
Designed as a form of counterinsurgency, American colonial education was meant to "pacify" an insurgent population in the midst of a protracted war. Key to this pacification program was the use of American English as the medium of instruction. Learning English entailed suppressing vernacular languages. It turned the colonial classroom into a site linguistic struggle, or wars of translation. Continuing through the post-colonial period, Filipino nationalists called attention to the colonizing role of English. Not surprisingly, this nationalist critique has rested on the same colonial assumptions about language and translation: that both were mere instruments for the transfer of meanings and intentions. At the same time, popular non-colonial and non-nationalist practices of translation have emerged underneath these colonial and nationalist notions. Such practices, seen in vernacular slang formed from the remains of creole Spanish, provide alternative ways for understanding the role of translation in democratizing social expression in a post-colonial context.

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