



doi <https://doi.org/10.58256/rjah.v3i4.960>



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Research Article

Section: Literature, Linguistics & Criticism



Published in Nairobi, Kenya  
by Royallite Global.

Volume 3, Issue 4, 2022



#### Article Information

Submitted: 16th August 2022

Accepted: 30th November 2022

Published: 4th December 2022

Additional information is available at the end of the article

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ISSN: 2708-5945 (Print)

ISSN: 2708-5953 (Online)

To read the paper online,  
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#### How to Cite:

Esnara, C. B. (2022).

Translanguaging in the analysis of narrative techniques and discourse styles in selected Philippine short novels. *Research Journal in Advanced Humanities*, 3(4). <https://doi.org/10.58256/rjah.v3i4.960>

## Translanguaging in the analysis of narrative techniques and discourse styles in selected Philippine short novels

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#### Abstract

This research undertook an innovative approach to the language-literature interface by means of adopting a modified model of translanguaging in the analysis of the narrative techniques and discourse styles of three selected Philippine short novels: *Getting Better* by Tara F. Sering, *What Things Mean* by Sophia N. Lee, and *Salingkit* by Cyan Abad-Jugo. Theories on language and thought and the modularity of the mind were reviewed in the reconfiguration of the translanguaging model assisted by CDA and the protocol of discourse analysis particularly in the gathering and treatment of data. Results of the study indicated the effectiveness of translanguaging strategies emanating from the aesthetic translanguaging space and the imaginative translanguaging instinct of the authors which helped in the appealing narrative techniques and creative discourse styles of the works. It is recommended that translanguaging as practice and theory be explored further in ESL/ELT/EMI and the disciplines to optimize its potentialities as a decolonizing stance as well as a relevant and helpful paradigm in resolving pressing language-related problems and challenges of the times.

**Keywords:** discourse styles, language and thought, language-literature interface, modularity of the mind, narrative techniques, translanguaging



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### Public Interest Statement

Translanguaging seeks to draw the attention of language practitioners to further investigate the theory and grasp the principles regulating it, as well as to embrace or modify it in their pedagogy and practice. This study however, will help teachers reflect on their language philosophy and how they treat their students' language patterns and preferences. Learners will profit from the study as well by using the empirical data to better understand their own individual usage of language or idiolects.

### Introduction

Applied linguistics has been confronted in decades with a number of culture-related issues like languages being lost as well as identity and ethnicity (Dalby, 2003), such complexities permeating teaching-learning contexts which would often snowball into many more and larger problems for the lack of adequate preparation and principled expertise to address and troubleshoot them. Modern trends in ELT have been on bilingual education, dual education, multilingualism, and inclusive plurality yet the persistent bias for dominant and mainstream languages continues to create cultural divides and polarize societies (Chapman & Anderson, 1995), with minority languages and their speakers all the more disenfranchised in the overall picture as these languages get discarded over time with decreased or no speech communities left to nurture them (Dalby, 2003). There have been aggressive efforts among sociolinguists and psycholinguists to experiment on approaches that could respond more effectively to the communication demands of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, language programs and curricula that do not leave any learner's mother tongue behind another language. However, the linguistic marginalization persists worldwide, seemingly rendering code-based paradigms irrelevant especially to bilinguals and multilinguals who do not think unilingually (Otherguy et al. 2015; Li Wei, 2018, 2022).

Given the problematic backdrop, this research ventured into yet uncharted waters in the realm of ESL teaching in the Philippines to contribute in the thrust of discovering and developing a radical approach that can address linguistic marginalization, language stigma or the lingua-bias, even language death and the increasing communication demands of a globalizing society. The greatest interest in the language-literature interface served as the motivation of his investigation on the latest yet seemingly controversial post-modern theory in applied linguistics and World Englishes (WE) debates, translanguaging which is hailed particularly by Li Wei (2018, 2022) to be the best response there is for a problem-riddled field. And the gateway to a new mindset of language as derived from a pragmatic theory of multilinguals' actual language use and practice. Henceforth, this innovative research culled on both the disciplines of linguistics and literature plus the related fields of cognitive psychology, history, anthropology, sociology, and political science to set the groundwork using discourse analysis protocol for both the data gathering and interpretation.

An ambitious pioneering study, the investigation explored into the narrative techniques and discourse style of three selected Philippine short novels using the unconventional notions and principles of translanguaging, a relatively new development as theory of language practice which aims to break the conventional linguistic and cultural divides permeating largely into the humanities, particularly in applied linguistics, literature, and the arts but not limited to these disciplines (Li Wei, 2018, 2022). Translanguaging, as adopted in the investigation, provided both the theoretical framework and the principled process of interpretation to look into the strengths of narrative techniques, language and the styles of discourse used in the chick lit of Tara F. Sering's "Getting Better," the young adult fiction of Sophia N. Lee's "What Things Mean," and Cyan Abad-Jugo's "Salingkit." As used in the study, translanguaging was modified to include syntactic, idiomatic, and organizational preferences aside from the lexical and morphological features of the texts inclusive of the author's idiolectal and psycho-social

demographic as manifested in the textual evidences. These were treated as the authors' creative attempts for translanguaging space and translanguaging instinct. Principles and tools of critical discourse analysis or CDA were likewise integrated into the translanguaging model as adopted in this investigation which helped in the analysis of the three short novels' macro discourse structures and discourse style or lexical preference.

According to Li Wei (2018), translanguaging is the most relevant response to Kramsch's (2005) call for an enlightened theory of language practice in applied linguistics as the 21<sup>st</sup> Century language users are mostly if not all multilingual and hence, the need for a practical theory of language that offers a new way of looking at the everyday linguistic practice in post-modern society. Simplifying the notion of translanguaging, Li Wei (2018) goes on to say that it is a practical theory of language which looks into the practice of multilingual language users, a process that is dynamic, creative, and fluid which involves the use of named languages, varieties of language, and other semiotic resources to make and negotiate meaning in the actual process of authentic communication.

Translanguaging suggests more of language mixing yet in an integrated creative dynamic process of making meaning or sense-making resulting to effective communication. Every individual develops his own unique idiolect which is more or less facilitated by the act of translanguaging, mediated by the translanguaging space and translanguaging instinct.

When applying translanguaging to the analysis of literary discourse like the novel, the requisite underlying assumption is first to overcome language biases or prejudices and followed by the ability to interpret the wide and full range of linguistic style of the author which include as well the nonlinguistic and extralinguistic features of the narrative and poetic discourse. Motives and intents can be best described by an integration of linguistic resources utilizing knowledge of named languages, varieties of language, and other semiotic resources or the multimodality in communication towards the communicative intent of making sense and getting at meaning. In this research, the three selected novels (chick lit and young adult fiction) were analyzed in terms of their merits and strengths by looking into their narrative techniques and discourse styles aided by the use of translanguaging perspective, process, and practice. Thus, each literary work was interpreted and understood incorporating the integrated assemblage of artistic and language values in the full ecology of the individual author's meaning-making resources evident in the text. Discourse analysis general protocol was employed with CDA's lexical mapping and overlexicalization to guide the scientific method of linguistic analysis, of course with the translanguaging perspective.

To facilitate the objective of the investigation, the selected literary texts were taken from the more upbeat and relevant genres of chick lit and young adult fiction. Since these three short novels lend themselves to a translanguaging discourse being the more popular varieties of prose and observably consumed greatly by the modern or post-modern reader, they were assumed the right choice of material to achieve the ends or goals of the research. The first novel, *Getting Better* by Tara F. Sering is classified as chick lit while the other two, *What Things Mean* by Sophia N. Lee, and *Salingkit* by Cyan Abad-Jugo are young adult fictions.

Usually, chick lit is for women written by women that depicts what life is like for young women in the cities or urban areas who focus on their careers and romantic relationships. It is a recent literary genre which is also referred to as "post-feminist, post-modern and popular fiction as well as contemporary romance" by fictionist Imelda Whelehan in her *The Feminist Bestseller* (2005). She provides a more detailed definition:

Chick lit provides a post-feminist narrative of heterosex and romance for those who feel

that they're too savvy to be duped by the most conventional romance narrative. It allows for the possibility of promiscuity, illicit sex, ordinariness, loss of dignity, and fallibility, along with all the aspirational features – whether it be clothing, interiors, or food. (p. 186)

By adopting the translanguaging lens into the genre of chick lit, the narrative technique was subjected in the research to a discourse analysis of the fluid integration of the author's idiolectal register, the cultural experience and norms, and ultimately, the world view in the sum total of the text as both artistic and linguistic artifacts. Motives and intents were interpreted and understood within the frame of linguistic evidence to support both the criticism and appreciation of the work. The voice of women was inevitably an important discourse to examine in this genre as an evidence of an evolving world language within and across cultures. As such, the material was likewise found appropriate for critical discourse analysis.

Young adult literature is defined as literature written for and marketed to young adults, regardless of gender orientation. Robert Carlsen (1980), as cited by VanderStay (1992) in his *Young-Adult Literature: A Writer Strikes the Genre*, posited the following definition:

Young-adult literature is literature wherein the protagonist is either a teenager or one who approaches problems from a teenage perspective. Such novels are generally of moderate length and told from the first person. Typically, they describe initiation into the adult world, or the surmounting of a contemporary problem forced upon the protagonist(s) by the adult world. Though generally written for a teenage reader, such novels – like all fine literature – address the entire spectrum of life. (p. 49)

The genre served the purpose of this research since young adult fiction is intended for the younger readers and therefore, offers the opportunity for translanguaging analysis of its macro discourse structure and language use. The genre is usually characterized by a teenage protagonist, first-person perspective, adult characters in the background, limited number of characters, compressed time span and familiar setting, slang, positive resolution, and few subplots. While the investigation banked on the language-literature interface with translanguaging as the dominant lens for discourse analysis, it likewise intended to determine how the narrative technique facilitates the negotiation of the linguistic and artistic values, in other words, the interpretability of intended meaning, and backed up by the use of dialogues. In the research, both the old and contemporary paradigms of genre were considered hence, the basic features of young adult fiction and chick lit were examined in terms of how they were linguistically and creatively manipulated to achieve the narrative effect and the authentic language but without excluding the author's deliberate attempt to innovate and transgress from the basic conventions. Translanguaging offered the necessary lens for this radical stylistic and narrative technique analysis.

The notion and principles of translanguaging as employed in the study therefore considered the language and style of discourse of the three selected novels. It is admissible that chick lit and young adult novels are marked by a casual, informal, humorous, and sometimes colloquial, vulgar or street language, with code-switching, and these were treated in the research within the framework of translanguaging as creative linguistic practice and not as linguistic weaknesses of certain speakers of language or languages.

This current research sought to analyze the harmonizing concordance of language and literature within a novelty paradigm in applied linguistics, translanguaging, which was modified in scope to include larger chunks of discourse other than lexis, morphology, and utterances but also discourse frames of

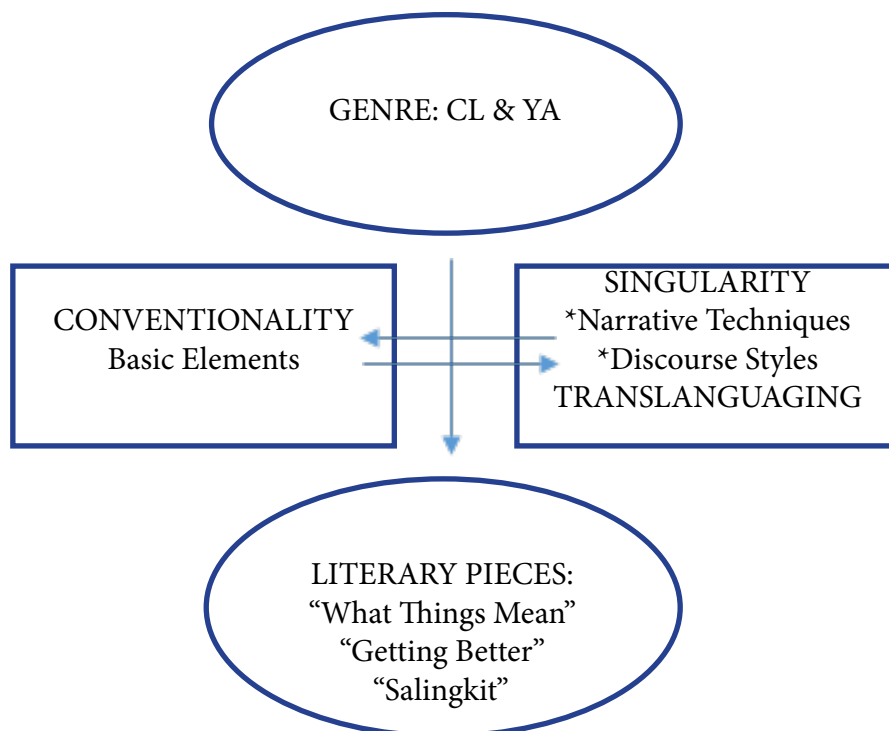
cultural practice, ideology, and philosophy embedded in the narratives and organizational style. The study was undeniably radical in linguistic approach and literary analysis. Given the choice of literary genres with the unstable genre notion of Swales (1991) to analyze, translanguaging was henceforth adopted in the study to also consider macro discourse or the suprasentential structure of the text not just specific discourse markers at the intersentential level utilized by assumed multilingual authors and their created characters in their respective fiction.

**Problem Statement**

This investigation adopted a modified notion and scope of translanguaging as theory and practice in applied linguistics and the study of literature particularly chick lit and young adult fiction. It considered translanguaging as approach and as actual evidence of evolving language which is the result of creative negotiation of meaning in authentic discourse. Moreover, translanguaging as treated in the study included longer chunks of creative discourse not just as single words or morphological constructs but also the macro discourse structure or metadiscourse, reflecting the thematic value of the work anchored on a particular ideology or philosophy. However, only the short novels as literary genre were subjected into the translanguaging analysis aided by the tools of CDA within the protocol of discourse analysis with focus on the narrative techniques and discourse styles.

**Conceptual Framework**

The study was conducted guided by the assumption that chick lit and young adult fiction as exemplified by the three selected literary pieces manifested effective use of narrative techniques which highlighted both conventional and unconventional stylistic manipulation and use of language in their basic elements of plot development, and character development with authentic discourse characterized by translanguaging. Illustrated below is the schematic diagram of the conceptual framework:



From the given schematic diagram of the study’s conceptual framework, it was assumed that translanguaging impacted into the creative narrative technique and discourse style of each of the three selections. The author’s prior knowledge of the genre is translated into her attempt to follow set

conventions of narrative technique and choice of language but which is likewise mediated and enriched by her artistic attempt, or aesthetic translanguaging space and translanguaging instinct, to achieve originality and singularity or creative innovation in plot development and language use with the aid of translanguaging strategies for macro discourse structure and discourse style like lexical mapping and overlexicalization, sloganization, imagery, voice, and mood. The harmonizing effort of the author to follow convention and simultaneously experiment with her creative license result to her unique piece of work, her own masterpiece. The strength of the author's work was expected to be of singularity and originality though in an evident genre making it acceptable and refreshing, the literariness resonating innovation in both form and style, made possible by translanguaging ability.

### Methodology

Given that the research was venturing into a rather new paradigm of looking into the current linguistic phenomena of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, the latest practical theory of language called translanguaging as overtly and subconsciously used in the creation of literature like the chick lit and young adult fiction and their narrative technique analysis, the protocol or procedure of discourse analysis, aided by CDA tools of lexicalization and overlexicalization was observed in the gathering and treatment of data while the DA approach or theory served to facilitate the employment of a modified translanguaging model and process within the objectives of investigation. The study was therefore translanguaging-discourse analysis but in the realm of literature as both the source of textual and linguistic data.

### *The Corpora*

Chosen as the genres and texts for the investigation were Tara F. Sering's chick lit *Getting Better*, and the young adult fictions of Sophia N. Lee's *What Things Mean*, and Cyan Abad-Jugo's *Salingkit*. They were selected on the basis of assumed popular culture, novelty technique, and dynamic language use, rendering translanguaging process doable in the discourse analysis and interpretation. Significant extracts from each of the three novels were subjected to the translanguaging investigation following the DA protocol. These extracts came in varied linguistic units like lexemes or vocabulary words and discourse markers, utterances and idioms as syntactic configurations, linguistic and nonlinguistic expressions, including the extralinguistic features of setting and cultural artifacts, dialogues and longer frames of discourse. The macro discourse structure of the narrative technique for each of the three novels was of course examined in the totality of the literary work while paying attention to the significant features of plot development.

### Results and discussion

This section of the study presents the literary analysis of each of the three novels upon which translanguaging notions and principles were observed in discourse analysis to describe their strengths in terms of narrative technique and discourse style.

#### A. *Getting Better: Synopsis*

The novel revolves around the story of a twenty-seven year-old Karen who lives in an apartment in Manila and works in Makati. Just when all her friends are bidding goodbye to the single life, she is still reaping its benefits – a cool apartment with no curfew, a creative job with a flexible schedule, and a boyfriend, Miko, who looks just about ready to marry her. Her biggest challenges so far are decorating her apartment and playing adviser or counsellor to her problematic friends. Her life is a perfect balance of having all the liberties of being single and a fiancé. She and Miko told about their engagement to her



parents who live in Laguna. They also made a deal to announce to their common friends about their getting married and invited them after work to their usual bar along Makati Avenue, but Miko did not appear. Until an unexpected turn of events happens. While in the bar with friends, Karen was told about a secret affair between her boyfriend Miko and their officemate Cynthia but she remained optimistic until she realizes that Malu was right, “But there’s no ring ... I’m sure Miko can afford a ring, right?” and the fact that Miko’s mom still doesn’t know her son is engaged.

Until one day in the office, she was faced with devastating news that it might have been Miko on that Xerox machine, and accidentally caught Cynthia wearing that red panty which reads “Come on down!” Miko’s belated birthday gift. She confronted Miko and decided to break up with him.

In order to recover and move on from that painful break up, Karen did some “recovery routes” until Robert Reyno, a former schoolmate and a “suspected gay-in-denial,” shows up at her door: “He moves closer and kisses you. Shut up and enjoy it. While you’ve never done it before, you don’t think there’s nothing wrong with sleeping beside a guy you’ve only started hanging out with, especially if he makes you an elaborate breakfast the next day.”

The story ends with Robert and Karen in her apartment. She now decides to “be nicer to herself”:

Watch Bert’s topless back as he washes the dishes, and understand that the moving on process varies from case to case. For some people, it can take a few months or years. Others need only a few days. Accept the fact that in your case it’s happened already.  
(Serings, p. 76)

#### *Narrative Technique and Style of Discourse*

The author uses the “You” character as the protagonist perhaps to create a close bond between the reader and the character or a relationship between reader and text. This is an evidence of syntactic translanguaging strategy to break the usual convention of the genre for manipulation of linguistic forms like pronominals. In this literary piece, the functionality of the pronominal “you” is highlighted to create a higher degree of reader-participation by a clear straightforward linguistic address. *Getting Better’s* translanguaging syntactic and macro discourse strategies are presumably intended to create the image and form of a self-help manual for young women who have been treated badly by the men in their lives. The dominant discourse style is in synch with urban middle-class single-woman’s lifestyle as indicated by the following LM: cool apartment, no curfew, creative job, flexible schedule, having a boyfriend. This effective use of lexis helps to achieve the desired imagery of city living, and enhances the overall aesthetic appeal of the work. The OVL clearly articulates a feminist perspective in opposition to abuse and exploitation by the opposite gender as exemplified by the following statements and phrases: recovery routes, nicer to herself, there’s nothing wrong with sleeping beside a guy you’ve only started hanging out, liberties to being single, painful break up, devastating news, secret affair. The macro discourse structure is a welcome translanguaging strategy by a female author to drive home the feminist point of view; for women to free themselves from too much inhibitions and fear to avoid getting abused by a male-dominated society. As described by fictionist and scholar Cristina Pantoja-Hidalgo (2007) in her *Over a Cup of Ginger Tea: Conversations on the Literary Narratives of Filipino Women*. As a “self-help manual,” the title of every chapter literally attempts to present strategies that the reader or character might take. Like in the first chapter, “How to Deal with June,” it begins with:

First, pretend that it doesn't bother you. Watch movies about how great it is being unmarried but boyfriend-ed. Single, dating exclusively and enjoying all the perks – you've got a kiss-and-cuddle buddy without the children and commitment, so you should be ecstatic right? (p. 29)

The succeeding chapters are: How a Xerox Machine Can Break, How to Tell the World You're So in Love You're Getting Married, How to Catch a Cheat Without Really Trying, How to Recover from Heartbreak by Trying Really Hard, How You Might Backslide, How to Be Nice to Yourself.

The organizational or macro structure of narration is conventional in the outset as it takes a chronological development with the exposition of setting then gradual introduction of characters, rising incident, climax, falling incident, denouement, ending. However, the translanguaging attempts to heighten the dramatic and emotive appeal of the narration with the creative manipulation of syntactic construction and lexical choice render the work its singularity and originality with that strong sense of realism and authenticity. The discourse mode has an alternately sad and humorous narrative tone where sentiments are played up to achieve the desired emotive appeal.

Generally, the discourse style is transactional rather than poetic because everything is clear to the reader. There is no ambiguity and sentences are in the active voice. It is written in a typically colloquial style, an evidence of translanguaging to create a sense of authenticity. The use of colloquial language is an attempt of the author to employ a discourse style, translanguaging (the use of two languages and mixing them) that is intended to be typical of oral speech of contemporary Philippine middle class women. It is realistic. The characters occasionally use tag-lish, slang, vulgar and obscene terms to express their emotions (TS). By doing this, the impression of authenticity and immediacy is reinforced as in these extracts:

“So how often do you have sex? Is it, like, every night?” (32)

“Are you PMS-ing?” (33)

“OA” (34)

“Tang ina! Someone fucked on the Xerox machine!” (37)

“Swerte mo naman you got your dream guy ... No naman.” (43)

As the language is very informal and conversational (translanguaging of actual conversation), complex sentence structures and formal expressions are rarely found. Short sentences, simple expressions are frequently used. The humorous, sarcastic tone that is typical of chick lit can also be observed in this story. For instance, an e-mail memo of Mrs. Palabrica, a.k.a. Mrs. Hobbit, about “devastation of office property” shocked the office one Monday morning:

Sounding like a forensics expert by the fifth paragraph, she reports that “weight was applied on the machine, weight that is approximately the equivalent of two people, perhaps a male and a female, but given the personalities in our industry, it is quite possible that the combination was something else.” (p. 37)

The style is typically colloquial but authentic (translanguaging phenomenon). The witty Tagalog lines made it all the more realistic. This discourse style is intelligent in the sense that the author was able to closely imitate (satirize, a translanguaging strategy) the society in which the story took place. Cristina Pantoja-Hidalgo's *A Note on Reconnaissance* speaks of the novel's success and appeal:



I believe it's the protagonist's voice, which is very now, unmistakably contemporary – alternately funny and sad, tough and vulnerable, in-your-face and help-I'm-hurting-something-awful! It's a voice that fans of television sitcoms, like *Ally Mc Beal* and *Sex and the City* will recognize. It's a voice that young and not-so-young urban women – students, young housewives, career girls – will identify with. (p. 77)

Hidalgo commented on the reasons behind the appeal Sering's *Getting Better* had on the readers. Perhaps what she referred to as a language that is “very now” (translanguaging phenomenon) is actually something that is seen in Sering's novel. Her example of what she sees as “dialogue that's both clever and credible” is actually what this paper also sees as one of the most powerful attempts to establishing authenticity of discourse [translanguaging strategy for singularity] from tradition. The discourse also evidences idioms:

“Jan, his name is Bert Reyno. Bert is bad enough,” you hiss. “Bert Reyno pa!”  
“What's his real name ba? Baka naman you can sort of invent a new nickname.”  
“Robert Redford Reyno.”  
“Tang ina naman.”  
“And Jan, he goes to the gym a lot daw. Plus he loves *Sex and the City*.”  
“Ay wala na. You've got yourself a new shopping friend.” (p.78)

The power of translanguaging or realistic dialogue like this in a chick lit lies in its stance on how real people sound when they speak (informal, colloquial register) to each other in this country – even when they may have English as their first language. Undoubtedly of a social class that is comfortable enough with English to use it with friends and family, the main characters in this novel are also well-situated in this country's linguistic idiosyncrasies (speech and discourse communities) as they comfortably shift (translanguaging strategy) from English to Filipino in exactly the same way that we do in our everyday lives. It is a current usage of two languages that the characters in these books cannot live without.

The practical style in this novel, both at the macro discourse structure (organizational and narrative style) and at the intersentential level (lexical choice and syntactic construction) is compromising as far as language is concerned, the writing itself, the narrative and dialogues. It allows for a real glimpse (translanguaging discourse style and narrative technique) of the particular state of educated young women in urban areas like Manila and Baguio City. On the whole, the literary worth of the novel is achieved with a skillful manipulation of narrative technique and discourse which clearly came from the author's linguistic repertoire and creative license for singularity with the premise of a good understanding of the conventions of chick literature. Evidently, the author's skillful manipulation of lexical mapping and over lexicalization (OVL) combined with her translanguaging space and artistic instinct helped her to produce an excellent singularity of artefact, understandably derived from her rich knowledge of her subject, the world, and subcultures within cultures. Her gender tendencies and inclinations substantially manifested in her treatment of the conflict and the world view as articulated in the theme. These translanguaging attempts for the female social space worked effectively to create the right voice in the text, and that is the protest of women to abuse and exploitation.

#### B. *What Things Mean: Synopsis*

The novel revolves around Olive Guerero, a fourteen-year-old girl who lives with her big family in a subdivision somewhere in Commonwealth, Quezon City. Being different from the rest of her mother's

clan from appearance to hobbies and interest makes her feel lonely and unaccepted. “She is big-haired, brown-skinned, and clumsy in a family of cream-coloured beauties who are all popular and good at sports.” She is more like her father, though she never actually met him. Olive, having been the different one in the family, struggles to become like her family. To cope with her loneliness, she does anything that will bring optimism to herself. She turns to books, cuts old magazines for scrapbook, writes diaries, collects stamps, she learns magic tricks with her uncle, and she goes out for a walk around the subdivision. The more she wants to fit in, the more she wants to meet her father to understand why she is so different. Things went smoothly until one day she discovers about her father’s place which isn’t too far from their house, about an hour or two’s worth of walking, it’s Tempo’s Tacos and Things store. She decided to see him:

From behind my head, a man came into view. He is very tall and dark-skinned, his mop of curly hair tied back in a greasy looking ponytail. His arms are sticking out from underneath a dusty-looking striped poncho. Tucked under one arm is a large, unlidded jar of pickles ... He is smiling a large, Cheshire cat kind of a smile from under his thick, bushy mustache. (Lee, p.122)

It was a difficult day for Olive but the truth about her identity and her father started to unfold.

### *Narrative Technique and Style of Discourse*

The novel is told in a non-linear format of dictionary entries (translanguaging strategy for authentic text). Each chapter is introduced using non-fictional documents like words and their dictionary meanings (lexical mapping). Every word correlates with the life of Olive, the protagonist. The series of word definitions move the story forward, providing appropriate metaphors that articulate familiar human concerns especially that of Olive’s. The narrative technique is more of a story-within-stories. The text features a number of stories that have a similar thread (more or less overlexicalization): Olive’s journey into discovering who she is in the little things that make up her life, like bristles, stamps, forks, and mirrors (lexical mapping or LM); her relationship with her cousin Estella and Estella’s love stories. In each story, there is a pronounced yearning not only of a reason for her oddness (OVL for the notion of eccentricity, which in this context is conveyed as seemingly undesirable), but also a cry for a man she may call Dad. News headlines, diary entries, recipes, geographical details are also used in the novel (clustering for semiotic stylistic effect).

The protagonist’s story is told using first-person POV that reveals the protagonist’s experiences (translanguaging strategy for emotive appeal and the sense of realism) directly through the narration. It is primarily character-driven. With this narrative voice, a sense of connection with the character’s mindset and emotional state is established. Sometimes a little funny, sometimes a little sad. The novel ends with a sense of realization and fulfilment because the protagonist has finally found answers to her existential questions (translanguaging strategy to bridge the ideological and the practical worlds) and was able to meet her father. Except for a little ambiguity or uncertainty (translanguaging strategy for singularity to create dramatic and emotive appeal) that is implied in the last paragraph:

Mama is surprised when I ask her to drive me back to the taco shack. She asks me if I’m sure, and I tell her that I am. “I don’t mind going to him, Mama – he may not be good at that sort of thing, but I want to be.”  
She agrees to take me there next time.

“Maybe I can help him finish painting his wall,” I tell her.

“Maybe,” she says.

For now, maybe is enough for the both of us. (Lee, p. 132)

The dialogues are simple and conversational, and dominated by simple sentence structures or just single-word utterances that are mostly in the active voice. The use of such discourse style gives the novel a realistic appeal (translanguaging strategy to approximate daily life communication, natural discourse). The novel being set in a subdivision in Quezon City with Filipino characters showcases the Filipino culture and values (translanguaging strategy for participation in authentic cultural world). Like the close family ties set up of living, where Olive lives in a house with her grandmother, her aunts, and cousins (lexical mapping or LM). Also, there are so many notable quotes or idioms (translanguaging, strategy or TS and OVL for honest, candid realistic yet romantic worldview and philosophy of a happy family life] in almost every chapter that provides a closer look at the things that define life, and the many ways in which we find meaning. Below are extracts from the novel that exhibit OVL:

“Strength comes in different ways, Olive,” (4)[OVL]

“Maybe we all have to let go of things, and people, in order to keep our balance.” (33)  
[OVL]

“Things go where they are needed, and when they do, we simply learn how to live without them.” (46)[OVL]

“This means that no matter how close two things may be, you can always find another point between them ... Close[OVL] but still not close enough.” (47)[OVL]

Mostly, for the insights, the story speaks about the importance of family (overlexicalization for institutional importance). It portrays how families can be quite imposing on children. Olive shows to the readers why it is important to keep asking questions (translanguaging strategy) to understand why things are the way they are. At the same time, it makes the readers realize how family members have different ways of making other members feel they love them.

On the whole, the novel *What Things Mean* is an insightful attempt to create a story that is faithful to life’s vicissitudes and realities facilitated by translanguaging strategies of reinforcing the ideology and philosophy of the importance and role of societal institutions like the family in character building and the sense of rootedness and identity. The dominant discourse style which moves from the intimate-personal to the casual then to the general informal depending on the speech participants in the episodes is helpful to the achievement of the overall mood, which is reflective and discerning. The translanguaging strategies of syntactic manipulation (short, simple utterances, polite discourse marks like Mama, Dad, father) and the discourse mode or the narrative style complemented the general mood of the novel.

### C. *Salingkit: A 1986 Diary: Synopsis*

A 12-year-old Kitty Eugenio, certified martial law baby, struggles with her own personal issues, especially the departure of her mother who tries to find a life for them in the United States and the continued absence of her father, a *desaparacido*, who disappeared alongside rallyists and revolutionaries during a time of oppression. She lives with her relatives.

The shy, introverted Kitty finds solace in her friends who sometimes act weird and sometimes keep secrets from her. Her classmates persist in pairing her with a boy she doesn’t like, but who just

might be able to help in the search for her father. She is also into music. Together with her three other friends, she is part of the New Wavers Club who celebrates in the songs of their favorite bands, Depeche Mode, Tears for Fears, and Duran Duran, among others, which were having their '80s peak. She even labels herself Goro, the nickname of Depeche Mode songsmith Martin Gore. As the months go by, Kitty finds out more about herself and the rapidly changing world around her.

### *Narrative Technique and Style of Discourse*

The novel presents real issues of young people (translanguaging strategy or TS and OVL), such as transitioning from high school to college, getting involved in romantic relationships, maintaining friendships and breaking family rules (LM).

The term 'salingkit' (TS and OVL) is used to refer to a person, often younger, who really doesn't belong, an outsider of some sort. In *Lifestyle.inquirer.net*, *Salingkit* derives its title from the Filipino expression 'saling-pusa' (idiom for OVL) or someone who doesn't really belong; 'Kit' also being the nickname of the main character, Kitty Eugenio.

This young adult novel, takes a look at the 1986 EDSA Revolution (translanguaging for ideologue) from the perspective of Kitty Eugenio, a 'salingkit' witnessing the unravelling of Philippine history and her unspoken insecurities and anxieties. As a historical fiction, the socio-political events in 1986 (LM) were seamlessly placed in the novel.

The novel shifts between Kitty's diary entries [translanguaging strategy for macro discourse structure] and the omniscient third-person POV which could be slightly disorienting translanguaging for singularity]. One has to keep track of this as well through the changes in the font and layout of the book (visual semiotic resource). There are tangents (overlexicalization) in the story: Taylor's problems with her parents, Betsy's own struggles being a son of a military official affiliated with the Marcoses, Wanda's story and why she is the way she is, Kuya Allan's activism, and Kitty's own relationship with her mother. All of these could be developed further and realized in the story, yet it might be deliberate in the author's part to invite the readers to draw their own inferences, giving a space to navigate around the story (translanguaging for singularity). The structure of the story is chronological without any flashbacks (translanguaging for conventional mode). There is an open, but implicit happy ending, as both Kitty and her Mama can now look back on their past with humor, Kitty is now optimistic about her father's situation and she now understands almost everything about herself. All of these become obvious in the final dialogue when Kitty's Mama arrives home from the US and decides to come back for good:

Her mother searched Kitty's face and looked her over one last time. "You've grown, sweetheart."

Yes, yes, Ma, now go," Kitty said, unable to take any more staring, and being observed like a specimen. When the door closed behind her, Kitty snatched up Siobhan (her kitten). "You'll have to live with me, you know, my dear. Can't have Kuya Alan hogging all the kittens." (Jugo, p. 132)

And in the last part of her last diary:

And finally, I am so glad I wrote in this diary, even if I didn't get to fill out all the days. At least there's a little bit of me I can look back on when I grow old like Lola Sol, and tell people not to talk politics at my table. I hope Kuya Alan gives me another diary for Christmas. But oops, I wasn't supposed to write that. (Jugo, p. 133)

Although the characters often talk in fragments and abbreviated terms (translanguaging strategy for authentic every day discourse), this one does not use vulgar or obscene language (lexical mapping). It tends to be dialogue heavy (translanguaging strategy), the language is adapted to typical features of oral speech. The dialogues are rather short and the vocabulary is not sophisticated but in a few instances uses Tagalog words (translanguaging strategy). Often times, words like 'he/she said' are added within a characters' speech, perhaps a technique to stress the character's temperament (syntactic translanguaging strategy for emotive appeal and lexical mapping). Some of these are given in the story:

"Maybe for yours," Goro said.

"Stop that," Mama said. "Try to understand."

"I don't."

"Try harder."

"Maybe I'm just dumb."

"Don't be difficult." (3)

"*Pare*, there's a cute high school girl in the other tent." (15)

"Still angry about that, are you?" (16)

"Ma'am," Jay-R said, "we're too young to vote." (7)

"What's the matter, Kitty," Betsy quipped, "cat got your tongue?" (8)

The conversational style is made up of simple language, sentence fragments and phonetic transcripts (syntactic translanguaging strategies). Again, this narrative style enhances the realism of the situations. In sum, the work achieves literariness as a young adult fiction with the complementary linguistic attributes made possible by the author's ability to blend her imaginative prowess and her language resources which was richly drawn from an extensive range of both the practical and poetic.

### Findings

In view of the results, it was observed that the dominant strength of the three novels in their narrative technique, is the use of a realistic discourse mode and style from the beginning to the end of the story thus complementing the subject and theme of the work with translanguaging strategies on both the organizational and intersentential levels. These include ideological and cultural reflections and insights woven into discourses or dialogues, storytelling that alternates between funny and sad moods to convey a balanced view of life, and while the chronological convention of plot development was used, subgenres like self-help manuals, diaries, and personal letters that were integrated into the main genre demonstrated effective translanguaging in the narrative style.

Despite the fact that the three novels' subjects ranged from sadness to the quest for one's father to a sense of belonging or self-identity, the discourse style remained informal and casual with embellishments of idioms, slogans, and personal, perceptive lexicology.

In addition to the above, translanguaging principles are also evident in the manipulation of the language of literature in each of the three novels observable from the syntactical constructions, lexical choice, and narrative technique, indicative of each author's aesthetic translanguaging space and imaginative translanguaging instinct.

### Conclusion

These three novels consistently use discourse style or language that is non-ambiguous, straightforward and is highly conversational, as these are clearly aimed at a particular readership which expects

immediate, personal and entertaining stories rather than complex connotative texts. Moreover, these novels do not merely entertain because they also address serious and significant themes such as family relationships, quest of identity, career, and sexual pre-marital relationships, among others.

Concerning the macro discourse structure or the narrative technique, these novels follow the conventions of storytelling though they likewise come with various narrative situations and told from several perspectives. For instance, the *Getting Better* illustrates cleverness by way of its manual-like narrative technique, the non-fictional documents in *What Things Mean* mark an instructive aspect of genre fiction and the personal letters written by the heroine in *Salingkit* create the feelings of intimacy, authenticity and immediacy which make up or enhance the overall emotive appeal. The stories are filled with witty dialogues and contemporary, realistic situations that resonate with their readers, obvious indications of the authors' attempts for translanguaging as multilingual participants of a dynamic multiverse.

The three novels, however exhibit translanguaging strategies in both the macro discourse structure (ideological theme and feminist voice), and in the intersentential level or in the dialogues (approximating every day natural conversations or register). With the frequent use of lexical clustering [lexical mapping], and repetition of words, use of synonyms, connotations (overlexicalization), the desired overall sensory, imaginative, emotive, and dramatic appeal of each novel is achieved. Imagery is consistently that of realistic portrayal of life. Translanguaging strategies, consciously and subconsciously employed by each of the three authors enhanced the literariness of their respective works while retaining the basic conventions of the genre of chick lit and young adult fiction.

### Recommendations

The research makes the following suggestions in light of the aforementioned results and conclusions:

Practitioners should look into the potentialities of the translanguaging theory as a decolonizing stance and practical alternative to ESL/EFL/EMI pedagogy in resolving identity issues in language learning as well as linguistic marginalization problems, and reflect on current practice to integrate the translanguaging principles in all aspects of the teaching-learning dynamics;

Language learners should derive learning strategies from observing how people actually use language and make use of this information in the reading and appreciation of literary texts as well as in their personal language use for social interaction;

Future researchers in the field and the related disciplines should include a variety of texts to examine as well as more of the modalities of communication other than speaking, listening, reading, writing but also the visual arts, music, and humanistic approaches to language and literature teaching;

School Administrators, policy makers, curriculum developers, and textbook writers should include translanguaging strategies in their portfolios for seminars, conferences, workshops, programs, and production of instructional materials to inform, disseminate and orient all stakeholders of the benefits of the principled pragmatic theory and practice of translanguaging as the latest paradigm in applied linguistics.



**Funding:** This research received neither internal nor external funding.

**Conflict of Interests:** There was no conflict of interest declared by the author.

**Bionote**

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