

Acknowledging dispossession

A CDA/PDA perspective on discourse dealing with unceded land

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This paper illustrates what can be revealed by a linguistic analysis of the discourse strategies deployed in a bilingual text acknowledging the dispossession of Indigenous peoples in Mindanao (Philippines). The analysis draws on systemic functional linguistics (SFL) descriptions of English, which model language as a resource for making meaning. It explores the choices involved from the perspective of critical discourse analysis (CDA), exposing language in the service of power, and positive discourse analysis (PDA), appreciating language as an instrument of social change. In doing so we exemplify the role of SFL-informed CDA/PDA in processes of reconciliation, including personal and public acknowledgements and apologies, alongside considerations of “making peace” with dispossessed Indigenous people through existing, renovated or emerging genres.

Keywords: critical discourse analysis, positive discourse analysis, systemic functional linguistics, story genres, history genres

1. Unceded land

One of our authors grew up in southeastern Canada, in a small town of just over 1000 people that he called St Andrews. He learned as a child that it was founded by “United Empire Loyalists”, who settled in British North America after the American Revolution. Even though one end of town was called Indian Point and he and his sisters went to school and played with children from the one remaining First Nations Passamaquoddy family that still lived there, he never realised that he was living on unceded land, that loyalist settlers had driven most of the Passamaquoddy people across Passamaquoddy Bay to reservations in

the northeastern United States (Peskotomuhkati First Nation 2021) and that the caravan park his father helped establish as a member of the local Kiwanis Club was positioned on Passamaquoddy ceremonial land (Rayner 2018). And he did not know until recently that the Canadian government had refused to take steps to recognise the existence of Passamaquoddy people in Canada pursuant to the Indian Act and refer to their leader as Chief Hugh Akagi until 2016 (French 2016). What he thought of as his home was in fact Qonasqamkuk, home to the Peskotomuhkati people. Neither he nor his parents (descended from Irish settler farmers who ended up living in a nearby loyalist town when their farm burned down and English settlers from central Canada) had been welcomed to this land.

His experience was not of course unique. It is one shared by the vast majority of people who live in the Americas, countries like Australia and New Zealand, and many other parts of the world colonised by European powers. We usually did not know that our ancestors had been at war of one kind or another with First Nations people and that peace had seldom been formalised, and where it had been, seldom honoured. Most of us learned only later on in life that there was a process of reconciliation to work through before any of us could dwell at ease in someone else's home.

2. Recognition

What is to be done? The first step, as articulated by then Prime Minister of Australia Paul Keating in his landmark Redfern Park Speech (Keating 1992; National Archives of Australia 2012), is recognition. This public address, marking the Year for the World's Indigenous People, was in fact the first acknowledgement by the Australian Government of the dispossession of Australia's First Nations peoples.

It begins, I think, with that act of recognition – recognition that it was we who did the dispossessing. We took the traditional lands and smashed the traditional way of life. We brought the diseases. The alcohol. We committed the murders. We took the children from their mothers. We practised discrimination and exclusion. It was our ignorance and our prejudice. And our failure to imagine these things being done to us.

(Keating 1992: 3)

It is from this step, recognition, that the possibility of an apology, treaty, land rights, representation, compensation, a voice in government and other dimensions of reconciliation flow.

From the perspective of CDA (critical discourse analysis; e.g. Fairclough 1989, 2010; Caldas-Coulthard and Coulthard 1996) and PDA (positive discourse

analysis; Martin 2004; Bartlett 2017), there are many relevant genres to investigate and participate in – stories (in literature, film, song...), histories (academic, popular, documentary...), ceremonies (governmental, religious, grass roots...), treaties, land rights legislation and so on – across a range of print and electronic media. For purposes of this paper, we take CDA to be primarily concerned with language and attendant semiosis in the service of power and PDA as concerned with language and attendant semiosis in the service of social change.¹ We elaborate on this complementarity in Section 9, taking stock from a CDA perspective of what our text does not do (e.g. making room for Indigenous people to speak for themselves) and taking stock from a PDA perspective of what the text does do (e.g. unfolding as a moving “coming of age narrative” acknowledging dispossession and its ongoing repercussions for Indigenous peoples). In particular, we focus on the change of gears from the first part of the text to the second (i.e. the transition from the author’s memories from childhood to her explanation of the colonising forces in play). The two parts of the text in effect enable two complementary kinds of recognition – initially foregrounding empathy (as we look at a dispossessed Indigenous woman through a child’s eyes) and ultimately acknowledging colonial responsibility for life in Mindanao (and her family’s complicity in the dispossession).

From the perspective of SFL, all of the genres noted above have the potential to be described and designed from the perspectives of realisation (metafunction, strata and rank), instantiation (coupling, commitment and genesis) and individuation (allocation and affiliation) – far too much to be explored in a lifetime, let alone a single book or paper. For introductions to the theoretical and descriptive toolkit in play, seen from the perspective of the model of SFL assumed here, see Martin (2010, 2014, 2016) and Martin and Doran (2023). In this paper, we will focus on a single text in order to illustrate what a close reading drawing on some of these tools brings to bear on our understanding of linguistic resources in the service of recognition, as one step in the complex process of bringing peace to “settled” First Nations’ lands. This is a challenging process as the recent defeat in Australia of a referendum calling for a change to the constitution establishing an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island Voice bears witness (<https://www.aec.gov.au/Elections/referendums/2023.htm>). It is too early to tell what sets of resources will end up being generalised as effective reconciliation genres. But looking in detail at choices made is important and we offer this paper as an example of why this is so and avenues of productive analysis to be pursued. This is especially important for the Philippines, where reconciliation genres are still rare.

1. For discussion of the relation of SFL to CDA see Martin (2000), Bloor and Bloor (2007) and Young and Fitzgerald (2006).

3. Growing up in Davao

The text we are dealing with here is called “Growing up in Davao” (*Paglaksi sa Davao* in Tagalog) by Cynthia Lumbera (2009:145). In this bilingual text, Lumbera reflects on her memories of growing up in Mindanao and explains what she did not understand as a child about the dispossession of Indigenous people there. It is part of a bilingual social science book called *Regional profiles: People and places* (Almario et al. 2009) which has been designed to introduce Philippine school students to the geography, environment, history, industry, people and culture of their country and is taken from the “Mindanao and the Archipelago of Sulu” section of the book. Lumbera focuses our attention on the position of the Philippine communities whose land has been expropriated by settlers, corporations and government and whose culture and language are thereby marginalised and threatened with extinction. The English text is presented in full below (following Lumbera’s paragraphing); it is presented to the right of the Tagalog text in Almario et al. (2009).² We include the full text here because an important first step in any analysis involves reading the text we are interpreting, at least twice – once with “soft eyes” to get an overall feel for the meanings it is making and once again more slowly, carefully taking in more detail. Note in particular the transition from Lumbera’s memories of childhood to the history of Mindanao and back again.

GROWING UP IN DAVAO

by Cynthia Lumbera

When I was a young girl growing up in my Lola’s house in Davao in the mid-1950s, there used to come every Christmastime a Bagobo woman who would just sit huddled for hours on top of the stairs. I was very much afraid of her then – I thought she was a witch, for she was small and old, with sharp piercing eyes, blackened teeth, and rough, splayed feet. She carried a dirty native knapsack, in which she stuffed old clothes, plastic containers, discarded plates and saucers, and old spoons, forks, and knives. But she was dressed handsomely! Though tattered and worn, her dress, made of abaca fibre, was decorated with embroidery, shell disks, and beads. She had ornaments of brass and shells on her arms; and around her ankles she wore beads, bells, and shells.

She came every year, and then one day, she stopped coming. I asked my Lola where the old Bagobo woman was, and my Lola waved her hand indifferently: “Don’t know...gone somewhere.” I asked my uncle, and he said that the Bagobo woman was the wife of a former Lumad chief, now tenants in my Lola’s farm.

2. For analysis of the Tagalog version of this text see Cruz and Martin to appear, which includes some comments on the translation of the English text.

Growing up in Davao in the mid-1950s was growing up blissfully ignorant of the conflicts and tensions in a settler town carved out of the wilderness by Spanish friars and conquistadors; integrated into the world capitalist market by American and Japanese plantation owners; and increasingly peopled by Christian settlers coming from all parts of the country, in search of better luck in the “land of promise”. Although the language of the old families remained “Dinabaw” (a Mandaya-based dialect), this was fast disappearing, as settlers from all over the country trying to find a common language of communication had given birth to a peculiar “bastardized” Tagalog, heavily laced by Bisayan-Cebuano words and linguistic peculiarities.

The Muslims and Lumads were displaced and marginalized by conquest, and through the years had been systematically deprived of their ancestral lands by government laws and left out of economic progress by the expansion of multinational agribusinesses. The Lumads moved farther into the forests and hinterlands; and the Muslims moved to places where there were stronger Muslim settlements, like Cotabato, Sulu, and Zamboanga. In Davao, a bustling settlement town and then declared a city in 1936, the Muslims and Lumads, original settlers of Mindanao land, became to most people just shadowy creatures, mysterious and fearsome, hovering in the fringes of our safe Christian community.

Insulated, raised in prejudice and distrust, and even a sense of arrogant entitlement to the land, we “settler children”, had no realization of the displacement and alienation of Lumads and Muslims. We did not have the eyes to see the Muslims and Lumads in the light of an oppressive political, economic, and cultural system that continues to this day.

That’s why we never bothered with the old Bagobo woman who huddled on the stairs of my Lola’s house.

The graphology of this presents us with a title and six paragraphs. The title, *Growing up in Davao*, seems to be predicting some kind of autobiographical text. And this is indeed reflected in paragraphs 1 and 2, which tell a story from Lumbera’s childhood about an old Bagobo woman who used to visit her grandmother’s house at Christmas time, but one day did not come. Paragraphs 5 and 6 return to these events, but in a rather contradictory way – suggesting that because of their upbringing, Lumbera and settler children like her never paid any attention to the Lumad and Muslim people around their homes. But paragraphs 1 and 2 deal explicitly with events etched in Lumbera’s memory, showing she did pay attention, at least some of the time. And the text’s single illustration in a sense confirms this through a drawing of two children peeping over a window sill at a woman in Indigenous clothing sitting on the stairs of a small traditional stilt house (*bahay kubo* in Tagalog). This contradiction offers itself as something we need to explain.

Paragraphs 3 and 4 on the other hand are more historical than autobiographical. They deal with the colonisation of Mindanao by successive waves of outsiders and the resulting displacement of its Indigenous peoples – and so are less clearly predicted by the title of the text and less directly related to its illustration. At first blush, this leaves us wondering whether the text was written as a personal story about the author or as a generalised history of Mindanao or some combination of the two. What kind of “hybridity” is in play here (Bartlett 2012; Miller and Bayley 2016)? What is it that holds the text together? And what is pulling it apart? Why do we have two genres instead of one?

To resolve the apparent contradiction and to answer questions about what kind of writing this text is, we need to look more closely at its meanings. And this means doing some detailed analysis; here we draw on the tools introduced in Martin and Rose (2007) and Halliday and Matthiessen (2014). Our focus on a detailed text analysis in Sections 4, 5 and 6 of the paper, before turning to a CDA/PDA interpretation in Sections 7, 8 and 9, is a deliberate one. We want to carefully ground our reading of the text as an act of recognition in the linguistic choices that are made – so that we can see explicitly how language serves power (CDA) and enacts change (PDA). This puts us in a stronger position to interpret and evaluate reconciliation discourse across genres. As applicable linguists, we do want the tail to wag the dog.

4. Autobiography

How can we ground the commonsense observations concluding Section 3? And how can we resolve the puzzle raised there? The title says “Growing up in Davao”. Let’s start there.

From an ideational perspective, paragraphs 1 and 2 do build a picture of what life was like for Lumbera in Davao in the 1950s. Therein action clauses (their Processes in italics below) generalise what was going on each Christmas, until one time the Bagobo woman did not arrive.

- (1) When I was a young girl *growing up* in my Lola’s house in Davao in the mid-1950s, there *used to come* every Christmastime a Bagobo woman who *would just sit huddled* for hours on top of the stairs [...]
She *came* every year, and then one day, she *stopped coming*.

And state clauses present a rich description of the Bagobo woman, whose demeanour frightened Lumbera at the same time as her attire impressed her (their Processes in italics below). These clauses include extended nominal groups

describing what frightened Lumbera, what the woman was carrying in her knapsack and how she was dressed.

- (2) I *was* very much afraid of her then – I thought she *was* a witch, for she *was* small and old, with sharp piercing eyes, blackened teeth, and rough, splayed feet. She carried a dirty native knapsack, in which she stuffed old clothes, plastic containers, discarded plates and saucers, and old spoons, forks, and knives. But she was dressed handsomely! Though tattered and worn, her dress, *made of* abaca fibre, was decorated with embroidery, shell disks, and beads. She *had* ornaments of brass and shells on her arms; and around her ankles she wore beads, bells, and shells.

A variety of state clauses and nominal groups are used to describe the Christmas visitor. To get at the meanings involved we have pulled out the entities described in a range of clause types and aligned them with their descriptions in Table 1. Lumbera begins with the Bagobo woman's physical appearance, continues by describing her knapsack and its contents, and concludes by detailing her clothing. Table 1 is organised around these three phases of description.

Table 1. Lumbera's description of the Bagobo woman (story)

	Entity	Description
appearance	<i>she</i> (Bagobo woman)	<i>small and old</i>
	<i>eyes</i>	<i>sharp piercing</i>
	<i>teeth</i>	<i>blackened</i>
	<i>feet</i>	<i>rough, splayed</i>
goods	<i>native knapsack...</i>	<i>dirty</i>
	<i>clothes</i>	<i>old</i>
	<i>plates and saucers</i>	<i>discarded</i>
	<i>spoons, forks and knives</i>	<i>old</i>
dress	<i>she</i> (Bagobo woman)	<i>handsomely dressed</i>
	<i>her dress</i>	<i>tattered and worn</i> <i>made of abaca fibre</i> <i>decorated with embroidery, shell disks, and beads</i>
	<i>ornaments</i>	<i>of brass and shells</i>
	<i>ankles</i>	<i>beads, bells and shells</i>

As we might expect from a story genre, the function of this description is not simply ideational. Feelings are also being shared. As a child, Lumbera is afraid of the Bagobo woman and thinks in fact she is a witch.

- (3) I was *very much afraid* of her then – I thought she was a *witch*,

The first phase of description relates why Lumbera reacted the way she did – specifying the trigger of her fear and the target of her judgement; it connects attitude to ideation with the causal connector “for”.

- (4) I was very much afraid of her then – I thought she was a witch,
for
 she was small and old, with sharp piercing eyes, blackened teeth, and rough,
 splayed feet

The second phase of description is less explicit about feelings. But they are there. In Martin and White's (2005) terms, this phase mainly invokes rather than inscribes attitude. The contents of the knapsack reveal how poor the Bagobo woman was, as far as material possessions are concerned. Everything she owns appears to have been discarded by the kind of people she is visiting each Christmas. She lives, in other words, on the margins of their world. The state clause complex invoking this negative appreciation of her possessions and negative judgement of her social position is presented below; it includes a long nominal group complex (in *italics* below) in a clause elaborating on the contents of her knapsack.

- (5) She carried a dirty native knapsack,
 =
 in which she stuffed *old clothes, plastic containers, discarded plates and saucers, and old spoons, forks, and knives*.

For the third phase of description the polarity of the attitude presented is explicitly reversed and signalled as so with the concessive connector *but* (underlined below). Lumbera positively appreciates the way the Bagobo woman dresses, inscribing her reaction to how she dressed (*handsomely*).

- (6) But she was dressed *handsomely*!

This explicit appreciation in fact functions as a Hyper-Theme for the details that follow – most of which are not explicitly attitudinal in themselves but which need to be read as such because they are in the domain of the explicitly attitudinal Hyper-Theme.

- (7) Hyper-Theme
 But *how elegant* her attire was!

=

Though tattered and worn, her dress, made of abaca fibre, was decorated with embroidery, shell disks, and beads. She had ornaments of brass and shells on her arms; and around her ankles she wore beads, bells, and shells.

The disjunction here is that Lumbera does in fact negatively appreciate the Bagobo woman's clothing as *tattered and worn*. But the concessive connector *though* deflects this criticism as beside the point (as underlined below) – countered by the attractive traditional dress for which the Bagobo are well-known.

- (8) *Though* tattered and worn,
her dress, made of abaca fibre, was decorated with embroidery, shell disks, and beads.

In the following paragraph, description of the Bagobo woman gives way to action clauses (their Processes in *italics*), beginning with physical activity – as something unexpected happens.

- (9) She *came* every year, and then one day, she *stopped coming*.

Lumbera then recounts her attempts to find out why through verbal clauses (their Processes in *italics* below).

- (10) I *asked* my Lola where the old Bagaobo woman was, and my Lola waved her hand indifferently: "Don't know...gone somewhere." I *asked* my uncle, and he *said* that the Bagobo woman was the wife of a former Lumad chief, now tenants in my Lola's farm.

The Initiating and Responding structure of the conversation is outlined in Table 2. Her grandmother brushes off the question with a vague disinterested reply. Her uncle does not answer directly either; but he does tell her that the Bagobo woman was married to a former Lumad chief.

Table 2. Lumbera looks for answers (story)

Lumbera	Initiating	I asked my Lola	where the old Bagobo woman was
Lola	Responding	–	"I don't know... gone somewhere."
Lumbera	Initiating	I asked my uncle	(where the old Bagobo woman was)
uncle	Responding	he said	that the Bagobo woman was the wife of a former Lumad chief, now tenants in my Lola's farm.

Lumbera's uncle's reply indicates that the old Bagobo had, or at least once had, a social status in her own community which was much higher than that we might have inferred from the description analysed above. This gives us some perspective on what Lumbera saw as a child, in a family of farmers, in relation to how someone married to a Lumad chief would be viewed by Indigenous people in

Mindanao. From a PDA perspective it makes room for different points of view – a child’s naive reaction vs an elder’s tribal status. And this disjunction prompts Lumbera to shift gears and move in effect from the autobiographical text foregrounded by the text’s title to a historical account of how the Bagobo woman and her people ended up living as Lumbera encountered them as a child.

5. History

Shifting gears, we say. What changes between paragraphs 2 and 3? One of the most striking changes is the amount of information Lumbera packs into the first sentence of her acknowledgement of dispossession (there is, after all, a lot of history to tell). It is an identifying state clause, with embedded clauses functioning as both Value and Token.

- (11) Value [[Growing up in Davao in the mid-1950s]]
 Process was
 Token [[growing up blissfully ignorant of the conflicts and tensions in a settler town carved out of the wilderness by Spanish friars and conquistadors; integrated into the world capitalist market by American and Japanese plantation owners; and increasingly peopled by Christian settlers coming from all parts of the country, in search of better luck in the “land of promise”]]

The Token itself includes an embedded clause complex qualifying a settler town.

- (12) ...in a settler town [[*carved out of the wilderness by Spanish friars and conquistadors; integrated into the world capitalist market by American and Japanese plantation owners; and increasingly peopled by Christian settlers coming from all parts of the country, in search of better luck in the “land of promise”*]]

This qualifying embedding consists of three clauses (separated by “//” below):

- (13) [[carved out of the wilderness by Spanish friars and conquistadors; // integrated into the world capitalist market by American and Japanese plantation owners; // and increasingly peopled by Christian settlers coming from all parts of the country, in search of better luck in the “land of promise”]]

And the third of these itself includes an embedded clause complex qualifying *Christian settlers*, in italics below:

- (14) ... by Christian settlers [[*coming from all parts of the country, in search of better luck in the “land of promise”*]]

And this complex consists in turn of two clauses.

- (15) [[coming from all parts of the country, // in search of better luck in the “land of promise”]]

This degree of embedding inside embedding inside embedding, with embeddings themselves involving clause complexes, is a feature of relatively abstract written academic discourse and has the potential to pack an indefinite amount of information into a single sentence. One way to get a feel for this is to rewrite the sentence, removing embeddings. A plausible “translation” into less abstract more “spoken” style discourse is offered below. Significantly, unpacking the embeddings creates a number of opportunities to make logical connections between clauses explicit with connectors (*when, for, then, and, after, in order to*), in italics below.

- (16) *When* I was growing up in Davao in the middle of the 1950s //
 I didn’t know about the conflicts and tensions in a settler town //
because it was carved out of the wilderness by Spanish friars and conquistadors, //
then integrated into the world capitalist market by American and Japanese plantation owners, //
and more and more Christian settlers lived there, //
after coming from all parts of the country, //
in order to find better luck in the “land of promise”. ///

The Lumbera sentence we are working on was in fact made denser still by the inclusion of four nominalisations (*conflicts, tensions, luck, promise*):

- (17) Growing up in Davao in the mid-1950s was growing up blissfully ignorant of the *conflicts* and *tensions* in a settler town carved out of the wilderness by Spanish friars and conquistadors; integrated into the world capitalist market by American and Japanese plantation owners; and increasingly peopled by Christian settlers coming from all parts of the country, in search of better *luck* in the “land of *promise*”.

Verbalising these nominalisations stretches out the explanation further still – into what is arguably a more transparent account of what went on. Significantly, even though Lumbera is explaining the colonisation of Mindanao in relation to ongoing tension and conflict and its impact, she does not use explicit markers of cause and effect between clauses (e.g. *because, so, for, therefore, as a result*) – leaving it to readers to make causal connections explicit for themselves. From a CDA perspective there is a high degree of implicitness here, which the more “spoken” version helps spell out. One might well criticise this in terms of absolving settlers of responsibility for dispossession; but from the perspective of

PDA it might be read as avoiding blame and inducing guilt and thus potentially alienating an audience that Lumbera hopes to get onside.

- (18) *When I was growing up in Davao in the middle of the 1950s //*
I didn't know //
that people were clashing //
and becoming anxious in a settler town //
because it was carved out of the wilderness by Spanish friars and conquista-
dors, //
then integrated into the world capitalist market by American and Japanese
plantation owners, //
and more and more Christian settlers lived there, //
after coming from all parts of the country, //
in order to fare better
as they had been promised. ///

What about cause and effect inside clauses? How is the impact of one thing on another handled there? We will concentrate here on agentive clauses (in which one entity acts upon another). Two accounts of what went on are offered here. The first has to do with the history of Davao as groups of invaders (*Spanish friars and conquistadors, American and Japanese plantation owners and Christian settlers*) establish and expand the town. The second has to do with the dispossession of the Muslim and Lumad peoples living there. In this case, it is not groups of people who are agentive but nominalisations (*conquest and expansion*) and regulations (*laws*). So the people developing Davao are made explicit (in their “constructive” role), but they are not named in relation to the devastating impact on the people they are dispossessing – this is left implicit (their “destructive” role). Table 3 shows how colonisation is realised in the grammar of clauses and responsibility shifts from people settling Mindanao to institutions dispossessing Indigenous people.

The contrast with Keating's (1992) recognition could not be more striking, as he explicitly positions Australians (highlighted in italics below) as responsible for dispossession and its ramifications.

- (19) It begins, I think, with that act of recognition – recognition that it was *we* who did the dispossessing. *We* took the traditional lands and smashed the traditional way of life. *We* brought the diseases. The alcohol. *We* committed the murders. *We* took the children from their mothers. *We* practised discrimination and exclusion. It was *our* ignorance and our prejudice. And *our* failure to imagine these things being done to *us*.

With Lumbera, on the other hand, responsibility is assigned to institutions functioning in certain ways, which leaves individual people out of the problem.

Table 3. The grammatical impact of colonisation (history)

Agent	Process	Medium	Circumstance
<i>by Spanish friars and conquistadors</i>	<i>carved</i>	<i>a settler town</i>	<i>out of the wilderness</i>
<i>by American and Japanese plantation owners</i>	<i>integrated</i>	(“)	<i>into the world capitalist market</i>
<i>by Christian settlers...</i>	<i>peopled</i>	(“)	
<i>by conquest</i>	<i>were displaced and marginalized</i>	<i>the Muslims and Lumad</i>	
<i>by government laws</i>	<i>deprived</i>	(“)	<i>of their land</i>
<i>by the expansion of multinational agribusinesses</i>	<i>left</i>	(“)	<i>out of economic progress</i>

This contrast draws attention to the differences between the entities involved in the autobiographical paragraphs (1 and 2) and the historical ones (paragraphs 3 and 4). Paragraphs 1 and 2 have specific people (Lumbera, her grandmother and uncle, the Bagobo woman and her husband) rather than groups of people (the Muslims and Lumads). The relevant identity chains make the contrast clear. Table 4 displays the chains for paragraphs 1 and 2. We do not really need a table to account for identity tracking in paragraphs 3 and 4. There is just one main chain, for Muslims and Lumads (*the Muslims and Lumads, their, the Lumads, the Muslims, the Muslims and Lumads*) and one short chain for the Dinabaw language (“*Dinabaw, this*”).

These differences as far as entity tracking are concerned give us just a partial picture of the contrast between the entities presented in the story (paragraphs 1 and 2) and those participating in history (paragraphs 3 and 4). As already itemised in Table 1 the story is concerned with what we call appearance (e.g. *eyes, teeth*), goods (e.g. *plastic containers, spoons*), and clothing (e.g. *abaca fibre, ornaments*) entities there. In addition, mention is made of family (*girl, Lola “grandmother”, woman, uncle, wife, chief*) and Grandmother’s home (*house, stairs, farm*). It is a local domestic scenario.

In paragraphs 3 and 4, on the other hand, the main players are not individuals but social groups. Alongside the Muslims and Lumads in general we have various colonising collectives:

- (20) Spanish friars and conquerors, American and Japanese plantation owners, Christian settlers, settlers

Table 4. Identity chains in paragraphs 1 and 2 (story)

Author	Grandmother	Bagobo woman	Uncle
<i>Cynthia Lumbera</i>	<i>Lola “Grandmother”</i>	<i>a Bagobo woman</i>	<i>uncle</i>
<i>I</i>	<i>Lola</i>	<i>her</i>	<i>him</i>
<i>my</i>	<i>Lola</i>	<i>she</i>	
<i>I</i>	<i>her</i>	<i>she</i>	
<i>I</i>	<i>Lola</i>	<i>she</i>	
<i>I</i>		<i>she</i>	
<i>my</i>		<i>she</i>	
<i>my</i>		<i>her</i>	
<i>I</i>		<i>she</i>	
<i>my</i>		<i>her</i>	
		<i>her</i>	
		<i>she</i>	
		<i>she</i>	
		<i>she</i>	
		<i>the old Bagobo woman</i>	
		<i>the Bagobo woman</i>	
		<i>the wife</i>	

It is not someone’s specific house that is mentioned, but rather what Australia’s Indigenous peoples refer to as ‘country’:

- (21) wilderness, plantation, country, land, country, lands, forests, hinterlands, places, Cotabato, Sulu, Zamboanga, Davao, Mindanao

And reference is made to various Philippine languages:

- (22) Dinabaw ‘Mandaya-based dialect’, language of communication, “bastardized” Tagalog, Bisayan-Cebuano, words

Finally, alongside the nominalisations dealt with above, we have the nominalisations *conquest* and *expansion* and the relatively abstract entities *government laws* and *multinational agribusiness*.

Summing up this ideation, we can see that stories are about specific people and what happened to them, often around their home. History on the other hand is about groups of people, their languages, their ‘country’, their business and their

government – all in relation to generalising nominalisations like *conquest* and abstractions such as *government laws*. Choices for Theme foreground this difference – i.e. specific people and things in paragraphs 1 and 2 (e.g. *I, she, her dress, my Lola, he*) but abstractions, language and groups of people in paragraphs 3 and 4 (e.g. *growing up in Davao, the language of the old families, settlers from all over the country..., the Muslims and Lumads*).

This raises questions about the kind of language we use in recognition of the dispossession of First Nations peoples. Keating's choices, for example, are much more explicit about taking responsibility for what went on – with Australians as agentive Themes and their impact as News. Information flow in Keating's recognition is outlined below as a rhetorical sandwich, prefaced by an initiating Hyper-Theme and consolidated through a culminative Hyper-New (with Themes thus predicted highlighted in italics, and News thus summarised underlined).

- (23) It begins, I think, with that act of recognition – recognition that it was *we* who did the dispossessing.

=

We took the traditional lands

and (we) smashed the traditional way of life.

We brought the diseases.

(We brought) The alcohol.

We committed the murders.

We took the children from their mothers.

We practised discrimination and exclusion.

=

It was our ignorance and our prejudice. And our failure to imagine these things being done to us.

With Keating, blame is put on all Australians in general, as if to say that they all have the responsibility for reconciliation. With Lumbera, on the other hand, reconciliation is about institutions functioning in certain ways, which leaves individual people out of the problem. But Keating's Hyper-New of course does more than summarise; it inscribes the feeling invoked by the filling of the rhetorical sandwich – as *ignorance, prejudice* and *failure*. This raises questions about the differences in attitude between paragraphs 1 and 2 and paragraphs 3 and 4 in Lumbera's text. As with attitude analysis in general it is important to consider not just the kind of feelings expressed but also whose feelings they are and the ideation that is triggering or being targeted by them.

As analysed above, in paragraphs 1 and 2, we feel the world through a child's eyes. Growing up in her grandmother's house, Lumbera is frightened of the Bagobo woman (*very much afraid*) but impressed by her attire (*dressed hand-*

somely); and she is frustrated by the indifference of her grandmother's vague answer to her query about where the Bagobo woman had gone (*waved her hand indifferently*).

In paragraphs 3 and 4 Lumbera changes stance, and evaluates the colonisation of Mindanao as an adult. She begins by judging her childhood persona as *ignorant* and then turns to appreciation to comment on what happens as the colonisation unfolds. As outlined in Table 5, Lumbera draws on a mix of positive and negative appreciations of different aspects of the colonisation, as felt through adult eyes.

Table 5. Appreciation in paragraphs 3 and 4 (history)

Source	Appreciation	Target
Lumbera (adult)	<i>conflicts</i>	<i>settler town</i>
Lumbera (adult)	<i>tensions</i>	<i>settler town</i>
Lumbera (adult)	<i>better</i>	<i>luck</i>
settlers	<i>promise</i>	<i>land</i>
Lumbera (adult)	<i>"bastardized"</i>	<i>Tagalog</i>
Lumbera (adult)	<i>peculiarities</i>	<i>"bastardized" Tagalog</i>
Lumbera (adult)	<i>progress</i>	<i>economic</i>
Lumbera (adult)	<i>stronger</i>	<i>Muslim settlements</i>
Lumbera (adult)	<i>bustling</i>	<i>town (Davao)</i>
Lumbera (adult)	<i>safe</i>	<i>Christian community</i>

Towards the end of paragraph 4, Lumbera shifts from appreciation of the process of colonisation to judgement of the Muslims and Lumads affected by it. As noted in Table 6 she sources these negative judgements not to herself but to most people who settled in Mindanao. Their target is the Muslims and Lumads, who end up being referred to as *creatures* (not people), as they move around the outskirts of the secure Catholic colonisers' lives. This textual process of dehumanisation in part explains why Lumbera as a child reacted to the old Bagobo woman as she did (i.e. fearful and believing her to be a witch). It also sets the stage for another shift of gears, as Lumbera reflects on the impact of colonisation on children's attitudes to Muslims and Lumads as they grew up in the 1950s in Mindanao.

As Tables 5 and 6 display, in her history, Lumbera appreciates the settlement of Mindanao and inscribes how settlers judged the First Nations people they displaced. What about the settlers? Who judges them and how?

Table 6. Judgement in paragraphs 3 and 4 (history)

Source	Judgement	Target
most people	<i>shadowy</i>	<i>Muslims and Lumads</i>
most people	<i>mysterious</i>	<i>creatures</i>
most people	<i>fearsome</i>	<i>creatures</i>

6. Stiches and seams

As we have seen in Sections 4 and 5, there is a big change of gears between paragraphs 1 and 2 and paragraphs 3 and 4 as Lumbera in effect shifts genres – moving from an autobiographical story on to a historical account of the colonisation of Mindanao (Martin and Rose 2008; Coffin 2006). This means there is a seam in the text and the two genres have to be stitched together. The transition is managed by picking up the theme of growing up in Davao in the 1950s and characterising it as growing up ignorant of the growing conflict and tension in a land of settlers – a land whose colonisation is then outlined.

- (24) Growing up in Davao in the mid-1950s was growing up blissfully ignorant of the conflicts and tensions in a settler town [...]

The same disjunction arises between paragraphs 4 and 5 as the text shifts back again to growing up in Davao in the 1950s. Lumbera manages this by consolidating her history of Mindanao in the nominalised phrase *the displacement and alienation of Lumads and Muslims* at the same time as she develops an identity chain tracking settler children (including herself). The key nominalisation is highlighted in italics below.

- (25) Insulated, raised in prejudice and distrust, and even a sense of arrogant entitlement to the land, we, “settler children”, had no realization of *the displacement and alienation of Lumads and Muslims*.

The identity chain tracking the settler children unfolds as follows, including two implicit references, in parentheses below – (we), (we), we, “settler children”, we.

- (26) (we were) Insulated, (we were) raised in prejudice and distrust, and even a sense of arrogant entitlement to the land, we, “settler children”, had no realization of the displacement and alienation of Lumads and Muslims. We did not have the eyes to see the Muslims and Lumads in the light of an oppressive political, economic, and cultural system that continues to this day.

These children (including herself) Lumbera characterises as raised in families that she judges as prejudiced and suspicious – although the nominals *prejudice*

and *distrust* mean that who the families were prejudiced against and suspicious of is left implicit. The following sentence however confirms that it was the Muslim and Lumad people that the children were too blinded by prejudice and distrust to see – as long as readers make explicit a causal link between the first sentence and the second, which Lumbera leaves implicit. She then moves on to confess that the settler children were arrogant enough to feel entitled to the land – uncaded land which Lumbera’s history tells us was inherited by the Muslims and Lumads from their ancestors.

Table 7. Judgement in paragraph 5

Source	Judgement	Target
Lumbera (adult)	<i>prejudice</i>	settler families
Lumbera (adult)	<i>distrust</i>	settler families
Lumbera (adult)	<i>arrogant</i>	settler children

Having made this confession, she concludes her text with the puzzling comment we introduced in Section 1, explaining the consequence of the negative judgements:

(27) That’s why we never bothered with the old Bagobo woman who huddled on the stairs of my Lola’s house.

Here Lumbera makes another shift of gears – from ‘we’ pronouns tracking settler children in general to a ‘we’ pronoun which we have to infer includes herself and one or more siblings – since it was they, and not settler children in general, who saw the Bagobo woman curled up at the top of the stairs. This move successfully connects the history of Mindanao back to the story our text opens with; and it explains why Lumbera as a child reacted to the Bagobo woman the way she did. But it leaves us with the puzzle of how to reconcile her keen interest in the Bagobo woman back then with her comment here that Mindanao’s history of colonisation explains why she and one or more siblings did not pay attention to that very woman and people like her. We might speculate, perhaps, that this comment implies that once Lumbera could not get a straight answer from her grandmother she was satisfied by her uncle’s reply and then simply forgot about the Bagobo woman and carried on. But she didn’t in fact erase her memory and has lived to tell the tale. Could it be that a settler child’s responsibility toward the injustices done to indigenous peoples stops at remembrance? So, this seam in the text is never fully patched over. Her story and her history are not fully reconciled.

7. Whose history?

Before exploring this wrinkle in the text (i.e. Lumbera as a child not paying attention to someone she paid attention to) a little further, let us pause for a moment and look critically at the history Lumbera has constructed for us. At first glance, from a PDA perspective, there is a lot to celebrate. The colonisation of Mindanao is documented, including its effect on the Indigenous peoples living there. This surely is a positive step forward as far as popularising the history of the Philippines for school students is concerned. There are after all many histories across many nations where Indigenous peoples scarcely figure at all – or when they do appear they figure as potentially dangerous savages of some kind or other who are in need of “civilising” via religion, schooling and legislation (not to mention murder and/or incarceration and/or militaristic intervention and/or ‘shoot to kill’ drug enforcement laws).

But we need to be careful here. From the perspective of CDA, Lumbera positions the Muslims and Lumads as helpless victims of a colonisation process that is naturalised as somehow inevitable. Paragraphs 3 and 4 are written from the perspective of the colonisers, not the colonised. The land the Muslims and Lumads inherited from their ancestors, which they have managed over countless generations, is referred to as *wilderness*; it is *increasingly* settled by Christians from all over the country; it is referred to by settlers as a “*land of promise*” (with Lumbera using scare quotes to make clear this is the settlers’ opinion, not necessarily hers); the Mandaya-based dialect Dinabaw was *fast disappearing*; the Muslims and Lumads are *systematically* deprived of their land; the work of the multinational agricultural enterprises is evaluated as *economic progress*; and Davao is characterised as a *bustling* settlement town that grew into a city. The key features of this naturalisation process are highlighted in italics below – yet another instance of history written by the conquerors.

- (28) Growing up in Davao in the mid-1950s was growing up blissfully ignorant of the conflicts and tensions in a settler town carved out of the *wilderness* by Spanish friars and conquistadors; integrated into the world capitalist market by American and Japanese plantation owners; and *increasingly* peopled by Christian settlers coming from all parts of the country, in search of better luck in the “*land of promise*”. Although the language of the old families remained “Dinabaw” (a Mandaya-based dialect), this was *fast disappearing*, as settlers from all over the country trying to find a common language of communication had given birth to a peculiar “bastardized” Tagalog, heavily laced by Bisayan-Cebuano words and linguistic peculiarities.
- The Muslims and Lumads were displaced and marginalized by conquest, and through the years had been *systematically deprived* of their ancestral lands by

government laws and left out of *economic progress* by the expansion of multinational agribusinesses. The Lumads moved farther into the forests and hinterlands; and the Muslims moved to places where there were stronger Muslim settlements, like Cotabato, Sulu, and Zamboanga. In Davao, a *bustling settlement town* and then declared a city in 1936, the Muslims and Lumads, original settlers of Mindanao land, became to most people just shadowy creatures, mysterious and fearsome, hovering in the fringes of our safe Christian community.

The only wrinkle in this naturalisation process is an abstract reference to growing conflict and tension in the 1950s at the beginning of paragraph 3. But from the point of view of the Muslims and Lumads, there would have been plenty of conflict and tension from the very first moments of the arrival of Spanish clerics and soldiers in Mindanao (not to mention earlier struggles between Indigenous communities and Muslim colonisers). We do not learn about resistance and betrayals, about battles and skirmishes, about razing and torture, about murders and massacres, about illness and starvation, about prostitution and slavery – much of it genocidal and continuing to this day (as a quick Google search both can, or may not, reveal). And in a book where students are meant to learn about the people and culture of the Philippines, we do not hear anything in this text about Muslim or Lumad ways of life. The Muslims and Lumads, like the Bagobo woman, have no voice at all.

In this regard we need to keep in mind that the terms Muslim and Lumad are both being used as cover terms for a wide range of Indigenous groups with distinctive languages and cultures of their own. In the case of the term Lumad, the collective designation is a contested one, challenged by some Indigenous leaders as effacing the distinctive identity of specific ethnolinguistic groups (the term is in fact taken from Cebuano, a Visayan language, not a Mindanao one). And the term Muslim is problematic in another way, since it refers to people from Mindanao and Sulu who converted to Islam before the Christian settlers arrived, even though some of these groups are closely related to Lumad groups, ethnolinguistically speaking. So while the terminology is convenient for a condensed history of the kind Lumera is naturalising, the terms themselves impersonalise a diverse community whose personal resistance and suffering is written out of Lumera's history and has to be inferred from the position of the Bagobo woman she writes about and reacts to, but about whose feelings we hear nothing at all.

Let us not however be too critical here. No single text can do all the work that needs to be done to redress, even in partial ways, the myriad injustices of colonisation. Colonised and colonising cultures around the world are still in desperate need of reconciliation; and colonisation in one form or another is still going on.

At least the victims have a place, if not a voice, in Lumbera's reflection on her past. Her text does enact a degree of recognition.

8. Confession

As a final step in our analysis, having failed in our interpretation to iron out the main disjunction in the text (i.e. Lumbera not paying attention to someone she clearly paid attention to), let us explore a little further to try and explain why this seam is there – in relation to the inevitable tension between story and history genres. Lumbera begins by recounting for us a story from her childhood growing up in Davao. To contextualise what went on and her reactions to it, she then turns to history and provides an account of how she and her family came to be living there and how each Christmas the Bagobo woman ended up at the top of her stairs. Permitting this visitation was presumably an annual act of Christian charity on the part of Lumbera's grandmother's family, who judging from their reaction when the woman stopped coming were otherwise not much concerned with her welfare. Like many of us who have had personal encounters with disenfranchised Indigenous people, apparently Lumbera cannot help feeling uncomfortable about this lack of concern, and even more uncomfortable no doubt about the arrogant pride she and other settler children took in their occupation of unceded land. In these respects, her text can be read for her part as a kind of confession of her childhood "sins" and more generally perhaps as an apology on behalf of the much less innocent sins of her settler community – a canonical Catholic approach to guilt and absolution one might say.³

It is perhaps this felt need to atone for her sins and those of her ancestors that leads to the tension between the beginning and end of Lumbera's text. By the end of her account of colonisation and its effect on Indigenous people, she needs to confess to the prejudice induced blindness through which she and her siblings, along with other settler children, were socialised as they grew up. At the same time, by way of introducing this history she draws on a specific memory of a specific Bagobo woman she encountered as a child. This autobiographical story is the very springboard for her historical account. And so the fact that she was not quite as blind as her closing suggests turns out to be a pragmatically useful rhetorical strategy after all.

3. It is perhaps relevant here to note that when writing this text, Lumbera was a staff member in the English Department of Ateneo de Manila University, which was founded in the mid-19th century by Jesuits.

Turning to PDA, as noted above, all colonised and colonising cultures are wrestling with redress; and confessing (i.e. acknowledging the wrongdoings of the past) and apologising (as publicly as possible) are important tasks. In Australia, a significant secular genre has evolved in response to these issues, which is referred to as Acknowledgement of Country (McKenna 2014; Kowal 2015; Dreyfus and Helwig 2023). This genre is performed by representatives of settler communities at public gatherings in Australia, in order to acknowledge that the events taking place are doing so on unceded Indigenous land and in order to pay respect to elders, past and present, who are traditionally responsible for ‘welcoming’ outsiders to their ‘country’. Here are two short examples, one from the University of Sydney and another from the Australian Academy of the Humanities.

We acknowledge the tradition of custodianship and law of the Country on which the University of Sydney campuses stand. We pay our respects to those who have cared and continue to care for Country.

The Australian Academy of the Humanities recognises Australia’s First Nations Peoples as the traditional owners and custodians of this land, and their continuing connection to Country, community and culture.

These texts represent an attempt to transcend more traditional autobiographical and historical genres by means of a new genre – one foreshadowing, we hope, a more meaningful negotiation of the place of Indigenous people in Australian society. This is of course an important challenge for the Philippines as well, where Indigenous people tend to be seen as either part of cultural or tourist shows or in reference to land issues, such as a recent heated one on the possibility of constructing a dam to serve Manila, the capital, on Indigenous land. There has been a growing Indigenous presence in government but it is hard to tell at this point whether new genres have developed that could be said to rise from reconciliation. Perhaps some of the tools we have deployed in this paper can play a role in designing genres that include Indigenous voices, sensitively address Philippine history in a balanced way from both settler and Indigenous perspectives, apologise on behalf of settler communities and pave a way forward towards reconciliation and social justice. The 2016 Report of the Transitional Justice and Reconciliation Commission, which focuses on the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, provides an invaluable point of departure. Hopefully it will not take armed rebellion for comparable initiatives to arise elsewhere.

9. Critique and design

Caldas-Coulthard and Coulthard (1996:xi) suggest that it is the responsibility of CDA “to investigate, reveal and clarify how power and discriminatory value are inscribed in and mediated through the linguistic system”. And they further envision a CDA which “is essentially political in intent with its practitioners acting upon the world in order to transform it and thereby help create a world where people are not discriminated against because of sex, colour, creed, age or social class”.

Kress, however, suggests that critical language projects “have remained just that: critiques of texts and of the social practices implied by or realised in those texts, uncovering, revealing, inequitable, dehumanising and deleterious states of affairs”, and goes on to suggest that “if critical language projects were to develop apt, plausible theories of this domain, they would be able to move from critical reading, from analysis, from deconstructive activity, to productive activity” (1996: 15–16). Luke echoes this call to move beyond a focus on ideology “to document ‘other’ forms of text and discourse – subaltern, diasporic, emancipatory, local, minority, call them what you will – that may mark the productive use of power in the face of economic and cultural globalization” (2002:98). He argues the “need to develop a strong positive thesis about discourse and the productive uses of power... to capture an affirmative character of culture where discourse is used aesthetically, productively, and for emancipatory purposes... if CDA is avowedly normative and explicitly political, then it must have the courage to say what is to be done with texts and discourse (ibid. 106-7).

These critiques seem to suggest that CDA needs to move in the direction of interventions; and there have indeed been occasional gestures in this direction. Janks and Ivanič (1992) develop a pioneering discussion of critical language awareness and emancipatory discourse; and Anthonissen (2003) discusses the productive resistance to media censorship in apartheid South Africa. The paucity of exemplars, however, led one of our authors (Martin 2004) to call for the development of positive discourse analysis (PDA) alongside CDA. He suggests that the main focus of CDA work has been on hegemony – on exposing power as it naturalises itself in discourse, and thus feeling in some sense part of the struggle against it (something we might naively posit as a trajectory of analysis flowing through Marx, Gramsci, and Althusser). To move forward, he argues, needs a complementary focus on community, taking into account how people get together and make room for themselves in the world – in ways that redistribute power without necessarily struggling against it. Gore’s (1993) discussion of Foucault in relation to notions of empowerment in critical and feminist pedagogy is relevant here, especially in relation to the de-demonisation of power.

Arguably, Lumbera has taken up Kress's (1996; 2000) challenge and designed a "mixed text"⁴ drawing on both a story genre and a history genre (for the genre categories used here see Coffin 2006; Martin and Rose 2008). Her story, as told in paragraphs 1 and 2 could be treated as either an anecdote (inviting an emotional reaction) or an exemplum (judging character and behaviour). But the point of retelling events is not made explicit. Instead, in paragraphs 3 and 4, Lumbera contextualises what went on with a historical account, explaining (albeit rather implicitly as far as causal connectors are concerned) how the settlement of Mindanao dispossessed the Indigenous peoples there. This sets the stage for her to return in effect to her story genre, and make an explicit judgment about settler children – which suggests that her story needs in fact to be interpreted as an exemplum involving a moral commentary on the author's experience of growing up in Davao.

How successful we might ask, from the point of view of recognition, is Lumbera's "mix"? There is no doubt her exemplum serves her well; it does make a negative judgement of the way settler children were "raised in prejudice and distrust". And her historical account does explain the effect of settlement on Indigenous peoples in Mindanao. At the same time, as noted above, paragraph 6 seems to contradict paragraphs 1 and 2 as far as settler children ignoring Lumads is concerned – so contextualising the story with an explanation genre does not quite work out. In addition, as critiqued above, the historical account is very condensed, with causal connections between events left implicit in a grand narrative of settlement which leaves silent the voices of the dispossessed. So the recognition Indigenous people might be granted in a fuller account is compromised – in the service of the clarifying the point of the preceding story genre.

Well, no text can do it all! There are always choices to be made. And what "hybridity" gains has to be costed against the "purebred" meanings lost. Let's also keep in mind that this text is part of a rich set of materials designed to introduce Philippine school students to the geography, environment, history, industry, people and culture of their country. It will be read by students who can use it as a model for projects connecting their personal histories to the larger histories of inequality and oppression that are the ongoing contexts for their lives. As such the text is promoting an act of recognition at a far earlier point in life than it might otherwise appear.

Our overall point in this paper is that close readings of texts informed by rich models of language such as SFL enable us to monitor what we gain and what

4. We prefer the term "mixed text" to "mixed genre" here, since drawing on two or more genres is part of the process of instantiation, not realisation; for discussion see Martin (2002) and Matthiessen and Teruya (2016).

we lose. This is crucial for both the critique of semiosis in the service of power (CDA) and the design of semiosis in the service of social change (PDA). As far as recognition of dispossession is concerned, there will be times when established genres will serve us well and other times when we draw on the power of two or more genres in “mixed texts” – out of which, over time, perhaps new genres, fit for purpose, will evolve. The Australian acknowledgement of country genre, though still evolving, is perhaps a case in point – filling as it does a gap in an unfolding process of reconciliation. Making peace of course is a continuing process. As functional linguists we have an opportunity to look carefully at steps (and missteps) along the way and make constructive suggestions about future design.

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