

COLLABORATIVE Engagement of Public-School Teachers on Facebook: A Critical Discourse ANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed at analyzing collaborative engagements between teacher to teacher and teacher to learner on Facebook, focusing on discursive types, language features, and the power of language in shaping the understanding of academic challenges. Purposively chosen 50 teacher-to-teacher and 50 teacher-to-learner collaborative engagements on Facebook served as the corpora and were analyzed employing critical discourse analysis. To ensure the validity and reliability of the analysis, 34 participants, composed of 10 public-school teachers and 10 senior high students for in-depth interviews, and seven public-school teachers and seven senior high students for focus group discussions, served as participants in this research. Findings reveal pragmatism as the frequently used discursive type in the interactions. As for language features, classification schemes are predominant. The power of language manifests in that language exposes institutional and legal control over individuals. Moreover, the IDI and FGD generated essential themes such as fostering empathy and resilience and communicating best practices and strategies. This study reveals how Facebook is a platform for teachers to exchange experiences, propose reforms, and advocate for systemic change. The findings of this research provide valuable insights into how collaborative engagements among public-school teachers on Facebook illuminate systemic challenges in the academe while offering routes for improvement. These findings emphasize the importance of promoting teacher collaboration to improve educational practices and policies.

KEYWORDS: *Education, critical discourse analysis, discursive types, language features, Philippines.*

INTRODUCTION

Collaborative engagement, an approach which focuses on community and recognizes learners as co-creators of knowledge (Longo & Gibson, 2023), involves creating a learning environment where teachers and learners engage in language-related tasks through interaction and cooperation (Vega-Abarzúa et al., 2022) in addressing real-world problems. Teachers collaborate with fellow teachers to improve teaching practices, share innovative ideas, and provide emotional support (Nguyen & Ng, 2020; Torphy et al., 2020), while learners engage with teachers and peers through dialogue and shared experiences (Alwreikat et al., 2022; Manickam et al., 2020) through their collaborative engagements on social networking sites (SNS), particularly Facebook (Aguilar et al., 2021; Saragih & Arika, 2020). However, collaborative engagements on Facebook may trigger language-related challenges such as misinterpretation owing to lack of non-verbal cues, informal language use resulting to confusion (Nguyen et al., 2023), socio-cultural misunderstandings linked to language barriers (Karami, 2021), and potential limitations in language advancement caused by excessive dependence on written communication.

In light of this phenomenon, there is a need to analyze language use as this can help teachers and learners to be cognizant of their own communication patterns (Agustin et al. 2021) and provide understanding of how linguistic abilities affect participation and success in collaborative engagements (Chau, Bui, & Dinh, 2024) particularly in virtual settings where effective communication skills enhances competence.

In the global context, Rambe's (2012) study on collaborative engagements on Facebook that involves superficial learning and limited meaningful engagement with teachers, peers and content suggesting that the depth and quality of interactions within the platform may not be adequate for profound knowledge acquisition, incidence of academic under-preparedness pointing out to lack of necessary study skills or other factors that impede academic success. In Asia, Chein and Choo (2021) found out that when learners interact for learning, they prefer to interact with their peers rather than with teachers. They revealed that the only factor that did not significantly influence learner engagement was interaction with teachers as this involves authority and power. In another study, Safori and Abd Rahman (2019), lecturers hold a significant influence that normally leads learners to follow their instructions. Though interaction between educators and learners need to be basically formal

and fundamental to learning, this likely leads to limited collaborative engagements among teachers and learners.

In the Philippines, the study on using the Facebook Group feature of Facebook in Distance Learning as an alternative to various learning management by Avila and Cabrera (2020) found out that the use of Facebook Group in virtual classrooms highly improved the academic performance of students against those who were using the modular distance learning. They posited that the learners perceived that the utilization of Facebook is helpful during the ‘new normal’ teaching-learning despite facing minor challenges in using the platform. This was confirmed by Esteves (2012) when she explored Facebook as a platform to enhance learning and student engagement and the findings reveal that utilizing the platform is effective in sustaining student engagement in distance education.

Another study on Facebook as a platform for asynchronous learning among undergraduate industrial technology students in the Philippines by Caipang et al. (2021) revealed that students viewed it positively as a tool for fostering interaction and knowledge exchange. Also, in 2021, Lim explored the use of Facebook as an alternative learning platform, highlighting how students' narratives revealed that Facebook promotes learning, instruction, and interaction, particularly through conversations in the comment section of posts. According to Lim (2021), Facebook as a learning platform, provides an avenue for teachers for instruction and feedback purposes. On the other hand, the findings of Boholano and Cajés (2021) and Maglunog and Dy (2019) also revealed that there were students who found the use of Facebook as being problematic, due to issues such as limited format of files uploaded resulting to difficulties in accessing pre-uploaded materials, unorganized discussion among learners regarding certain topics, and learners feeling unsafe and uncomfortable in sharing their ideas and information on Facebook.

Although there are numerous researches about teachers’ Facebook collaborative engagement such as Triana et al. (2020) and Rambe (2012), but thus far, the researcher has not come across studies focusing on collaborative engagements of teachers employing critical discourse analysis with in-depth interviews and focus group discussions among Facebook users.

The result of this research will be disseminated through various channels, including digital platforms, academic journals, and presentations at public forums. Furthermore, the outcomes will be presented during School

Learning Action Cells (SLAC) and Teachers' In-Service Training, in collaboration with involved parties.

This qualitative research employing critical discourse analysis aims to analyze collaborative engagements between teacher to teacher and teacher to learner on Facebook regarding challenges in the academe. Exploring collaborative engagements on Facebook between the two identified groups helps to examine patterns on how these texts are organized and the linguistic means teachers utilize to achieve this social action.

Research Questions

1. What discursive types are revealed by the collaborative engagements between teacher to teacher and teacher to learner on Facebook regarding challenges in the academe?
2. What are the language features of these discursive texts?
3. What power of language is manifested in the collaborative engagements between the two identified groups?
4. How do these collaborative engagements shape the understanding of the challenges faced in the academe?

Theoretical Lens

This qualitative research employing Critical Discourse Analysis (Fairclough, 1989) was anchored on Fairclough's model of critical discourse analysis and the concept of the power of language (Hung Ng & Deng, 2017) in educational contexts.

Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is a multi-faceted approach that examines languages as forms of social systems and emphasizes the function of discourse in the production and reproduction of social power relationships. CDA is an effective tool for analyzing teachers' collaborative engagements on Facebook because it allows researchers to explore various dimensions related to discourse and social power dynamics (Triana et al., 2020). By utilizing CDA, this study will be able to identify discursive types, language features and uncover power of language which are often concealed in discourse.

In exploring the power of language, this study employed the framework introduced by Hung Ng and Deng (2017), which examines the inherent power of discourse in communication. Power of language refers to the capacity of language to shape social interactions and influence behaviors, thoughts, and

power dynamics within various contexts (Hung Ng & Deng, 2017). This framework was utilized to explore the intricate dynamics of language and power, by highlighting two main aspects: the power behind language characterized by pre-existing societal powers that language can reveal and reflect on the micro level, and the power of language which focuses on the inherent abilities of language to influence and shape social realities (Hung Ng & Deng, 2017). By using the language-power relationship framework, this research will be able to emphasize the significance of language in establishing social realities and power relations.

Establishing these connections highlights the multifaceted role of language as both a product and a producer of power, capable of revealing, reflecting, maintaining, uniting, dividing, and creating influence within various social contexts. By utilizing Fairclough's CDA framework with the structure of language-power relationship, this study can conduct a critical analysis of how the use of Facebook as a platform for public-school teachers' collaborative engagement, and how the use of language reflects and shapes the structures of power in the educational milieu.

METHODS

Research Design. A qualitative research design employing critical discourse analysis was utilized in this study; to understand how public-school teachers interact on Facebook. With CDA, it helps reveal the deeper meaning behind the words, showing how they share ideas, express opinion, and deal with power and roles in these conversations. Qualitative research, which serves as the overarching methodological framework for CDA according to Creswell (2013) and Creswell and Poth (2016), is an investigative exploration into social or human-related matters and its methods are tailored to help researchers acquire a deeper understanding of individuals, including their social and cultural circumstances. Its methods are designed to assist researchers in gaining a deeper understanding not only on the objective nature of behavior but also on its subjective meanings such as individuals' own accounts of their attitudes, motivations, behavior (McIntyre, 2005; Creswell 2013).

Research Materials and Participants. The corpora of this study were 100 purposively selected teachers' collaborative engagements on Facebook and this was anchored on Braun and Clarke's (2013) recommendation of using 10-100 corpus materials for analysis. The corpora were analyzed employing CDA to reveal discursive types, language features, and the power of language

manifested in shaping the understanding of academic challenges. To ensure data triangulation, 34 participants composed of 17 teachers and 17 Senior High School (SHS) learners underwent in-depth interviews and focus group discussions to determine how language in collaborative engagements shape the understanding of the challenges faced in the academe.

Data Analysis. In conducting critical discourse analysis, the researcher adhered to the procedures proposed by Morse et al. (2002). Initially, the Facebook posts and comments were read multiple times for thorough comprehension. After thorough appraisal of each post or comment, irrelevant comments were discarded. CDA of the corpora was conducted, focusing on the text genres and discursive types (Rambe, 2012) used by teachers. In the analysis, texts were presented in tabular form and the frequency in which the discursive types were utilized in the online engagements were accounted using their respective codes. After that, the researcher conducted the interpretation of data into their corresponding discursive types in the first column to determine if they express neutrality, corporation, technological optimism, pragmatism, legitimacy, and technocracy. The final part was the explanation of social practice or social analysis.

Thematic Analysis (TA) was employed in examining the transcriptions generated from the in-depth interview (IDI) and focus group discussion (FGD) among teachers and SHS learners. In analyzing qualitative data, TA is a widely utilized method as it focuses on classifying and analyzing patterns of meaning in discourse into themes (Herzog et al., 2019; Braun & Clarke, 2012). I conducted the transcription of the audio recordings from the IDI and FGD. After transcription, I utilized TA as outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006), consisting of six phases: Familiarization with the data, Coding, Searching for themes, Reviewing themes, Defining and naming themes, and Writing up.

RESULTS and DISCUSSIONS

Discursive Types Revealed by the Collaborative Engagements

The results reveal that the most frequently utilized discursive types in interactions between both groups are pragmatism, legitimacy, and corporatism. These discursive types are found to be prevalent in most discussions as these are conveniently used by individuals to convey their knowledge and opinion.

Pragmatism, as a discursive type, emerges as the predominant discourse strategy in the corpora, which is attributed to the fact that most interactions center on knowledge-sharing, teaching-learning processes, and practical life experiences. This key finding reflects great emphasis on organized teaching approaches, development of critical thinking, and the need for extensive research education. This result implies that teachers and students communicate about pragmatic solutions, institutional practices, and results-oriented communication to handle academic and organizational challenges. In academic discourse, the relevance of pragmatism aligns with recent studies that investigate its function in shaping instructional approaches and educational interactions. In a study conducted by Rezac and Husbye (2024), they claim that critical pragmatism works as a link between research and classroom practice and advocate for systemic transformation in the academe through practical research. Their assertion supports the findings of this study that pragmatic discourse is fundamental in promoting meaningful educational reform.

In shaping discourse, legitimacy assumes a significant role particularly in situations where educators and learners face systemic challenges, institutional inequalities, and advocacy for reform. Several assertions reflect a discourse of resistance and recognition which emphasizes teachers' collective identity as mentors and societal defenders. The discourse in which teachers are associated with soldiers reinforces the contention that their hard work and dedication, though significant, remain unrecognized within fixed institutional structures. Correspondingly, comments addressing young individuals' discipline and emotional well-being underscore the legitimacy of concerns pertaining to parental influence on an individual's behavior, underlining the integrity of developmental psychology and social work discourse. Research findings from recent studies conducted by O'Connor and White (2021) and Magallanes, et al. (2022) support the relevance of legitimacy in academic discourse. O'Connor and White (2021) explored organizational resistance and legitimating discourses in higher educational institutions, highlighting how existing guidelines often conceal systemic inequalities while sustaining traditional power structures. As observed in both teachers' and students' narratives in this study, the discourses expressing frustration and advocacy for reform align with the findings of O'Connor and White. This claim reinforces the notion that collective identity and advocacy efforts of teachers uphold the legitimacy and reputation of the institution.

Moreover, corporatism is instrumental in shaping interactions in educational settings by underpinning institutional authority, and positioning individual autonomy with corporate goals. The corpora analyzed in this study demonstrate how institutional norms, resilience, and shared responsibility are incorporated in discourse. To illustrate this, the assertion underscoring that stress is a typical part of work demonstrates how workplace discourse normalizes challenges in the academe, while encouraging teachers to accept difficulties and struggles as part of professional development rather than personal or systemic failure. Likewise, the discourses concerning the lack of emotional development of learners who present inappropriate behavior in schools as expressed in the corpora, stresses how academic institutions take in social and behavioral challenges, highlighting the responsibility of teachers in managing the well-being of learners. Recent studies conducted by Anderson (2021) and Rambe (2012) validate the prevalence and significance of corporatism in institutional discourse. The study of Anderson (2021) which examines resilience in corporate settings, emphasize how institutions regard stress as a common experience among employees that promotes adaptability and productivity. Anderson's findings validate the result of this study that such discourses encourage employees to view challenges in the workplace as customary and manageable.

Language Features of the Discursive Texts

Based on the corpora of this study, language features, specifically experiential values of words such as classification schemes and rewording or overwording are frequently utilized in both teacher to teacher and teacher to learner collaborative engagements.

Classification schemes are predominant in the discourses between both groups as this categorizes entities, roles, and concepts, influencing how they are perceived in discourse. The analysis highlights how classification schemes frame institutional identities, such as DepEd's "no collection policy," which positions the agency as a governing body affecting small schools dependent on local funds. This classification underpins stratified academic structures, influencing the cognizance of financial vulnerability within the Department of Education (DepEd). Likewise, the discourse which categorizes the LGBTQ+ community as marginalized, demonstrates classification scheme emphasizing their fight for recognition and rights. In a study by Bedford (2015), it was posited that classification schemes facilitate in structuring discourse by organizing ideas into hierarchical structures, thereby underpinning social identities and institutional

roles. This inference aligns with the findings of this study as it demonstrates how classifications schemes in language shapes meaning and establishes systemic inequalities.

Rewording and overwording, as a language feature, serve as powerful linguistic strategies in teacher-teacher and teacher-learner online interaction by presenting themes through purposeful repetition and reformulation of ideas. In the corpora analysis, it is underscored how accountability in the academe is regarded as a fundamental principle in establishing learner discipline and academic performance. As evident in the discourse, repetitive reference to the word "accountability" stresses its importance in promoting responsibility and ownership among students. As validated by the findings of the study by MacTavish and Kolb (2006), it is through discourse that student engagement is enhanced, especially when teachers consistently reinforce essential values, such as accountability in this context. This repetitive practice creates a structured learning environment that fosters learner success (MacTavish & Kolb, 2006). This inference aligns with the findings of this study which demonstrates how rewording and overwording guide interpretation and reinforces its essential role in shaping student behavior.

Power of Language Manifested in the Collaborative Engagements

Language exposes institutional and legal control over individual is identified as prevalent in most interactions in this study. The discourses illuminate how language captures power dynamics across educational, professional, and societal domains, reflecting the framework of language reveals power as outlined by Fairclough (2021). The corpora studied establish how language unveils institutional power structures, individual struggles, and advocacy efforts. The findings mentioned above align with the studies of Uwen (2023) and Eburuaja and Udoh (2025) which emphasizes how language reveals and negotiates power dynamics within social structures. Reflecting on structured relationships and advocacy for institutional reforms, discourse serves as both a tool for sustaining power and a mechanism for challenging inequities.

Highlights systemic and social challenges is also evident in several interactions. In this study, it is uncovered how language functions as a medium for power dynamics within diverse societal contexts, which includes social, institutional, and educational domains. Based on Fairclough's framework, which illustrates discourse as a site for power and ideology, and Hung Ng and Deng's

(2017) perspective on power of language, this analysis emphasizes how linguistic expressions depict institutional structures, personal struggles, and power inequalities. These reflections stresses language's dual role in maintaining and challenging power hierarchies.

Ways of Shaping the Understanding of the Challenges Faced in the Academe

The data obtained from the in-depth interview and focus group discussion generated essential themes such as fostering empathy and resilience, communicating best practices and strategies, establishing authority through professional language, and enhancing students' language skills through Facebook.

The first theme, fostering empathy and resilience, shows that collaborative engagement significantly influences how teachers and students perceive and navigate challenges in the academic environment. The lack of academic support in public schools often leads to isolation, making it difficult for educators and learners to address systemic issues effectively. However, through online interactions and shared discourse, teachers and students broaden their empathy, validate struggles, and develop practical strategies to overcome obstacles.

The second theme, communicating best practices and strategies, is deemed essential in shaping teachers' and students' perspectives on academic challenges, particularly through the exchange of innovative strategies and the use of technological platforms. The integration of digital tools such as Canva, MS Excel, PowerPoint, and Kahoot has greatly enhanced instructional materials and lesson discussions, enabling educators to share practical approaches for managing student behavior and fostering a growth mindset. According to Chakraborty et al., (2024), incorporating technology into teaching strategies improves student engagement and critical thinking, demonstrating the effectiveness of digital platforms in modern education. This aligns with the thematic analysis, which highlights how teachers utilize Facebook not only as a communication tool but also as a space for professional collaboration and pedagogical innovation.

The third theme, establishing authority through professional language, is instrumental in shaping teachers' and students' perspectives on academic challenges, particularly in fostering credibility and assertiveness in instructional

settings. Teachers recognize that utilizing formal language when addressing students enhances their authority and reinforces their role as models of effective communication. According to Ohayon and Albulescu (2021), professional learning communities enable educators to refine their instructional approaches through collaborative engagement, emphasizing the importance of structured discourse in improving student outcomes. This aligns with the thematic analysis, which highlights how teachers carefully curate their online presence, ensuring grammatical accuracy and ideological clarity in their posts to maintain professionalism and credibility.

The fourth theme, enhancing students' language skills through Facebook, confirms that engaging in collaborative interactions on Facebook significantly influences how teachers and students perceive and address academic challenges, especially in the development of language skills. The thematic analysis emphasizes how Facebook serves as an interactive learning environment where students are exposed to diverse vocabulary, expressions, and dialects. As one student noted, engaging with different users on Facebook allows them to learn new words and cultural dialects, broadening their linguistic knowledge. Similarly, another learner emphasized that reading comments on posts introduces them to both familiar and unfamiliar terms, improving their vocabulary and communication skills. This aligns with Al-Dheleai and Tasir (2017), who found that Facebook facilitates online interaction among students, positively influencing their academic performance and language acquisition by providing exposure to varied linguistic inputs.

This study has illustrated the transformative potential of collaborative engagements on platforms like Facebook in addressing systemic challenges faced by educators in the academe. By promoting open communication, resource sharing, and collective problem-solving, teachers have found validation in their shared struggles and actionable solutions to improve their teaching practices and well-being. These interactions have also inspired educators to embrace innovative strategies and technology, highlighting the value of peer support in navigating the complexities of modern education.

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