



Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Constitution Hills, Quezon City

SIXTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

3702

House Bill No. _____

Introduced by REPRESENTATIVE ERIC L. OLIVAREZ

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Philippines has long been known for its people's proficiency in speaking the English language. In Southeast Asia alone, we are considered the best English-speaking nation amongst all other countries.

Slowly but surely too, our ability to speak English fluently is being more and more recognized and reinforced worldwide. In a recent study conducted by the GlobalEnglish Corporation, the Philippines was named the world's best country in business English proficiency, even beating the United States for that matter.

As per Global English's annual Business English Index (BEI) for the year 2012, only the Philippines attained a score above 7.0 among the 76 represented countries around the world. Such

rating translates to "high proficiency" which is indicative of the Filipinos' ability to take an active role in business discussions and perform relatively complex tasks.¹

It can be deduced from the foregoing that our English proficiency bridges different cultures and nations and ultimately contributes to our very own economic growth. Because we have the ability to speak the language which is widely used around the world, language barriers never get in the way of tourism, trade, business and profession involving parties of different nationalities. This gives us a competitive leverage in the global market against other nations in more ways than one.

First, there is no wonder why there is an outpour of Overseas Filipino Workers – relating and communicating with employers have always been easier with a Filipino worker, as compared to other nationalities. Indeed, aside from other great characteristics of Filipinos when it comes to their jobs, their ability to understand and speak English has always been a primary consideration for hiring them.

Second, our high competency in speaking the English language enables our business-oriented countrymen to expand their horizons internationally. Communication is very easy and dealing with foreign clients, partners and whatnot, prospective or otherwise, is no problem for us at all.

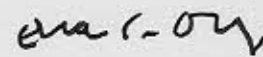
As the Business Processing Operation (BPO) Industry gains trend, Filipinos become highly in demand as well mainly because of our high English proficiency. In fact, as a country with one-tenth of the population of India, the Philippines recently overtook the latter as a hub for call centers. Over 400,000 Filipinos are now employed in call centers, roughly 50,000 more than those in India.²

Truly, the impact of having above-average proficiency in English is too substantial to ignore. It follows then that our skill in speaking the English Language must not only be maintained, but also improved so as not to lose our competitive advantage against other countries especially now that almost every aspect of business and economy is geared towards globalization.

While recognizing the greater importance of knowing and loving our very own language – that being Filipino – we cannot, however, afford to be below the benchmark of what the global market requires as can be gleaned from the steady decline in the Filipinos' ability to speak the language in recent years. Speaking the English language fluently seems a must nowadays, and the Philippines, having established a good reputation with respect to this matter (as discussed above), cannot just forego the benefits created by this skill to our economy.

We shall therefore adapt a system that will enhance the English proficiency further in the country. Young minds must be trained to be fluent in the language being used worldwide as this will serve as their stepping stone in a guaranteed good career in the future.

It is for this reason that the approval of this bill is being sought.


ERIC L. OLIVAREZ

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House Bill No. **3702**

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**AN ACT STRENGTHENING THE USE OF THE ENGLISH
LANGUAGE AS MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION IN GRADE
SCHOOL, HIGH SCHOOL, COLLEGE, AND VOCATIONAL
EDUCATION**

SECTION 1. *Short Title.* This Act shall be known as the
“English Proficiency Act”.

SECTION 2. *Definition of Terms.* The terms, as used in this
Act shall mean as follows:

Grade School – grade school shall pertain to
the elementary level of education which adopts or
follows the Kto12 system.

High School – pertains to the regular 4 year intermediate level of education.

College – pertains to the four or more years of tertiary education, depending on the course or degree pursued. For purposes of this Act, College education shall exclude vocational courses.

Vocational Education – pertains to informal education that prepares people for specific trades, crafts, and skills.

Student – as used in this Act, students shall pertain to anyone in grade school, high school and/or college level, as the case may be.

Learners; Apprentices– for purposes of this Act and this Act alone, the terms Learners and Apprentices shall be used interchangeably depending on the circumstances, so long as both refer to people enrolled in a vocational course.

SECTION 3. Mandatory English Aptitude Test. Every start or school year, and of every semester, a mandatory aptitude test

measuring the general English Proficiency of students shall be conducted. Based on the results of which, the lesson plan of teachers assigned to handle English courses such as Grammar, Reading Comprehension, Literature, Technical Writing, Research and the like shall adjust their lesson plans and tailor fit the same to address the key weaknesses of students in different Areas of English courses.

SECTION 4. *Mandatory English Post-Diagnostic Test.* At the end of every school year, or of every semester as the case may be, a mandatory test covering the same topics as that of the previously given Aptitude Test, as mentioned in the preceding paragraph, shall be conducted to measure the improvement of the students in English over the year or the semester.

SECTION 5. *Preparation of Mandatory Aptitude and Post-Diagnostic Tests.* The tests as mentioned in Sections 3 and 4 of this Act shall be prepared by the Department of Education (DepEd) for the grade school and high school level, the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) for the college level and TESDA for the vocational education.

SECTION 6. *Report of the Results of the Mandatory and Post-Diagnostic Tests.* It shall be the duty of each school, college, university or any other educational institution including those

that cater to vocational education to submit a summarized report of the results of the Mandatory and Post-Diagnostic tests to the respective departments which they are under.

SECTION 7. *Evaluation by DepEd, CHED and/or TESDA.*

These agencies shall have the duty to evaluate and analyze the reports submitted to them by the schools and/or universities under them and identify the core weaknesses of the students, or the learners/apprentices as the case may be. Based on these data, these agencies shall update, improve and/or revise their prescribed curriculum to address these general weaknesses.

SECTION 8. *English Language as Medium of Instruction.* In all levels of education, the English language shall be the standard medium of instruction in conducting classes, in oral and written examinations, home works, projects and the like in all the subjects except in Filipino subject and Philippine History.

SECTION 9. *Acceptable Use of Other Languages or Dialects.*

To ensure that students have a better understanding of the English Language, a teacher should exert extra effort to explain key concepts of the lesson to a struggling student in Filipino, or in any other language or dialect that will be easily understood by the latter. After doing so, the teacher may proceed to conduct the class using the English Language as medium of instruction again.

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

SECTION 10. *Mandatory English Lessons for Vocational Courses.* Every vocational course offered in the country shall incorporate basic English lessons for the learners and apprentices. The English component shall cover at least 30% of the entire vocational course.

SECTION 11. *Joint Sessions to Complete the English Component.* Alternatively, at the option of the institution offering different vocational courses, public or private, the English component as required in Section 10 of this Act may be conducted in a joint session for all enrollees in the said institution.

TEACHERS AND INSTRUCTORS

SECTION 12. *Seminars Required.* Teachers and Instructors of any English-related course or subject shall undergo regular trainings and seminars to improve their skills and knowledge of the subject they teach. Also, the seminars shall also cover ways to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of imparting knowledge to their students and to educate said educators themselves of the trends and novel concepts being developed world wide with respect to their specific fields they teach including but not limited

to Grammar, Reading Comprehension, Technical Writing, Research and Business/ Professional English and other branches of the subject.

SECTION 13. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* The Department of Education (DepEd) for grade school and high school, the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) for college, and TESDA the vocational education, shall respectively promulgate their own Implementing Rules and Regulations to carry out the provisions of this Act taking into consideration the peculiarities and specific needs of each educational level under their supervision. Such rules and regulations shall separately take effect upon their publication in three (3) newspapers of general circulation.

SECTION 14. *Repealing Clause.* – All laws, presidential decrees, letters of instructions, executive orders, rules and regulations insofar as they are inconsistent with this Act, are hereby repealed or amended as the case may be.

SECTION 15. *Separability Clause.* – In the event that any provision of this Act or any portion thereof is declared

unconstitutional by a competent court, the other provisions shall not be affected thereby and shall remain valid and enforceable.

SECTION 16. *Effectivity Clause.* – This Act shall take effect after its complete publication in at least three (3) newspapers of general circulation.

APPROVED.