

Introduction

The field of Language Studies involves a wide, varied, and interdisciplinary area for critical investigation and research. Through the years, studies in language and language use have encompassed a diversity of research methods, theoretical underpinnings, and data types. This journal brings together different research studies and different perspectives in Language Studies Research. In this issue, ten articles examine, explore, and appropriate how language (English, Filipino, and varieties of both languages) acts as a societal tool that influences, shapes, and controls particular discourses in the fields of sociolinguistics, pragmatics, women studies, language acquisition, language and pedagogy, computer-mediated as well as institutional discourse analysis.

This journal is a compilation of the proceedings of the First Language Studies Research Colloquium with the theme, “Unity and Diversity: Perspectives in Language Studies Research.” Unity and Diversity best encapsulates the way the English Language Studies Program of the Department of English and Comparative Literature looks at and into the different kinds of research studies done in the field—diverse, multilingual, multicultural—and the role of English in those research studies. Clearly, English is given a pivotal role as it is the main medium of instruction used in the program; yet, it is clearly understood that English is not the sole language that is worthy of study. In the light of the conversations on language and globalization, English is seen from both global and local perspectives.

English is a global language and a tool for international communication but the usage of English may vary from person to person and from context to context. As Tupas points out in his Keynote paper, “by tracking how people use language (here broadly covering interpersonal/micro uses of language and institutional/state/macro deployments of language), one is able to describe and unpack the processes and discourses of globalization,” as well

as the different issues in the field of English studies. Thus, in the first article, “Unequal Englishes as a Sociolinguistics of Globalization,” Tupas talks about how the politics and cultural dynamics of globalization can be discussed through the lens of the social dimensions of language. The paper argues that one (but certainly not the only) way to understand globalization is through the lens of *Unequal Englishes*, a view of ‘global’ English not only as a deeply localized language, with various varieties formed through cultural mediation and language contact but, more importantly, a view of such English language varieties as unequally valued and distributed. It is centered around the politics of Englishes or the pluralization of English. Tracing the development of ‘global’ English demands looking at the twin processes of the spread and localization of English due to globalization and colonization.

From politics of English, the next two articles highlight Pragmatics as they talk about language, culture, and context particularly politeness strategies and cultural nuances employed by different interlocutors in their interactions/negotiations in the workplace and in the classroom.

Paraan, in her paper, “Filipino Communication Style as Reflected in Politeness Strategies in Administrative Memoranda in the Philippine Workplace,” explores the interplay of language and culture in the cross-cultural interaction of the western-oriented memorandum and its writers’ Filipino culture. Through focused ethnography and content analysis, she examines politeness strategies (PS) in 100 memoranda to see how culture is reflected in the choice of PS. Her paper is able to surface that a Filipino construct of *tao* (person) with a strong sense of *kapwa* (shared inner identity) constitute Brown and Levinson’s (B&L’s) notion of ‘face.’

Lavalle-Alcudia’s “Getting Students to Do or Say Something: A Pragmatic Analysis of Teachers’ Directives in Classroom Discourse in a State University” examines the linguistic choices and strategies used by Bachelor in Secondary Education (BSED) English major student teachers in their attempts to get students to do something. Using the Cross-Cultural Speech Acts Realization Project (CCSARP) of Blum-Kulka, et al., the study is able to show that mitigation

in “detour situations” is done using politeness markers and tone of the voice. As ESL speakers, the student teachers possess a repertoire of linguistic devices used to achieve the goals of interaction. They exhibit control as a dominant teacher role by using more of the regulative directives.

One way at looking at discourse is to look at it as a social practice. Social practice involves making choices and acting for reason. In addition, it also entails looking at institutional and ideological factors that determine individual actions (Eckert and McConnell-Ginet). The two articles on Language and Gender show contrasting discourses on women: one foregrounds the prominent identities of women at a specific period in time while the other portrays women as silent victims needing directives and imperatives to break their silence.

Jolo, in her article “Metaphors of the Movement: The ‘woman’ in Speeches and Addresses by Women’s Groups in the Philippines in the 1980s,” looks into the major shifts in the Philippine socio-political sphere that affected both the material and discursive conditions of human rights groups, the labor sector, and the women’s movement—by analyzing the linguistic metaphors used in speeches and addresses given by select women’s groups. The metaphors were then situated under broader conceptual metaphors, as per Lakoff and Johnson’s Conceptual Metaphor Theory, and the non-textual elements that surround their dissemination and consumption. Fairclough’s model of Critical Discourse Analysis gives focus on the nationalistic and gender-specific motivations behind each conceptual metaphor; thereby, highlighting the prominent identities of the woman at the time.

In “The Silent Treatment: A Multimodal Study of Campaign and Advocacy Materials against Sexual Harassment,” Deocampo attempts to uncover the prevalent discourse and the representations of sexual harassment in the University of the Philippines as reflected in the posters and campaign materials produced by the Office of Anti-Sexual Harassment (OASH) using the multimodal framework. By focusing on the relationship between the visual elements and the linguistic features, the findings reveal a recurring narrative of silence

and shame in the portrayal of sexual harassment victims. The campaigns and advocacy materials address these representations by constructing imperatives that urge the victims to break the silence and overcome the shame by reporting and sharing their experiences. The results in this study offer a glimpse of how sexual harassment is perceived and understood in one context in the country.

One area in Language Studies that has considerably robust research is Language Acquisition. In the late 1960s, Second Language Acquisition (SLA) emerged as an interdisciplinary research area that was related to developmental psychology, linguistics, and language teaching. The last three decades witnessed the expansion of SLA research in terms of scope, data types, and methodology. The article by Catedral and Recto on SLA titled, “An Analysis of the Ways Filipino Bilingual Children Initiate Conversation with Different Interlocutors,” seeks to enumerate, describe, and analyze the initiation devices used by Filipino bilingual children with different interlocutors. Their research used Conversation Analysis, Register and Genre Theory, Communicative Competence, and Michael McTear’s work on children’s initiation devices in analyzing the initiation devices of 40 Grade Two pupils at the UP Integrated School who are exposed to English and Filipino at home or in school. Results show that Filipino bilingual children use different verbal and non-verbal initiation devices, which are shaped by their specific interlocutor. This finding suggests a degree of communicative competence on the part of the young children.

Language Teaching has always been connected to language acquisition and learning. The theoretical foundations in language teaching (pedagogy) have revealed much for language researchers to understand and appreciate how humans acquire a first and/or a second language. Tiongson’s article, “English for Specific Purposes: Teachers’ Perceptions of Interdisciplinary Collaboration in Writing Classes,” focuses on pedagogical collaboration in the context of a specific language skill—writing. Tiongson claims that although interdisciplinary collaboration between language teachers and content specialists is an important activity in English for Specific Purposes (ESP), it is an under-researched practice in the Philippines due to lack of training in

technical content. In this paper, she highlights the importance of collaboration in the light of its potential in informing curricular decisions in specialized writing classes in the context of curricular revisions in the K to 12 program.

The next two articles highlight a relatively recent approach to discourse analysis—the mediated discourse analysis. In the late 1990s, Ron Scollon developed a theoretical position, later termed Mediated Discourse Analysis (MDA), that focuses on the links between discourse and action and how these links create social identities, social practices, and social issues. MDA is widely interdisciplinary and traces its roots in interactional sociolinguistics, Conversation Analysis, Ethnography of Communication, Critical Discourse Analysis, Social Semiotics, and Multi-modal Discourse Analysis.

The last two decades witnessed a rapid increase in computer-mediated communication (CMC) research. CMC has evolved into a new communication modality that has significantly impacted the everyday lives of people. In “#blessed and the fancy self: An Exploratory Study on the Different ‘Selves’ Constructed in Facebook Posts,” Saqueton employs Goffman’s theories on dramaturgy and impression management to look into the different ways of self-presentation made by Facebook users when they use *#blessed* in their posts. Through the hashtag, a self-image that is beyond the denotative meaning of the word, *blessed* is constructed, which makes it hard to reconcile the religious association of the word *blessed* and the text (linguistic and visual) that shows how thankful they are for the luxury that they enjoy. The paper analyzes the captions that accompany the photos as textual evidence to see how the use of *#blessed* has become an accessory that is available to the self in his/her need and/or want to curate and engineer an ideal version of himself/herself.

Rodriguez and Go posit that toys perpetuate dichotomization of gender in their article, “Gendered Bricks: A Semiotic Approach to the Marketing of Lego in Singapore.” The study employs multimodal critical discourse analysis and geosemiotics as frameworks in order to answer the research question: “How does Lego (re)produce gendered discourses vis-à-vis toy marketing in Singapore?” According to them, while Lego does not present sufficient textual evidence of marketing their products as either and exclusively for girls or boys,

semiotic resources of color, space, product design, type fonts, and suggested activities for play on toy packaging, on the website, and in Bricks World Singapore, collectively index which gender the manufacturer positions as its target consumer.

The final article utilizes a pragmatic orientation to analyze institutional discourse. “Grounding Patient Care Decisions: A Discourse Analysis of Doctor-Patient Interactions in Private Clinics,” draws from Grice’s conversational implicatures and uses Discourse Analysis to explore the interactions of doctors and patients during consultations in private clinics. Papiłota-Diaz, et al. claim that effective use of communication strategies facilitates common ground as participants get involved in mutual discussion of treatment options, goals, and roles in health management. From extracts of eight transcripts of the audio-recorded interactions which serve as data, the research shows that the communicative strategies of doctors that promote effective doctor-patient interaction and communication include instances of bureaucratic negotiation and casual inserts, frequent repetitions and explanations, and code-switching while patients prefer receiving brief answers, asking for confirmation, and giving more information than requested.

The contributions to this special issue provide an invaluable overview of what has become of Language Studies—a complex, engaging, multi-faceted, and multi-disciplinary field of research.

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Work Cited

Eckert, Penelope and Sally McConnell-Ginet. *Language and Gender*. Cambridge University Press, 2003.