DECONSTRUCTING DISCOURSE WITHIN A DISCOURSE: THE INTERTEXTUAL ASPECT OF BLOGGING

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Abstract

The ability of the participants to perceive situations around them and bring in various resources to reinforce their belief and opinions, illustrates how an individual's awareness builds up certain ideologies. This study involves a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) of the comments of various respondents on the issues being discussed in the *Yahoo! News* articles, using Appraisal as a tool in the analysis. The analysis found, various attitudes through language use. Also, different stances from respondents are used to refute or agree with someone else's comments by using 'direct quotations', 'direct reference', 'unreferenced sources' as well as 'hypothetical text' that respondents obtain from various resources. These devices determine the inter-textual aspect of blogging which contribute to a continuing flow of discussion. This sometimes leads to the agreement or argumentation with the previous respondents and often shapes the individual's ideology.

Key words: Appraisal, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), ideologies, blogging, inter-textuality, discourse

Introduction

Discourse is a broad concept of language. It covers the use of spoken, written and signed language. It is multimodal which means it includes multimedia forms of communication. Frances and Tator (2002) give a good summary of discourse. It states, discourse is the way in which language is used socially to convey broad historical meanings. It is language identified by the social conditions of its use, by who is using it and under what conditions. Language can never be 'neutral' because it bridges our personal and social worlds (grammar.about.com). This social world which is made up of different cultures creates a multi-dimensional space in which meaning merges and acts to multiply the voices or inter-textual ideas in the text.

Literature Review

Discourse Sociolinguistics is another direction which Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) has taken with Wodak and her colleagues. Wodak bases her model on the sociolinguistics of Bernstein and Habermas (Wodak, 1995).

"Discourse Sociolinguistics…is not only explicitly dedicated to the study of the text in context, but also accords both factors equal importance. It is an approach capable of identifying and describing the underlying mechanisms that contribute…to the discourse in which they are embedded in a particular context…and inevitably affect communication [Wodak, 1996:6]

Wodak's work on the discourse of anti-Semitism led to the development of an approach which she called discourse historical method. It denoted an attempt to "integrate systematically all available background information in the analysis an interpretation of the many layers of a written and spoken text" [1995:209].

According to Wodak & Ludwig (1999:12-13) viewing language in this way involves at least three things.

> *First,* discourse always entails some element of power and ideologies. There is no interaction where power relations are not present and where values and norms do not have a major role.

> *Second,* discourse is always historical, in that, it is connected with other events which are happening at the same time or which have happened before.

> The *third* aspect is that readers and listeners, depending on their background knowledge and information and their position, might have different interpretations of the same communicative event. Wodak & Ludwig (1999) insist that *the right* interpretation does not exist but interpretations can be more or less plausible, but cannot be *true.* This is also Fairclough's position (1995b:15-16).

Fairlough's approach to CDA has become central to CDA over the past twenty or so years. Fairclough in *Critical Language Study* (1999:4-5) described his approach as "a contribution to the general rising of consciousness of exploitative social relations, through focusing upon language". CDA 'brings social science and linguistics together within a single theoretical and analytical framework, setting up a dialogue between them' Chuliaraki and Fairclough (1999:6). The linguistic theory used is that of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), which has been the foundation for Fairclough's analytical framework as it has been for Fowler et al., 1979; Fowler, 1991; Hodge and Kress, 1979.

Fairclough's approach has also drawn on a number of critical social theorists, such as Foucault (*orders of discourse*), Gramsci (*hegemony*), Habermas (*colonization of discourses*) among others, (Sheyholislami, 2001).

Chuliaraki and Fairclough (1999: 30) argued that 'the past two decades or so have been a period of profound economic social transformation on a global scale'. They believe that although these transformations were due to particular actions by people they have been perceived as part of nature, that is such transformations have been thought of as natural and not due to people's actions.

For Chuliaraki and Fairclough (1999:4) the recent economic and social changes "are to a significant degree…transformations in the language and discourse. Therefore, CDA can help by theorizing transformations and creating an awareness of what is, how it has come to be, and what it might

become, on the basis of which people may be able to make and remake their lives".

Discourse analysts naturally make assumptions about how the audiences read and comprehend texts. CDA practitioners agree in general that different audiences may interpret texts in different ways. One of these ways is through Appraisal.

Appraisal has three systems; it encompasses *attitude*, *engagement* and *graduation*. Attitude deals with the inter-subjective value or assessment participants by reference either to emotional responses or to systems of culturally-determined value system.

Attitude is divided into three sub-systems:

1. **Affect** characterize by certain emotions

2. Judgment assesses human behaviour

3. *Appreciation* encompasses the assessment of the value of an object or product.

Engagement is concerned how linguistic resources position a text to express, negotiate and naturalize particular inter-subjective ideological positions. While **graduation** is concerned with values which act to provide scaling or grading of certain interpersonal force in which the speaker attaches to a text labelled as 'force' and 'focus'. *Force* deals with the intensity of the text while *focus* the sharpening or blurring of the category (White, 2006).

Martin and Rose (2007) emphasize that projecting sources in discourse is part of appraisal that concerned with evaluation and often imbedded in the discourse or text in which Halliday and Matthiessen (2004) call projection. Projections may quote the exact words that someone has said, in which case 'speech marks' are usually used. Or writers/speakers may report the general meaning that was said, which normally does not require speech marks.

Through projections, additional resources of evaluation can be introduced. According to Martin and Rose (2007), there are four ways in projecting sources to consider the source of attitudes and distinguish where the evaluation comes from.

Table 1: Projecting sources

Projecting clauses	Then *he says*: He and three of our friends have been promoted. *I know* where everything began, the background.
Names for 'speech acts'	I end with my few *lines* that my vulture said to me they broadcast *substantial extracts*
Projecting within clauses	Many of those who have come forward had previously *been regarded as respectable*
Scare quotes	'those at the top', 'the cliques' and 'our men

(adapted from Martin and Rose 2007:52)

Martin and Rose (2007) and Thibault (1997) regard this as 'engagement' of having two voices, a monoglossic, called 'bare declarative' [*Shakespeare was the author of Hamlet*] as opposed to the heteroglossic [*They say Shakespeare was the author of Hamlet*]. In terms of this present dissertation on media texts and readers reactions to such texts is more likely a heteroglossic approach. This is because the utterances are regarded as necessarily invoking, acknowledging, responding to, anticipating, revising or a challenging range of social positions. Such a perspective counters the 'common sense' notion that certain statements either spoken or written are interpersonally neutral and therefore can be 'factual' or 'subjective'. Engagement, therefore, covers resources that introduce additional 'voices' into discourse in the following ways.

Intertextuality is an analysis of how different elements in society influence the production of language interconnected and produces different types of discourse in social contexts. Essentially, it describes as a text with in a text. Introduced by Kristeva in the 80s and explains that text basically has two axis, a horizontal axis that connects the author and the readers of the text and the vertical axis which connects the text to other text. Her argument was instead of focusing the readers' attention to the 'structure' of the text, readers should look at the "structuration" or "how the text comes into being" (Chandler, 1994, www.aber.ac.uk/media/Documents/S4B).

While Fairclough (1992:84) defines intertextuality as, "the property texts have of being full of snatches of other texts, which may be explicitly demarcated or merged in, and which text may assimilate, contradict, ironically echo, and so forth". Like Kristeva, Fairclough (1992:104) recognized two types of intertextuality: "manifest intertextuality" where specific other texts are overtly drawn upon within a text which is marked by explicit signs like quotation marks, indicating the presence of other texts. And the "constitutive intertextuality" which is referred to the constitution of texts out of other elements of discourse such as an official government report being transposed and popularized for a newspaper readership that gives a particular slant on the report (quoted in Sheyholislami, 2001).

The same idea that intertextuality (e.g Barthes, 1977; Bakhtin, 1981; Fairclough, 1992) tries to illustrate.

> According to Barthes (1977:143):
>
> It is language which speaks, not the author; to write is…to reach the point where only language acts, "perform", and not "me".

According to him, the text is 'multidimensional' as text embodies different ideas of different sources constructed into one. These various ideas trigger initiatives to create a 'framework' to remember and illustrate certain situations where a writer can position certain proximity to an argument the writer intends to put forward. The pervasiveness of intertextuality as Bakhtin saw it serves different purposes; The transmission and assessment of the speech of others, the discourse of another, is one of the most widespread and fundamental topics of human speech. In all areas of life and ideological activity, our speech is filled with highly varied degrees of accuracy and impartiality. The more intensive, differentiated and highly developed the social life of a speaking collective, the greater is the importance of attaching among other possible subjects of talk, to another's words, another's utterances, since another's word will be the subject of passionate communication, an object of interpretation, discussion, evaluation, rebuttal, support, further development and so on. [Bakhtin, 1981: 337]

This could mean that the idea of a word can be borrowed by writers pro-actively from a previous text, so the new texts can acquire layers of meaning

and thus neutralize or intersect one another. This would underline the importance of seeing text within a context of culture and situation as in the *Discourse Historical Method* of Wodak or Bakhtin's (1981; 1986) engagement of heteroglossia and intertextuality (Fairclough, 1992 and Bakhtin, 1981). What was insisted upon was the intertextual nature of all texts, observing all necessarily references, respond to, and to a great or lesser extent incorporate other text. Any speaker/writer is him/herself a respondent to a greater or lesser degree. The heteroglossic perspective, according to Bakhtin, the emphasis on the role of language in positioning speakers/writers and their texts within the heterogeneity of social positions and worldviews which operate in any culture. All texts reflect a particular social reality or ideological position and therefore enter into relationships of greater or lesser alignment with a set of more or less convergent/divergent social positions put at risk by the current social context. This notion of heteroglossia is reflected in Foucault's account of intertextuality where he claims, "…there can be no statement that in one way or another does not reactualize others" (Foucault, 1972:98). This is the foundation to Fairclough's analysis on intertextuality and orders of discourse (Fairclough, 1992; 2003).

Blogging in social media is one of many examples where intertextual references are commonly used because of its heteroglossic interactions. Information Computer Technology (ICT) offers this opportunity to society; a willingness to communicate, exchange information and create ties with strangers. Many social networking sites like the *Facebook*, *Twitter* and *Blog*, have something in common 'a willingness to communicate' or being in 'touch'. In '*Facebook*' however, people normally know each other. On the other hand 'bloggers' or the 'respondents' of the news may not.

> Blogs are constructed as if they are offering some of the private remarks and experiences that used and constitute the stuff of personal letters…blogs are written for the digital crowd of thousand strangers…with many modes of expression. (Harper, 2011:23)

This new channel of communication can change people's view about human connections that might help to liberate feelings that otherwise individuals might not want to present in face to face conversation.

Scoble and Israel (2006) write:

Blogs are supposed to be written from the heart- to be produced passionately rather than dispassionately, to be off the cuff rather than planned…offer a corrective to the bland and not always frank word of communication. (quoted in Harper, 2010:24)

In fact, some features found in the comments' section of the *Yahoo! News* show reader/writer reactions about a particular news item together with the engagement that takes place often in extended interaction in an on-going debate. These comments are normally posted anonymously, express appreciation or anger about something and convey moral judgment. Some people tend to react to topics that concern issues and situations as well as other respondents, while others tend to lead the *blogosphere* by opening up new topics or area for discussion (Harper, 2010). The *web browser* allows users to add *Really Simple Syndication* (RSS) feed if readers or bloggers want to add their own blogs. "Blogs are read as a web of interrelated objects connected through systems of RSS." (2010:26) These bloggers enjoy sharing topics that might need discussions and are potentially of some concern.

According to Harper;

The value of searching the webs of RSS feeds and understanding the threads is to be able to add comments to those threads…this way does the pulse remain vital. To know what the action is and what is being said about the action is to be in blogosphere. Keeping up is what makes the blogger (2010: 27).

The majority of the bloggers enjoy being anonymous as this gives them an opportunity to express their emotions freely as a *form of self expression*.

In Singapore, the anonymity being employed in online discourse has, for the first time, allowed citizens to make their voices heard and express views which may be contrary to government policy. Such anonymity has given these people the 'power' to speak up because identifying individuals can be difficult for the authorities. However, these individuals have to handle the new medium carefully to avoid being themselves blog news (Harper, 2010).

Research Methodology

This study analyzed the comments posted by different respondents of *Yahoo! News* of Singapore and the Philippines.

This study tried to answer the following questions.

1. What are the different factors or elements which shape the discourse of the participants in the data collected?

2. How this study of intertextuality in CMC tells the attitude of different respondents?

3. What are the implications of this research for education and ELT?

The study used six articles as a stimulus to activate readers' discussion based on different issues being discussed such as; the *Church intervention in the state, graft and corruption, housing policy, immigration policy* and *education.* These issues generate 2,056 comments (including replies on the original postings) but for the purpose of this paper, the comments being presented focus on education. This is to give an idea on how intertextuality is being employed in the discourse as a resource to reinforce respondents' opinions. The fact that the interaction is done online and the whereabouts of different respondents are not known, there are several unpleasant language in the discussions. However, one striking features of the discourse is the use of intertextuality by bringing in other sources in the discussion which reveal certain attitudes indicate in the language used by different respondents.

The questions stated above are answered by employing Martin and Rose (2007) approach to Appraisal by utilizing different ways of projecting sources to determine various types of intertextuality responsible in shaping the respondents discourse. Second is the evaluation of different attitudinal elements (*affect, judgment* and *appreciation*) in the comments that indicate certain attitudes of different respondents.

Although the literature suggests four ways of projecting different sources other features of intertextuality can be determined as part of the heteroglossic aspect of the discourse. However in order to demonstrate intertextuality in a comprehensible manner other features of intertextuality

are taken into account as part of the study and considered important in determining the different factors in shaping the language. Thus, terms are slightly modified into: Direct reference, Direct quotes, Implied references to text, Hypothetical text and Cultural text.

Analysis

Table 2: Abbreviations and symbols used in the analysis

Attitudinal elements and types of evaluation	Contextual value
judg = judgment	(-) negative
aff = affect	(+) positive
app = appreciation	**Graduation or degree**
exp = explicit or overtly 'inscribed evaluation	(↑) up scaling volumes
imp = evoked or implicit evaluation	(↓) downscaling volumes
	(≈) neutral (neither positive nor negative

Excerpt from Yahoo. Ph news article [*Philippines has 26k foreign students, Jerome Aning in Manila/Philippine Daily Inquirer | ANN – Mon, Aug 22, 2011*]

> […] The BI chief cited the increasing number of foreigners studying here as "proof that the Philippines is fast emerging as a major educational hub in the Asia-Pacific region."
>
> "The fact that more and more foreigners are opting to study here is testament to the improving standard and quality of education provided by the country's learning institutions," David said.

Comment I *[Diana]*

> Fast emerging? [imp: - aff: dissatisfaction/wonder ≈: D] Million+ mga Pilipino ang di makatapos ng pag-aaral [imp: - judg: incapacity ↑: Filipinos] dahil ninanakao ang pera ng taumbayan ng mga buwaya.

[imp: - judg: impropriety ↑: politicians] Tapos yung ibang mga Koreano, sila pa'ng racist dito sa bansa natin.[exp: - judg: impropriety ↓: Koreans] No offense to Koreans [imp: + aff: happiness ≈: D] but when you're in a foreign country, you respect the locals just the way a when we go to Sokor, we respect your locals and traditions.

[…] More than million of Filipinos did not go to school because the crocodiles are stealing the money of our society. And then some of Koreans in our country are racist. […]

This reply has a direct reference to the article above questioning the *Bureau of Immigration* statements about education in the Philippines. The participants' emphasis is on the significant number of Filipinos who did not finish their education and blame it on the corruption of the country. Diana describes corrupt officials as '*buwaya* (crocodile)'. In the Philippines, 'buwaya' refers to a person who wants everything for himself, sometimes describe to a corrupt person or a person who has many girlfriends. In this context, the 'buwaya' indicates a corrupt politician. She is also skeptical whether the education in the Philippines is progressing. She expresses her **dislike** to some Koreans and explicitly calls them racist but indicates she meant no harm. This statement is perhaps trying to demonstrate her personal opinion and nothing more. The code-switches from Tagalog to English are obviously meant for two groups, Filipino readers and the Koreans in order to clarify the message to the nationalities intended. It also indicates that the writer does not want Koreans to understand the meassage meant for Filipinos, thus the switch to Filipino indicates unity among Filipinos and leaving out Koreans in the discussion. The whole comment has intertextual associations from direct references to the text written by the Bureau of Immigration chief to implied references on different corrupt officials and foreign students.

Comment 2 [Benjamin I]

Ikinararangal ko ang ating mga guro. [exp: + aff: satisfaction ↑: B] Sana po ang gobyerno ay gumawa ng paraan upang hindi lang mga banyaga ang nakikinabang [imp: + judg: normality ↑: foreigners] sa

husay ng pagtuturo nila titser, [imp: + judg: capacity ↑: teachers] kundi pati mga batang pinagkaitan ng tadhana dahil sa kahirapan at korapsyon. [exp: - judg: abnormality ↑: Filipino children] **Salamat** [imp: + aff: satisfaction ≈ B] pala sa mga nagpapa-iskolar na pulitiko, [imp: + judg: propriety ≈: politicians] sana lang sa sarili nyong bulsa galing, sarili nyong publicity yan eh, kaya dapat hindi sa bulsa ni Juan galing. Pero salamat na rin.

[I am very proud of our teachers. Hopefully our government will do something so it's not only the foreigners that could benefit the expertise of our teachers' teaching but also the poor and underprivileged children who are the victims of corruption.

By the way, to the politicians who grant scholarship, thanks, hopefully it comes from your own pocket and not from Juan (society). But still thanks.]

Benjamin expresses his respect to the teachers, appreciating their expertise in teaching, indicating the names for speech act, **ikinararangal** (very proud). He also articulates his desire of letting the underprivileged Filipinos to complete their education through scholarship grants. Moreover, Benjamin articulates how thankful he is to the politicians who granted him scholarship and stresses, 'sana lang sa sarili nyong bulsa galing (hopefully it comes from your own pocket) and not from the pocket of Juan (John)', possibly referring to the scholarship grant he avails. *John* signifies any Filipinos who pay taxes. Obviously, there is an underlying implied reference in this statement. Perhaps it refers to a person from a poor family, but has an opportunity to study by means of a scholarship from certain politicians. Maybe that is the reason why at the beginning of his comment he is thankful and grateful to the teachers and politicians who granted him scholarship. Perhaps, this is the reason why he wishes some unfortunate Filipino children to succeed. As indicated in this comment, the respondent brings in different sources in his comment to reinforce his opinion about teachers and politicians.

Comment 3 [Sheff]

Juan, it helps boost our economy? You* (are) joking right? it * (In) what certain element this will boost the economy? if it is the

goverment's idea, its _reckless_, [exp: - app: impact ↑ idea] now if it is your opinion, keep it to yourself, we aint buying. [imp: - judg: tenacity ≈: Filipino] And you're sure this will pacify those _negative_ comments to the Philippines? [exp: - app: impact ≈: comments] Into what extent? I am just saying that Filipinos should be deserve* (d) better [imp: - judg: tenacity ↑: Filipino] than them kasi po nasa Pilipinas sila. [**It's because they are in the Philippines**] Logic brother. Make use of it.

CezarOng (CO), what is wrong with "enjoying the privilege?" As far as our history tell us, we were invaded by Americans. [imp: - judg: incapacity ≈: Philippines] Sino ang gustong masakop? [**Who wants to be occupied?**] getting my point now? not? To hell where I stated blaming our governement? Im just knocking them out [imp: - judg: capacity ↓: Sheff] (baka sakaling magising [**Hopefully they wake up**]). You statement is _way out of mine*_ _(mind)_. [imp: - app: quality ↑: CezarOng statement] Try absorbing first then post. Like you said, better enjoying the internet. Gawin mong makabuluhan ang paggamit nito. Kung magcocomment ng kakupalan, sarilinin na lang. [**Make the use of it worthy. If your comment is nonsense, keep it to yourself.**]

Sheef disagrees with _Juan's_ in direct reference to education. Then sarcastically questions Juan and criticizes CezarOng quoting the sections "enjoying the privilege" to let CO understands why he was not happy with his response. He claims CezarOng's statement is '_way out of mind_'. He also gives a historical reference by giving American occupation as another example that foreigners do not boost the economy. Although Sheef's discussion is complicated, there is a hypothetical suggestion that he does not want readers to support foreigners. The irony of his sarcastic remark is, he suggests to 'try to absorb first then post' the comments given but he doesn't like comments that disagrees his point. Sheef response to Juan and Cesar possibly exhibits his rigid and domineering personality in which he thinks he is always right.

Comment 4 [Junzi]

The MIWs are so naive [imp: - judg: capacity ↑: government] and think they are so smart to give grant [imp:-judg: incapacity ↑:

government] to these foreigners who come from those countries where their soiceity*(society) is not as straightforward and simple like ours. [imp: - judg: incapacity ↓: foreigners] These foreigners know how to reap you and extract all the benefits. [imp: - judg: impropriety ↑: government]

Make them take up loan and pay back [imp: - judg: capacity ↑: foreign students] like our students. *No free lunch* like what we have been reminded over and over again by PAP. [imp: - aff: dissatisfaction ↑: PAP] Another *bad* policy of PAP. [*exp: - app: social significance ↓: policy*] 20%of on study grant ? Just work out how much we pay per foreign student. Money *can be put to better use* in other areas of our society. [*exp: + app: social significance ↓: money*]

This blogger expresses his/her displeasure in reference to the foreign students and the grants given. Labeling the PAP MIW is already an insult, labeling them 'naïve' is a further insult to them. The statement "think they are so smart to give grant" underlines the irony being used. This reinforces the negativity of Junzi's evaluation. Such a statement refers to the generally perceived view concerning the PAP's arrogance who 'think highly' of themselves. Furthermore, the writer also makes more allegation against foreign students describing them as 'not as straightforward and simple' possibly indicating that they are 'dishonest' and may well reflect stereotyping of all foreigners. Again, although the blogger uses euphemisms, as in 'these foreigners know how to reap you and extract all the benefits,' he still describes foreigners as 'manipulative or deceitful'. The phrase used by the PAP, "*No free lunch*" is quoted to indicate that 'everything has a price'. Again the pronoun 'we' is used suggesting that what is being said is the 'a common opinion of many Singaporeans.'

Comment 5 [William]

Our stupid minister grant [exp: - judg: incapacity ↓: ministers] foreign students tuition fees. We Singaporean taxpayer are paying them, so that they can come here to compete the uni space [imp: - judg: normality ↑: foreign students] with our children and later kick my ass out of the employment [imp: - judg: impropriety ↑: foreign students]

here due to <u>cheaper to employ</u> them. [exp: - judg: normality ↓: foreign students] What is the 3 years bond to worry? To them..., they are <u>assure of employemnt</u> after graduation, [imp: + judg: normality ↑: foreign students] while local students <u>have to worry about unemployment</u> after graduation. [imp: - judg: normality ↓: Singaporean students]

The foreign students are **more than happy** to pick up the bond [exp: +aff: satisfaction ↑: foreign students] as this is *a good training ground [imp: + app: quality ↓: Singapore]* and after 3 years, they <u>will be quality</u> for other job <u>opportunity elsewhere</u>. [imp: + judg: normality ↓: foreign students] Stupid minister with air bubbles in his brain! [exp: - judg: normality ↑: ministers

Another discontented Singaporean voices his unhappiness because of the anonymity. The feeling is possibly generated by the information from the article. William also views foreign students as '<u>competitors</u>'. Alleging foreigners' to '<u>come here to compete the uni space</u> and <u>later kick my ass out</u> of employment'. Apparently, William sees these foreign students like a 'colonizer' that will 'colonize' Singapore and leave them nothing, no 'university space' and no 'jobs'. The description of foreign students, '<u>assure of employment</u>' while Singaporeans, '<u>worry about employment</u>', indicates a xenophobic feeling towards the foreigners. By labeling foreign students as 'they' and Singaporeans as 'us', the writer creates division between two groups. Finally, the whole situation is blamed on the PAP ministers, calling them, <u>'Stupid minister with air bubbles in his brain!</u>' a sardonic remark mocking the minister as 'empty headed.'

Comment 6 [TP]

I had posted this before and I am writing about it again:........I knew of 3 18-yr-old Indonesian Chinese (but can't speak Chinese) girls in July (2011). They are <u>granted MOE scholarship</u> [exp: + judg: normality ↑: foreign parents]to do their degrees in arts with La Salle Arts College. Of course they are <u>bonded for 3 years</u> [exp: + judg: capacity

↑: foreign parents] after graduation. By then, as they have already planned, to leave Singapore for other western countries' universities to pursue their masters degrees. [exp: + judg: capacity ↑: foreign parents] They have to return the money to MOE? No problem they say, as their parents are very rich. [exp: + judg: capacity ↑: foreign parents] How rich? can send them to westerners' countries for the same course even at this pont* (point) of time. Then why they don't do it? Because they are still very young [exp: + judg: capacity ↑: foreign parents] and their parents **want** to visit them or **want** them 'fly' back to Indonesian as often as they like, and at *the shortest time with the lowest costs*. *[exp: + app: quality ↑: expense]*

SINGAPORE is the *best choice* *[exp: + app:quality ↑: Singapore]* as it is the *best country for EDUCATION* *[exp: + app:quality ↑: Singapore]* and the *nearest* to their hometown, *[exp:+app: quality ↑: Singapore]* and their parents, and even grandparents , can visit our 2 grand casionoes*(casinos) when they vist*(visit) the 3 girls (there is no casino in Indonesia). ,,,,,,,,,Besides, they admit that an Indonesian certificate / degree *will be deemed as trash* in the western countries' universities. *[imp: - app: quality ↓: Singapore]* Their Singapore - attained certificates are *readily recognised and accepted* by the western countries' universities *[exp: + app: quality ↑: certificates]* and thereby they can get into those uni effortlessly. [imp: + judg: capacity ↑: foreign students]

This comment refers to the issue of the foreign students studying in Singapore, specifically from Indonesia and being granted 'scholarship' by (Ministry of Education) MOE. The blogger's basic premise is on how Singapore is used as a 'stepping stone' by these foreigners.

TP partially distances himself from the argument by 'projecting' other sources of information by reporting what was said. Projecting others as the source of information is an approach to let the readers know that the original source of information is not the writer himself but the Indonesian Chinese student. TP claims that the Indonesian admits an Indonesian certificate / degree *will be deemed as trash* in the western countries, while, the Singapore

degree are *readily recognized and accepted* by the western countries. The whole tenor of the discourse in this case is more of a diatribe of hearsay where the validity of the statements is almost impossible to verify. However, the feelings of the writer with regard to the topic under discussion are clearly indicated.

Findings and discussion

The analyses of the data are generally infused with negative attitudes with regards to the issues being discussed. Participants tend to express different tones in a continuum of polite to extremely impolite expressions of their feelings on the topic. Various comments reflect attitudes, as we have indicated in terms of sarcasm, hate, dislike, prejudice, and racial discrimination in the exchanges. The intertextuality is foregrounded by linking up the views of the writers as well as other sources that support the evaluations. Several intertextual references are found in different comments such as:

Projections or **direct references**: Participants tend to project sources in many ways sometimes 'quoted' or 'reported' what other people said or have written, thus bringing in other voices to support their views and reinforce their argument. Some examples taken from different issues are shown below.

a) ""Heng also highlighted that majority of the international students are on the Tuition Grant scheme, which helps to defray their fees."
Why is the govt using tax payers' money to subsidize foreigner students? Shouldn't they pay more than local students to study here?

b) "… is this a joke? "The BI chief cited the increasing number of foreigners studying here as ¿proof that the Philippines is fast emerging as a major educational hub in the Asia-Pacific region." or maybe she should say because it's easy to study in the philippines (sic)…

The participants utilized '**quotations**' through the use of the 'original words' quoted as 'factual information' to reinforce the reliability of their comments, displaying either positive or negative evaluations. Also, participants employ other voices by paraphrasing others or using the '**third person**' to distance themselves from the discourse while placing other sources as 'active' agents as:

   a) *"Externally* they <u>claimed</u> now Singaporeans first but *internally* no foreigners <u>better can control them</u> with its bond.**"**

   b) Maybe the Institution they are *enrolled in* have *poor language curriculum* or they themselves are <u>naive</u> hehe.. <u>If they can't stand our English prowess then they should leave.</u>

The use of the 'third person' is an 'authorial distancing' strategy to indicate 'interpersonally unconstrained registers that can be rejected or acknowledged by the readers.

Reported speech or **implied references** is another means of projecting sources. The purpose is to provide support by indirect reference.

   a) 'I know of some foreign students who register themselves with shell companies here so that they <u>no need to serve out the three-year bond after taking the tuition grant.</u>'

   b) <u>Typical</u> Filipino <u>"crab mentality"</u> attitude. Stop being pessimistic! I work here in an English Academy School for Koreans and I know how <u>thankful and grateful</u> the students are because we <u>teach them proper English</u>. And just for your information, <u>no one is patronizing and worshiping them or maybe you just don't know</u> what those words mean?

These examples show diverse ways in addressing different situations by using reported or implied references which indicate the writer possibly obtained information from other sources. Different participants sometimes use authorial evaluations, but others use reported speech. Generating different sources is commonly used throughout the comments. The participants

incorporate different issues and talk about one topic or another gathered from one sources or another to justify or slant their point of view.

Like '*direct references*', '*quotations*' include direct quotes of texts and scare quotes, '*reports*', *implied references, cultural text, hypothetical text* and the use of '*third person*'. The purpose of 'projecting the sources in clauses' is to show the original source of the information in order to distance the writer while shifting the blame to external sources. Such elements in the discourse show that intertextual references are utilized and tend to be 'heteroglossic' in nature. White (2006) has described this as 'intersubjective positioning in the social rather than the individual which concerns the negotiations of interactional and informational meanings.' Different utilization of sources demonstrates the degree of information that may help the readers to consider the reliability of the issue and assess their value judgment.

Modalities are used to introduce 'voices', some are positive others are negative. These modalities are used for '*negotiating services*' such as; it could hire a graduate, the government can only do so much, may be you do not like, and will never gained and sometimes '*information*' such as I was never able, I won't be voting, I would very much like, I wouldn't be surprised, as well as a resource for grading polarities.

The use of '**we**', '**us**', and '**our**' versus '**them**' and '**they**' were also constantly used in the comments. This labelling is used to demonstrate 'in group' and 'out group' division or an 'exclusiveness' of being Singaporeans or Filipinos and the 'otherness' of being foreigners. This kind of expressivity constructs Singaporeans' or Filipinos nationalism which is part of their national identity, thinking cohesively and being part of one group. Such classification also illustrates that foreigners are regarded as outsiders. There is also an indication that Singaporeans and Filipinos are trying to get hold of 'entitlement' for everything. For example, in terms of places or financial aid in schools or universities, and priority in terms of education would involve prioritizing Singaporeans and Filipinos before foreigners. This is where the mentality of being '*kiasu*' or being afraid to lose out with others, (Singaporeans) and '*utak talangka*'or crab mentality, (Filipinos) can be apparent.

Personal judgments as in the following examples, <u>well-educated</u>, <u>very poor and helpless</u>, <u>arrogant and bullies</u>, <u>generous yet always complaint</u>, <u>spitting in the lift</u> and dirtying the corridor, and <u>pro-active and friendly</u> were commonly utilized to judge different evaluative entities. **Moral judgment**s like these illustrate, <u>bad</u>, <u>good,</u> honest, and <u>think highly of themselves</u> were used. Some evaluations were explicitly stated while others were implicit. It was also noticeable that the participants had different stylistic modes of expressing their judgment. The use of dysphemism for example such as <u>ball carrier type</u>, <u>bottom dwelling scum sucking scavengers</u>, <u>bridge-crossers ungrateful slobs with no dignity</u> and <u>brazen lots, loud voice, ill-mannered</u> portray how participants manipulated the language to make it sound more dramatic. Euphemisms were also exploited when implicitly judge a group of people and individuals to produce a subtle criticism. For instance; <u>will be vanished in the air or underground</u>, <u>continue to turn a blind eye,</u> a <u>pretty straight forward problem</u> and <u>away from the ground</u>.

Different **adverbials** such as ; <u>really</u> suffering, <u>very</u> worried, <u>likely</u> to qualify, not <u>dumbly</u> believing, <u>already</u> headache, <u>so many</u> Singaporeans , <u>nicely</u> treated, <u>actually</u> I don't mind, <u>will not</u> be, <u>maybe</u> you will, progressing <u>everyday</u> and <u>always</u> told were used as graders which raises or lowers the intensity of the evaluation. It was also found that the intensity of the whole discussion seems to change from one polarity to another depending on the target of the evaluation.

The comments made by the participants display that their attitudes tend to be triggered by the news and the comments of other respondents/bloggers which is a part of the dialogic nature of the discourse. The sourcing used by the bloggers demonstrated '*monoglossic*' and at times '*heteroglossic*'. However the majority of the discourses tend to be '*factive*' utterances independently expressed by the blogger's own emotional response as the use of pronoun 'I' and 'my'.

For example, throughout the text, phrases like; *I* hate myself , *I* really empathise, *I* would very much like, *I* am so sad, *I* believe, *I* wouldn't be surprised, *I* bet, *my* family and I, *my* respect and salute, *my* friends lost their jobs*,* were employed greatly. These pronouns signify that comments are interpersonally expressed and therefore can be inferred as 'factual' and 'subjective'. Nonetheless, statements which are interpersonally charged are

also utilized and reveal an 'opinionated' or 'attitudinal' negative aspect especially if the statement is based on unfounded evidence. Thus, the participants give an '*authorial*' valuation based on their perception but the diversity of the comments show that '*non-authorial*' valuations were also used through the utilization of other voices and projecting other sources.

Conclusion

As indicated in the findings, different kinds of elements are found to be shaping the discourse of different respondents from the two countries, Singapore and the Philippines. It can be seen that various rhetorical properties are used in the evaluation and responses between the bloggers and their readers. The *anonymity*, different resources or the *heteroglossic* interactions create the *intertextuality* of the text. These sources of intertextuality were used to strengthen the blogger's emotional response. These heteroglossic multiplicities of resources that can have alternative meanings are brought into play in the evaluation, thus construing multiple points of view which shape the discourse of the participants.

What is clear from this data is that discourse patterns are built up gradually from various sources, some direct and others indirect. The discourse builds up and shapes the way different phenomena are perceived both in terms of the psychological and social make up of the participants given their respective environments. There is a desire to 'to connect with people' as this can be a manifestation of power by establishing different alliances and forming solidarity as one 'cyber culture.'

An understanding of the attitudinal elements that make up language would seem to be vital for teachers and students in order to understand how opinions as expressed in this case through computer mediated discourse can have an effect on society. Sometimes people who are perceived as unaware and passive of what is going around them are actually informed and responsive, if they are given a chance to express their opinions freely.

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