

# Compartmentalizing Culture? A Critical Examination of the Language/Culture Nexus in Foreign Language Teaching

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## ABSTRACT

Recent explorations of the impact of globalization on the development of foreign language (FL) instructional materials invite us to revisit the meaning and purpose of 'culture' in foreign language teaching, as the complex nature of the term may entail widely divergent applications in policy and classroom practice. In the Philippines, learning about culture features heavily in educational policies and rationales on FL. However, incorporating cultural and intercultural content into instructional materials and FL pedagogy remains a challenge for local educators, whose very profession entails mediating between the foreign and the local, the self and the other, and the teaching of language skills and cultural content. This study critically examines these intersections and argues for the role of local educators as creators of language instructional materials that not only reinforce grammar lessons, but also reflect upon intercultural points of encounter and facilitate continuity in the current curricular structure of FL degree programs. The new materials may feature selected transnational themes and promote reflective skills towards other worldviews and ways of life. Suggestions are then made for a short chapter that include intercultural content, using the example of Rizal's European journey, his studies in Germany, and selected letter exchanges with Ferdinand Blumentritt.

## KEYWORDS

Foreign Language Teaching, Curricular Bifurcation, Intercultural Communication. Literacy, European Languages

If there is a longstanding assumption about the role of culture in foreign language (FL) learning, it is that the FL class serves as a venue where one can also learn about culture(s) in which the target languages are spoken. On one hand, this can involve the learning of customs, traditions, and artistic and literary works of the people who speak the language, and on the other hand, the nuanced ways a language is used to express one's self. Both these expressions of culture often pervade FL textbooks and are frequently referenced in FL educational goals and policies, forwarding the idea that language learning will inevitably entail learning some aspects about different ways of life.

A relatively recent incident that brought FL teaching to national attention in the Philippines was when Korean was introduced into the basic education curriculum at selected public schools in 2017. Seen in isolation, there appears to be little of apparent note in the incident, as other foreign languages, such as Spanish, Japanese, German, French and Mandarin, are also offered in line with the Department of Education's *Special Program in Foreign Language (SPFL)*, which aims to introduce foreign languages in public high schools. Yet this did not quell fears that Korean would be taught in lieu of the national language, Filipino ("DepEd: Korean and other foreign language classes elective, not replacement to Filipino"), a notion that can be understood in the context of the proposal to remove mandatory classes in Filipino at the tertiary level in the Commission of Higher Education's (CHED) Memorandum Order n. 20 s. 2013. Ostensibly, the concerns raised about Korean evoke the challenges and tensions that exist between promoting Foreign

Languages that are mostly associated with participation in globalization and its associated skill sets, as evidenced by the program goals of undergraduate degrees in Foreign Languages, or the CHED Memorandum Order (M.O.) no. 23 s. 2017, while simultaneously upholding the importance and continued usage of the national and regional languages and promoting Filipino culture(s) in the academe. It is thus worth considering how Foreign Language classes in the Philippines are conceived not only in terms of their relationship with both the culture(s) and context(s) wherein they are spoken, but also their relationship to the culture(s) and context(s) where they are learned, and the wider processes that characterize the globalization of culture and intercultural communication.

In light of the above, it is hardly surprising that cultural references are closely associated with FL classroom practices and language policies. At the same time, it is important to note that the introduction of ‘culture’ into the formal language learning class is neither as simple nor ‘automatic’ as it may first appear. For instance, in the teaching of English as a foreign language, the rise of communicative teaching approaches meant that instructional materials eschewed lengthy references to culture (Pulverness 426), and depictions of culture that did appear tended to remain within the bounds of what was considered socially acceptable in particular contexts, as much as possible avoiding topics such as politics, alcohol, religion, sex, narcotics, -isms and pork (Gray 159). The treatment of a complex term such as culture may thus vary in a language teaching context.

To illustrate, ‘culture’ may range from information or facts to be learned on one hand, and linguistic practices (including idiomatic expressions, gestures and so on) on the other, depending on the purposes of the language learners as well as the extent of cultural knowledge and linguistic capabilities of the language teacher. This is particularly relevant as FL teachers who have not had significant experience living in a place where the target language is spoken may find themselves reluctant to elaborate on ‘culture’ and cultural practices (Kramsch, Caine & Murphy-Lejeune 99), which are often assumed to be subjects more suitable for native speakers to impart.

Nevertheless, the increasingly fluid nature of migration and the rapid spread of cultural and linguistic information have subverted traditional expectations of the “one-way flow of expertise from center to periphery” (Block & Cameron 10), creating a space for the input of language teachers in peripheral contexts, as well as instigating discussion on how language learning can facilitate skills apt for ‘two-way’ flows of knowledge in an ever more globalizing world. As Kramsch, Caine, and Murphy-Lejeune note, “[u]nlike any other subject in the educational curriculum language study is both knowledge and performance, awareness and experience. It is the recognition of the boundary between the familiar and unfamiliar and the actual crossing of that boundary.” (105) Language teachers and learners therefore find themselves at the precipice of several intersections, ones that allow both teacher and learner to navigate unfamiliar practices, settings and attitudes, while finding ways to process their new experiences and knowledge.

Interestingly, or perhaps ironically, it was the increasing awareness of the ‘world out there’ and the complexity of language learning contexts that brought to the fore the importance of the local in language teaching, as well as the unique situational needs of students. One of the contexts that is of particular interest to this essay is the teaching of foreign language degree programs in higher education, being a setting where a number of different approaches and assumptions about teaching ‘culture’ in FL are put into practice. In the Philippines, FL degree programs are often taught outside of the target languages’ cultural context, which further begs the question as to what role local educators can play in imparting ‘culture’.

One of the key documents in the Philippine setting that can help to situate the treatment of culture in higher education is a memorandum order (M.O.) issued by the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) in 2017 (“CHED M.O. no. 23 s. 2017”). The M.O. no. 23 s. 2017 sets formal curricular guidelines for higher education institutions that wish to offer foreign languages as a degree program. Among its curricular stipulations are mandatory language classes in the first two years of the program that serve to prepare students towards independent use of the target language, or the language

that the students wish to specialize in, and content courses in the last two years of the program that cover history, literature, translation and linguistics of the target language.

The CHED guidelines are akin to the typical structure of FL programs in higher education in countries where the target language is not spoken, in that they focus on building communicative skills in the first half of the curriculum (which are also reinforced in most language textbooks (Pulverness 426-427)) before prescribing classes requiring the analysis of historical, cultural, literary and linguistic content in the second half of the curriculum (Kramsch, Cain & Murphy-Lejeune 99). This is known as curricular bifurcation, the term itself emphasizing a division in the curriculum based on different skills and content that are required for each half, namely communicative and spoken skills in the ‘grammar’ series of the first half, and analytical and writing/reading skills in the second half.

The division, however, goes beyond just expected skills. Arguably, ‘culture’ in the first ‘grammar’ half of the curriculum is largely represented by what Paige et al. call small ‘c’ culture (60), comprising largely of everyday practices and interaction, such as determining in what contexts one can ‘say’ something and ‘how’ to say something in a particular context (Kramsch, Cain & Murphy-Lejeune 105). On the other hand, the ‘culture’ that is taught in classes on history and literature in the second half of the curriculum, is the big ‘C’ Culture of “literature, geography, and other factual or tangible elements of the target culture” (Paige et al., 59), suited more for cognitive rather than performative purposes.

I thus argue that a particular definition of literacy, elaborated in the latter part of the essay, ought to be adopted to address the lack of coherence in the way that foreign language programs are structured in higher education, particularly in terms of culture. This definition of literacy is one that transcends functional comprehension and communicative skills by moving towards reinforcing skills for intercultural interpretation and understanding of various forms of texts. This is so that even the course of the grammar series, through certain forms of classroom activities and exercises, for example, there can be a more coherent transition to the content courses that are more analytical in nature. As the instructional materials needed for this will inevitably require some local knowledge (hence ‘inter-cultural’), creating these arguably supports the need for substantial local inputs for thematically or contextually-apt instructional materials, rather than purely commercial textbooks catering to a global audience.

This essay will be structured into four parts. The first part details some of the issues posed by the framing of language and culture in the descriptions and program rationales of selected degree programs in the Philippines that are characterized by an extensive language program, preparing users for the B1 level of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, or ‘independent language use.’ It also features related issues found in the Commission on Higher Education’s (CHED) Memorandum Order No. 23 s. 2017 on undergraduate degrees in FL.

The second part of this essay describes developments in pedagogical approaches that explore the nexus between language teaching and culture in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, taking the original program rationale of the 1976 BA in European Languages (BA EL) at the University of the Philippines (U.P.) Diliman as a document that exemplifies early local perspectives on FL teaching and culture in higher education. Here, the idea is forwarded that beyond textbooks where the ‘inter-cultural’ dimension is represented by stereotypes or cosmopolitan references, new FL instructional materials are encouraged to teach skills to help deal with the cultural diversity and complexity of the contemporary world that language learners live in.

In the latter half of the essay, I explore the issues facing the bifurcation of FL programs in higher education curricula, in that cultural content courses are treated as separate from the language courses and often require different cognitive skills. It is argued that a broad understanding of literacy that promotes conscious reflection about meanings found in various types of texts ought to be applied to the entire FL curriculum, serving as a way to link intercultural skills with grammar-based content. Lastly, the institutional guidelines for teaching Foreign Languages in the Philippines, while emphasizing

the study of foreign languages and cultures, also promote an appreciation for Filipino culture(s). This presents an opportunity for the creation of local instructional materials that incorporate different forms of literacy and themes to build reflective skills for intercultural communication, and with the example of Rizal's trip to Germany, I shall present a rough sketch of a short Foreign Language chapter that incorporates such goals.

### **The Nexus of Language and Culture in the Institutionalization of Foreign Language Degree Programs**

The references to how 'culture' is/should be framed in higher education in the Philippines can be gleaned from various sources, which shall serve to contextualize the link between the teaching of language and the teaching of culture. The importance of culture can, for example, be inferred from the CHED Memorandum Order 23 s. 2017 , which, as mentioned above, sets the guidelines for the creation of FL programs in the country. References to culture can also be found in the descriptions of programs or centers of universities that offer foreign language classes. One such program description is The University of the Philippines' Bachelor of Arts in European Languages (BA EL) rationale of 1976. This is significant as the BA EL remains to date the only FL degree program in the country taught almost completely in the target language(s). The program rationale of 1976 which remains the official rationale of the program as of writing<sup>1</sup>, cites, for instance, that

[a]mong the values attributed to the study of languages is the development of attitudes of tolerance and human-ness, of inter-racial respect and international understanding, the 'liberation' of man from prejudice, bigotry and hatred [...] It is well, therefore that while we, as teachers of the Humanities in the U.P. encourage and give primacy to the study of our own culture and language and inculcate in the student a genuine love of, and pride for what is Filipino, we also allow for interest in the culture, thought and life of other peoples, thereby enriching his background, extending his cultural and intellectual horizons and opening the doors to new fields for study and research. ("BA EL Program Rationale")

The framing of the BA EL program rationale thus emphasizes the importance of culture and the promotion of attitudes such as tolerance and interest in the life of 'other peoples', from which intercultural goals can be inferred as a desired outcome of the FL program.

Another higher education program that offers basic to intermediate language training is the Ateneo de Manila University's (ADMU) Modern Languages (ML) Program. The language series' description notes that cultural themes are introduced in the course of the grammar classes, while there is also the possibility of taking one class on popular culture associated with each of the program's offered languages. This suggests that through the teaching of language one (does, or must) teach culture ("Modern Languages"), namely by acquainting the students "with the history, art, and culture of the countries in which these languages are spoken. It also fosters their understanding and appreciation of Philippine culture in the process ("Modern Languages")." Language learning in ADMU thereby, as with the BA EL rationale, is assumed to have an inherently intercultural dimension. And akin to the BA EL rationale, it is unclear whether or not this aspect is an additional objective or skill to be further included in the selection of readings or the development of specific teaching materials and/or approaches, or if this should come naturally from the grammar series of classes that form the first level of a bifurcated curriculum.

Additionally, the CHED M.O. no. 23 s. 2017 for Foreign Languages, which applies to all FL degree programs offered at the tertiary level in the Philippines, appears to support these goals by exposing "students [to] the history, literature and culture of the foreign languages" and also cultivating "an appreciation of Filipino national and cultural heritage" ("CMO 23 s. 2017", Section

5.3). In Section 6.3, *Program outcomes specific to a sub-discipline or a major*, Point c) further stresses the aim to “demonstrate awareness of *foreign language culture*” (emphasis mine) which appears to be a neologism that is neither defined in the policy document nor a common academic term in the field of Foreign Languages.

In suggested program offerings of the CMO where culture is explicitly named, i.e. Business Culture, Language, Culture and Society, and Foreign Language Culture and Civilization, there is an attempt to emphasize that ‘culture’, at least in the sense of the big “C” Culture of historical events, social practices, and geography, is indeed incorporated in the latter half of the program, ostensibly in line with the bifurcation of grammar and content. Yet the difficulties of marrying the objectives and outcomes in a bifurcated curriculum can clearly be seen in the somewhat limited scope of the CHED M.O. no. 23’s *Sample Performance Indicators*, which show that the desired outcome of “demonstrat[ing] awareness of foreign language culture” (Section 6.3) is neither learning the ‘contents’ of culture, nor an intercultural component, i.e. extensive knowledge of the target language and culture to further appreciate and understand one’s own culture, but rather to “assess language use in specific cultural contexts” and “apply foreign language skills in various socio-cultural settings” (Section 7 ).

Culture in foreign language classes is thus interpreted by the CHED memorandum order as enhanced pragmatic skills rather than as an explicitly reflexive activity about one’s own culture or a foreign culture, revealing a notable disjuncture between objectives and outcomes. The glaring ambiguity in the official policy of *how* culture is to be incorporated further presents potential dangers, namely presenting curated, ‘cosmetic’ insertions of cultural information about contexts where the target language is spoken to suit solely communicative purposes (Pulverness 426-427). For example, some language instructional materials have been found to include numerous assumptions and cultural or gender stereotypes (Hilliard 239) or worse, have been characterized as neo-imperialist (Pulverness 426), such as through the appearance of privileging foreign cultures and cosmopolitan lifestyles for instance, by promoting “a materialistic set of values in which international travel, not being bored, positively being entertained, having leisure, and, above all, spending money casually and without consideration of the sum involved in the pursuit of these ends,” (Brown 13) – while being marketed to students for whom such activities are not always within the bounds of financial capability. In the context of a higher education degree program, therefore, there appears to be a need for more coherence between the representations of cultural content in the grammar classes and the ‘content’ courses of the latter half, not to mention addressing the question of how to reinforce intercultural skills.

In postcolonial societies in particular, Foreign Language Learning has in many ways been regarded as a double-edged sword – on one hand, languages spoken by former colonial powers have left long, intricate and often divisive legacies that eschewed the functionality of local languages, an attitude that influenced educators well into the decolonial era (Constantino 16-17). On the other hand, it was generally recognized that a number of formerly colonial languages, English in particular, would enable participation in global and globalizing processes characteristic of the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (“CHED M.O. 23 s. 2017”), which allowed for a more functional discourse of language learning emphasizing labor and mobility to prosper, particularly in the private sector (Pulverness 427).

Seen in light of initiatives in the Humanities to introduce local voices and experiences in curricula and teaching materials (Zavala 3), local FL teachers are put in a position where they at once have to be aware about their own cultures and histories, and at the same time, in the case of European languages, *European* cultures and histories in their teaching practices, as well as the connections and legacies of the latter in the former and vice versa.

In the context of a language degree program situated in the Humanities, this further has to be regarded in terms of the type of curricular structure, where it is unclear how and when inter-/cultural learnings should be introduced into the first half of the program (the grammar series), while not posing any clear answers as to how learning a foreign language is connected with the second “content” half of the program, which may arguably also be taught in English, Filipino, or any number of local languages. A potential resolution to the “gap” would then be exploring ways to draw attention to the

fact that when learning about the target culture(s), one needs a combination of both linguistic and interpretative skills that allow students to assess the language use, appropriateness and socio-cultural embeddedness of cultural content and how this relates to their own personal and cultural assumptions.

### **Language, Culture and Foreign Language Teaching**

This section describes historical perspectives in the intersection of language and culture and how these were later adopted into Applied Linguistics frameworks geared towards Language Teaching. In the Philippines, the relationship between language and culture has long been a feature of scholarly interest, as prominent *ilustrados* such as Jose Rizal and Pedro Paterno would examine what languages and etymological studies could reveal about pre-Hispanic norms and non-European influences, primarily to emphasize the existence of flourishing culture(s) prior to colonialism (see Mojares 81, 86). Yet despite the early recognition that language, primarily through its lexicon and figures of speech, served as a medium to uncover the remnants of pre-Hispanic culture(s), it would take nearly a century before the relationship between language and culture would breach the field of FL teaching, largely due to the latter's previous preoccupation with imparting grammar as the main objective of foreign language learning, as opposed to cultural information. Nevertheless, the link between foreign language teaching and culture is complex and dependent on the language in question, instructional norms, and setting of where it is taught (Kramsch, Cain & Murphy-Lejeune 100). Notably, there are also divergences between the approaches and debates that characterize the teaching of English as a Foreign Language and other languages. For instance, while Pulverness argues that the communicative focus in language learning, particularly in EFL or ESL, tended to draw attention away from cultural content in instructional materials (426), Kramsch contends that the way that culture is incorporated into language teaching approaches and materials can be seen in parallel with developments in the field of Intercultural Communication (ICC), particularly as ICC research focused on skills allowing peaceful co-existence among peoples of different backgrounds (Kramsch & Hua, "Language, Culture in ELT").

There does indeed appear to be a pedagogical link between the recognition of 'inter-ethnic' and 'inter-racial' relations that characterized ICC discourses in the 1970s, which focused on sources of social tensions originating in intersectional divides in many Western societies, such as between race, gender, ethnicity and various social classes, and the *culture-as-nation* paradigm of the 1980s and 1990s, which tended to define culture in terms of nationality (Kramsch & Hua, "Language, Culture in ELT"). For instance, Gray, through interviews with English language teachers in Spain, notes that while some teachers welcomed increasing efforts at inclusivity in the representation of diverse cultures and peoples inhabiting English-speaking contexts in instructional materials, others lamented that there were dangers of tokenistic representations, particularly of non-white peoples, that did not forward intercultural understanding in a meaningful way (163). On the other hand, in the case of German as a Foreign Language, the incorporation of geographic and cultural facts (*Landeskunde* and *Kulturkunde*) into FL lessons became increasingly common in syllabi, curricula and teaching materials since at least the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Altmayer 4), which later triggered scholarly debates on the difficulties caused by the ambiguity of pedagogical goals that involved learning about culture (4-5).

ICC turned its attention to globalization in the 2000s and beyond, during which culture, being embedded in rapid transnational and global flows of movement was becoming gradually de-centered, in the sense that cultural practices were increasingly becoming uncoupled from particular places (Kramsch & Hua, "Language, Culture in ELT"). This had several effects on language teaching practices around the world, such as in Japan, where the official response to English as a Foreign Language in the midst of increasing globalization was to assert the uniqueness of Japan's national identity through the depiction of essentialist and nationalist elements of Japanese culture in study guides provided for English FL learners (Kubota 23), as well as national policy (the *Course of Study*) (Kubota 14), while other textbooks have drawn their attention to developing communication skills that may be applied in contexts beyond language learning (Altmayer 12-13), such as in international workplaces.

The various approaches to culture and foreign language teaching around the world can serve as a background to reflect about the Philippine context of higher education policy in FL. The following presents the provisions of the U.P.'s Bachelor of Arts in European Languages (BA EL) program rationale, which was referenced in the previous section, and how it ties in with some of the ideas on culture in language classes presented above.

One of the bases for drafting the program rationale is an article authored by Max Kirch in the *Modern Language Journal* in 1970 called *The Relevance of Language and Culture*. Kirch's article acts as a window into the prevailing discourses of language and culture, particularly, learning a foreign language, at the time. Of the following quotes, the first appears in the BA EL program rationale, while the latter is one of the concluding lines of the Kirch article itself:

It would be wise, therefore, to stress those elements in a liberal education which prepares one for the societal and humane aspects of life in general. One of the fortes of foreign language study is precisely this: to liberate the mono-cultural individual from his provincialism and to make him tolerant of other viewpoints, beliefs and ways of life. (Kirch 414)

The unique advantage of foreign language learning is that it allows the student to get inside a foreign culture without leaving his own shores. He learns about a foreign culture through its own unique verbal symbols and comes to the understanding that, even though others peoples speak differently and behave differently, their way of thinking, believing and acting, is not necessarily wrong, just different. (Kirch 415)

There are a few points here on language, culture and pedagogical expectations that deserve attention. First, the quote's assumption that the student can 'come to an understanding' of a foreign culture is important because there does not appear to be a clear connection between how learning a language ought to transcend both its communicative ('language learning') and cognitive goals (learning about a foreign culture through verbal symbols), to develop the *skills* of intercultural communication and reflection, which not only pertains to the bifurcated curriculum but also the ambiguities of an 'intercultural' goal and how to achieve it.

Secondly, the recognition of 'unique verbal symbols' in the Kirch quote may be thought of as a moment in which the language learner realizes that even at the smallest linguistic levels (such as that of the sign), there is evidence of cultural differentiation. In particular, the claim that "to isolate and confine [the student] to a monocultural and monolingual world would be depriving him of his cultural legacy as a member of the human race" ("BA EL Program Rationale" Section 1) is worth noting, as it implicitly supports the idea that speaking a language will entail a certain way of thinking. The argument thus appears to indicate that a language is not only intimately related to the creation of culture, but that speaking one language will create a culture in the singular, having a homogenizing effect - Kirch also employs the word 'mono-cultural' (414) to describe an individual who should be liberated from 'provincialism' (414) through foreign language learning. Considered together with the BA EL program rationale quote from the previous section that the degree program should "encourage and give primacy to the study of our own *culture and language* (emphasis mine) and inculcate in the student a genuine *love of, and pride for what is Filipino* (emphasis mine)" ("BA EL Program Rationale"), the mere mention of a 'monolingual' and 'monocultural' individual in the same stroke as 'Filipino culture' is embedded in conceptual linkages between singular entities of nation-state, language and culture, that are presumed to interact with other functionally similar entities that exhibit different behaviors.

These views on language therefore appear to be rooted in assumptions of logocentrism, an idea forwarded in Western scholarship that language has concrete meanings, namely, "that characteristic of texts, theories, modes of representation and signifying systems that generate a

desire for a direct unmediated given hold on meaning, being and knowledge.” (Gross, 25-26) In other words, language is assumed to be a means by which to represent a concrete reality and knowledge of our surroundings. This idea was taken further during the Enlightenment, when language was linked to culture. A famous proponent of this was Herder, who, for example, posited that a language’s lexicon, or *Wörterbuch*, was built from the sounds of the entire world (81) going on to state that the acknowledgement of an (existing) thing through vocabulary is akin to ‘name-giving’ in ‘Eastern’ cultures, a capability inaccessible to animals as their speech is described by Herder as conforming to ‘alogos’ the Greek word for speechless, or alternatively, lacking reason (logos) (73). After arguing that language necessarily represented the realities of humans living in a particular ‘herd’ or society (170), Herder declared that as it was impossible for humans to remain in a single ‘herd’, the emergence of different ‘national languages’ was inevitable (187). A new language thus existed for every new (cultural) ‘world’ (192).

The claims above thus appear to demonstrate vestiges of logocentric thought in Linguistics through the hypothesis of linguistic relativity (Kramsch 34). Otherwise known as the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis<sup>3</sup>, it postulates that language, through its structures and categories, shapes thinking on social realities (32). Later interpretations of the hypothesis proposed both a ‘weak’ version that argues that linguistic structures and categories influence thought, and a ‘strong’ version characterized by linguistic determinism in forming cognitive categories (Pinker 57), i.e. that one’s thought is necessarily decided by the structure and concepts present in one’s language(s). However, the empirical validation of a language espousing a particular worldview requires greater introspection, particularly due to generalizations that can be drawn by broadly claiming that people are prisoners of their language, i.e. the ‘strong’ version of the hypothesis of linguistic relativity. For instance, McWhorter contends that extant psycholinguistic experiments such as Fausey et al. have demonstrated that structural elements of language are correlated with only minimal to moderate changes in how we see and interact with the world, i.e. worldviews (McWhorter 9-10). Arguing further, he reasons that such a claim maintains its attractiveness because it originally served as evidence to show that peoples that had once been characterized by Eurocentric discourses as ‘primitive’ and ‘savage’ were indeed capable of indigenous abstraction and could present radically different points of view that were in no way inferior to how the West perceived and talked about the world (136). The argument hints that the association of language with a particular worldview, while empirically limited, served a practical purpose in that it undergirded discourses that rejected chauvinist discourses of colonial powers, while serving as a source of solidarity in post-colonial narratives.

Indeed, one of the more deleterious effects of the prestige languages that came with colonialism was the relative disempowerment of local languages and the linguistic policies enacted in the name of nation-building in the period of decolonization in which colonial powers withdrew from their former colonies following the end of WWII (Constantino 16-17). The presentation of culture and language as generative of worldviews attained new dimensions as it was regarded as imperative to theorization and nation-building to throw off the yoke of colonial linguistic trappings, as seen in academic production in the Philippines emphasizing the explicit and conscious use of the national language, Filipino (Salazar 45, Reyes 248). In Salazar’s essay *Ukol sa Wika at Kulturang Pilipino*, the notion of language reflecting contextual realities is reaffirmed through descriptions of language as the *pahayag-pahiwatig*, *impukan-kuhanan*, and *daluyan* (19) or the expression/impression, source/resource, and vessel, of culture (Reyes 248), with culture representing the ‘*kabuuan ng isip, damdamin, ugali at karanasan ng isang grupo ng tao*’. (the summation of knowledge, emotions, customs and experiences of a group of people) (Salazar 45). Salazar’s focus in the essay is centered on the creation and enrichment of a national language which is anchored in a history of anti-colonial imperatives in the Philippines, during which the creation of a country (i.e. comprising of a culture and language) was paramount (35). The very idea of language as *impukan-kuhanan*, or source/resource, means that language stores the ‘past and the knowledge’ of the culture (27), exhibiting parallels with logocentric assumptions that

allowed the linguistic bases for nations in Europe. While Salazar mentions that there are certainly negative, chauvinistic effects of irredentism and the political ambitions of states in the name of the nation, particularly in WWII in Europe (23), there appears to be little of a concrete solution in terms of language teaching practices or approaches against the threat of nationalistic/linguistic chauvinism, other than a positive portrayal of multilingualism in the service of the creation of a nation/national language, i.e. through the role of the polyglot as a type of translator responsible for the enrichment of the emerging national culture and language (30), and by ‘indigenous’ languages that enrich the national language and culture (39).

The ability of educators and language teachers, however, to promote respect of other cultures while not implying a hierarchy of languages, *even in a multilingual domestic setting*, arguably remains crucial in order to prevent the tragedy of how colonial languages facilitated societal divisions through power asymmetries, and often, linguistic chauvinism .

Indeed, there is growing evidence about the limits of *culture-as-nation* approaches in FLT, despite their ability to introduce a modicum of awareness of national identities, in that the socio-cultural dynamics of globalization tended to engender an increasing recognition of intercultural communication as “interpersonal exchanges of meaning” (Liddicoat & Scarino, quoted in Kramsch and Hua “Language and Culture in ELT”). This re-framing brought to the forefront an interest in developing general skills as well as attitudes for matters pertaining to communicating with other peoples and their potentially differing worldviews, *even if* coming from similar ethno-linguistic backgrounds. Approaches in language and culture in FLT from the 1990s onward thus had to contend with the changing discourses on culture that came about with globalization, or according to Anthony Giddens, “the intensification of worldwide social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa.” (Giddens 64). Steger (6-11) further noted the cultural dimensions of globalization, with FLT pedagogy significantly turning its attention to its consequences. Under globalization, the concept of culture was no longer “tied to fixed localities such as town and nation, but acquire[d] new meanings that reflect[ed] dominant themes emerging in a global context” (Steger 10) and thereby attained a complex, mobile and interactional character that cannot adequately be captured in FLT by the discourse of *culture-as-nation* alone. Even when conceding the argument that globalization merely reinforces long-standing global power asymmetries, the gradual framing of cultural expressions and forms beyond tokenistic expressions of culture-as-nation can also be seen as diverging from ideas originating in European modernity that aggregated the nation with a specific territory, people and language - concepts that were later adopted across colonies with vastly different social and linguistic heritages and needs. As Pulverness notes regarding the current situation: “The problematic relationship of culture to language teaching and learning is further complicated by the way in which the concept of culture in language teaching has been freighted with connotations of an outmoded approach to transmitting unmediated facts and information about an implicitly superior ‘target’ culture” (426), which supports a turn towards language education that promotes goals that supersede both communicative skills related to language teaching approaches as well as the cognitive skills related to learning information about cultures.

Recognizing the effects of globalization , the need for intercultural ‘skills’ or even ‘attitudes’ has been variously labeled as a 21<sup>st</sup> century or transversal skill, one that can be used in a wide variety of settings that characterize an interconnected and rapidly changing world (UNESCO Asia-Pacific, 2). Care and Luo, for instance, frame intercultural understanding as part of a skill set that fosters global citizenship (VI) that can be applied both within multicultural, multilingual national communities and without.

The changing conceptualization of culture and the objectives of intercultural communication thus necessitate a shift of perspective in FL teaching that not only explicitly recognizes the need for skills in intercultural communication, but also its pedagogical output through the creation of language teaching materials reflective of a more ‘flexible’ conception of culture as detailed above. It may thus

very well be useful not only in promoting an understanding of cultures that transcend one's own country, but also from within multicultural and multilingual nation states that have been beset by issues of intra-state cultural dominance, or the enforcement of a mono-cultural, mono-lingual ethos.

### **Language and Culture in the Foreign Language Classroom**

The growing appreciation of the diversity of cultures, subcultures, and recognizable cultural commodities and experiences across the world has encouraged researchers and language teachers to examine the use of linguistic elements that are shared across languages, or translingualism, which assumes the participation of mono-, bi- and multilinguals in a “common communicative arena” (Molina 1247). Some evidence of this in FLT can be found anywhere from the micro-level, such as the use of ‘internationally comprehensible’ words as an introductory vocabulary activity in the basic level of German in the textbooks *Studio D* and *Studio 21*, to the macro-level, which can be seen in the MULTICOM project in Europe that aims to promote translingual competencies for international professional communication (1244). With a view towards these developments, Altmayer proposes a divestment of the traditional framing of culture in language learning and leans towards three recommendations for incorporating culture in the language classroom under globalization:

1. The object of study with relevance to culture in a Foreign Language class should not be a (specific) country, but the discursive processes of interpreting and negotiating meaning in the foreign language (Altmayer 12).
2. The focus in the foreign language class ought to shift from learning cultural facts about a foreign country to developing strategies and skills for dealing with other cultures. The goal of this is to enrich the students' ability to participate in discourses and thus global interaction. Foreign languages would thus contribute towards the strengthening of global citizenship (12).
3. Cultural learning is an individual process where the learners use their own cultural interpretative frameworks in learning about another language or culture. The foreign language class should therefore provide the opportunity for students to reflect critically upon their own cultural interpretative frameworks and construct new ones (13).

If we suppose that one learns the necessary elements of a language to achieve a basic grasp of cultural or pragmatic norms in the process of learning a foreign language, understanding the relationship between language and culture from Altmayer's framework above suggests that this ought to be supplemented by classroom exercises and activities that emphasize the various cultural interpretations of different forms of texts and media in the language as reflective activities in the FL classroom, sometimes even to the extent of creating ‘defamiliarizing’ exercises that put the learner in a situation where they have to contend with coping with unfamiliar situations and practices, like in science-fiction or high fantasy settings (Pulverness 430). Language classes can then serve to emphasize both linguistic and interpretative skills, while increasing the students' appreciation for texts and discursive practices other than those articulated in Philippine languages or English.

Two dimensions remain significant for the task at hand, however. The first is the institutionalized *culture-as-nation* paradigm reflected in the CHED Memorandum no. 23 s. 2017 in the Philippines, which reveals the continuing importance of the nation-state, or at the very least the environment of the learners. The second is the appropriate language level for such activities. In the following section, the aspect of culture in FLT curricula will be described, while suggesting the concept of literacy as a way to bridge the two levels of the curricular structure and achieve the goal of ‘learning culture’ throughout the course of FL degree programs. The Department of European Languages at the University of the Philippines Diliman will be used as a case study as the only Department in the country where an entire degree program taught in the language has been implemented. The section

that follows will suggest the role of local educators to address the need for connecting the local and/or national culture with the ‘foreign’.

### Curricular Bifurcation and the Introduction of Intercultural Content

A key feature of the curriculum of the Bachelor’s degree in European Languages at U.P. Diliman (BA EL) is its division into grammar classes and content classes, which mirrors how Foreign Languages are structured as university degree programs across the world, particularly in contexts where they are not used as a lingua franca (see Maxim et al 1). That being said, the BA EL program at U.P. offers, in line with the concept of a bifurcated curriculum, various language and grammar courses. The grammar series, which has basic to advanced classes in German, Russian, Italian, Portuguese, French and Spanish are taught in the first two years (four semesters) of the program which allow the learner to reach a level at which he or she can use the language independently in communication, and core ‘content’ courses are taught in the latter two years as shown in their course numberings in Table 1.

First Year		Second Year		Third Year		Fourth Year	
1st Sem.	2nd Sem.	1st Sem.	2nd Sem.	1st Sem.	2nd Sem.	1st Sem.	2nd Sem.
10-11 (Elementary Courses)	12-13 (Intermediate Courses)	14-15 (Advanced Courses)	30-31 (Advanced Spoken), 40 (Advanced Grammar)	45 (Phonetics and Phonology), 60 (Composition), 80 (Stylistics), 100 (Culture and Civilization)	101 (Contemporary Culture and Civilization), 110 (Survey of Literature), EL 180 (Directed Language Activities) and/or EL 170 (Techniques of Translation)	EL 199 (Research Methods), EL 180 and/or EL 170, 140 (Technical Language)	EL 200 (Undergraduate Thesis)

**Table 1.** Distribution of selected grammar and content courses of the current BA EL curriculum of UP Diliman (as of Academic Year 2017-2018). Class numbers apply to all languages.

This division, or bifurcation, of the FL Curriculum has, however, brought about a number of critiques due to a perceived lack of coherence in its pedagogical approaches and outcomes. Kern, for instance, speaks of “[...] divergent pedagogies (communicative approaches vs. literary and cultural analysis) and competencies (speaking vs. reading/writing) that are prioritized at the two levels.” (Maxim et al. 1), resulting in an “epistemological-linguistic-cognitive-methodological divide” (Kern, “Reconciling the Language-Literature Split through Literacy”). Here, Kern emphasizes the differences between the requirements of the grammar classes in the first half of the curriculum, which involve communication and that mainly prioritize speaking, and the substantive content in the second half of the curriculum, whose classes require analytical skills for subjects such as literature, cultural studies, translation and didactics in the target language, and where readings and written output are more relevant than oral competency.

This abrupt transition between pedagogical approaches and expectations in the bifurcated curriculum, as described above, has been documented to have deleterious effects on students that find themselves, after two years of communicative language classes, ill-equipped to deal with the starkly divergent demands of the second half of the curriculum. The suggestion for a short chapter proposed in this essay serves to address the curricular gap in FL programs by proposing a framework for the creation of transitional instructional materials that draw heavily on a broad definition on literacy. This perspective on literacy involves not only various forms of text – from poetry, prose, letters, and

even images, but also acknowledges the importance of situating texts in particular socio-cultural and historical contexts. Kern, in an attempt to address the ‘language-literature’ split in higher education FL programs, thus proposes the following definition :

(Literacy is) the use of socially-, historically- and culturally-situated practices of creating and interpreting meaning through texts. It entails at least a tacit awareness of the relationships between textual conventions and their contexts of use, and ideally, the ability to reflect critically on those relationships. Because it is purpose-sensitive, literacy is dynamic – not static – and variable across and within discourse communities and cultures. It draws on a wide range of cognitive abilities, on knowledge of written and spoken language, on knowledge of genres, and on cultural knowledge. (“Reconciling the Language-Literature Split through Literacy”)

The interpretation of such a definition into classroom exercises and themes has a great deal of potential to address the need for a proper transition between both levels of the FL higher education curriculum. Firstly, its conscious incorporation of understanding socio-cultural situatedness and not merely communicative skills presents an opportunity for teachers to gradually introduce the big “C” Culture of literature and history even in basic levels of FL, particularly through the presentation of various forms of text. Secondly, it emphasizes the importance of writing and reading (or more broadly, ‘interpreting’), which are often overlooked in favor of speaking in language learning classes with a communicative approach. Thirdly, it provides an impetus and framework for teachers to introduce instructional materials that promote awareness of various social, cultural and historical contexts along with diverse forms of images and written texts throughout the ‘grammar’ series. This definition of literacy emphasizes, as with Altmayer’s ideas above of culture in FL as ‘interpreting meaning’, the importance of *both* linguistic and interpretative skills which can serve as preparation for the literary and historical content taught in the latter half of the program. It is also an attempt to concretize the original assumptions of the BA EL program, as it appears to allude to a form of literacy leading to intercultural tolerance that would supersede the functional and communicative skills meant to be developed in the program, but this was neither explicitly addressed or defined.

Nevertheless, the issue of whether students are linguistically prepared to critically engage with such topics as cultural comparison and identity at a basic level of language remains: given that Kern’s definition of literacy can possibly link the learning of grammar to the study of literature and language, what is the earliest point at which the ‘push beyond basic interpersonal communication skills’ (“Reconciling the Language-Literature Split through Literacy”) can be implemented in the grammar series?

We have already seen in the previous section that some language textbooks such as *Studio D* and *Studio 21* have made efforts to introduce cultural similarities pertinent in the 21<sup>st</sup> century through translanguaging at an early stage of language learning, even as early as the introductory chapters where internationally recognized words are the focus of the lesson, yet there appears to be broad reluctance from publishers to issue FL textbooks or materials that are tailored to students with the intent of pursuing philological subjects that involve learning about literature, language and history after having learned the language, ostensibly for commercial reasons (Pulverness 426-427).

However, a narrative that describes local efforts to produce the appropriate materials for FL in higher education can be found in Maxim et al., who went so far as to restructure the entire syllabi of the German Studies Department at Emory University and to create customized instructional materials, particularly for the grammar series, that paid attention to the transition between language learning and content (6). To illustrate, Maxim et al.’s German Studies Department explicitly included cultural inquiry as a goal in the context of basic level themes such as identity formation (e.g. as a student, family member, citizen, consumer) (8), and coming-of-age (e.g. in relation to nature, education, family, among

others) (10), and then went on to select literary works that focus on identity construction and changing discourses of concepts throughout German history, such as the concept of ‘love’, (11) for advanced learners.

In the context of our case study, the BA EL typically combines the use of FL textbooks published in France, Italy, Germany and Spain as main resource materials with a number of teaching materials from other sources or that are self-made by the teacher. The books commonly used range from *Alter Ego +* in French, *Mi Piace* and *Nuovo Espresso* in Italian, *Studio D* and *Studio 21* in German and *Nuevo ELE* in Spanish, among select others. While the books may appear to be rather different when taken at face value, they share the guidelines articulated in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), a standardized six-point descriptive scale developed by the Council of Europe used to describe language proficiency.

The framework sets the minimum expectations per level of language while acting as guidelines for both grammatical and thematic content for textbooks of European Languages. The six levels of language proficiency, namely A1 and A2 (Basic Users), B1 and B2 (Independent Users) and C1 and C2 (Proficient Users), are associated with a range of skill descriptors to help educators determine their students’ level of language. As the BA European Language Program’s grammar series aims for at least independent use (B1), the pertinent skills are shown in Table 2 below.

		A1	A2	B1
Speaking	Listening	I can recognize familiar words and very basic phrases concerning myself, my family and immediate concrete surroundings when people speak slowly and clearly.	I can understand phrases and the highest frequency vocabulary related to areas of most immediate personal relevance (e.g. very basic personal and family information, shopping, local area, employment). I can catch the main point in short, clear, simple messages and announcements.	I can understand the main points of clear standard speech on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. I can understand the main point of many radio or TV programs on current affairs or topics of personal or professional interest when the delivery is relatively slow and clear.
	Reading	I can understand familiar names, words and very simple sentences, for example on notices and posters or in catalogues.	I can read very short, simple texts. I can find specific, predictable information in simple everyday material such as advertisements, prospectuses, menus and timetables and I can understand short simple personal letters.	I can understand texts that consist mainly of high frequency everyday or job-related language. I can understand the description of events, feelings and wishes in personal letters.
	Spoken Interaction	I can interact in a simple way provided the other person is prepared to repeat or rephrase things at a slower rate of speech and help me formulate what I’m trying to say. I can ask and answer simple questions in areas of immediate need or on very familiar topics.	I can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar topics and activities. I can handle very short social exchanges, even though I can’t usually understand enough to keep the conversation going myself.	I can deal with most situations likely to arise whilst travelling in an area where the language is spoken. I can enter unprepared into conversation on topics that are familiar, of personal interest or pertinent to everyday life (e.g. family, hobbies, work, travel and current events).

Table 2. Expected Skills from CEFR levels A1-B1 (“Self-assessment Grid”) (continued on next page)

	Spoken Production	I can use simple phrases and sentences to describe where I live and people I know.	I can use a series of phrases and sentences to describe in simple terms my family and other people, living conditions, my educational background and my present or most recent job.	I can connect phrases in a simple way in order to describe experiences and events, my dreams, hopes and ambitions. I can briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans. I can narrate a story or relate the plot of a book or film and describe my reactions.
Writing	Writing	I can write a short, simple postcard, for example sending holiday greetings. I can fill in forms with personal details, for example entering my name, nationality and address on a hotel registration form.	I can write short, simple notes and messages relating to matters in areas of immediate needs. I can write a very simple personal letter, for example thanking someone for something.	I can write simple connected text on topics which are familiar or of personal interest. I can write personal letters describing experiences and impressions.

Table 2. Expected Skills from CEFR levels A1-B1 (“Self-assessment Grid”) (continued from previous page)

On one hand, it is typical for European Language textbooks to explicitly identify skill, grammar, and pronunciation goals, described in detail in the table of contents of each individual FL textbook. On the other hand, the inclusion of inter-/cultural dimension is largely dependent upon the discretion of the textbook’s authors and editors – although it is worth noting that the beginner levels (A1, A2) feature a high degree of shared thematic content across languages and textbooks, while B1 content, as seen in the CEFR table above, deals with more complex themes since the range of grammar and vocabulary of the students at this level is much broader. Some of the common topics in the books used in the BA European Languages program, such as *Alter Ego +* in French, *Mi Piace* and *Nuovo Espresso* in Italian, *Studio D* and *Studio 21* in German and *Nuevo Ele* in Spanish are represented in Table 3 below.

Topics common to levels A1 and A2	Topics common to B1
Introductions, travel and vacations, family, eating outside, hobbies or leisure activities, housing and the home, jobs, telling the time, purchasing clothes or groceries, common locations and directions	Art, gender, technology, media, film, music, politics, holidays and festivals, regional differences in culture or language, social issues, relationships, health, addressing common problems

Table 3. Common topics per language level

As can be seen in the table above, the topics change their focus from activities that engage the self (in the A1 and A2 levels) to domains that involve one’s relationship with society (B1). The topics are indeed broad, and it cannot often be helped that they include references to the national contexts of the countries of their origin, while at the same time focusing on topics that a large and diverse international market for the textbooks may reasonably have in common. Yet their standardization and mass appeal may leave potential areas of local input to be desired, particularly since language learning manifests itself both in policy and practice as a two-way process of learning about the self *and* other, rather than merely a receptive act of internalizing the various depictions of culture in target language textbooks. Taking this into consideration, the next section shall focus on a proposal as to how educators in the Philippines can supplement the existing textbooks of the grammar series with locally-produced, level-appropriate materials that promote both literacy and a dynamic understanding of culture beyond its

tangible and everyday expressions, as meaning-making, while remaining cognizant of national and local guidelines on incorporating an understanding or appreciation of the culture(s) and languages in the Philippines. While it will use an example with themes suitable for a German language class, it may serve as a stimulus for other language teachers in the Philippine setting to incorporate transnational themes in their classroom materials.

### **Local Materials, Global Perspectives**

The proposal below, while initial and provisional, suggests a task for those who teach foreign languages to create teaching materials that recognize higher education goals of understanding one's own culture(s) while developing a mindset toward the global dimension of cultural exchange (Altmayer, 7) as well as a broad view of literacy. In order to limit its scope, this section will focus on German-language content, although similar themes or principles are also plausible for other Foreign Languages. The inspiration is taken partially from the decolonial education practices of producing alternative stories in order to affirmatively assert one's subject-position in dominant narratives<sup>1</sup> and can also be linked to similar pedagogical initiatives in FL that have been tried before – such as the *Ihr und Wir* series made for an African German learner market, and *Criss Cross* (1998-2001), a series of coursebooks featuring selected language and (inter)cultural topics geared towards a Central and Eastern European market.

As mentioned above, the considerations of teaching materials creation are both the promotion of literacy and the facilitation of reflecting on how meaning is attributed culturally. The introduction of familiar local content can further facilitate the activation of the affective level in language learning - an example of this approach can be found for Italian language learners in a learning unit on Philippine migration to Italy created by Bautista, who conducted research in Italian language classes at the Department of European Languages at U.P. Diliman. The learning unit she developed draws on the common experience of migration in Filipino families by showing select scenes from a reportage on a Filipina migrant to suit pedagogical needs. Evaluations of the students taken afterwards revealed a largely positive response and that the learning unit attained the goal of “contextualizing and humanizing the selected materials” (289). Among the responses of the learners were the idea that the focus should not solely be on the Filipino perspective but on the reception towards them and the culture of the Italians:

*Forse ci può essere una parte in cui parliamo più della cultura italiana. Perché a me piace molto che lei ha incluso la cultura filippina e lo trovo molto interessante ma penso che sia meglio se parliamo delle due culture l'uno accanto l'altro. (290)*  
/ (Maybe there can be a part in which we speak more about Italian culture. This is because I really like it that she included the Filipino culture and I find it really interesting but I think that it would be better if we talk about the two cultures side by side.) (Translation provided by Bautista through personal communication).

This insightful comment emphasizes the need to adapt locally produced materials with an explicitly intercultural and transnational approach that dovetails with the larger goals of FLT, such as in Pulverness' suggestion of thematizing transnational and migrant experiences in the FL class, which have the effect of raising awareness not only about two separate (national) cultures, but also about the process of how one deals with different cultures (Pulverness 430-431). For a German learning unit, there are several areas of focus that lend themselves to being thematized given the criteria above. Suggested topics are included below per level:

### **Basic Level – A2**

1) Rizal und Deutschland (Rizal and Germany, Level A2) – *Historical connections*

### **Independent User Level - B1, B2**

2) Kino/Sine (Level B1) – *Cultural connections*

3) Deutsche auf den Philippinen und Pinoys in Deutschland (Germans in the Philippines and Filipinos in Germany, Level B1) – *Transnational Connections*

4) Deutsche schreiben über die Philippinen (Germans write about the Philippines, Level B2) – *Self/Other Dimensions, Knowledge Production, Modernity in Germany*

5) Philippinische Bezüge auf Deutsche Philosophie (Philippine References to German Philosophy, Level B2) – *Self/Other Dimensions, Knowledge Production, Modernity in the Philippines*

This section in particular will focus on the suggestion for the latter half of the A2 level, *Rizal und Deutschland*<sup>2</sup>. Here, I will discuss briefly the relevance of Rizal to Germany and why this may serve as an apt preparation for the dimensions of cultural contact and discovery to be covered in the succeeding chapters. The relationship between the thematic content and linguistic elements that are necessary to understand the texts shall also be presented.

Both in the secondary and tertiary levels of education in the Philippines, Rizal and his works are required reading: The novels *Noli me Tangere* and *El Filibusterismo* are assigned in high school, while all universities and colleges in the Philippines are mandated to offer a stand-alone subject on Rizal as part of their curriculum. Rizal is also widely known for his contributions to Fil-Hispanic literature and socio-political thought, not to mention the enduring discussions on his ideas about the relationship of the Philippines to the Spanish colonial administration, patriotism, and the many versions of ‘Rizal’ that have been appropriated by colonial governments and political and social elites in the Philippines. Nevertheless, the choice of Rizal is made here for mostly practical purposes that draw on students’ previous knowledge, and due to the fact that he serves as an example of a prominent Filipino whose experiences in Germany and contacts with German-speaking individuals (amongst other intercultural encounters) were well-detailed in his various letters, many of which are authentic examples of writing by a Filipino in the German language. Certainly, one could entertain the possibility that a fictional character could stand in the place of Rizal in a textbook, although arguably, the parallels would be almost unavoidable. While the suggested chapter outline does not purport to contain some of the more political ideas of Rizal (at this level, students are also unlikely to possess the vocabulary to discuss these issues in German), it does attempt to present a set of issues that transcend typical linguistic (represented by the CEFR guidelines) and intercultural (represented by the thematization of exchanges on culture shock, the representation of Rizal in the German public domain) objectives by selecting and pedagogically modifying materials that are crucial in fostering skills for inter-/cultural awareness (Pulverness 426) and incorporating knowledge about and asserting a space for Filipino personalities in the realm of the ‘global’.

The proposed unit thus draws on familiar topics that many learners in the Philippine context have background knowledge about, and has potentially motivating effects as shown in feedback on the learning unit developed by Bautista (see above), which demonstrated an increase in interest of the students after the introduction of explicitly intercultural topics involving the Philippines (288). Each chapter is written so that it demonstrates and reinforces skills that have already been learned, which comply with CEFR level-based descriptors of reading, writing, listening and speaking skills. The proposed Rizal chapter, for instance, is intended for the latter half of the Basic Level, or A2. The unit thus does not delve into the more substantial aspects and legacies of Rizal’s thought; rather, it serves as a background by which these topics can further be understood and elaborated upon in the succeeding learning units in the latter half of the curriculum, i.e. in classes on Society and Culture, and

potentially other branches of the Humanities. Thus the main themes of the chapter will simply cover basic information about Rizal's sojourn in Europe, his motivations for leaving his homeland, his sojourn in Germany, his correspondences on culture with Ferdinand Blumentritt, a poem he wrote referencing Germany, and the legacy of Jose Rizal in present-day Germany, thus exposing the learner to different types of texts with a cultural component – factual texts, letters, and poems, to introduce different literacies. As for linguistic objectives, the A2 user, according to the CEFR, should be able to produce

[...] sentences and frequently used expressions related to areas of most immediate relevance (e.g. very basic personal and family information, shopping, local geography, employment). [The learner] can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and routine matters. [as well as] describe in simple terms aspects of his/her background, immediate environment and matters in areas of immediate need. (“Global Scale – Table 1 (CEFR 3.3)”).

For coherence, A2 users should be able to use “basic sentence patterns with memorized phrases, groups of a few words and formulae in order to communicate limited information in simple everyday situations” (“Global Scale-Table 1 (CEFR 3.3)”). By the time the A2 level has reached its final stages, the student of German will have learned most of the noun-cases and adjective declensions. The past tense, directions, and simple vocabulary such as common verbs, adjectives and expressions, words frequently occurring places, food items, activities and events are known, in addition to practical skills such as finding one's way in a city, describing one's holiday and daily routine and starting basic conversations on everyday topics.

The chapter can therefore begin with an exercise testing the simple past tense, probing the learner's previous knowledge about who Rizal was and what he accomplished by examining sets of pictures of him and his known activities and books. This can be accompanied by an activity in which dates are matched with the places that Rizal visited in Europe on a map and put in the right order. The following exercises could feature more details about Rizal's thoughts and sentiments on each trip to various countries in Europe, which the students will be asked to recount in different forms of the past tense. A picture exercise is a possible element that can stimulate the students to spontaneously talk about a series of events in the past, as well as for introducing elements of visual literacy. For reading comprehension, a short and simple text is presented that centers on the topic of *ilustrados* and their ability to move between and among countries, as well as the different connotations of the word. These texts can then be followed by a simple letter that includes some of Rizal's thoughts (which may include multilingual text excerpts) found in his letters describing his experiences of winter, Christmas, his new surroundings, and his homesickness, emphasizing the ‘unfamiliar’ aspects of a new setting and the tribulations of adjusting to and interpreting such novel experiences. The readers may be asked if they have ever been far from home or if they have ever changed schools and to write a short letter based on their experiences of excitement, homesickness, and recognition of differences in meaning and practices in a new place.

A reading comprehension section focuses on an exchange of grammatically-modified letters between Rizal and Blumentritt, introducing grammar features apt for the A2 level, such as the perfect tense, simple past, and subordinate clauses. The exchange, may, for example, pertinent information on how Rizal and Blumentritt viewed holidays, weather or family, which feature intermittently in their personal exchanges. It also introduces the figure and biography of Ferdinand Blumentritt and some useful links. Students will be asked to write a simple and linguistically appropriate response for the register of a personal letter, to one of Blumentritt's comments on holidays, weather or family in the Philippines, particularly as to whether or not the remarks apply to their own situation.

Following this, an excerpt from a German translation of the poem *A Las Flores de Heidelberg* is proffered for discussion to elicit views of the reader on selected verses, as well as to act as a read-out-

loud activity, particularly since it is a poem that was written about the appreciation of Heidelberg on one hand, yet the homesickness and displacement Rizal felt on the other. Other possible additions are an information box on the city of Heidelberg and some information on the university and the faculty where Rizal was said to have audited in classes on optic surgery, with some links to both the (still existing) university and the city of Heidelberg.

The chapter can then feature places in Germany (mostly in Heidelberg and environs) where plaques, statues and place-names exist in honor of Rizal. Additional texts include the efforts of Philippine and German governments to commemorate these ‘sites of memory’ or *Erinnerungsorte*. The learning activity of the class would thus be comprised of answering questions using grammar structures expected of the chapter. As a culminating activity, the last section contains reflections about the topics of the chapter, including the meaning of transnational exchanges, learning about other cultures, and feelings about leaving home, seeing that migration has become a key feature of Philippine society. The suggested learning unit presented above thus contains vital information about Philippine and German history, transnational exchanges, homesickness, displacement and intercultural reflections on meaning that will serve as a basis for reflecting on the novelty of discovering a new culture, while evaluating the styles of different forms of text – from letters, poems and descriptive texts. While I shall not dwell on the precise activities and consequences of those chapters, I would like to emphasize that a thematic scope such as this draws on the content of chapters of already existing books, which include *Ihr und Wir* and *Criss Cross* for intercultural content as mentioned above, as well as Cornelsen’s *Studio D* and *Studio 21*, which introduce the countries of Europe and the European Union in their A1 volume, the chapter on Weimar of the same book series, and supplementary materials that deal more extensively with places of historical and cultural importance to the Germans, or *Erinnerungsorte* (sites of memory). Such interventions blur the line between the highly bifurcated curriculum of Grammar and Content, and approach language learning through the lens of history and people-to-people relations, with an aim to consciously incorporate skills for intercultural encounters and assert the role of local contexts and educators, who, by nature of their profession, act as interlocutors and mediators at the nexus of the global and local.

### **Conclusion**

The suggestion above is just one of the ways in which culture in an FL class situated in Philippine higher education can be presented in the context of increasing globalization. The current state of FL in higher education in the Philippines faces challenges both in terms of institutional goals, which require and/or assume explicit intercultural component, as well as due to the issue of curricular bifurcation in the FL curriculum.

Applied Linguistics scholars of the past decade have made numerous references to the dynamism of culture due to globalization. This was not only in response to the palpability of globalization in the form of increased information and socio-cultural interconnectedness, but also due to the perceived need for communicative skills and openness towards the unfamiliar that would allow learners flexibility in dealing with various peoples and cultures.

There are several ways of achieving this – for instance, incorporating lessons that feature situations removed from students’ everyday surroundings by concentrating on migration or transnational content (Pulverness 430) can be combined with a broader definition of literacy that involves understanding different forms of ‘texts’ and their interpretation in various cultural settings, which is forwarded in this essay as a means to transition from communicative grammar classes to the analytical skills required for content courses in FL higher education degree programs.

The suggested book chapter endeavors to take inspiration from a non-fictional example of transnational mobility and displacement to allow students to put themselves in the place of a person who arrives in an unfamiliar setting. Even if students have not been to the places covered in the chapter, the exercises ask them to draw upon times when they were new in a place, through which recognizing

difference is practiced, as well as to exchange letters with people who may not be from the students' own background. Furthermore, it provides sites of intercultural encounters for students to reflect upon global dimensions of human interaction, as well as to enhance skills required for intercultural communication, understood here as exchanges of different meanings. The exercises in the chapters may thus serve to facilitate the processing of the cultural content in classes comprising the second half of the curriculum.

The reason for focusing on transnational relations is not only to reassert the traditional goals of openness and tolerance that are assumed to come with learning languages, but also to draw attention to the increasing awareness of the diversity of cultural forms of expression, nuances, and meaning-making, which can no longer be overlooked in favor of simplified monocultural and monolingual frameworks in FL education, particularly in the face of the diversity already present in the country. These materials are ideally produced by local educators all over the world to reflect their own conditions, and to emphasize the intercultural nature of points of encounter that are often assumed to be part and parcel of the content and process of FLT in a non-native country that has its own contextual particularities and educational goals, as has been attempted in the series *Ihr und Wir* and *Criss Cross*. However, it is also true that such initiatives may require sufficient teacher training, in an effort to move beyond mastering communicative competence in target languages.

The Philippines, through its secondary-level initiatives such as the Special Program in Foreign Language (SPFL) and the 2017 CHED Memorandum on Foreign Languages, indeed recognizes that Foreign Languages ought to play an increased role in the education of children, yet these are lamentably largely associated with economic gains, or at worst, Eurocentrism. It is perhaps time that the potential of Foreign Language classes to assert local dimensions of transnationalism and embeddedness in global flows of cultural exchange is recognized. In a globalized world where the nexus of language, politics, culture and identity is increasingly palpable through cultural and societal mobility, and the rapid dissemination of information and negative stereotypes, the need for a broad set of skills relating to openness and understanding becomes even more apparent.

## NOTES

- 1 The program rationale of the BA European Languages Program at U.P. Diliman is currently undergoing revisions that consider global dimensions of language, among others. While proposal is in the process of review as of writing, changes to the program rationale that began in 2012 were made using the original from 1976 as a reference text, indicating that despite changes to the curriculum, no substantial changes were made to the program rationale since 1976.
- 2 It is plausible that the term attempts to circumvent the association of Foreign Languages with a particular nation or place of origin, no justification for its use was provided in the policy.
- 3 The latter term is debated amongst scholars as Edward Sapir and Benjamin Lee Whorf never had a joint publications, nor did they jointly propose a hypothesis. The term was coined posthumously to describe arguments put forward in the writings of both scholars.

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