

'Kultura' in the 21st Century Filipino Language: Revisiting the Western Critique of 'Culture'

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Abstract

The critique of culture as a colonial objectification of the 'other' appears to remain oblivious that it is also a category shaped by forces other than Western discourses. This paper presents a view of culture articulated in 21st century Filipino language through contemporary academic and non-academic texts. Using linguistic analysis software to organize a combined total of 600 word occurrences of *kultura* into a corpus, we show how Filipinos use the term to denote ideas of unity and sharedness, especially in the non-academic context. Unlike the colonial use of the category to describe the subjugated 'other,' Filipinos use culture to refer to themselves as a collective, particularly in casual non academic discussions. Interestingly, in the academic context, the term is employed primarily as a lens or perspective through which social phenomena are viewed. In this domain, it is also used to talk about the 'other.' These nuances in academic, non-academic, Western, and non-Western discussions prove the category's rich semantic content. Such richness is worth exploring further beyond Western hegemonic discourses and merits attention rather than renunciation.

Keywords: contemporary Filipino, corpus analysis, culture, *kultura*, Western hegemony

Introduction

The critique of culture as a category peaked in the 1990s at the time when the social sciences, especially anthropology, became very self-critical of its colonial roots. While we agree with Alfred Kroeber and Clyde Kluckhohn (1963) that culture as a rich category deserves serious consideration, we refuse to view its importance as “comparable to such categories as gravity in physics, disease in medicine, evolution in biology” (p. 3). This is a misleading analogy as it implies culture is a static category with a fixed set of interpretations that remain unchanged regardless of how it is being (re)construed by people outside of the sciences. Unlike technical concepts such as the theory of evolution, culture is being used, and is continuously being defined, beyond academic discourses. The use of culture as a category, at least in the Philippines as this paper will present, shows that anthropology should be viewed instead as “an extension of the universal working of intersubjectivity into a kind of knowledge that everyone can master and render fruitful” (Descola, 2005, p. 73). Unfortunately, the condemned status of the concept of culture in Western anthropological discourses seems to be based simply on how Westerners use the category and without regard to its meaning for non-Westerners.

Culture as a concept is easily dismissed as a product of Western objectification of the ‘other.’ As Edward Said (1978) points out, it is a colonial category used to characterize subjugated groups. That is, culture is a concept attributed to understanding the exotic, the primitive, and the wild. But then again, even such description is shaped by Western discourses. From the point of view of the colonized, perhaps culture is the explicit categorization of shared experiences and beliefs.

Two polarized conceptualizations of culture inevitably emerge. The first implies dominance through an outward hegemonic gaze at ‘otherness.’ The other implies unity among subjects by emphasizing ‘sharedness’ and common feeling. There is need, therefore, to understand how culture makes real the inchoate aspirations of the people possessing it. The anthropologist looks at a category not only with an intention of attaining a generalizing claim but does so with due consideration of other realities through which such claim may be viewed differently.

The first part of this paper lays out a brief history of the term culture and shows how its meaning evolved in Western discourses. Some of the Western construction of culture, we argue, have limited it as an evaluative category. In the succeeding section, we elaborate how ‘culture’ has been appropriated by colonized societies, specifically in the Philippines. After discussing how ‘*kultura*’ appeared in texts during the colonial and post-colonial period, we show how it is being used in

contemporary Filipino language. The contemporary Filipino texts which serve as primary data for this paper are classified as either academic or non-academic and were published between 2000 and 2016. They consist mostly of peer-reviewed academic journals, online blogs, and social media posts. We argue in this paper that there is a particular usage of '*kultura*,' a Filipino appropriation of 'culture,' in the non-academic sense that saliently conveys ideas of unity, sharedness, and nationalism. This nuance provides a means of expressing togetherness among Filipinos as opposed to the Western objectification of 'otherness.' The paper concludes with a summary of the points discussed and proposes ways by which the idea of 'culture' may be further explored.

From *Cultura Animi* to Culture

The word culture is often traced to the Roman orator Marcus Cicero in 45 BC. In one of his teleological writings, Cicero used the phrase '*cultura animi*' which literally means cultivation of the soul. This is the first time the agricultural term was applied to a philosophical subject (Kroeber and Kluckhohn, 1963, p. 18). This teleological concept of improvement would later become part of the European languages in the Renaissance (Velkley, 2002, p. 15).

In the 17th century, German philosopher Samuel von Pufendorf modified Cicero's *cultura* to refer to a human condition opposed to its natural state "acquired through the help, industry, and inventions of other men" (Velkley, 2002, p. 155). Culture, in this sense, becomes a concept that separates men from barbarians. Although the Germans are inconsistent with their use of '*kultur*,' they clearly distinguish it from 'civilization' (Kroeber and Kluckhohn, 1963). The relationship between culture and civilization is that of means and ends. Civilization is an output achieved by means of culture, hence, the phrase "civilized man" but not "cultured man."

The German *kultur*, according to Kroeber and Kluckhohn (1963), inspired British anthropologist Edward Tylor's (1871) conceptualization of culture as "that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society" (p. 1). However, instead of viewing it as a means of acquiring civilization, Tylor frames culture as a universal condition. Each society has culture. In his evolutionary approach, culture is viewed through developmental stages which use 'civilization' as a point of reference. Hence, the Tylorean lens suggests that 'savagery' and 'barbarism' are forms of culture that can be characterized by features inferior to 'civilization.'

Acceptance of Tylor's concept of culture took time in anthropology despite its influence. Culture, of course, has always been ambiguous,

vague, and controversial. In Kroeber and Kluchkohn's (1963) exhaustive collection of quotes and definitions, several terms are suggested in place of culture. Hegel, for example, prefers '*geist*' or spirit, while Kant refers to culture strictly to mean a sense of cultivation — as in the phrase "culture of reason." Meanwhile, James Frazer (1885) who considered Tylor as his primary influence in the anthropological discipline, only spoke of 'customs' in a paper presentation to the Royal Anthropological Society. In 1922, Alfred Radcliffe-Brown consistently used the phrase 'culture or civilization' instead of simply using 'culture.'

In anthropology, the term appeared to have been in use since the 1920s through the influence of figures in the field such as Bronislaw Malinowski, Franz Boas, Ruth Benedict, and Edward Sapir who explicitly defined 'culture' in their works.

Franz Boas (1930), who considered Taylor as influence, refined Tyloorean culture and defined it as "the manifestations of social habits of a community, the reactions of the individual as affected by the habits of the group in which he lives, and the products of human activities as determined by these habits" (p. 79). By incorporating "habits," Boas and the anthropologists after him, presented a framing of 'culture' as practice rather than as condition that people possess passively.

With the rise of structuralism and cognitivism in the 1960s, anthropology seemed to have ceased from defining culture and just continued to use the term without being conscious of its semantic implications. Claude Levi-Strauss (1974) in *The Savage Mind* used 'culture' as opposed to nature by proposing a "homology between *two* systems of differences, one which occurs in nature and the other in culture" (p. 115). In associating culture with nature, the natural sciences typically treat culture as something external to the biological body. This dichotomy continues to pervade in the cognitive sciences today where innateness is seen as inconsistent with 'environment,' 'learning,' and 'culture' (see Pinker 2004).

For Levi-Strauss (1963), cultural interactions create impact on the individual's body in the same way shamanistic healing does. Culture opposes nature as a relation, not as an alternative. Akin to a shaman who transforms into concrete forms the "mind pains the body refuses to tolerate," culture fuses the social with the physical domains (p. 192). In this sense, culture and nature are not mutually exclusive.

Culture: The Post-Modern Critique

When postmodernism pervaded anthropology and made it highly self-critical in the 1990s, the critique against culture as a category shifted to issues such as homogeneity, ahistoricism, and objectivism.

We will focus on these three grounds although it must be noted that post-modernist critiques are more exhaustive (Clifford and Marcus, 1986; Abu-Lughod, 1991; Brightman, 1995).

One critique invokes the idea of homogeneity or 'holism' in its attack of culture. As Clifford (1992) notes, culture can never be captured as a whole due to intra- and inter-cultural dynamics especially in the context of globalization. In enclosing a group into a certain 'culture,' in other words, anthropologists are creating boundaries and producing points of exclusion that discount connections and interactions.

Somewhat related to this idea of holism is the view founded on objectivism where culture is construed to be situated in a system that determines its individual members. The emphasis, however, is on agency, actors, practice (e.g., Bourdieu 1977), and discourse (e.g., Abu-Lughod 1991). This shift in emphasis is in contrast to what seemed to be a deterministic feature of culture as a system.

Classical 'culture' is also notorious for its implied ahistorism. Culture is employed as a category to refer to something that endures or, to a certain extent, primordial, thereby discounting history and changes. In many colonial accounts colonized subjects are represented to possess an enduring nature or primitiveness. Changes in their ways of living are attributed to acculturation, turning them into something they are not. In this usage, culture appears to be highly ahistorical and oblivious to the interconnectedness of historical processes, society, and its members. Many anthropologists, in contrast, cite the importance of both historical processes and everyday life. Renato Rosaldo (1993) in his study of the Bugkalot of Northern Luzon put emphasis on both. He highlights the need to comprehend the practices of everyday life to appreciate such forces as emotion within a cultural system.

Scholars today appear to avoid the word 'culture' even though the word 'cultural' remains acceptable in academic literature. Contemporary anthropologists, especially in the West, would rarely claim to be writing or talking about the 'culture' of a certain group of people. This contrasts sharply with colonial ethnographies in the past decades such as John Garvan's (1927) reference to "the culture of the Manobo."

Overtime, 'culture' was used increasingly with the "stigmata of quotation marks" (Brightman 1995, p.110). Without the marks the writer risks being labeled ignorant of the nuances attached to the term. In lieu of 'culture' scholars opt to adopt Bourdieu's *habitus* or Foucault's *discourse*.

Robert Brightman (1995) believes the critiques against culture as a category are well founded, as they are based on a “selective retrospective construction of the meaning of the concept in earlier conditions of anthropology... presented as an antiquity from the past to be transcended and replaced” (p. 510). Anthropology’s contemporary view of culture is grounded in the shortcomings of past definitions instead of its potential for rich refinements. Because discussions on culture rarely go beyond its Western, colonial, and generalizing attributes, culture became a liability instead of asset to anthropology.

The very brief retracing of culture as a category in these two short sections shows that as an evolving concept in Western discourses, culture has potentials and shortcomings. Culture may have its own significant evolution outside the discourses but anthropology is too preoccupied with Western conceptualizations. Self-criticism in anthropology, unfortunately, produced attacks against a category that the discipline has not only failed to clarify but has forgotten to recognize as an attribute of the colonized.

Edward Said (1978) refers to culture as either “self-congratulation (when one discusses one’s own) or hostility and aggression (when one discusses the ‘other’)” (p. 325). He points out how such category glorifies the colonial superiority and the objectification of the ‘other.’ Interestingly, Said views culture as a concept exclusive to the West. It is as if the colonized are incapable of self-congratulation and hostility in their relation with others.

In Lila Abu-Lughod’s (2002) critique of the moral crusade to save Muslim women, she argues that the plight of Muslim women should not be framed in terms of saving them from their culture but from poverty, militarism, and other sociopolitical and economic problems. Understanding the issues faced by Muslim women in Afghanistan, therefore, is not about asking whether Islam gives them rights or their culture produces oppression but to see the bigger picture and situate the experiences of Muslim women amidst historical, social, economic, and political intricacies. Although we do not believe this is completely admirable, Abu-Lughod appears to be warning against the Western framing of culture as ahistorical and objectifying. Brightman (1995) insists, culture never maintains “attributes of ahistoricism, totalization, holism, legalism, and coherence with which the critics selectively reconstitutes it” (p. 541). Culture, in reference to being a Muslim, is a highly particular framing of the category that ignores the capacity of the subjects to actually conceptualize what culture means for them. It is likely these Muslim women have a concept of culture, or something synonymous, in their language. This concept may have been highly influenced by Islam but it is likely beyond just being Islamic. Their

experiences, customs, and traditions as Muslim women do not have to be viewed as Islamic. To view culture based on how these Muslim women themselves conceptualize the category would help provide a fuller understanding of *their* understanding of the situation.

Kultura: Colonial and Post-Colonial Philippines

A kind-hearted leader took a city from its oppressive rulers and freed all the slaves. Upon learning that the slaves were given depreciative names such as Grey Worm, Red Flea, and Black Rat to signify their low status, the new leader commanded the use of such slave names be stopped and the newly freed be allowed to use the names which their parents gave. One stood up and explained that his slave name gives him pride, because it is a lucky name. The name he was born with was cursed, for it was the name he had when he was taken as slave. His slave name, on the other hand, is what he had when he was set free. This scene from a popular television series, *Game of Thrones*, depicts what we think Western anthropologists do with categories such as 'culture.' Few will deny that colonial categories are used to subjugate and objectify the colonized. But, likewise, few will admit that the colonized are also capable of reconceptualizing these same categories. Unfortunately, ignoring salient conceptualizations to focus on colonial framing is also colonialism in disguise.

We prefer to view this reconceptualization of colonial terms as a bricolage. Claude Lévi-Strauss (1974) refers to a bricoleur as one who achieves goals by making use of available materials whose use have yet to be conceived, and gives them purpose. Bricolage is an adaptive way of thinking that views a category beyond "one definite and determinate use" (Levi-Strauss, 1974, p. 18). Spanish and American colonialism lasted for around 400 years in the Philippines, thus, it should not be a surprise that Filipinos have reconceptualized colonial categories to serve a specific purpose. While the colonized were (and are) apparently subjected to Western hegemony, there is also a need to put emphasis on their reconceptualizations of colonial concepts.

Filipino, the national language of the Philippines, appropriates a number of Spanish categories as a result of more than three centuries of Philippine-Spanish colonial relations. For example, *mano po* is a Filipino phrase used to refer to a normative gesture of showing respect to the elders. The word *mano* is Spanish for hands while *po* is a Filipino word used to address elders. *Mano po* can be translated to mean 'your hands please' in English. This norm dictates that one greet the elderly by asking for their hand and bowing with the hand pressed on one's forehead. When the Spaniards imposed Christianity on the natives they required converts to kiss the hands of friars as a sign of submission

to the church-led Spanish government. Many Filipinos appropriated the practice until eventually it became a gesture of respect. It is still prevalent at present though practiced not in the context of social class but kinship. When one arrives home, for instance, children greet parents by asking for their hands. The same gesture is made when meeting older relatives or even non relatives close to the family.

The bricolage of Filipinos with colonial gestures and categories such as hand-kissing shows how certain categories are refined not to perpetuate the imposing framework but to serve a localized purpose through local understanding. Here, the high respect the friars demanded for the colonial government and the church was transformed into a visible appreciation by the Filipinos of their elderly whose wisdom is considered the ultimate source of leadership in a community.

The Filipino word *kultura*, however, may have been influenced by the American concept of culture rather than the Spanish *cultura*. In a comprehensive descriptive account of the Tagalog vocabulary written during the early Spanish era, *Vocabulario de la Lengua Tagala*, there is no entry for the word *kultura* (de Noceda and de Sanlucar, 1754). At the height of the Philippine revolution against the Spanish regime in the late 1800s, writings by Filipino authors such as the polymath Jose Rizal and revolutionary leader Andres Bonifacio never used the word in place of *kalinangan*, which literally means cultivation of learning (Aguilar, 1994). The term *kalinangan*, now antiquated in contemporary colloquial Filipino, foregrounds ways of learning and understanding distinctly Filipino. Based on usage, the use of *kalinangan* signifies a collective understanding that separates Filipinos from colonizers. The category strongly relates to the positive implication of cultivation as productive and is not applied to unproductive endeavors such as gambling and vices. Individual habits, to which the latter belongs, are commonly referred to as *gawi*.

One of the early references to the word *kultura* during the colonial period can be found in the Spanish-Tagalog dictionary compiled by Pedro Serrano-Laktaw (1889):

CULTURA. f. der. *nang cullo*. *Paglinang nang lupa: kung ang sinasabi ay paraan ng pagsasalita; kagandahang sumabi. | | Karunungan; pagsisikap sa anumang ikaliliwanag nang isip. | | Karununganang makipagkapuwa-tawo; kagandahan ng kilos [cultivation of land: if used as a manner of speaking; eloquence, | | Knowledge; contention to achieve enlightenment. | | social skills; sophistication] (p. 168).*

The entry for *cultura* closely resembles the Western concept of culture as a degree of sophistication and finesse; that is, a state of

being cultured as opposed to being barbaric or primitive. It also relates to land cultivation which, as mentioned, is one of the earliest meanings of the term culture in the West. This dictionary appears to present a Western oriented semantic nuance of *kultura* that does not reflect the view of the general masses. This might also explain why *kultura* does not appear in the works of Filipino writers during the period.

After Spain sold the Philippines to the United States in 1898 through the Treaty of Paris, American colonization introduced formal educational institutions that were not as critical but still kept an eye on the works of Filipino authors. The publication of Paz Marquez Benitez's *Dead Stars* in 1925 heralded the emergence of more Filipino literary works in English. Culture during this era, as seen in the writings of national artist Nick Joaquin, suggests that it is about propensity. According to Joaquin (1966), Filipino culture is a dichotomy between the inclination towards small-scale goals and the volition to achieve something ambitious. Often labeled as liberal, his concept of culture suggests a detachment from a norm or behavior that is constant or cyclical.

How *kultura* figured in the different discourses during the colonial period is very interesting. Zeus Salazar (1997) observes that different Tagalog categories used in specific periods to refer to a social collectivity and consciousness among Filipinos have varying emphasis and contexts. He explains that during the Spanish colonial period in the Philippines, the word *bayan* was used to refer to a collective consciousness in relation to the revolution against colonizers. As nation-building became the primary discourse during the American colonization period, the word *bayan* was replaced by *nasyon* and, subsequently, by *bansa*.

The varying uses of the terms culture and *kultura* in post-colonial Philippines can be seen in the diverse body of literature, including laws. Republic Act 6649 that created an autonomous region for Muslim Mindanao in 1988, for instance, was supposedly based on "ethno-linguistic, geographical, sectoral, educational, and cultural factors." The Indigenous Peoples' Rights Act (IPRA) of 1997, on the other hand, assures "the protection of indigenous cultures." It is not clear what these laws mean by culture. Interestingly, the indigenous people for whom these laws were enacted supposedly were the ones who came up with the conceptualization. Among the indigenous communities in Southern Philippines, *kultura* implies a communal possession that relates to a rightful claim by a community. For certain, there are more than one conceptualization, but the idea of communal possession appears to be common. Indigenous groups, for instance, would assert the protection and preservation of their *kultura*, from land grabbers and large mining concessionaires.

This notion of *kultura* appears integral to the concept of ancestral domains. The IPRA provides land titles to areas claimed by indigenous groups as their ancestral domains. It is an empowering category that seems to make people feel that, despite the vastness of what they lack, they still possess something. The notion of communal possession is neither an economic tool nor a legal invention that indigenous communities can take advantage. Instead, culture or *kultura* validates their status as rightful occupants of their lands. In this sense, it relates to possession, human rights, autonomy, and recognition of existence (see Tampos, 2015).

Culture as possession also reverberates in the anecdotes of local ethnographers. Informants once asked an anthropologist, "*Nganong diri ka mag-study, wala naman mi kultura?*" [Why did you choose to study here? We no longer have culture?]. It took a while before the anthropologist realized that what the residents meant was that the community lost all its artifacts, traditional musical instruments, ornaments, and accessories to migrants. This, of course, may be viewed as their concept of material culture. The village gongs, highly valuable percussive brass instruments, may still be found in museums or in wealthy Muslim communities. But culture is gone because these objects are no longer in the people's possession. They are no longer played during rituals or celebrations. They are a communal possession to which people no longer have access.

While the paper focuses on the contemporary sense of the word *kultura* in the Filipino language, it is also interesting to explore how such evolution compares with different linguistic performances. We next discuss the academic and non-academic notions of *kultura* in contemporary Filipino language.

Kultura in Contemporary Filipino Language

The data in this paper consists of contemporary texts written in Filipino between 2000 and 2016. This corpus is divided into academic and non-academic texts. Academic texts are those which were peer-reviewed and written by experts in their areas. These use a formal writing style and aim to advance knowledge or scholarship. Sources of information are also cited properly. Journal articles fall under this type .

The other set of texts is categorized as non-academic. These are materials written for the general public. Peer review is not required and publication standards are more lenient. Source citation is optional. The style of writing is usually casual or informal. Moreover, authors need not necessarily be experts in the subject. This type of texts can be found in blogs, online fora, news articles, as well as in social media posts and comments.

Figure 1. A screenshot of the user interface of SIL Fieldworks that presents the concordance and word list features, as well as the corpus of texts collected.

The screenshot displays the SIL Fieldworks Language Explorer interface. The main window is titled 'kultura - academic - FieldWorks Language Explorer'. The interface is divided into several panes:

- Texts & Words:** A sidebar on the left containing navigation options like 'Intellectual Tests', 'Concordance', 'Complex Concordance', 'Word List Concordance', 'Word Analyses', 'Bulk Edit Wordforms', and 'Statistics'.
- Wordforms:** A table showing the frequency of various word forms. The word 'kultura' is highlighted with 300 occurrences.
- Concordance:** A list of text occurrences where the word 'kultura' appears, including reference numbers and snippets of text.
- Info:** A pane at the bottom right providing detailed information about the selected occurrence, including its context in the original text.

Form	Word Glosses	Number in Cor.
Show All	Show All	Show All
ng		966
sa		714
ang		458
na		453
at		453
mga		408
kultura		300
ay		123
ito		104
-i		74
isang		65
Ang		60
wika		59
o		56
x		53
hindi		52
bilang		52
Sa		52
Pilipino		50
-ng		48
may		46
kung		44

Six hundred occurrences of the word *kultura* were collected from the corpus: 300 from academic, and another 300 from non-academic texts. Variations of the word *kultura* such as pop culture and high culture were not included in the corpus. The academic texts came from 53 journal articles on social science topics written in Filipino. Journals used include the UP College of Social Sciences' *Philippine Social Sciences Review*, UP Diliman's *Social Science Diliman*, De La Salle University's *Malay*, and the online scholarly journal *Saliksik*. The non-academic texts include 78 posts from different authors. They include Facebook posts, blogs, and comments.

Using SIL Fieldworks, a software for linguistic analysis, we explored the linguistic context of *kultura* in each occurrence. The use of the software provided a systematic and convenient means to analyze the co-occurring concepts. The most frequently attached words to *kultura* are also nouns which modify it and possessive pronouns that attribute ownership. This defines the co-occurrence criterion that frames the analysis below.

SIL Fieldworks was used to organize the corpus to show the concordance and number of occurrences of *kultura*. We utilized the 2015 version of the software which gives all word forms present in the collected texts. It shows a column of various data about the target word,

including summary statistics, location in the overall corpus, and the co-occurring words for each sentence. The application allowed us to process a large amount of texts within a short amount of time.

Kultura in Contemporary Non-Academic Filipino Texts.

The non-academic articles in the corpus provide different aspects of *kultura* employed in contemporary, casual, conversational, and non-jargon contexts. The result indicates that *kultura* is still a widely used category even outside academic discussions. Below is a summary of the most frequent contexts and categories that co-occurred with *kultura* based on 300 occurrences in 78 different non-academic posts (2000-2016) written in Filipino.

One of the most frequent linkers used to attach another word is *ng*. When found after *kultura*, it connects to a noun signifying to the locus of culture. In non-academic texts, the most frequently occurring items with this configuration are categories that refer to Philippine nationality – Filipino/*Pinoy*, *Pilipinas*, and *bansa* (country). The latter often includes the possessive pronoun *atin* (our). About 12% of the 300 word occurrences refers to these concepts. While Filipino, *Pilipino*, and

Table 1. Co-occurring terms with *kultura* from contemporary non-academic texts written in Filipino

Non - Academic Texts			
	Co - Occurring Lexical Item	Frequency (x/300)	Sample Concordance and Linguistic Context
[1]	Filipino / <i>Pilipino</i> / <i>pinoy</i> , <i>Pilipinas</i> (Philippines)	12.3%	This is associated with <i>kultura</i> through the linker <i>ng</i> . <i>Hindi na uso ang pagiging mangmang, at wala sa kultura -ng Pilipino na magmaangmaangan</i> (Guinto, 2010).
[2]	<i>Atin</i> / <i>natin</i> (our)	17.3%	<i>Atin</i> is linked through <i>ng</i> , while <i>natin</i> is directly placed after <i>kultura</i> <i>Pinagtitibay lang nito ang isang aspeto ng kultura natin, ang pagpapahalaga natin sa pakikipagugnayan</i> (ResidentPatriot, 2012).
[3]	<i>Wika</i> / <i>lengguahe</i> (language)	3.7 %	This is linked to <i>kultura</i> through a conjunction such as <i>at</i> (and) <i>Kasabay ng pagaaral ng wikang Filipino, bilang disiplina ang pagtatanghal at paglingap ng mga wika at kultura ng bayan</i> (Muralla et al., 2015).

Pinoy are used to refer to the agent of a custom, *Pilipinas* (Philippines) and *bansa/bayan* (country) are used to refer to a space where Filipinos practice or observe such customs. In cases where these categories co-occurred with *kultura*, they usually carried a positive nuance. For example, the distinct ways of preparing dishes such as chicken adobo are often linked with Filipino culture or culture in the Philippines. By positive, we mean that the term connotes pride, nostalgia, and self-respect. But there are also instances where it was used to describe negative aspects such as the phrase '*kultura ng kurapsyon ng mga Pinoy*' (culture of corruption among Filipinos). This phrase, as used in the corpus, refers to persistent corruption in the government. However, these negative connotations seem rare (an occurrence rate of only 0.01% in the gathered corpus).

Moreover, the categories Filipino and Philippines appear to be related to the first person plural possessive *natin/atin* or *our* in conversational contexts. About 17.3% of the 300 occurrences of *kultura* are found to have this lexical association. Other pronouns that attribute possession include *nila* (second person plural) which has a 3.3% frequency rate. The word *sarili* (own/self), on the other hand, has a 2% occurrence rate.

These co-occurrences imply that speakers consider themselves part of the culture they are referring to. In online discussions, authors usually talk about themselves instead of other social groups they are not part of. This is contrary to the colonial use of the category culture to objectify subjugated groups. As opposed to colonizers talking about 'culture' as characteristics that make the colonized odd or eccentric, Filipinos refer to culture as familiar ways of life that is shared by a community through common history and social identity. In this sense, the category emphasizes sharedness rather than distinctness.

The word *wika* (language), another salient category linked to *kultura*, also denotes collectivity. These two categories, *kultura* and *wika* (language) are usually connected by a Filipino conjunction *at* (and). Of the concepts in this type of collocation, 22.45% refers to *wika* (language). In cases where these two domains are linked, the authors refer mostly to a Philippine language, usually Filipino or Tagalog, to signify another shared aspect among a group of people. This pair is employed most commonly in the context of conservation where language and culture are seen as salient symbols of a people's rich history and identity. The gradual demise of the usage of a certain Philippine language, according to the corpus, is associated with the idea of Filipinos becoming less Filipino.

Other domains found in the non-academic corpus include *tradisyon* (tradition), *sining* (arts), *pulitika* (politics), *lipunan* (society),

Figure 2. Sample concordance of *kultura* in academic texts

Concordance	
Ref	Occurrence
Show All	Show All
292.1	lasang nakakaligtang sangkap ng kultura ng ating bansa – ang inumang Pinoy. Sa paggamit ng Galawang pamamaraan ng p
296.1	yaw ko talaga ng pangit kasi di sa kultura natin eh, di natural sa atin yun...
298.1	Paano nga ba ito sumasalamín sa kultura at nakapagpapahayag ng isip at damdamin ng mga naturang mananalita?
300.1	sa bawat wika ay sumasalamín sa kultura -l na kaibahan” (pp. 6-7).
302.1	ing salitang ahas sa kani-kanilang kultura , pananaw, at/o paniniwala.
304.1	ayag sa mga halimbawang ito ang kultura -l na pagkakaiba ng Filipino at Bisaya sa pamamagitan ng kaibahan sa salita at me
306.1	agang batayan ang background ng kultura , karanasan at lalo na ang wikang ginagamit sa pag-interpret ng mga metapora.
308.1	aligid at maituturing na bahagi ng kultura ang siyang malimit ginagamit upang ihalintulad sa karakter ng tao sa pamamagita
312.1	ga ito ng ating mayaman na wika, kultura , paniniwala, pagpapahalaga, karanasan, at pananaw sa buhay.
314.1	iyang diin ng artikulo ang etno- kultura -l na pagmamapa ng lalawigan lampas sa usapin ng teritoryalidad at pagmumuhos
316.1	heograpikal, sariling kasaysayan, kultura , at panitikan.
	Gagamitin sa pag-aaral ang Etno- kultura -l na pagmamapa sa pagdadalumat ng Pangasinan bilang isang lalawigan na binub

identidad (identity), *kasaysayan* (history), *pagkatao* (humanity), and *paniniwala* (belief). Their co-occurrence with *kultura* in the corpus signifies the emphasis on collectivity and aspects that are shared.

The results bring to mind the approach *pantayong pananaw*, which is popular in the study of Philippine history. Proposed by historian Zeus Salazar (1997), the method highlights the importance of forming a discourse designed for the Filipino people by Filipino authors. The phrase '*pantayong pananaw*' is derived from the words *tayo* which means 'us,' an inclusive form of the English 'we' that includes both the speaker and audience; and *pananaw* which means 'perspective'. This historical approach aims to promote discourse among Filipinos for Filipinos. The approach also promotes the use of Filipino, the national language of the Philippines, to capture local conceptualizations. The rationale is that although foreign languages may still function in translating local concepts, they will not fully grasp local contexts, experiences, and meanings.

The use of *kultura* in the non-academic corpus, on the other hand, highlights its *pantayo* feature. It is usually applied as an inclusive form of 'us' rather than 'them.' The usual non-academic use of the term *kultura* is in the context of talking about a certain form of culture that the authors attribute to a wider social group – i.e., Filipino/*Pilipino*/*Pinoy*.

Pantayong pananaw's prescription of Filipino as the language of historical approach, however, seems too restrictive. As the reconceptualized category of *kultura* shows in the corpus, the word did not necessarily emerge from within. It may itself have been borrowed

Table 2. Terms co-occurring with *kultura* in contemporary academic texts written in Filipino

Academic Texts			
	Co-Occurring Lexical Item	Frequency (x/300)	Sample Concordance and Linguistic Context
[1]	<i>Pilipino</i> (Filipino - Philippine Nationality)	6.3%	This is associated with <i>kultura</i> through the linker <i>ng</i> . <i>Ito ay ang proyektong Manunggul Jar, isang programang pang-edukasyon sa wika at kultura -ng Pilipino sa bansang Italya (Madula, 2015).</i>
[2]	<i>Wika</i> (language)	4.3%	This is linked to <i>kultura</i> through a conjunction such as <i>at</i> (and). <i>Sa dinami-rami ng mga mayayamang wika at kultura sa bansa, ang Tagalog lamang ba ang may karapatang maging wika ng karunungan at sining? (Mendoza, 2011)</i>
[3]	<i>Kasaysayan</i> (history), <i>tradisyun</i> (tradition)	4 %	This is linked to <i>kultura</i> through a conjunction such as <i>at</i> (and). <i>Ipinapalagay ng pag-aaral na ang dalawang matandang pamayanan ng Panag-asinan—Caboloan ay may kanya-kanyang katangiang heograpiikal, sariling kasaysayan, kultura, at panitikan (Flores, 2011).</i>
[4]	<i>Identidad</i> (identity)	2.3 %	This is linked to <i>kultura</i> through a conjunction such as <i>at</i> (and). <i>Mahalaga itong kontribusyon sa pagpapahalaga sa mga tungkuling ginagampanan ng mga festival sa pagpapakilala ng kultura at identidad ng isang lipunan o komunidad (Amtalao, 2015).</i>
[5]	<i>Natin, atin</i> (our)	1.3 %	<i>Atin</i> is linked through the linker <i>ng</i> , while <i>natin</i> is directly placed after <i>kultura</i> <i>Hindi kailangang kalimutan at isakripisyo ang anumang aspeto ng ating kultura sa paghanap ng mga solusyon (Batongbacal, 2011).</i>

from outside and reconceptualized through time. In order to develop internal discourse among Filipinos, therefore, we may need to take into account categories with foreign roots whose local reconceptualization are based on local experiences.

'Kultura' in Contemporary Academic Filipino Texts

Scholarly articles in the corpus provide a contrasting dimension to the non-academic texts. Journal articles are specialized and usually deal with academic subjects or themes that are not normally tackled in typical conversations. It would be interesting to compare how *kultura* is used in contemporary Filipino language based on these two different sources.

Similar to the non-academic texts, the 300 occurrences of *kultura* in the academic texts were also linked to nouns and pronouns. The table below shows the result of concordance analysis and summarizes the most salient contexts and co-occurring terms in the collected academic texts.

In this corpus, 25.67% of the 300 co-occurrences use the variation *kultural*. This is high compared to the rate in non-academic texts of only 4.3 %. These occurrences include derivations using the affixes *ethno-* (ethno-cultural), *sosyo-* (socio-cultural), and *kros-* (cross-cultural). In these, *kultura* can be construed as an aspect or feature of certain domains or concepts. The phrase *aspetong kultural* (cultural aspect) is an example common in the corpus. It implies that culture encompasses not just everyday life but other domains such as meaning, strategy, history, and geography.

The conjunction *at* (and) links *kultura* to other domains. The most frequently co-occurring categories are: *wika* (language) 4.3%, *identidad* (identity) 2.3%, and *kasaysayan* (history) 4%. Other categories found in the corpus include *pilosopiya* (philosophy), *pulitika* (politics), *burukrasya* (bureaucracy), *edukasyon* (education), and *impormasyon* (information).

The characterization of *kultura* in relation to *wika* (language) appears to be similar to that in the non-academic corpus. Culture and language are deemed highly enmeshed factors in identifying a collective trait. One difference, however, is the presence of a number of other domains linked to *kultura* in the academic corpus. These other domains include *sining* (arts), *panitikan* (literature), and *kasaysayan* (history). The presence of these other social domains commonly linked with *kultura* explains why the co-occurrence rate of the key terms drawn from the corpus of academic articles is relatively low compared to the key terms from blog posts. Unlike in non-academic discussions, the concept of culture in these academic articles is not only focused on language but

also on many other social aspects—aspects that are used as lens or perspective in viewing a social group. However, this does not imply that layman discussions are deprived of such nuance. A number of blog posts tend to talk about dances and food cuisines when characterizing Filipino culture. The difference appears to be mainly just a matter of employing generalizing categories which is often required in academic discourses.

Another difference is the identifying context of Filipino culture in social inquiries. Blog authors usually identify themselves as part of Filipino culture when referring to it. In academic articles, however, Filipino culture is discussed even by those who do not embrace it.

The apparent contrast between the academic and non-academic use of *kultura* appears to be related to how academic discussions have been influenced by Western discourses. Although a number of authors in the non-academic corpus refer to *kultura* as a form of collectivity and a degree of sharedness, the co-occurring units imply an understanding of culture as a lens or a perspective to view social phenomenon. The concept of culture, then, is not something that an individual or group possesses. Instead, it is a lens or perspective through which social life may be viewed and analyzed.

This is related to culture as used in colonial accounts of observers unrelated to the subjugated groups. American anthropologist Faye-Cooper Cole (1913) who studied indigenous groups in Southern Philippines during the early 20th century, for instance, referred to the subject of his study as 'wild tribes.' His accounts vividly describe 'wild tribes' and their personal adornments, house structures, and 'primitive tools.'

In our corpus, readers who are from the same background as the authors writing about their own culture (or that of another group within the Philippines) are not introduced to something completely distinct or foreign. Instead, the reader encounters things that may already be familiar.

Other categories connected to *kultura* in a similar manner are places including countries, activities, concepts, and people. Categories referring to the Philippines as a country and people are the most frequent. They comprise about 24% of all the categories attached to *kultura* through the linker *ng*. Several categories refer to specific names of places or countries. Another set refer to different groups of people or ethno linguistic groups and foreigners. Activities refer to those practiced by Filipinos, such as *pagtatatu* (tattooing), *pangangayaw* (revenge killing), *pagtatanim* (planting), *paglilimbag* (publishing), *pagkonsumo* (consuming), and *pandaragat* (seafaring).

Related to this are activities where *kultura* is placed as the succeeding word after *ng* (e.g., *pag-unlad ng kultura*). Of these, 29.3% refers to the establishment, creation, expansion, loss, and advancement of culture.

Identity as a context in writing about *kultura*, meanwhile, is often linked to ethnicity. In this corpus, authors often refer to an ethnolinguistic or social group when using culture to refer to collective characteristics unique to a certain group. There are texts which used this pair to characterize a group based on economic status, calling them bourgeoisie or elite, or belonging to the proletariat or the working class. The most common social groups associated with the pairing of culture and identity in this corpus are: Austronesian, Dumagat, Muslim, Tagalog, Malay, Lumad, and Filipino. Usually authors talk about the culture of a particular group from the perspective of someone who is not necessarily a member. In a book review, for instance, Bonus-Adeva (2012), discussed the importance of Austronesian language as a cultural heritage without elaborating on her Austronesian roots. But this could well be due to the need to uphold a certain degree of objectivity in academic discussions.

Moreover, the linking of *kasaysayan* (history) and *kultura* in the corpus is often in the context of either critique or descriptive account of colonialism and globalization. In those instances, authors usually talk about a culture of which they are a part. Culture is often referred to in the first person possessive, as in the phrase: "...*hindi ito nangangahulugan na wala na tayong magagawa sa mga posibleng kahihinatnan ng globalisasyon, lalo na sa larangan ng ating kultura*" [this does not mean we cannot do anything about the possible consequences of globalization especially on our culture] (Mabaquiao 2007, p. 80). Culture, in other words, is used not in reference to another group but to characterize something the speakers themselves possess.

Conclusion

The corpus analysis highlights salient contexts in which the word *kultura* is used in contemporary academic and non-academic Filipino texts. Our results suggest contrasting usage between the academic and non-academic contexts. In the non-academic context, culture appears to be something possessed collectively by a social group. In casual, non-academic exchanges, Filipinos make reference to culture to talk about themselves as a collective and employ the term to categorize their social cohesion or unity. In the academic setting, on the other hand, culture is construed as a lens or perspective by which social inquiry is pursued. In the academic corpus, *kultura* is a characteristic of a group to which the speaker is not necessarily a member. In this sense, *kultura* is just one facet by which social life is viewed and analyzed.

It is important to note, however, that whether in casual exchanges or academic discourses, *kultura* signifies collectivity, albeit in varying degrees. Culture is used to characterize one's own group, or a group that is not too distinct from one's own. The terms *Pilipino* or Filipino and *atin* or *natin* (our) appear frequently with *kultura* in the corpus despite the influence of Western conceptualization of culture on contemporary academic discussions.

The framing process employed by Western anthropologists to analyze a group, according to Roy Wagner (1981), is the same process non-Westerners use to frame outsiders. Unless this is recognized, Western critique of culture that ignores colonial authority commits the same evil it is trying to dismiss. The category *kultura* in contemporary Filipino language offers a wealth of meanings rich in experiences and thoughts. They are worth exploring. They merit attention instead of renunciation.

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