

Multilingualism and English in a Global City

A Study Tour Organized by Ariane Macalinga Borlongan,
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Multilingualism is the linguistic reality the world lives in. And then, there is the prevalence of English as a global language. Thus, societies around the world has the complex task of balancing between acknowledging linguistic diversity and promoting and preserving the languages present in the society and, at the same time, using English in so many contexts and situations. This phenomenon is clearly seen in global cities like Singapore, where three other official languages representing different ethnic groups in the city-state co-exist with English.

This study tour titled 'Multilingualism and English in a Global City' was organized with this interest in mind. And the students who participated in the study tour were introduced to linguistic ethnography as a means of studying and investigating on multilingualism and English in Singapore.

There were eleven students who registered for the study tour and they received several lectures from academics in Singapore. Two lectures were given in a TUFSS partner institution — the National University of Singapore (NUS). Assoc. Prof. Vincent gave an overview of Singapore English and related it to Japanese English. Dr. Theodora Lam also gave a lecture on migrant-led diversity in Singapore. The students were also given a tour of the NUS campus, in particular, the library. One day was spend for them to experience campus life in NUS. In another university, Nanyang Technological University (NTU), talks and discussions were also held. Educator, researcher, and writer Dr. Anitha Devi Pillai talked about languages and literatures beyond the three official languages of Singapore. Daniel Lim also introduced the students to the research he is doing on Singapore English phonology and phonetics and also inspired students to do

advanced studies. A tour was also given to students in the campus of NTU.

Students were also led in a guided exploration of Singapore, highlighting multilingualism and English in the places visited, and also as necessary in the linguistic ethnographies they are doing for the study tour. The students were first brought to the British colonial structures along the Singapore River and were told of the beginnings of the city-state. And then, the students were brought to China Town and Little India, the two famous ethnic enclaves of Singapore. Another interesting place where students were able to visit is Katong where they witnessed firsthand Peranakan culture, a culture resulting from the intermarriage of Chinese and Malays. Students were also shown the modern structures demonstrate how Singapore has become a very important global city. Finally, students also visited migrant enclaves and they witnessed first-hand how globalization and



multilingualism interact in Singapore.



