinez, 2007) then can be said to be extended into the BPO companies. This spirit of solidarity is most likely felt and seen within a small team.

The researcher observed and inferred from participants' responses that in general, training in the BPO gives equal treatment to trainees or CSRs. Participants were either male, female, or gay. Regardless of socio-economic level, participants said everyone had to work hard to achieve the level of proficiency required by the employers; they attributed their success to hard work. It can be said that training and employment in the BPO sector helped these participants believe in and experience a way of involving every Filipino in the development of the country beyond ethnolinguistic origins, political and religious affiliations (Doronila, 1992; Timbreza, 2008;

Weekley, 1999). In the case of trainers and CSRs, English language proficiency is one of the required basic skills to take part in the training and thus be employed in the BPO.

### Summary

The way of thinking, interacting with one another, interpreting events, and the world define Filipinos as a community (Mercado, 2008). As such, training has influenced trainers' and CSRs' perceptions of themselves as Filipinos in four ways. First, trainers and CSRs accept English language and training as important skill. They are aware that the brand of English they speak is one of many. They work hard to acquire this skill and sub-skills associated with the English language and work requirements in the BPO. Second, to some extent, training in the English language and employment in the BPO develop awareness of trainers and CSRs of belonging to one nation as a community. Third, they are aware that language defines its people and people define the language they use. They find ways to compromise with the American linguistic requirements, choose a language code and how to use it based on different contexts. Linguistically, they are strategically competent users of the TL. As Filipinos, they demonstrate the characteristics of being flexible, friendly, and adaptable. Fourth, they define themselves not on what they get from training and employment in the BPO but on what they are able to do with what they get to help others and support their local community. Hence, they actively take part in the development of the Filipino national community. Generally, training in the BPO gives equal treatment to trainers, trainees or CSRs each according to his/her role because English proficiency is the initial skill required of any applicant to qualify for work in BPO.

## CHAPTER 5 SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### Summary

This study explored the Filipino English language trainers' and Customer Service Representatives' integration with the American culture and language and whether this has any influence on the way they teach or use the language. It also investigated whether training in the business process outsourcing (BPO) and training schools has any impact on the language and national identity of Filipino employees through strategies used to teach, transact amongst themselves, and with the American customers, and through the ways these employees perceive themselves as call center employees, as employees in the BPO training schools, and as Filipinos.

The study centered on Schumann's acculturation model to show that L2 learners play an important role in L2 acquisition. Other factors that contribute to a faster or a slower L2 acquisition were highlighted in the acculturation model. Acculturation was also presented as factors of different cultures in learning or teaching a TL, especially as ownership of the TL to make it a local language.

The results of the study showed that training in the BPO companies aims to help CSRs develop communication, professional, cross-cultural, and interpersonal skills. Moreover, training in BPO training schools is aimed at helping trainees develop communication and interpersonal skills. Trainers use cognitive, metacognitive, memory-related, affective, and social strategies in the BPO companies and in the BPO training schools. American English and culture are integrated in the English language trainers' teaching through emphasis on the American accent, the use of English only policy, the promotion of the American culture, time management, and the use of business English. These realities bring trainers and CSRs to accept the English language and training as a skill, work hard to acquire it, and use it for personal and community welfare. They

find the middle ground on the matter of the linguistic requirements of the American employers and vis-à-vis their Filipino community. The language they learn or training they get is aimed at equipping them with skills aimed to help perform well their job. As such, they portray themselves as locally and globally competitive. The language they teach or the knowledge they share help others look for a job. The reward they get helps them support their families or be financially independent while contributing to the development of their local community. Their self-perception develops from a regional through a national to an international or global view of being Filipinos as they identify themselves as Filipinos, distinguish themselves from non-Filipinos, and engage to compete globally. The results of English language training and work experiences in BPO companies and training schools helped this researcher draw conclusions based on individual and social, national and linguistic, economic and political, and psychological and spiritual aspects. Each conclusion has implications associated to the same theme.

## **Conclusions**

### **Personal and Social Aspects**

English language is important in the profession of Filipino trainers and CSRs for personal and community achievements. They view English as a profitable skill because persons who are competent in the English language get easily hired or promoted in the BPO sector. They can also use the skill outside the BPO industry. Generally, Filipino trainers and CSRs use the English language to conduct business with offshore clients. They also use the English language during training. Trainers and CSRs feel fulfilled because they could use this community skill at a personal level to help family members, friends, students, and customers.

## **National and Linguistic Aspects**

To be successful in the BPO environment, Filipino trainers and CSRs are required to study and integrate the target culture throughout their training and employment in the BPO sector. Some CSRs, trainees, and trainers develop a negative image of the brand of English and accent used in the Philippines and thus fall into a culture of inferiority as described by Tupas (2009). Other trainers and CSRs develop a critical approach to the TL and culture thus perceive the requirements of some BPO companies as a way to subsume their Filipino identity.

Filipinos are generally a bilingual in a multi-lingual community (Doronila, 1992; Llamzon, 1969; Tinio, 1990, Tupas, 2009). Most participants can be said to belong to Filipino outer-circle based on the classification of Martin (2014). They hold that the American brand of English is better than PE for practical reasons. The language CSRs and trainers use and the ways they choose to use it define their relationship with the listener. When talking in the English language to fellow Filipinos, they prefer speaking the 'Filipino way'. Talking the Filipino way is defined as using a Filipino accent.

The results from the collected data infer CSRs' training emphasizes speaking and listening skills than reading and writing. However, this emphasis changes according to the account CSRs are assigned to. Speaking is designed for the American NSE or native speech because Americans are culturally and linguistically sensitive and most investors and customers – in the BPO industry located in the Philippines – are Americans (Friginal, 2009; Salonga, 2010). However, CSR7, Trainer-T2, and Trainer-C5 believe that accent is a cultural factor. They believe that accent is a part of knowing any language. For them, since the English language is global, there must be varieties of accents and no accent is superior to the others. Trainer-T2 and Trainer-C5 prefer their Filipino accent. They see in it a mark of authenticity. They are aware of the American way of life,

culture, and style of speaking. Yet they do not wish to mask or neutralize their Filipino accent because they associate the accent with their Filipino identity. For them, a neutral accent does not and cannot exist in any language.

### **Economic and Political Aspects**

In the case of the Philippines, factors such as political, linguistic, religious, cheap labor, trainability of Filipinos, westernized Filipino culture, government support, and promotion of foreign investment in the country attract American investors (Lockwood et al., 2008/2009; Friginal, 2009; Sign, 2005). Participants in this study seem to have understood this and show determination to take part in the development of the national community. Based on this perspective, this study supports the positions of Bernado (2004), Tinio (1990), and Tupas (2008) who deplore the situation that English language is used to market Filipinos across foreign English speaking countries for cheap labor. Employment in the BPO is local yet most employers are foreigners. This study acknowledges that training and employment in the BPO have many challenges. This is based on the answers of CSR3, CSR5, Trainer-C2, and Trainer-C3 who underscored the negative side of working in the BPO sector like being humiliated by some American customers, being required to sound American, the evaluation focus on quantity of issues or cases handled than quality, working the nightshifts, and health problems.

BPO companies, in general, measure productivity based on the quantity of calls or cases that CSRs resolve each time. CSR2, CSR3, CSR6, Trainer-C3, Trainer-C5, and Trainer-T2 highlighted business English or the English that is straight to the point as one of the differences between the English taught at school and the BPO English. They stressed the concern for the talk-time.

The Philippine government contributes to boost job creation in the BPO sector because its agenda is to attract and support foreign investors (DOLE, 2011; PSA, 2015). The presence of a bigger number of American investors in the BPO is another sign that the political life of the Philippines still has some degree of dependence on the economy of the USA. This supports the claims of Bernado (2004), Doronila (1992), Tinio (1990), and Tupas (2008).

### **Psychological and Spiritual Aspects**

CSRs and trainers measure their career success based on their performance in the BPO sector. Communication skills and criteria set to select an internal or external applicant vary from one company to the other (Lockwood, 2012; Townsend, 2005; see Appendix H). These elements remain subjective depending on each company's needs.

Trainees have to pass all the preliminary tests before actual calls (see Appendix J). CSRs expect a customer satisfaction survey at every call or case handled depending on the customer. Likewise, trainers in BPO are evaluated as well to measure their performance. Team leaders, quality assurance team, and customers regularly give feedback about a CSR quality service. This practice adds pressure on BPO workers because they are always on guard during each transaction (Hannif, 2006; Lockwood, 2012).

CSR1 to CSR7, Trainer-C1 to Trainer-C4, Trainer-T2, and Trainer-T3 underscored listening skills used for different purposes and knowing the customers' background to help them better. CSR4, CSR5, CSR6 also mentioned receiving calls of frustrated or non-tolerant American customers who shout at them, look down on them, or insult them. CSR4 suggested that CSRs had to remain calm in such circumstances. Keeping quiet, listening, and composing one's thoughts while listening to the complaints and requests of angry or frustrated customers requires a solid

internal disposition. This internal disposition can also be referred to as affective strategy in the taxonomy of Oxford (2003).

Implications of the results of this study are drawn from the conclusions and are thus part of the conclusions. They must be understood in relation to the conclusions. They are separated for the purpose of clarity only. They include individual and social, national and linguistic, economic and political, and psychological and spiritual implications.

### **Individual and Social implications**

At personal level, Filipinos trainers and CSRs in the BPO companies and trainers in the BPO training schools have a strong motivation to develop or teach English language skills. Sub-skills like communicative competencies, reading, speaking, listening, and writing in the English language reinforce the main skill, proficiency in the English language.

English can be considered as a community or a social skill because the type of English spoken in the Philippines is PE. Personal success is measured through community success in the Philippines (Mercado, 1977). This implies that trainers in the BPOs companies, CSRs, and trainers in BPO schools contribute to the social development of their country of origin through their employment the same way other Filipinos who use the PE in education, trade, and research contribute to social development of their country.

### **National and Linguistic implications**

Even if training in the BPO does not directly emphasize the identity of trainers and CSRs, the strategies they use to teach, learn the English language, and transact with American customers

and with fellow Filipinos, the ways they talk about themselves in relation to their work, and the language they use reveals some aspects of their 'Filipinoness'. They value establishing and maintaining smooth relationships with others. They are generally sensitive or concerned more about the social aspect than the individual (Doronila, 1992; Gines et al., 2003; Martinez, 2007; Mercado, 1977; Timbreza, 2008)). They work hard to adjust to the pressures of globalization and improve their social life. They are flexible and adjustable. Sacrifices they make reveal what they long for. Their priorities also reveal much about who they are.

A one-language-policy like the EOP may not succeed in the Philippine context. In other words, a one-language-policy can be called a killer-of-local-languages policy because people will lose the sense of kinship, the sense of the sacred, and the sense of the moral imperative (Fishman, 1994). This is why trainers and CSRs find ways to compromise between the demands of the American culture and their identity. The compromise is not an act of giving in to these requirements but rather a symbol of being diplomatic. Based on Filipino national identification characteristics, the compromise can also mean being flexible, adaptable, and sociable (Doronila, 1992; Gines et al., 2003). With the desire to succeed in life, participants from the lower-income families must work hard to pass the entry-level of the BPO training and attain NSE or native-like proficiency. However, those from the middle and upper-classes take English communication language skills for granted because they attended the best schools in the country or have studied abroad (Bernardo, 2004; Tupas, 2008; 2009).

The use of 'Taglish' or Tagalog mixed with the English language implies deliberate or unconscious resistance trainers and CSRs demonstrate towards the monopoly of the EOP. The use of the Filipino way of talking or Filipino accent shows that each group of people has its way of communication (Llamzon, 1969). This also means that Filipino trainers and CSRs can acquire

communication skills when they work in the BPO sector and without necessarily being or acting like Americans. Associating the Filipino English accent with lack of fluency in the English language can be interpreted as a fear of being rejected by the employers or stigmatized by the American customers which again points back to the practical choice of the 12 (out of 15) participants expressed about the American or the neutral accent. By favoring to sound American than Filipino over the phone, these participants can be said to belong to the cultures of elitism and pragmatism according to the classification of Tupas (2009). However, the position of CSR7, Trainer-C5, and Trainer-T2 underscores the views of the WE, ELF, and of English as an international language paradigms. This preference can also mean an increased awareness of being Filipinos.

### **Economic and Political implications**

The Philippine economic situation is part of the factors that define the Philippine national identity (Doronila, 1992). Countries need business strategies to attract foreign investors. It is now clear that the English language can be used to attract investors in the country. The employment of many Filipinos locally can reduce the number of overseas Filipinos employees, help stabilize some families, and boost local economy. This study then aligns with Bolton (2013), Frigal (2007; 2009), Lockwood et al. (2008/2009), and Lockwood (2012) on the proposition that the BPO sector is an important industry to Filipino people. Yet, this study underscores that BPO employment is a phenomenon that is based on the interest of the investors. Thus, employment in the BPO sector may decrease and eventually be gone if the Philippine government would increase the basic salary of Filipino employees above the average salary BPO employers offer and if the Philippine government would promote local investment. Other implications and possible future challenges to

the BPO sector come from the tools BPO companies use and their way of transaction. The quicker a tool allows them to get a resolution, the better. This implies that time is quantified in the BPO sector and communication is standardized because productivity is measured based on the time a resolution was provided and the number of cases handled and closed (Cameron, 2000). Standardizing communication, constant monitoring, and computerizing some processes infer that machines might replace the human factor in the future as BPO employers will resort to automated solutions for cheaper labor to maximize income. Thus, boosting local employment through creation of jobs in the BPO sector can only be a temporary solution in the Philippine context.

On the political implications, American employers will continue to invest in the Philippines as long as the USA has a good diplomatic relation with the Philippines. The challenge to the Philippines is to generate more internal jobs and diversify international partners. Likewise, the English language used in the BPO sector has political implications (see for example, Bishop, 2012). CSR3, CSR4, CSR5, CSR6, Trainer-C1, Trainer-C2, Trainer-T2, and Trainer-C4 underscored the need to sound like Americans over the phone in the BPO because some American customers would request to talk to an American if they realize that the CSR is a not an American. This implies that training in the BPO be tailored to the CLT (Lockwood, 2012) and that Filipinos should aim for a NSE like speech (Friginal, 2009). This could justify why BPO employers give priority to applicants who sound like American and who adopt the American way of life and why some BPO companies advise their employees to provide a USA address when asked of their location. Thus, some CSRs undergo a certain level of change of who they really are when they are required to change the way they sound and to provide a foreign address instead of a local address (Salonga, 2010). A critique of these recommendations and preferences is found in Fishman (1994). He warns against the loss of weak languages where the English language could subjugate local

languages. Thus, aiming to speak English the American way and adopt the American way of life can be a danger to Philippine local languages and the Filipino way of life.

### **Psychological and Spiritual implications**

The drive to succeed and the fear of losing employment suggest that most CSRs and trainers from lower-income-families make self-sacrifices that include family life dysfunctionality, most of the time spent on work , less time to socialize outside the BPO environment, and readiness to work the nightshifts. To these employees, success is mostly measured by the quality and amount of support they give to the community.

To be a good listener implies also being aware of and accepting of one's personal and national identity. Listening to and helping a frustrated client in this context becomes an act of empathy and a healing power from the CSR to the customer. Frustration and anger become signs of exposed weakness and a cry for help. Thus, CSRs should not be called emotional laborers as Cameron (2000) presents them. Although they are evaluated based on the way they talk to customers, resolve each issue, and behave within the company premises, CSRs and trainers still have a certain level of control. When it comes to problem solving skills, well trained CSRs help their customers realize that a problem is something to approach with serenity in order to achieve positive results. Above all, Filipino CSRs and trainers can only be partially defined through the work they perform and the language they speak.

### **Recommendations**

Considering the results in RQ3 under the section 'Commitment to take part in the development of the national community', the Philippine government through the Department of

Labor and Employment, the Department of Education should continue to coordinate and support the youth, including Filipino BPO employees in increasing their awareness of their national identity. This could help them take part in the development of the national community. They could then transcend regionalism, religionism, become good citizens with strong belief in the power of unity as a nation, and be open to other nationals through the realization that Filipinos are Filipinos because there exist other people who are not Filipinos. The government should create competitive jobs in other sectors and invest more in the preparation of the youth.

School officials and curriculum designers should promote cross-cultural communication and time management awareness among teachers and students at all levels. School administrators should promote the use of different teaching strategies to help students understand the lesson. Likewise, the study on the national identity of Filipinos and multi-culturalism should be fostered in schools, BPO training centers, and especially in all BPO companies nationwide. This is based on the discussion of 'social strategies' on 'exploring cultural and social norms'.

Families and educators should be enlightened on the benefits BPO employees get from BPO and the challenges they face at the workplace. To do so, schools and TV channels could organize workshops and invite experienced BPO employees, researchers, and trainers to share some topics on the life and work of employees in the BPO industry and other organizations.

Language teachers should show students the practicality of knowing different English accents and the usefulness of speaking many languages because multilingualism is a defining mark of Filipino national identity. They should give different types of assignments and assessments that help students use different tools. They should also include activities that require students to work within a time constraint so they would learn time management a required skill in the BPO industry as claimed by the participants.

Based on the results, psychologists and counselors should prepare practical ways to help young Filipinos handle stress, resolve cross-cultural problems, and work in a highly stressful environment. Specifically, if this has not been done, qualitative and quantitative studies in psychology should focus on the impact of working at night shift on the health and lifestyle of the employees in the BPO sector.

Based on different viewpoints of the participants, language teachers, students, business people, and the government should realize that that PE is an acceptable type of English like the American English.

BPO employers, managers, trainers, and quality assurance (QA) analysts should work together to develop diversified training materials and conduct trainings that are based not only on the target culture, TL, the American customers, and the products or services. They should integrate local realities, especially the national identity of Filipinos in the training. Trainers in the BPO sector should be updated on teaching strategies. They should also collaborate with researchers and language teachers to improve and adjust the ways they train L2 learners. They should continue to invest in training their employees because employees are the first assets of the company and good training helps CSRs reduce the average handling time of calls with their clients. Knowledge is ineffective when left with the machines. However, knowledge is useful when transferred within a team, across teams within a company, and from one generation to the next.

BPO employers, managers, trainers, and quality assurance (QA) analysts, and CSRs are encouraged to practice meditation in any form they wish every day before or during work time to get in touch with their internal, intellectual, and emotional states to better transact with people of different background and emotional states.

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## **APPENDICES**

**Appendix A: Authorization Letter**

Date.....

To .....

Company name .....

Address .....

I would like to request for your permission to conduct a research at your BPO Company/ Training School. I am an MA student at the University of the Philippines Open University (UPOU) and conducting a research on training in call centers and BPO industry in Metro Manila.

Title of the study: **Impact of English Language Teaching and National Identity on Filipinos in the Call Center Industry**

Should I be allowed to conduct the research, I will:

- Need two (2) or three (3) Filipino participants who are trainers.
- Participants should voluntarily agree to be interviewed and observed.
- Interview each participant for 30 minutes on his/her available time and preferred location.
- Observe the same participant at least once during training for a period of one to two hours.
- Interview and observation are on strategies trainers use to teach English or soft skills to CSRs (or students) and how trainers and trainees interact with each other using the English language.
- None of the participants' experiences or thoughts or the identity of their organization will be shared with anyone unless all identifying information is removed first.

Your collaboration on the above request will be gratefully appreciated.

Sincerely,

## Appendix B: Research Locales

Name of the Company:	Location	in Metro	Nature of Business
BPO-C1	Manila		BPO and IT services
BPO-C2	Makati City		In-house BPO and IT services
BPO-C3	Muntinlupa City		BPO
BPO-C4	Parañaque City		BPO
BPO-C5	Pasig City		BPO
BPO-T1	Quezon City		School (private)
			They have taught 'English Proficiency Program for Call Center Representatives' (100 hours in 25 days).
			They teach English Communication Skills One, Two, and Three (per semester)
			School (public)
BPO-T2	Taguig City		They teach 'English Proficiency for Customer Service Workers (100 hours in 25 days)

## Appendix C: Interview Schedule

### A. Trainer.

1. How did you come to be a trainer? Please include the context of your professional life story leading up to your current position?
2. What are similarities and dissimilarities among the English you learned at school, the English taught during training, and the English used to speak to customers? Please explain by focusing on the following aspects: pronunciation, vocabulary, examples used, emphasis (listening, speaking, writing, and reading), and types of exercises.
3. What strategies do you use as a Filipino trainer to facilitate training, with Filipino new employees or with foreign employees or with students? Please select the three (3) you always use. You may add other strategies you use that are not listed below. Please explain reasons for using the strategy.
  - Speak English only during training
  - Give local examples to connect daily life with work life
  - Mix English and Filipino languages
  - Ask trainees about their background and build on it in training
  - Talk more and let trainees listen
  - Role play among trainees and take part as one of them
  - Use examples about the job and the background of your customers
  - Make jokes related to showbiz artists to attract trainees' attention
  - (Please add any other strategy)
  - (Please add any other strategy)
4. What English language skills (e.g. reading, listening, speaking, and writing) and cross-cultural communication skills do you teach to help CSRs become more effective in their work or to help students get ready for employment in the BPO sector? Please clarify and give some examples where applicable.
5. How did you learn or acquire these skills as a trainer?
6. Did your previous company prefer a specific English accent? If yes, what was it? Give the reasons
7. Does your current company or school favor a specific English accent? Please explain
8. Do you believe that speaking English with an American accent show proficiency in English? Explain your answer.
9. Do you believe that speaking English with a Filipino accent show proficiency in English? Explain your answer.

10. Which of the two accents do you prefer? Please explain.
11. When communicating in English, do you use the same style and accent when talking to a customer or a student and to a friend? Please explain
12. What does your work as English trainer mean to you?
13. What is the importance of teaching English for or at a call center industry? What is it like for you to train employees or students?
14. Please select the five (5) most important factors that motivate or motivated you to work and stay in BPO. You may add other factors not listed and please explain
  - Ability to communicate with people of different background
  - “Challenging work”
  - “Culture that fits my personality”
  - “Excellent compensation & benefits”
  - “Flexible work/life balance”
  - “Good relationship with your colleagues”
  - “Good relationship with your supervisors”
  - “Internal transfer opportunities”
  - “Job security”
  - “Strong career path” (Gager, Bowly, Nayak, & Chhabria, 2015, p.33)
15. How do you see yourself five to ten years from now?
16. Given diverse job opportunities, would you recommend a relative of yours or a close friend to your current job or to work in call center? Please explain

## **B. CSR or TSR.**

1. How did you come to be a CSR or a TSR? Please include the context of your professional life story leading up to your current position.
2. What are similarities and dissimilarities among the English you learned at school, the English taught during training, and the English used to speak to customers? Please explain by focusing on the following aspects: pronunciation, vocabulary, examples used, emphasis (listening, speaking, writing, and reading), and types of exercises.

3. What strategies Filipino trainers use to facilitate training, with Filipino new employees or with foreign employees? Please select the three (3) they always use. You may add other strategies they use that are not listed below. Please explain reasons for using the strategy.
  - Speak English only during training
  - Give local examples to connect daily life with work life
  - Mix English and Filipino language
  - Ask trainees about their background and build on it in training
  - Talk more and let trainees listen
  - Role play among trainees and take part as one of them
  - Use examples about the job and the background of your customers
  - Make jokes related to showbiz artists to attract trainees' attention
  - (Please add any other strategy)
  - (Please add any other strategy)
4. What English language skills (e.g. reading, listening, speaking, and writing) and cross-cultural communication skills do they teach to help CSRs become more effective in their work? Please clarify and give some examples where applicable.
5. How did you learn or acquire these skills as a CSR?
6. Did your previous company prefer a specific English accent? If yes, what was it? Give the reasons
7. Does your current company favor a specific English accent? Please explain
8. Do you believe that speaking English with an American accent show proficiency in English? Explain your answer.
9. Do you believe that speaking English with a Filipino accent show proficiency in English? Explain your answer.
10. Which of the two accents do you prefer? Please explain.
11. When communicating in English, do you use the same style and accent when talking to a customer and to a friend? Please explain
12. What does your work as CSR or TSR mean to you?
13. What is the importance of teaching English at a call center industry? What is it like for you to train employees?
14. Please select the five (5) most important factors that motivate you to work and stay in BPO. You may add other factors not listed and please explain

- Ability to communicate with people of different background
- “Challenging work”
- “Culture that fits my personality”
- “Excellent compensation & benefits”
- “Flexible work/life balance”
- “Good relationship with your colleagues”
- “Good relationship with your supervisors”
- “Internal transfer opportunities”
- “Job security”
- “Strong career path” (Gager, Bowly, Nayak, & Chhabria, 2015, p.33)

15. How do you see yourself five to ten years from now?

i6. Given diverse job opportunities, would you recommend a relative of yours or a close friend to your current job or to work in call center? Please explain

## Appendix D: Observation Guide

Participant's Name	Scenario	Strategies	Researcher's comments
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Speak English only during training</li> <li>✓ Give local examples to connect daily life with work life</li>   <li>✓ Mix English and Filipino languages to clarify a point or ask a question during training and with colleagues (trainers with trainers, CSR with CSRs).</li>   <li>✓ Ask trainees about their background and build on it in training</li>   <li>✓ Assessment</li> <li>✓ Talk more and let trainees listen</li>   <li>✓ Tools for working</li>   <li>✓ Role play among trainees and take part as one of them</li> <li>✓ Draw examples from the job and the background of the company's customers</li>   <li>✓ Give examples of challenges CSRs face at CCI.</li>   <li>✓ Make jokes related to showbiz artists to attract trainees' attention</li>   <li>✓ Read scripts when call is received</li> <li>✓ Change personal name or location when talking to offshore customers</li> </ul>	

Date and time:

Place:

## Appendix E: Observation sessions.

Name and Role	Observation date	From... to...	Duration
CSR7	Nov. 17, 2015	7:20 p.m. to 8:35 p.m.	75 minutes
-	Nov. 18, 2015	7:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.	90 minutes
CSR6	Dec. 16, 2015	7:10 p.m. to 8:20 p.m.	70 minutes
-	Dec. 17, 2015	7:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.	90 minutes
CSR5	Jan. 09, 2016	5: 00 a.m. to 7: 00 a.m.	120 minutes
-	Jan. 22, 2016	7:00 a.m. to 8:15 a.m.	75 minutes
Trainer-C4	Jan. 26, 2016	11:00 p.m. to 12:00 a.m.	60 minutes
-	Jan. 27, 2016	6:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.	60 minutes
Trainer-C5	Jan. 29, 2016	9:00 p.m. to 10:15 p.m.	75 minutes
-	Feb. 26, 2016	6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.	90 minutes
Trainer-T1	Sept. 7, 2016	8:00 a.m. to 9:30 a.m.	90 minutes
-	Sept. 8, 2016	7:30 a.m. to 8:35 a.m.	65 minutes
Trainer-T3	Sept. 7, 2016	9:45 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.	105 minutes
-	Sept. 8, 2016	8:36 a.m. to 9:30 a.m.	54 minutes
Trainer-T2	Oct. 7, 2016	10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.	60 minutes
-	Oct. 26, 2016	10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.	60 minutes
<b>Total</b>			<b>1,239 minutes</b>

## **Appendix F: Excerpt of field notes of observations**

Observations data include extracts from only one of the two sessions of only one trainer in the BPO, one trainer in BPO training school, and one CSR. This is done to maximize the page. Other elements from the observation that are mentioned may not be referred to in this section.

On January 09, 2016 from 5: 00 a.m. to 7: 00 a.m. and on January 22, 2016 from 7:00 a.m. to 8:15 a.m., I observed CSR5, B.S. Graduate in Marketing, at BPO-C3 in *Paranaque Metro Manila*. CSR5 performed his job using a computer connected to the Internet, a built-in telephone, headphone, and Skype for business to communicate with 101 colleagues. He opened different applications to search for customers or mark which customer had already answered. He also used Excel to document transactions.

The following is a sample of CSR5's call flow as observed on January 22, 2016. This was a phone call with an American customer. CSR5 started the call with a greeting. He introduced himself and gave the name of his company. CSR5 defined the nature of their business and the reason for his call. He explained how he got the contact information of the potential customer. He asked if this potential customer was still planning to sell some goods in one or six months from the date the call was made. He stated the service that their company could offer free of charge. After listening to customer's response, CSR5 scheduled a face to face meeting based on the customer's preferred day. He thanked the customer, ended the call, and documented the call.

CSR5 spoke English only during the transaction. He had memorized the scripts and the call flow. He gave the customer a USA-based physical address of their company with words like "we are located at..." As soon as he realized that the customer was willing to talk to him, CSR5 stood up, put one hand in his pocket, and started walking around his work station while talking to the customer. Each of the customer's answer allowed CSR5 to make short comments and ask a new

question. CSR5 used specific words to keep the conversation going: great, interesting, amazing, and wonderful. CSR5 made more than ten outbound calls on January 22, 2016. He had four successful outbound phone calls and took a short break to smoke after each successful call.

On January 29, 2016 from 9:00 p.m. to 10:15 p.m. and February 26, 2016 from 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m., I observed Trainer-C5, M.A. Graduate in European Literacy and Cultures, at BPO-C2 in Muntinlupa Metro Manila. On Feb 26, 2016, Trainer-C5 trained a new employee on troubleshooting skills. His agenda included, the importance of troubleshooting in relation to a CSR's work. He explained the basic troubleshooting steps, skills and techniques needed to identify, analyze, and resolve a customer's problem. He underscored questioning skills and the five whys. The 5 whys consisted of paraphrasing and asking the same question by starting with 'why' to get more detailed answers from clients. Trainer-C5 applied to life the basic troubleshooting steps utilizing troubleshooting techniques. He pointed out the relevance of the topic to customer satisfaction survey (CSAT) and to the quality assurance audits (QA).

Trainer-C5 used a computer connected to the Internet, Power Point Presentation, graphic organizers, charts, and body language like hands, gestures, and smiles. He opened different applications, and used an LCD projector. Trainer-C5 gave local examples to connect daily life with work life. He asked the trainee about his background and built on it during training. He spoke English and used some Filipino words to clarify a point. At times, Trainer-C5 read scripts but added explanations. He used analogies and proverbs to clarify a point. He talked more and let the trainee listen. He also drew examples from the job and the background of the company's customers. One of the analogies given was that of a doctor and a patient during the diagnosis stage. Then Trainer-C5 applied the analogy to the work of a CSR with a customer. Trainer-C5 gave a formative assessment to the trainee. The assessment of the trainee consisted of matching and

applying the patient-doctor interview with a customer-CSR interaction. Then, the trainee had to justify each answer using his own words. This assessment seemed to help Trainer-C5 to determine if the trainee had understood the topic.

On September 7, 2016, 8:00 to 9:30 a.m., and September 8, 2016, 7:30 a.m. to 8:35 a.m., I Observed Trainer-T1, M.A. Graduate in Education, English language at BPO-T2 in Taguig Metro Manila. BPO-T2 is a public training center. On the first day of observation, Trainer-T1 was explaining transitive and intransitive verbs to 17 Filipino students: three boys and 14 girls. Trainer-T1 spoke English only during training. She talked more and let the trainees listen. Trainer-T1 asked about the trainees' background to build on it. She gave also local examples. As a form of assessment, Trainer-T1 wrote down any sample sentence given by students. Then she invited the students to analyze the sentence. Through analysis, Trainer-T1 helped the students distinguish the correct from the incorrect sentences.

## Appendix G: Detailed Profiles of Participants

Name	Description
CSR1	A 27-year-old female, Bachelor of Nursing. Prior to employment in the BPO industry, she was a Sales Lady in a local shop. She has five years of experience working in the BPO sector as a CSR of which one year in her current company, BPO-C1.
CSR2	A 35-year-old female, Undergraduate in Computer Sciences. She was a Language Instructor (ESL and Filipino) for ten years prior to joining the BPO industry. She has six months of experience working in the BPO industry and as a CSR in her current company, BPO-C1.
CSR3	A 28-year-old male, Undergraduate in Information and Technology. Prior to joining the BPO sector, he worked as a Technician in an electronic company and a Server in a fast food chain restaurant. He has nine years of experience as a CSR in the BPO sector of which six months in his current company, BPO-C1.
CSR4	A 28-year-old female, Bachelor of Political Sciences. She has no previous work experience. She has two years of experience as a CSR in the BPO sector of which five months in her current company, BPO-C4.
CSR5	A 34-year-old male, Bachelor of Marketing. He was self-employed prior to joining the BPO industry. He has six years of experience working in the BPO sector of which three months as a Sales Associate (sales service representative) in his current company. He was observed during actual calls at BPO-C3.
CSR6	A 31-year-old female, Bachelor of European Languages. She was an English language Tutor, then a Receptionist prior to working in the BPO sector. She studied college while working in the BPO industry. She has 11 years of experience working in the BPO sector of which six years and half in her current company. She is currently a Technical Support Representative (TSR) and a Trainer. She was observed during training at BPO-C2.
CSR7	A 31-year-old female, M.A. Mass Communication. She worked for an NGO, University Research, and journal writing prior to joining the BPO industry. She has two years of experience working in the BPO sector of which eight months in her current company. Her current position is CSR. She was observed during actual calls at BPO-C2.

## Appendix G: Detailed Profiles of Participants (Continued)

Name	Description
Trainer-C1	A 30-year-old female, Bachelor of Economics. Prior to working in BPO, she was a Teller in a local bank. She has eight years of experience working in the BPO sector and has been through different positions of which she was a CSR. She is a Coach Assistant and Trainer in her current company, BPO-C5 where she has been working for one year.
Trainer-C2	A 30-year-old female, M.A. European Languages. She worked for NGO in Education Development prior to joining the BPO sector. She has ten years of experience working in the BPO industry of which five years and eight months in her current company. Her current positions are Team Leader and Trainer in BPO-C2.
Trainer-C3	A 30-year-old female, Bachelor of Nursing. She worked as a Secretary prior to joining the BPO industry. She has six years of experience working in the BPO sector of which one year in her current company. Her current position are Sales Trainer and Quality Assurance Auditor in BPO-C4.
Trainer-C4	A 42-year-old male, Bachelor of Philosophy. He was a high school teacher prior to joining the BPO sector. He has ten years of experience working in the BPO industry of which three years and seven months in his current company. His current position is Technical Trainer. He was observed during training at BPO-C2.
Trainer-C5	A 27-year-old male, M.A. European Literacy and Cultures. He worked as an HR- Compensation & Benefits agent prior to joining the BPO sector. He has two years of experience working in the BPO industry of which six months in his current company. His position is Technical Trainer. He was observed during training at BPO-C2.

## Appendix G: Detailed Profiles of Participants (Continued)

Name	Description
Trainer-T1	A 57-year-old female, M.Ed. English. She was an English Teacher and School Director for several years. She is an English language Trainer in her company where she has been working for four years. Most of her trainees want to work in the BPO industry. She was observed during training at BPO-T2.
Trainer-T2	A 25-year-old male, Bachelor of Political Sciences. Prior to working in the BPO sector, he worked as 'Sangguniang Kabataan' [a member of the youth council] at the Barangay [a sector of the municipality or city] level, then as a Provincial Federation Secretary. He studied college while working in the BPO industry. He has three years of experience as a CSR, then as a Trainer in the BPO sector. He has been working as a College Instructor for four months. He was observed during training at BPO-T1.
Trainer-T3	A 42-year-old female, College graduate with 36 units of M.A. in English. She worked as an Academic & Business Subject Instructor, then as Book Keeping Trainer. She is an English language Trainer in the BPO training center where she has been working for one year. She was observed during training at BPO-T2

## Appendix H: Extracts of the job postings of the five BPO companies

Company Name	Position & Month posted	Qualifications
BPO-C1	Customer Support Representative February 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Completed at least one (1) year of college education;</li> <li>✓ Above average English Communication skills;</li> <li>✓ Excellent Customer service orientation;</li> <li>✓ Basic knowledge of PC usage and internet navigation.</li> </ul>
BPO-C2	Customer Support Representative March 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Holder of a bachelor's degree;</li> <li>✓ Must be able to learn new technologies and concepts quickly;</li> <li>✓ Must be able to communicate clearly to team members and customers;</li> <li>✓ Fluent in ENGLISH (written and oral) with neutral accent.</li> </ul>
BPO-C3	Inside Sales Representative March 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ College degree preferred;</li> <li>✓ Experience with phone sales or telemarketing;</li> <li>✓ Excellent oral and written communication skills;</li> <li>✓ Willing to work night shift.</li> </ul>
BPO-C4	Customer Service Representative March 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Excellent English language skills;</li> <li>✓ Articulate speech, clear and well-modulated speaking voice;</li> <li>✓ Superb listening, probing, negotiation and de-escalation skills needed;</li> <li>✓ Excellent customer service skills.</li> </ul>
BPO-C5	Sales/Customer Service Representative March 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ At least two years of college completed;</li> <li>✓ 6+ months of contact center experience in a customer service / sales role or equivalent preferred;</li> <li>✓ Strong communication skills required;</li> <li>✓ Strong comprehension and learning agility.</li> </ul>

In the above table, I selected extracts that referred to communication skills and education level. These aspects portray the types of agents and skills call centers look for in applicants. The elements also can serve as a check-list to some applicants who aspire to work in the BPO firm.

## Appendix I: Call flow and Quality assurance metric

### A. SUGGESTED SCRIPTINGS (from BPO – C1)

OPENING	BPO-C1 – this is <NAME> - How may I help you?
OWNERSHIP	"I'll be glad to assist."
PRIVACY	"To protect the privacy of your financial information, may I please have your..."  "I would like to confirm, are you <name of policy owner>, or are you calling on <his/her> behalf?"
HOLD	"May I place you on hold for a moment while I ..."
Returning to Caller on Hold	"Thank you for patiently holding." ("I apologize for the delay" or "I appreciate your patience.")
Offering Further Assistance	"Is there anything I can help you with?"
Acknowledge	"Thank you", "I understand", "I see", "Alright"
Empathize	"I'm sorry to hear that."
SOFT Handoff	"Your request is handled by another department. If you have no further questions and don't mind holding, I'll be glad to transfer your call."
System Problem	Our system is currently updating and we are unable to pull up your records. We apologize for the inconvenience. We will appreciate if you can call us back within the next 2-4 hours. We are open from 8AM to 8PM, Eastern time, Monday through Friday. Again, sorry for the inconvenience.
Ghost Script	BPO-C1 this is <NAME>. How may I help you? (3X) I'm sorry but I'm unable to hear you. If you can hear me, please call us back at 1-800 – xxxxxx. We're open from 8AM to 8PM, Eastern time, Monday through Friday. I'll release the call now. Thank you for calling Prudential. Please call again.
Inquiry about Outsourcing	"Mr. /Ms. Smith, although BPO-C1 is based in the United States, it has a global presence in the financial services business. Although you may not be speaking to an associate in the United States, be assured that you'll continue to receive the high-quality service you've come to expect for."
CLOSING	Thank you for calling BPO-C1.

B. SUGGESTED CALL FLOW SCRIPT

<b>OPENING</b>	
<b>Customer Service Agent</b>	<b>Client/Customer</b>
CSP: BPO-C1 this is ____ how may I help you?	CLT: (Either states the policy no. or states the request)
CSP: (By this time, write down any information being provided, key words only)	
CSP: (Acknowledge) Thank you Mr. /Ms. _____. (Ownership) I will be glad to assist you with...	May be rephrased as: I'll be happy to assist you with your request.
CSP: (Probing) May I have the policy or contract no.?	
CSP: May I have your full/complete name please? (If applicable: if name was not mentioned yet.)	
CSP: (Privacy) To protect the privacy of your financial records/information, (authentication) may I have your complete mailing address and phone no.?	CLT: (Responds to your question)
CSP: Before we continue, I would to confirm, am I speaking with <name of policy owner>/ or are you calling on <his/her> behalf?	
CSP: (Acknowledge) Thank you. Please give me a moment as I pull up your records.	
CSP: May I have your email address and cellphone number to update your records?	
<b>PROCESSING</b>	
<b>Customer Service Agent</b>	<b>Client/Customer</b>
CSP: (You may echo the request back to verify or state the request in a statement form.)	CLT: (Responds to your statement)
CSP: (Set service expectations)	
<b>CLOSING</b>	
<b>Customer Service Agent</b>	<b>Client/Customer</b>
CSP: (Offer further assistance) "Is there anything else that I may assist you with?"	CLT: (Responds)
CSP: Thank you for calling BPO-C1. Please call us again.	

## Appendix I: Call flow and Quality assurance metric (continued)

**Analyst Name:** <write the name of the Analyst here>  
**Date & Time:** <indicate the date and time of the ticket was closed here>  
**Ticket Number:** <indicate the ticket number here> **FROM BPO-C2**  
**Call Reference:** <enter the call reference link here>  
**Question:** <briefly specify the concern of the customer here>

Dimension	Guide Questions (positive/negative indicators)	Yes / No / NA	Max / Min Weight	Score	Comments
<b>SOFT SKILLS (Total of 23 Points)</b>					
Q1	Opening and Closing (Telephone only)	NA	3		<provide comments here>
Q2	Questioning and Listening Skills	Yes	7		<provide comments here>
Q3	Professionalism and Empathy	No	5		<provide comments here>
Q4	Clear Communication	No	5		<provide comments here>
Q5	Telephone Etiquette (Telephone only)	No	3		<provide comments here>

# Appendix I: Call flow and Quality assurance metric (continued)

PROCESS (77 POINTS)		FROM BPO-C2 (continued)			
Q06	Initial Response	(+/-) Did the Analyst respond to the issue in a timely manner?	Yes	5	<provide comments here>
		(+/-) Did the Analyst provide time booking?	Yes	2	<provide comments here>
		(+/-) Did the Analyst correctly fill in the following required fields in IMS?			
	IMS Ticket Standards	Client Name, Partner Field and internal IMS fields (Technology, Ticket reason, Ticket area, Known symptom & Description, Ticket Outcome, Severity, Type, Environment, Origin)	Yes	4	<provide comments here>
Q07			Yes	3	<provide comments here>
Q08	Subject and Detailed Description	(+/-) Did the Analyst correctly fill out the Subject and Description field?	Yes	7	<provide comments here>
Q09	Issue Identification	(+/-) Did the Analyst correctly identify, define, and document the issue? (+/-) Did the Analyst gather and document all the relevant and necessary information to assist the customer with their issue? (+/-) Did the Analyst obtain proof of the incident where applicable? (+/-) Did the Analyst record the information in the ticket accurately?	Yes	7	<provide comments here>
	Data Gathering	For example: - Technology & application concerned - User-specific information (customer's name, telephone number, email address, user ID, password if applicable) - Company-specific information (company name, DUNS, Catalog ID.) - Incident specific information (View name, timeframe, Doc ID)			
Q10		(+/-) Did the Analyst effectively use the available tools / resources to address user's issue? (+/-) Did the Analyst identify all possible causal factors? (+/-) Did the Analyst document the details of the initial investigation in the response fields?	Yes	7	<provide comments here>
	Analysis (Initial Investigation)	The following details are evidence of Initial Investigation: • Proof: Screenshot of error reproduction • Step-by-step guide on how the issue was replicated • What are checks done by SL1? • Research: reference/related tickets			
Q11		(+/-) Did the Analyst correctly identify, provide complete and accurate description of Root Cause, Resolution and/or Workaround of the issue? (+/-) Did the Analyst record the RWR in the ticket accurately?	Yes	7	<provide comments here>
Q12	Root Cause Determination	(+/-) Did the Analyst identify, implement, document, and provide the most accurate, complete, and best-suited solution for the customer (involving the customer)?	Yes	7	<provide comments here>
	Solution Identification and Implementation	(+/-) Did the Analyst present the solution(s) in a clear (screen prints when possible), concise, positive and confident manner? (+/-) Did the Analyst demonstrate knowledge of the topic / process / product?			
Q13		(+/-) If the issue could not be resolved within the call or within the SLA or Target resolution time of the customer, did the Analyst explain why (i.e. escalation is necessary/more research is needed) and provide a workaround, set expectations or provide next steps to be taken towards issue resolution?	Yes	5	<provide comments here>
	Expectation Setting	(+/-) If the issue was non-FCR, did the analyst EITHER advise the caller that a ticket will be opened and number sent to him OR provide a ticket number? (+/-) If issue cannot be resolved by Hubwoo, did the Analyst set the right expectation with the customer?			
Q14		(+/-) Did the Analyst follow correct escalation/handover procedures? i.e. Escalation Path; Language Translation, escalation template, etc.	Yes	6	<provide comments here>
	Escalation	(+/-) Is the ticket escalated on time? Meaning: if no resolution is yet provided to the customer, the ticket should be escalated at 30% of the target SLA	Yes	3	<provide comments here>
Q15		(+/-) Did the Analyst use the Customer is Facing option correctly? <i>Mail icon; customer is facing icon</i>	Yes	5	<provide comments here>
Q16	Customer is facing icon	(+/-) Did the Analyst follow the correct update procedures? (+/-) Did the Analyst confirm with the customer if there is any other issue, (SLA)?	Yes	5	<provide comments here>
	Update Frequency and Deadline	(+/-) Did the Analyst confirm with the customer if there is any other issue, (SLA)? (+/-) Did the Analyst confirm that the request / concern is satisfactorily and if the issue is resolved? (+/-) Did the Analyst confirm that the request / concern is satisfactorily addressed? (Confirm client's satisfaction/offered further assistance if applicable)	Yes	6	<provide comments here>
Q17		(+/-) Did the Analyst follow-up for ticket updates, when necessary? Note to QA: - Check if sufficient follow-up is made and documented in the ticket's response lines and mail history (INTERNAL)			
	Ownership	(+/-) Did the analyst open a ticket when a new issue is reported? (+/-) Did the Analyst use another means of communication before ticket closure if no confirmation has been received from customer?	Yes	3	<provide comments here>
Q18		(+/-) Did the Analyst use another means of communication before ticket closure if no confirmation has been received from customer? IMS, Outlook and/or phone (2 out of 3 means of communication has to be used)		0	
OVERALL SCORE					
Feedback		<provide feedback here>			

**Appendix I: Call flow and Quality assurance metric (continued)**

**BPO – C4 SUPPORT**  
**Call flow 101 Scoresheet**

Advisor:	Date Monitored:
PIN/BAN #	Sup Name:
Concern	<input type="checkbox"/> Side by side <input type="checkbox"/> Remote <input type="checkbox"/> Calibration <input type="checkbox"/> Recorded
<b>1. Opening the Call</b>	
Did the Advisor brand the call?	_____
Did the Advisor offer assistance?	_____
Did the Advisor use his real name?	_____
<b>2. Display Empathy</b>	
Empathy (sincere and timely) – N/A when applicable	_____
<b>3. Listen and Understand</b>	
Paraphrased/Acknowledge (did not parrot)	_____
Assurance Statement	_____
Active Listening	_____
<b>COACHING STRENGTHS/OPPORTUNITIES</b>	
<b>4. Displays Confidence and Acknowledge</b>	
Maintain Friendly Tone with Customer	_____
Use Proper Grammar/Language/Pronunciation	_____
Explain Actions Effectively	_____
<b>3. Obtain Authentication Details</b>	
Followed authentication guidelines on CPNI Information Released	_____
<b>4. Alternate Number</b>	
Are you using the phone to call us?	_____
Ask for an alternate phone number?	_____
<b>COACHING STRENGTHS/OPPORTUNITIES</b>	
<b>5. Probe/Troubleshoot</b>	
General probing to obtain the customer's issue	_____
Specific probing to obtain the root cause of customer's issue	_____
<b>6. Follow Hold and Dead Air Protocol</b>	
ASAP	_____
Was the hold necessary?	_____
Was the Advisor <b>facing</b> in for dead air by providing necessary information?	_____
<b>7. Utilizes Tools to Resolve the Customer's Issue</b>	
Review Account Information/History	_____
Follow Process Steps	_____
Performed/Applied Proper System Solution	_____
Utilized support tools e.g. Supervisor, Mentor, SME	_____
<b>COACHING STRNGTHS/OOPORTUNITIES</b>	

<b>8. Advise/Educate on Necessary Information</b>	_____
Used clear explanation on what caused the issue	_____
Used clear explanation on what resolved the issue/ steps needed to resolve issue	_____
Clearly set expectations and provided SSO/ future steps to prevent recurrence	_____
<b>COACHING STRENGTHS/OPPORTUNITIES</b>	

<b>9. Power Closing</b>	_____
Did the Advisor probe for resolution?	_____
Did the Advisor provide a satisfaction close?	_____
Did the Advisor close the call using appropriated brand?	_____

<b>10. Implementing Resolution</b>	_____
Provide proper account notes	_____
Followed through on actions promised	_____
<b>COACHING STRENGTHS/OPPORTUNITIES</b>	

<b>ADDITIONAL TRACKING</b>	_____
Was the Advisor multitasking throughout the entire call?	_____
Did the Advisor properly de-escalate a sup call?	_____
Did the Advisor respond versus react to customer hooks?	_____
Was this a CSAT/Superstar call?	_____
<b>COACHING STRENGTHS/OPPORTUNITIES</b>	

<b>SCORE/FINAL</b>	
<b>Supervisor's COMMENTS/FEEDBACK</b>	

<b>ADVISOR'S ACTION PLANS/COMMITMENT</b>	
--	--

<b>I agree that the ratings given on this form are FINAL</b>	
Advisor Signature and Date:	_____
Sup Signature and Date:	_____

## Appendix J: Training code of conducts and other rules 1

### TRAINING CODE OF CONDUCT (From BPO-C4)

We treat our personnel with great dignity and respect. Once they earn the right to be part of the Customer family, employees are encouraged to exercise personal discretion execute individual ideas, and assume responsibilities that directly impact our company's growth. The result employees who feel vital and valued – and want to remain part of XXX

#### **Purpose**

The purpose of this guide sheet is to outline trainee/new employee behavior and performance standards that all employees in training must adhere to. The policies and guidelines below are not all inclusive and if policy is not stated, common sense, good judgment, courtesy and safety will apply.

#### **Attendance and Punctuality**

If you foresee an absence, you must immediately write a formal request and submit to your Trainer. Your reasons for absence will be weighed by the Training Supervisor to determine if it will be approved or disapproved. Tracking of attendance and tardiness will start from Foundation Skills Training (FST) to Program Specific Training (PST) and will end on the last day of [training].

#### **Authorized Absence**

Your absence will be classified as **Authorized** when it is one of the following situations and you have notified your Trainer:

- Illness or injury
- An emergency outside the control of the employee
- Bereavement leave for a direct family member (Mother, Father, Sister, Brother, Spouse or Child)
- Hospitalization (supported by documentation: doctor's certification, receipt, test results, etc.)

Only one (1) authorized absence is allowed during training. The succeeding authorized absences may be subject to disciplinary action upon management's discretion.

#### **Unauthorized Absence**

Your absence will be classified as **Unauthorized** when it is one of the following situations:

- You did not notify your trainer by phone one hour before your shift
- It was a foreseen absence not approved by the Training Supervisor

One occurrence of unauthorized absence during training will result in disciplinary action (written warning). More than one unauthorized absence is considered excessive and you may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including disqualification upon management's discretion.

#### **No Call, No Show**

One **No Call, No Show** will be subject to disciplinary action up to disqualification from continuing training. If you will be suddenly absent due to sickness or other emergencies, you **must notify your trainer or call the receptionist at telephone number 02-6xxxxx**. When speaking with the front desk personnel, trainee should leave his/her name, class code \_\_\_\_\_, and name of trainer in-charge,

Make sure you:

- call at least one hour before the designated start of your training
- give the reason for your absence
- get the name of the receptionist before you end the call
- know the exact time you made the call

Otherwise the absence will be escalated accordingly. Do not send messages through your friends who are employed at or are training at \_\_\_\_\_. The message may not reach the trainer and this will be considered a **No Call, No Show**.

## Appendix J: Training code of conducts and other rules 2

### From BPO-C4

#### Tardiness

Tardiness is defined as attending training less than 100% of your scheduled shift. Be sure to log in your actual time at all times. You are considered tardy when any of the following occurs:

- arrival one minute before the start of the class
- leaving prior to the end of the class
- late return from any break

You can only be tardy for a maximum of 120 cumulative minutes and/or a maximum of six (6) times. If you are tardy for more than 120 minutes, it will be considered an absence. Three times tardy is considered an unauthorized absence. Below is a schedule of discipline for tardiness which will be noted in your training file:

- One Summary of Discussion (a reminder for the whole class)
- Three Verbal Warning (with documentation)
- Five Written Warning
- Six Disqualification from Training

Your tardiness may be authorized if you informed your Trainer of your tardiness before your shift.

#### Class Participation

In order to maximize learning opportunities, you as trainees are expected to:

- Show respect for peers and trainers.
- Concentrate on the learning that is being provided for you.
- Ask questions. If the question seems to go beyond the scope of the class, the instructor can try to address it during a break or may have you research on it.
- Let only one person speak at a time.
- Contribute your best effort to any project the class is undertaking.
- Cooperate, participate and be involved!
- Gain the passing score for all evaluations and assessments which is 90% for \_\_\_\_ and 90% for \_\_\_\_.
- Failure to do so will result in termination of your employment.
- Meet all standard metrics. Failure to do so will result in termination your employment.

#### CERTIFICATION

##### PST Gates

Aside from the previously stated requirements, you will need to undergo mock call certification activities during the 4-week period. Coaches will rate your Mock Calls using the CMF for follow through. Failure to gain an average score of 90% will be subject for corrective action. Continued deviation will be subject to the next level of corrective action up to and including termination.

##### Language

English skills can only be enhanced through constant practice. In this business, language and communicating skills are fundamental to success. **You must speak only in English while you are in the premises of** \_\_\_\_\_. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action, up to and including disqualification.

##### Computer and Internet Usage

Computers are provided solely for training purposes. Use of these is strictly subject to the following guidelines.

## Appendix K: Reminders and Integrity

### From BPO-C4

#### Reminders

- **All Calls – no hold** unless needed
- **All Calls** – cascade info on how to deal with customers who don't want to **receive calls** from a certain number --- “**call blocking/barring, restrict calls, call forwarding**, MDN change (although this should be the last option because customers usually don't want to change numbers)
- **All Calls** – make sure agents give the correct closing spiel (**confirms satisfaction** – “*Did I resolve your issue*”, etc.)
- **All Calls** – agents should be reading memos in order to fully understand what's going on
- **All Calls** – agents are too wordy. *Statements should be short and sweet.* For example: instead of saying, “*In order for me to verify your account, may I have the last four digits of your social security number?*”, you can simply say “*May I have the last four digits of your social security number?*”

Your trainer may call your attention if you are not abiding by the dress code. You may be asked to go home and change your attire. This will be considered an incidence of tardiness.

#### Integrity

The following offenses will disqualify you from continuing training at TRG Customer Solutions:

- Cheating during exams.
- Cheating during call simulations.
- Falsification and fabrication of information during calls.
- Altering or not logging in your actual time in your Daily Time Record (DTR).

## Appendix L: Best Practices

### From BPO-C4

Acknowledge	Empathize	Reassure
<p>Acknowledge your customer's issue without getting defensive.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Apology words:</b> I apologize, I am sorry, I am truly sorry, I am extremely sorry, I am really sorry.</li> <li>• <b>Inflection:</b> Mean what you say. Use inflection and convey sincerely. Say "I am so sorry" instead of "Sorry about that; what's your number?"</li> <li>• <b>Paraphrase:</b> Connect with your customer by restating the reason for their call; "missing our appointment yesterday."</li> </ul> <p><i>"I am so sorry we missed our appointment yesterday."</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be the customer's advocate. Let them know you are on their side/see from their point of view.</li> <li>• <b>Empathy words:</b> "I understand your frustration" or "I can see how this can be 'upsetting'", etc.</li> <li>• <b>Inflection:</b> Mean what you say. Use inflection and convey sincerely.</li> <li>• <b>Connect:</b> Put yourself in the customer's shoes, e.g. share your personal experience.</li> </ul> <p><i>"I understand your frustration, I waited on furniture delivery once for several hours and they don't show up."</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Convey with certainty that you will resolve the customer's issue/concern.</li> <li>• <b>Reassurance words:</b> "This is what I am going to do fix it.", "This will be a very different experience than you previously had.", etc.</li> <li>• <b>Steps to be taken:</b> Share with the customer what you will do step by step. Be specific and demonstrate confidence.</li> </ul> <p><i>"This is what I will do, I will review your order and make sure the address and due date are correct. Then, I will contact our dispatch center and I assure you I will get a technician out there as soon as possible. Let's start with your phone number."</i></p>