**Journal of Nusantara Studies (JONUS)**

# TEACHERS' ENGAGEMENT IN SOCIAL SUPPORT PROCESS ON A NETWORKING SITE

*1Radzuwan Ab Rashid, 2Mohd Fazry A. Rahman & 3Shireena Basree Abdul Rahman

1 Centre of English Language Studies, Faculty of Languages and Communication, Universiti Sultan Zainal Abidin, Gong Badak Campus, 21300 Kuala Nerus, Terengganu, Malaysia
2 Shah Alam Community College, 40100 Shah Alam, Selangor, Malaysia.
3 Faculty of Education, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Puncak Alam Campus, 42300 Bandar Puncak Alam, Selangor, Malaysia
*Corresponding author: radzuwanrashid@unisza.edu.my

**ABSTRACT**

*This paper is part of a larger study investigating teachers' engagement in social support process on a networking site. It concentrates on the social and discursive practices of 20 Malaysian English language teachers as they co-construct social support on Facebook Timelines. The main data generated from participant observations were analysed using discourse analysis approach. The findings revealed that the teachers mainly post about negative experiences at school, such as facing colleagues and students whom they perceived as problematic and time pressure. By posting their negative experiences, teachers can be seen to initiate the co-construction of both emotional and informational support with Friends they believe are like-minded and supportive. This paper thus argues that teachers' postings on social networking sites are more than just an account of mundane teaching-related experiences, but serve as a mechanism for them to obtain social support to help them reflect on their practice and cope with the emotional turmoil arising from day-to-day challenges at school.*

**Keywords:** Social support, Malaysian English language teacher, Facebook Timeline, co-construction, discursive identity.

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Teaching is a challenging profession. Teachers across the world need support as they 'grapple with the immense emotional, intellectual and social demands' of the job and cope with 'ongoing government reforms and social movements' (Day, Kington, Stobart and Sammons, 2006, p.614). Unfortunately, the strong need for social support and guidance is not always adequately met by existing sources of support. As pointed out by Hobson et al. (2009, p.x), lack of support 'given in or by [the] schools' is one of the main causes for attrition, the phenomenon whereby teachers leave the profession. This implies that for teachers to remain in the profession, they need to be given adequate and continuous support so that they can successfully tackle the problems and challenges they encounter. If the support needed is not available in their schools, teachers will most probably look for support somewhere else in their attempts to survive in the profession.

One possible way to obtain support is by engaging in social networking sites (SNS), such as Facebook and Twitter, which have opened up new opportunities for all manner of people - including teachers - to communicate with each other (Rashid and Rahman, 2014). This communication includes seeking advice and information through the means of an online support community (Bissessar, 2014). Additionally, online communities may offer a welcoming and comfortable environment in which teachers can share their teaching-related experiences and concerns with like-minded Friends, as SNS technology allows teachers to choose who they want to connect with on the site through its privacy setting.

In the case of Malaysia, both school colleagues and administrators have been found to be unsupportive of teachers (Jais, 2010; Saufi, Thai, Seok and Eranza, 2013). To date, little is known about how teachers might seek and receive social support and in particular, how English language teachers might seek this in a Malaysian context. This research has thus been carried out in order to examine Malaysian English language teachers' engagement with social support on Facebook Timelines. A Timeline which is previously known as a Wall, is a section on Facebook Profile that shows all the Facebook updates and activities in reverse chronological order. The findings of this study aim to shed light towards a better understanding of the nature of teacher SNS discourse and insights into why and how teachers seek social support using SNS technology.

## 2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 Taxonomy of social support

There are two dichotomies of support in the social support literature, structural versus functional support and emotional versus instrumental (tangible) support (Beehr and Glazer, 2001). The taxonomy of social support is presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1: The taxonomy of social support (Beehr & Glazer, 2001)

| Structural Support | • Existence of Supportive Others |
|---|---|
| Functional Support | • Emotional Support<br>• Instrumental Support |

Structural support is associated with the existence of supportive others, whereas emotional and instrumental support are types of functional support, the functions that a supportive other can collaboratively construct with the person in need of support. Beehr and Glazer list praise, positive feedback and approval as examples of emotional support that they argue are useful for the development of self-esteem, hence the experience of positive emotions. In addition, conveying a sense of optimism that each problem has its own solution is also a form of emotional support as it can comfort the person facing the problem (ibid) and help them re-evaluate a distressing life event as less threatening, as suggested by Botschner (2000).

Interestingly, Beehr and Glazer (2001) point out that the mode of communication in conveying emotional support is highly debated in the social support literature - whether the use of telephone, letter, email or any other media can be as effective as face-to-face oral communication. Beehr and Glazer hypothesize that face-to-face communication is most effective, while admitting that they 'do not really know at present' (pp.105-106) due to the ambiguity of many factors, especially cultural differences. This suggests there is still much

more to explore for a comprehensive conceptualization of social support. This study involves a still relatively new mode of communication - SNS - and also focuses on a less-explored cultural context: Malaysian English language teachers. As pointed out by Brannan and Bleistein (2012) research that focuses on social support among English language teachers is still in its infancy.

In contrast to emotional support relating to the affective aspect of life, Beehr and Glazer (2001) define instrumental support as 'doing physical or mental labor' (p.106) or providing resources to help the focal person solve their problems or complete a particular task. For instance, teachers can be said to engage in instrumental support if they work collaboratively with more capable peers who help them learn, for example, how to use an overhead projector effectively in the classroom. Three possible forms of resources, according to Beehr and Glazer, are physical, such as equipment (e.g. a teacher lends a text book to another teacher), informational (e.g. a head of department informs teachers about the curriculum), and financial (e.g. a teacher receives funding to attend a seminar or workshop).

## 2.2    Social support as a co-constructing activity

Social support is a concept that emerges in studies related to occupational stress (Cohen and McKay, 1984). Williams, Barclay and Schmied's (2004) review of the concept of social support revealed little agreement between theoreticians and researchers on either a theoretical or operational definition of the term social support despite it being an extensively studied concept. For instance, Albrecht and Adelman (1987) define social support as 'verbal and nonverbal communication between recipients and providers that reduces uncertainty about the situation, the self, the other, or the relationship, and functions to enhance a perception of personal control in one's life experience' (p. 19). On the other hand, Mattson and Hall (2011) argue that other communications that do not necessarily reduce uncertainty, such as hugging a demoralized friend can also be supportive. Consequently, Mattson and Hall define social support as 'a transactional communicative process, including verbal and/or nonverbal communication, that aims to improve an individual's feelings of coping, competence, belonging, and/or esteem' (p.184). There is a common underlying principle behind the different conceptualizations that social support is 'a particular "thing" - something given, done, or said - that one person can offer another, or an individual "state" - such as a perception and an expectation' (Taylor, Sylvestre and Botschner, 1998, p.10). Conceptualizing social support as 'a thing, whether that be a commodity, a cognitive state, a gesture, or the contents of the communication' does not help practitioners to 'understand the role of social support in the complex process of building relationships' (ibid, p.12 – original emphasis).

Taylor et al.'s (1998) conceptualization of social support as a co-constructed activity is useful. It implies that social support is an interpersonal process mediated by discourse, thus observable in a conversation. The co-construction can be defined as:

> the joint creation of a form, interpretation, stance, action, activity, identity, institution, skills ideology, emotion, or other culturally meaningful reality, ...[covering] a range of interactional processes, including collaboration, cooperation, and coordination.
>
> (Jacoby and Ochs, 1995, p.171)

This conceptualization of social support is consistent with socio-cultural approach employed in this study as it views social support as an interpersonal process mediated by semiotic tools. According to Vygotsky (1981a) semiotic tools such as,

> language; various systems of counting; mnemonic techniques; algebraic symbol systems; works of art; writing; schemes, diagrams, maps and mechanical drawings; all sorts of conventional signs and so on' are all important in mediating social and individual functioning, and connecting the social and the individual (p.137).

Vygotsky's semiotic mediation thus suggests that knowledge is not something that is directly internalized but rather, is developed through the use of socially-created 'psychological tools' (John-Steiner and Mahn, 1996, p.193). Vygotsky's notion of semiotic mediation contributes to the understanding of how the social practice of constructing social support investigated in this study is mediated by the discourse that the participants engage in.

In the same vein, Botschner (2000) suggests that social support involves the repair of meaning when individuals 're-evaluate the meaning of an event in light of a more satisfying perspective, or a renewed faith in his or her basic assumptions about the world' (p.13) which, according to Gottlieb (1988), can be facilitated by social ties and support groups. Botschner's concept of social support as the repair of meaning is based on Silver and Wortman's (1980) insight that the most effective way to support individuals facing agonizing life events is to help them generate an interpretation of the events that is personally meaningful for them.

In short, this study adopts the discursive perspective of social support as a co-constructive activity of making and repairing meaning as proposed by Taylor et al. (1998) and Botschner (2000).

## 2.3 Theoretical Framework

In the attempt to explore how social support operates at an interpersonal level, a socio-cultural approach has been selected as the theoretical framework, with special emphasis on discursive practices, to study the collaborative process of constructing social support on teachers' Timelines, thus highlighting the usefulness of the site in their professional lives. Theoretical concepts rooted in the socio-cultural approach are briefly discussed in this section, in particular, Lave and Wenger's (1991) Community of Practice (CoP) and Swales' (1990) discourse community.

### 2.3.1 Community of Practice (Lave and Wenger, 1991; Wenger 1998)

Community of practice (CoP) and the related notion of situated learning are concepts developed by Lave and Wenger (1991), who emphasize that learning does not take place solely in the learner's mind but in the social processes of a community. Three essential dimensions to CoP are mutual engagement, joint enterprise and shared repertoire. Mutual engagement refers to the established norms and collaborative relationships that unite the members of the community together; joint enterprise refers to members' shared understanding of what unites them together; and shared repertoire refers to 'a set of communal resources' that can include both literal and symbolic meanings (Wenger, 1998, p.73). Moule (2006) adds that joint enterprise requires the presence of trust in the community, especially in an online environment where people are geographically dispersed and do not often (if ever) meet each other face to face. As for shared repertoire, Mills (2011) adds that it may include 'shared narratives, artifacts, discourse and experiences' (p.349), which relates to the concept of semiotic mediation suggested by Vygotsky (1981b). These three dimensions provide a useful perspective in distinguishing CoP from other kinds of communities (see Rashid, 2016a). For instance, a neighborhood is often called a community, but it is not necessarily a CoP, unless the members have 'a shared competence' that distinguishes them from other people, 'engage in joint activities and discussions' and 'develop a shared repertoire of resources: experiences, stories,

tools, ways of addressing recurring problems-in short a shared practice' (Wenger, 2006, pp.1-2).

Learning, from the CoP perspective, is 'the production of identity' (Wenger, 2010, p.180). Wenger claims:

> learning is not just acquiring skills and information; it is becoming a certain person—a knower in a context where what it means to know is negotiated with respect to the regime of competence of a community (p.180).

From the 'newcomer' and 'old-timer' perspective (Lave and Wenger, 1991, p.29), identity is developed when the newcomer progresses to become the old-timer. Conceptualizing identity as 'becoming' provides a useful framework for understanding the teachers' development as they interact with each other on Timelines. However, we argue that it is less useful for understanding the discursive identity constructed by the teachers to gain acceptance by the community, which can be better explained through the concept of 'discourse community' (Swales, 1990), discussed in the next sub-section.

### 2.3.2 Discourse community (Swales, 1990; Johns, 1997)

The members of discourse community participate to have 'informational opportunities' and feedback from each other (Swales, 1990, p.472). For Swales, a discourse community 'has and continues to develop discoursal expectations' of how members can get things done through the use of language - the 'appropriacy of topics, form, function, and positioning of discoursal elements' (p.472). It also has a specific lexis such as community-specific abbreviations and acronyms (e.g. SBA). Its members consist of individuals with different levels of 'content and discoursal expertise' (p.472). Since membership is not restricted to teachers with the same level of expertise, teachers with varying levels of skills in effectively holding a conversation may form a discourse community (Rashid et al., 2016b). Swales (1990) argues that these defining characteristics are both necessary and sufficient to identify a particular group of people as a discourse community.

### 3.0 RESEARCH DESIGN

This study employed a broadly ethnographic qualitative approach and closely focused on the participants' unfolding discourse as they interact on Timelines. To some extent, the ethnographic approach employed in this study can be associated with 'linguistic ethnography' (Wetherell, 2007; Copland and Creese, 2015) since it closely focuses on the discursive behaviour of the participants. As highlighted by Wetherell (2007), linguistic ethnography 'brings together [linguistic and ethnographic approaches], in the same analytic space [to] study the discursive patterns found in everyday interactions and aims to situate these in the dynamics of wider cultural settings' (p.661).

Despite employing an ethnographic approach, this study is not a fully-fledged ethnography as that would require 'living with and living like' the individuals being studied for a long period of time, often for at least a year (Van Maanen, 1996, p. 263). Data generation was undertaken over six months, from December 2012 to May 2013. This period was chosen because it covered one full academic semester. It is important to observe the Timelines for the duration of the whole academic semester so that different kinds of experiences and challenges encountered in the teachers' professional lives can be examined. The act of lurking or reading online content is considered a form of participant observation as Gatson (2011) argues that reading online content itself is a form of interaction and when we read online content, 'we are

already in, in a real way because most online content is read (interpreted), and not necessarily interacted with by adding the reader's own post' (pp.251-252).

The purposive sampling was used to recruit the participants as we believed that this group of teachers would be able to give rich insights into the phenomenon being studied since they actively post teaching-related issues on Timelines in their daily lives. The recruitment process began with five English language teachers with whom there was a professional connection in an off-line setting prior to the research, consequently, their identity as English language teachers was assured. They were then asked to recommend their Friends who were English language teachers. By using this snowballing technique, the risk of recruiting inappropriate participants was reduced. Altogether, 56 teachers were approached for this study, of whom 20 gave consent for their Timelines to be observed. Upon receiving the teachers' consent, their Timelines were observed. All teaching-related posts and Comments were copied and pasted into raw data sheets to be further scrutinized during the data analysis stage. The time of the postings and Comments were also recorded. The recording of the raw data was done when the Timelines were visited at around 10pm to 12pm daily. The data set consisted of 178 teaching-related Status updates on the Timelines, together with the 1226 Comments that these had attracted.

## 4.0 ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

The analysis of teaching-related Status updates and Comments obtained on the teachers' Timelines reveals that the teachers go through two simultaneous phases in the social support process: the discursive construction of shared identities and the co-construction of support. For expository clarity, we discuss these two phases separately in this section, though in reality, teachers go through these two phases repeatedly, in that they collaboratively construct and reconstruct their identities as they engage in the co-construction of support.

### 4.1   Phase 1: The discursive construction of salient identities

Based on the discourse community perspective, where members use their texts in order to demonstrate their membership of the community to which they wish to belong (Johns, 1997), the construction of salient identities can be viewed as the teachers' attempt to fit into the Timeline community. Seen from Goffman's (1959) perspective, the teachers engage in dramaturgy and impression management for them to construct identities that are acceptable to the community members so that they can engage in the co-construction of social support within the community. Among the salient identities constructed on Timelines are the dissenter and the slogger. The discussion on the discursive construction of the identity of a dissenter has been presented in Rashid et al. (2016a). The identity of a slogger is discussed in the following paragraphs.

The identity of a teacher who slogs to meet the demands of the teaching profession or what we refer to as the slogger is another salient identity constructed on Timelines which enables teachers to project the image of being one of the crowd to fit into the community and consequently engage in the co-construction of social support. To exemplify the construction of the identity of a slogger, we discuss an example of a Status update used by the teachers to recount heavy workloads which require them to work hard over a period of time.

Extract 1
    1     So, when you're a teacher,
    2     you also have to be a driver, parent, councilor,
    3     social worker (u have to visit ur problematic students' house),

4       nurse, bank (if you're a form teacher, u always have to use ur money for
        school's activities)
5       and a saint (teacher cannot be naughty!).

(Sue/SU1)

Sue starts the reflection on her roles as a teacher using the discourse marker so (line 1) to grab her readers' attention. Discourse markers are words or phrases such as anyway, right and okay that are used to connect, organise and manage discourse or to express attitude (Müller, 2005). When reflecting on these teacher's roles, she does not say 'because I'm a teacher, I also have to be a driver etc' but uses when you're a teacher, you also have to be a driver etcetera (lines 1-2). By using the pronoun you, Sue invites her readers to picture themselves in the text and consequently relate better to what she refers to. It also shows that she assumes someone is listening or reading (Gee, 2014) the Status update thus provides evidence to argue that she is inviting Friends to continue the topic and take part in the co-construction of support.

Sue highlights eight different roles that a teacher takes on - a driver, parent, councilor, social worker, nurse, bank and a saint (lines 2-5). By highlighting these multiple roles, Sue suggests that being a teacher is not an easy job. She uses the modal have to (line 2) to show that playing these multiple roles is obligatory, that a teacher cannot say no to these roles. When highlighting all the roles, Sue chooses to elaborate the roles of social worker, bank and saint. She gives further information about these in parenthesis. By choosing to explain these three roles, it seems that Sue has assumed her readers do not have shared knowledge of them. This implies that the roles are not common expectations of the society but she is nevertheless responsible for all these tasks thus suggesting that she does not live in 'the figured world' (Gee, 2014, p.89) of a teacher. By highlighting the unfamiliar roles, Sue emphasizes the toughness of the teaching profession, that being a teacher is tougher than people think, hence depicting the strength she has to remain in the profession. To some extent, Sue can be said to engage in 'self-promotion' (Jones and Pittman, 1982, p.241) as she conveys the message that she is capable of acting according to these multiple identities.

This study supports the argument that identity is fluid and unstable (Gee, 2000; Edwards, 2005; Benwell and Stokoe, 2006) as the findings reveal that the teachers construct different identities at different times. For instance, a teacher who constructs the identity of a slogger in a Status update may construct the identity of a dissenter in another Status update (see Rashid et al., 2016a). It is reasonable to suggest that the teachers construct different identities at different times depending on the type of social support needed, which shows their awareness that making full use of Timelines can help them cope with different challenges in their professional lives.
In the next sub-section we discuss how teachers engaged in the co-construction of support as they managed to fit themselves into the discourse community and consequently engaged in the supportive environment on Timelines.

## 4.2   Phase 2: Co-construction of support

Analysis of discourse topic management (Gardner, 1987; Bublitz, 1988) provides a theoretical basis for understanding the co-construction of support that occurred on the teachers' Timelines. The action of introducing topic provides insights into how the teachers initiated the process of co-constructing social support whilst the act of continuing the topic provides insights into the moves taken by the teachers to align their responses with the topic introduced. The following paragraphs discuss the action of introducing topic since the discussion on the action of continuing topic has been presented in Rashid (2016b).

A key feature of the initiation of support on Timelines is the degree of directness employed by the teachers when introducing topics in order to seek social support. The less explicit strategy is the disclosures that take the form of a 'news announcement' (Button and Casey, 1985, p.4) where teachers recount their experiences and feelings, as shown in Extract 2.

Extract 2 (Translation)
1    so the government wants to allow students to bring mobile phones to school
     next year…
2    believe me beb, I'm a teacher, used 2 b a warden…
3    don't regret if many students elope with men on the way going to/returning
     from school…
4    many cases already happened…

                                                                 (Syiba/SU11)

Syiba begins this Status update with the discourse marker *so* to draw readers' attention to the specific policy that she refers to, allowing students to bring mobile phones to school (line 1). Syiba then starts to give her opinion regarding the policy so that her topic introduction is easy for readers to follow. It is discernible that she has a negative opinion or disagrees with this policy when she highlights the possible consequence that many more female students will elope with men (line 3). In giving this opinion, Syiba does not simply give an opinion but justifies it from her experience of being a warden (line 2) in that she knows many problems have arisen when students have brought mobile phones to school (line 4).

Even though Syiba does not agree with the educational policy, she is careful not to condemn it. As can be seen in the Status update, she does not directly criticize the policy by condemning its rationale but she draws her Friends' attention towards the unintended consequences that might arise. Hence Syiba seems to initiate a conversation to evaluate the pros and cons of implementing this policy. Yet her stance is clearly indicated, that she believes this policy might lead to an increase in elopements, and the phrase *believe me* (line 2) suggests that she is persuading Friends to support this stance. Receiving Comments that support the stance is important to Syiba as this will make her feel emotionally supported by like-minded Friends.

The more explicit strategy in comparison to the announcement strategy used by Syiba (Extract 2) is the direct request for support by engaging in 'news inquiries' (Button and Casey, 1985, p.4) to seek informational support from Friends, as shown in Extract 3 below.

Extract 3
1    to all the grammar nazi on my wall…help me explain this:
2    a-don't be hesitant to see the teacher on duty
3    vs b-don't be hesitated to see the teacher on duty
4    which one is correct??
5    i feel a is correct but I need explanation
6    thanx!
                                                                 (Wafi/SU2)

The specific request to fill in the knowledge gap is reflected through the plea to help her explain (line 1) and asking which is correct in line 4. This is supported by the use of the phrase grammar

nazi to refer to Friends which suggests that she believes others in her circle of friends have greater expertise in terms of grammar. When she says that she feels hesitant is correct but needs an explanation to understand (line 5), the existence of the knowledge gap becomes more visible.

The request to fill in the knowledge gap, in this case, 'content knowledge' (Shulman, 1987, p.8), strongly suggests that this is an attempt to engage in informal learning on Facebook. Interestingly, Wafi could have Google searched or used her dictionary to find more about using the word hesitate but she chose to initiate a conversation on Timeline and make it the topic subject of the conversation.

The findings that teachers posted at different level of directness on Timelines resonates with Botschner (2000) who found different levels of directness in initiating support in face-to-face personal and professional talk. This implies that the teachers engaged in online support a similar way to the offline support seeking. However, the direct request for support in the form of 'news inquiries' was enacted by the teachers on Facebook in a slightly different way to that found in offline settings revealed by Botschner (ibid). The two forms of direct request identified by Botschner in the corpus of offline interaction are: 1) the claim about having a need for support preceded by disclosure of a problem (e.g. I need to key in the marks before the due date); and 2) the bald request directed at the other party in the conversation (e.g. Can you help me?). Based on the analysis of introducing the topic (updating Status), teachers did not employ the strategy of claiming a need on Timelines. They employed either a disclosure that is, not followed by 'need' claim, or used a bald request. This implies that the teachers in this study employed support initiating strategies at the opposite ends of the continuum in terms of degree of directness.

A closer look at the context of when the teachers employed the two different strategies of initiating support reveals that the indirect strategy of disclosures was used to seek emotional support, whilst the direct strategy of bald request was used to ask for informational resources. What can be inferred from this finding is that the teachers used sophisticated discursive skills in accomplishing these two different goals through engagement in conversation on Timelines. By using an indirect approach to initiate the co-construction of emotional support, they were able to avoid being seen as vulnerable as they did not beg for support from friends but merely recounted their experience and shared their inner thoughts. In contrast, by using a direct approach for initiating instrumental support, they managed to project themselves as teachers who know what they want when requesting work-related help. Despite the difference in degree of directness, Friends were able to give the relevant responses to teachers every time they sought support, which reflects a high level of empathy and supportiveness.

## 5.0 CONCLUSION

Co-constructing social support is a complex process. The teachers need to craft their postings carefully to encourage Friends to take up the topic they have introduced thus enabling the co-construction process to occur. The co-construction process consists of two simultaneous phases within which teachers need to find ways to fit themselves into the community to manage supportive conversations. Fitting themselves into the community is done by discursively constructing socially-acceptable identities so that they present the image of being 'one of the crowd'. Among the shared identities on teachers' Timelines that emerged from the analysis of status updates are the dissenter and the slogger, each constructed using different 'impression-management techniques' (Jones and Pittman, 1982, p.231) that incorporate various 'involvement strategies' (Tannen, 1989, p.17) and discursive psychology strategies (e.g.

Edwards and Potter, 1992; Edwards, 2005). Projecting the image of being one of the crowd is necessary as newcomers need to adapt their identities in order to be accepted by the existing members in the discourse community (Swales, 1990).

**REFERENCES**

Albrecht, T.L. & Adelman, M.B. (1987). *Communicating social support*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.

Beehr, T. and Glazer, S. (2001). A cultural perspective of social support in relation to occupational stress. In: Perrewe, P., Ganster, D. C. and Moran, J. (Ed.), *Research in occupational stress and wellbeing* (pp. 97-142). Greenwich, CO: JAI Press.

Benwell, B. and Stokoe, E. (2006). *Discourse and identity*. Edinburgh, UK: Edinburgh University Press.

Bissessar, C.S. (2014). Facebook as an informal teacher professional development tool. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education*, *39*(2), 121–135.

Botschner, J. (2000). *Doing not providing: a discourse analytic investigation of social support as a responsive process*. Ontario: University of Guelph Press.

Brannan, D. and Bleistein, T. (2012). Novice ESOL teachers' perceptions of social support networks. *TESOL Quarterly*, *46*(3), 519–541.

Bublitz, W. (1988). *Supportive fellow-speakers and cooperative conversations*. Amsterdam: Benjamins.

Button, G. and Casey, N. (1985). Topic nomination and topic pursuit. *Human Studies*, *8*(3), 3-55.

Cohen, S. and McKay, G. (1984). Social support, stress, and the buffering hypothesis: a theoretical analysis. In: Baum, A., Taylor, S.E. and Singer, J.E. (Eds.) *Handbook of psychology and health* (pp.253-267). Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.

Copland, F. and Creese, A. (2015). *Linguistic ethnography: collecting, analysing and presenting data*. London: Sage.

Day, C., Kington, A., Stobart, G. and Sammons, P. (2006). The personal and professional selves of teachers: Stable and unstable identities. *British Educational Research Journal*, *32*(4), 601–616.

Edwards, D. (2005). Discursive psychology. In: Fitch, K.L. and Sanders, R.E. (Eds.) *Handbook of language and social interaction* (pp. 257-273). London: Erlbaum.

Edwards, D. and Potter, J. (1992). *Discursive Psychology*. London: Sage.

Gatson, S.N. (2011). The methods, ethics, and politics of representation in online ethnography. In: Denzin, N. and Lincoln, Y. (Eds.) *Handbook of qualitative research* (pp.245-276). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Gardner, R. (1987). The identification and role of topic in spoken interaction. *Semiotica* *65*(1/2), 129–41.

Gee, J.P. (2000). Identity as an analytic lens for research in education. *Review of research in education*, *25*(1), 99–125.

Gee, J.P. (2014). *An introduction to discourse analysis: theory and method*. 4th ed. London: Routledge.

Goffman, E. (1959). *The presentation of self in everyday life*. New York: Doubleday.

Gottlieb, B. (1988). Support interventions: a typology and agenda for research. In: Duck, S. (Ed.) *Handbook of personal relationships* (pp. 519-541). New York: John Wiley & Sons.

Hobson, A.J., Malderez, A., Tracey, L., Homer, M.S., Ashby, P., Mitchell, N., McIntyre, J., Cooper, D., Roper, T., Chambers, G.N., and Tomlinson, P.D. (2009). *Becoming a teacher: teachers' experiences of initial teacher training, induction and early professional development*. Final Report. Nottingham: DCSF. Available at: http://dera.ioe.ac.uk/11168/1/DCSF-RR115.pdf [Accessed 10 June 2013].

Jacoby, S. and Ochs, E. (1995). Co-construction: an introduction. *Research on Language and Social Interaction*, 28(3), 171–183.

Jais, S. (2010). *Determinants of stress among secondary school teachers in Kubang Pasu district* (Unpublished doctoral thesis), Universiti Utara Malaysia, Malaysia.

Johns, A.M. (1997). Discourse communities and communities of practice: membership, conflict, and diversity. In: Johns, A.M. (Ed.) *Text, role, and context: developing academic literacies* (pp. 51-70). New York: Cambridge University Press.

John-Steiner, V. and Mahn, H. (1996). Sociocultural approaches to learning and development: a Vygotskian framework. *Educational Psychologist*, *31*(3), 191–206.

Jones, E. and Pittman, T. (1982). Toward a general theory of strategic self-presentation. In: Suls, J. (Ed.) *Psychological perspectives of the self* (pp.231-261). Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.

Lave, J. and Wenger, E. (1991). *Situated learning: legitimate peripheral participation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Mattson, M. & Hall, J. (2011). *Health as communication nexus : A service-learning approach.* Dubuque, IA: Kendall Hun.

Mills, N. (2011). Situated learning through social networking communities: the development of joint enterprise, mutual engagement, and a shared repertoire. *CALICO Journal* 28(2), 345–368.

Moule, P. (2006). Developing the communities of practice, framework for online learning. *Journal of Information Systems 4*(2), 133–140.

Müller, S. (2005). *Discourse markers in native and non-native English*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Rashid, R.A. (2016a). Responding to 'nurturing global collaboration and networked learning in higher education'. *Research in Learning Technology*, 24: 31485

Rashid, R.A. (2016b). Topic continuation strategies employed by teachers in managing supportive conversations on Facebook Timeline. *Discourse Studies*, *18*(2), 188-203.

Rashid, R.A., & Rahman, M.F. (2014). Social networking sites for online mentoring and creativity enhancement. *International Journal of Technology Enhanced Learning*, *6*(1), 34–45.

Rashid, R.A., Wahab, Z., Yunus, K., Ismail, N.S., Yusof, N., Syed Omar, SNM., & Latiff Azmi, M.N. (2016a). English language teachers as a dissenter on a social networking site. *International Journal of Applied Linguistic and English Literature*, *5*(4), 72-78.

Rashid, R.A., Yunus, K., Azmi, N.J., Safawati, B.Z., Rahman, S.B.A., & Yusoff, S.Z. (2016b). The discursive construction of teachers' desirable identity on a social networking site. *International Journal of Applied Linguistic and English Literature, 5*(5), 1-8.

Saufi, R., Thai, L., Seok, C. and Eranza, D. (2013). The effects of organisational factors and extra-organisational factors on work stress. *Journal of the Asian Academy of Applied Business 2*(1), 20–32.

Shulman, L.S. (1987). Knowledge and teaching: foundations of the new reform. *Harvard Educational Review*, *57*(1), 1–22.

Silver, R. and Wortman, C. (1980). Coping with undesirable life events. In: Garber, J. and Seligman, M. (Eds) *Human helplessness* (pp. 279-375). New York: Academic Press.

Swales, J. (1990). The concept of discourse community. In: Chapelle, C., and Hunston, S. (Eds.) *Genre analysis: English in academic and research settings* (pp. 21-32). Boston: Cambridge University Press.

Tannen, D. (1989) *Talking voices*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Taylor, A.R., Sylvestre, J.C. and Botschner, J. V. (1998). Linking formal and informal support. *Journal of Leisurability*, *25*(4), 10–24.

Van Maanen, J. (1996). Ethnography. In: Kuper, A. and Kuper, J. (Eds.) *The social science encyclopedia* (pp. 263-265). London: Routledge.

Vygotsky, L.S. (1981a). The genesis of higher mental functions. In: Wertsch, J. (Ed.) *The concept of activity in Soviet psychology*, (pp. 144-188). New York: Sharpe.

Vygotsky, L.S. (1981b). The instrumental method in psychology. In: Wertsch, J. (Ed.) *The concept of activity in Soviet psychology* (pp. 134-143). New York: Sharpe.

Wenger, E. (1998). *Communities of practice: learning, meaning, and identity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Wenger, E. (2006). *Communities of practice: a brief introduction*. Retrieved from: http://www.ewenger.com/theory/ [Accessed 20 February 2015].

Wenger, E. (2010). Communities of practice and social learning systems: the career of a concept. In: Blackmore, C. (Ed.) *Social learning systems and communities of practice* (pp. 179-198). London: Springer.

Wetherell, M. (2007). A step too far: discursive psychology, linguistic ethnography and questions of identity. *Journal of Sociolinguistics*, *11*(5), 661–681.

Williams, P., Barclay, L. and Schmied, V. (2004). Defining social support in context: a necessary step in improving research, intervention, and practice. *Qualitative Health Research*, *14*(7), 942–960.