EXPLORING THE SOCIAL CONTEXT OF ONLINE ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING (ELT) PLATFORMS: A CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF YOUTUBE COMMENTS

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Paper Information

Abstract

This study aimed to investigate the social context of online ELT platforms on social media. For this purpose, data were collected from the four most popular English Language and Teaching YouTube channels with the mutual theme of communication/speaking skills. One hundred comments from each ELT YouTube channel were extracted for the investigation of the social context of education on social media. Both qualitative and quantitative approaches were used to manipulate the phenomenon. Norman Fairclough's 3D model of discourse followed as a theoretical framework. AntConc was also used to explore word lists and language descriptions. Google and Excel sheets were used for the graphical representation of the data through charts and graphs. This study focused on the use of language in comments by using critical discourse analysis (CDA) to better understand how people construct and negotiate meaning in this setting. This study found that the aspect of language acquisition in comment sections enables users to communicate effectively and share cultures. The current study concluded that language varies according to the context in which it is used. Furthermore, the conclusion of this study provided valuable insights and revealed that the online commenters used formal and straightforward sentence structure to convey their opinions in the comment section. The development of language learning that allowed users and commentators to express themselves, participate in the discourse, and acquire an aesthetic sense of self-assurance in their command of the English language was greatly aided by these formal language choices. This study welcomed recommendations for future studies.
Keywords: ELT, Discourse, Language, Youtube, Comments

Introduction

The use of social media offers benefits, with the majority of the advantages being found in the ability to access course materials, and videos, and transfer instructional notes (García Botero et al., 2018). Generally, students have confidence that social media and mobile devices are the most reachable and affordable sources of learning about existing areas. Social media has an impact on all aspects of life, including the political, economic, social, and educational sectors. In the context of education, this media expands the range of 24-hour student-teacher interactions while also improving learning chances for pupils (Mohammad, 2013). Facebook as a learning tool All the typical social networking features (pictures, games), but this site will also be primarily concerned with educational collaboration and will allow subject matter experts to respond to queries posed by users. A growing multidisciplinary research movement called critical discourse analysis (CDA) uses many unique theoretical and methodological methods to study language. Each has a certain goal of its own. Despite this disparity, CDA academics share a mutual perception that language is a social activity. They are also concerned with carefully inspecting the ideologies and covert power connections that are integral in discourse. They are also devoted to researching how discourse affects society and the world around us. Researchers from the CDA share (N. L. Fairclough, 1985) dialectical perspective on speech, believing that it is both socially formed and socially constitutive. They continue to have a clear inspiration to actively oppose or interfere in the power dynamics or societal issues that are being studied. Numerous CDA approaches map discourse analyses across these sizes to make connections between micro, meso, and macroscale social phenomena. (N. Fairclough, 2005) envisioned these scales as a three-dimensional model made up of social structures, discursive practices, and discursive events (micro, meso) (macro). According to (N. Fairclough, 2006) CDA, research should alternate between descriptive, interpretive, and explanatory phases, each of which is supported by switching between various scales of analysis. Researchers examine texts or other types of speech at the micro level of discursive occurrences to provide a rich description. CDA research frequently begins with a study subject or problem. It is expected that specific study design decisions involving theory, technique, and methodologies are informed by robust contextual understandings of the dynamics of particular themes or problems (as well as the unique discourse under examination). As a result, depending on the particulars of a project, CDA's study design and methodological methods can be rather fluid, iterative, and adaptive. Digital learning is "just in time" and on-demand, according to (Balaaco, 1996), offering information when and where employees need it. On a larger scale, this idea of "anywhere-anytime" is beneficial to learners. The practice of teaching English to non-native speakers is known as English language teaching (ELT). We live in a world where technology has undoubtedly impacted every part of our lives. Technology is playing an incredibly large role in both our personal and professional lives and our students are using it more frequently (Ahmad, 2012). There is no denying that using technology to study a language is nothing new. Indeed, if we consider the chalkboard a sort of technology, it has been used in language training for decades one could even argue for thousands of years. Sidewise from its ability to save time and effort, technology may also give people new perspectives and opportunities by introducing them to fresh ideas and people they might not have otherwise encountered. With technology becoming more widely available, there is a huge desire to use it in language classrooms.

Significance of Research

This study explores the social context of online ELT platforms, a critical discourse analysis of YouTube comments in Pakistan, and the social context based on social media (YouTube) from the perspective of critical discourse analysis.

Research Objectives

- To interpret the syntactic and vocabulary description of the comments on ELT YouTube channels.
- To explore the language and discourse strategies used in the comments of ELT YouTube channels that contribute to social messages.

Research Questions

- What is the difference between the syntax and vocabulary of the comments on ELT YouTube channels?
- How do the language and discourse strategies used in the comments of ELT YouTube channels contribute toward social messages?

Literature Review

Social Media in the Educational Context

New opportunities are being provided by social media for learners in the field of education. It simply tackles the problem and provides solutions for that ambiguity (Greenhow et al., 2019). Students and teachers of the modern era are taking advantage of this platform to ease their studies. This study mainly focused on developing technology in social media for students and different techniques for educators for research purposes. It also explored the availability of modern technology for students, discussion of scholarships, and teacher training in institutions. This study recommends the availability of modern media for education policy. The study conducted (Vanwynsberghe & Verdegem, 2013) investigated and provided a framework for the implementation of social media and modern technology in education fields. Students of the modern age are deeply involved in social media, so this should become part of the curriculum and syllabus design. The authors also suggested a framework to include that platform in the settings of education fields to communicate with the theories of cognitive, practical, and affective behavior to strengthen the role of social media in the literary field. A notion by Pierre Bourdieu is followed by the researchers to link with educational policy to construct the assistance between social media and education sectors. For language learning and teaching, social media is considered a helpful resource. Different researchers have discussed the implementation and integration of social media in education fields, but this investigation focused on the behavior and actions of learners and teachers after interacting with this technology. For this purpose, the comparison of the two workshops is done by the UK University regarding how the users use social media in general, and how they interact with it for education. Thematic analysis was performed to understand the attitudes and opinions generated by the workshop. Three different themes surfaced from this: social media as a platform for language learning, positivity and negativity, and proper communication channels. They offered different recommendations for researchers and participants: proper usage of social media features, concentration, learner-owned, and learner-led creation spaces, structured maps to use social media, and social media for assessment tools (Lambton-Howard et al., 2021). In the last couple of decades, social media has proven to be an authentic and powerful tool for digital technology for communication. Many social media users and organizations have learned how to use this new method to convey their message to their fans (Ranginwala & Towbin, 2018). Medical students also started to use social media as a source to convey their content related to their field. The main purpose of this study is

to illustrate the usage of social media for medical education. Different social media platforms have different constraints, and several types of social media are discussed differently. The authors also discussed the advantages and disadvantages for the users of each network to claim how the users used these platforms to get a concentration of the audience.

Critical Discourse Analysis in the Educational Context

One of the most important concepts of critical discourse analysis is manipulation, which leads toward further theoretical frameworks (Van Dijk, 2006). This study investigated triangular analysis to manipulate social issues, i.e., power, class, and discourse interaction. Manipulation is stated as social instability, and cognitively, the mind controls ideologies through the process of considering social ideas. Manipulation very often involves ideas of formal and informal discourses, i.e., bad images or good views. This level of analysis depicts how manipulation is different from a legal mindset. Through this theory, the analysis of Tony Blair's speech in the House of Commons Legalizing is analyzed in the war of the US against Iraq in 2003. The study by (Baker et al., 2008) manipulated which method is closely associated with corpus linguistics that is effectively followed by analysts of the discourse. For this purpose, British news articles on refugees, immigrants migrants, and asylum seekers (RASIM) were collected to develop a corpus of 140 million words. The processes of analysis of the collocation and concordance identified the common trends of RASIM through quantitative analysis. This study in critical discourse analysis suggests a framework for following corpus trends. In the last couple of years, text analysis in the linguistics discipline has had a strong approach to analyzing media messages and news articles. Discourse analysis is not only the modern method used to analyze text but is also considered a research application and paradigm. After the

descriptive details, the results showed that most news articles followed systematically in the last couple of years. Stylistic analysis and the analysis of coherence are relevant in media (Van Dijk, 1983). Discourse analysis is one of the most popular multidisciplinary approaches and is considered a complete field in education to investigate discourse. (Van Dijk, 2011) handbook of discourse studies is one of the most evaluative books to study any aspect of discourse analysis, including semantic, pedagogical, pragmatics, and cognitive aspects. Exploring any sort of discourse, i.e., political, social, or economic approaches, would be followed by the students. A study by (N. Fairclough, 2013) illustrated the contribution of critical discourse analysis to make a comparative analysis between critical policies of study and (CPE) critical political economy in the journal and (PDA) poststructuralist discourse analysis. According to the discursive aspect of this research, there is a slight difference between CDA, CPE, and PDA. CDA contributes specifically to making the policy of argumentation within CPE and PDA. The conclusion of this research showed that the analysis of argumentation is not confined by CPA and PDA, but it is necessary to approach all political speech analysis. The purpose of this study was to examine the representation of Muslims all over the world in the corpus data of the 105M words of a giant Swedish internet-based forum in the year of 2003 to 2013 after combining the topic model and critical analysis of the discourse. This was also a first study despite the emerging importance and need of modern technology including social media. The data revealed that Muslims are considered a sign of violence, homogeneous group, moral conflict, and also the signs of extremism which are also considered taboo characteristics in the religion Islam. These examined data are also the same as was found in the traditional media analysis. These results indicated that on social media platforms, it does not matter

how a specific discourse is. The traditional media can easily be a genetic way to disturb the discourse of the public including any religion or section (Törnberg & Törnberg, 2016).

Social Context

This study examined the impact of social context on the students of secondary school the usage of emotional expressions in internet communication (Derks et al., 2007). Respondents were 158 in numbers to answer the short chats on the internet. Social context including positive and negative valences was investigated in the chats. Participants were allowed to give their responses with the text followed by emotional and normal chats. Results expressed that the socio-emotional emoticons were most frequently used by the respondents in the task-based social context. Moreover, the respondents used more positive emoticons in positive and negative in negative contexts. An interaction was also found among the valence and different types of contexts; in the task-based process, negative contexts were least used by the facial expressers. Results were also related to the study regarding the emotions in face-to-face collaboration and interaction. Due to the limitations of references, abbreviations, and jargon, it is hard to analyze the sentiment in social media apart from the other kinds of text. No doubt social media provides much background information in any text including the reactions, preferences, and relations among the users. The prior research dominantly provided the text analysis of sentimental tasks in the social context. However many aspects of social context are still under examination due to the limitations and these works are also not analyzed deeply with the application of systemic social context (Sánchez-Rada & Iglesias, 2019). This study aimed to bridge the gap by providing three main categories; proper social context definition, the framework for the investigation of social context, and a review of the literature depending upon the stated framework. Different fields of research focus on the production of knowledge, creativity, and generating new ideas instead of the socialization of knowledge through which any researcher can easily identify the community and the educator's field of knowledge towards novelty (Diehl et al., 2022). The analysis of social networks is used in this study to investigate the core of the knowledge that an expert chooses for students in any interdisciplinary setting. Specifically, the syllabus of high-level 25 schools is examined in the social context of literacy background from the United States for the determination of shared references, themes, and also from the authors. The analysis revealed that due to interdisciplinary settings shared themes are the most common structure in the social context of education for the knowledge cores rather than the specific author and perceptions. It is also claimed that the following approach can be a valuable and useful instrument for the novelty in interdisciplinary structure.

English Language Teaching and Learning

Education in the English language is necessary to prepare scholars and students to compete for existing and upcoming language issues (Chvala, 2020). This study aimed to investigate the ideologies of English in schools and societies in the 21st century by Norwegian teachers. Another main purpose of this research was to understand teachers' tendencies toward English and certain realities regarding ELT. Data were collected from 12 teachers in basic education in Norway through interviews. For the analysis of the data, grounded theories and ideologies of teachers' conceptual structure were followed. The findings revealed that English is a natural and unnatural context in the societies of Norway. English also has many legacies in all fields, including culture, politics, and other disciplines of daily life. The study also argued that interaction with non-natives as well as native speakers will be helpful for a better understanding of the English language.

The integration of technology in the classroom innovated several ways to ease the burden of modern students. It not only changed the method of learning and teaching modules but also proved to be a key factor. A study conducted by (Ahmad, 2012) claimed that using electronic devices in the classroom is more credible than natural methods of teaching. For this purpose, he conducted three statistical surveys at JCC, King Abdul Aziz University, KSA, to investigate the impact of media technology, learners' writing skills, and the response of students on the implementation of modern electronic devices in the classroom. The results showed that using modern technology in the classroom was interesting and outstanding. The objectives of this study by (Ashraf et al., 2017; Sabiri et al., 2023) were to investigate the attitudes of English teachers toward computer innovation at university and to find the most common factors of not using technology in ELT classrooms. For this purpose, 30 university teachers were selected. For the collection of the data, a questionnaire and semi-structured interviews were used. Descriptive and inferential statistics along with content analysis were followed for the analysis of the data. The results of the study showed that most teachers were in favor of the integration of technology in language teaching classes. Information and communication technology evolved in all educational fields to move towards modern methods of teaching as well as its importance in course books. This study analyzed the importance of ICT and multimedia applications in ELT course books and their usage in language teaching classrooms. After discussing theories regarding ICT use in English language learning (ELL) classes, this study was conducted among English preparatory schools of the five main universities in Northern Cyprus that have been using or ignoring ICT in ELT course books for the last three years. This research also discussed the recent studies conducted on ICT integration in course books. The findings revealed that ignored ICT devices should never be included in lessons (Hismanoğlu, 2011). Concordance programs have played an important role in literary text analysis for the last couple of years (Yavuz, 2014). Its main purpose is to count the frequency and function of any word and the group of this specific word in any text. It helps to identify the structure of the words and their importance in any given text. Concordance is another computer software used to interpret text, and it also includes lexeme advocators to learn the language. In the last couple of years, these concordances and software have been used to investigate the text, but they do not involve language learning. The study also gave descriptive details of concordance and its relevant programs and the major techniques regarding this software to implement this software in ELT learning. Research conducted by (Dudeney & Hockly, 2012) justified the use and development of ICT and its impact on ELT in the last three years. According to them, this development not only affected classrooms but also encouraged teachers in language teaching. For this purpose, the taxonomies of CALL's implementation by Stephen Bax and Mark Warschauer are followed. They also followed the methods of teaching and language learning development from the starting point to the ending point of CALL (1980 to 1990) from CALL to WEB 2.0. Last, they also looked at the brief description of the future implications of technology for ELT learning.

Research Gap

The study tried to fill the gap regarding the understanding of syntax and vocabulary of YouTube channel comments and how discourse strategies were used among the audience in their comments to convey a social message.

Research Methodology

For data collection and analysis, this study followed both quantitative and qualitative

approaches, and data was collected statistically. For this purpose, four major ELT YouTube channels TED-Ed, EngFluent, Rachel's English, and ToFluency were followed. Norman Fairclough's 3D model of discourse was applied to the comments of each of the four English language teaching YouTube channels. One hundred popular comments on YouTube on these four major ELT channels were manipulated through the Fairclough 3D model of discourse along with the syntactic description. A mutual theme of communication/speaking skills from all of the channels followed for the interpretation of the data. The researcher used AntConc (3.5.9) for vocabulary comparison at the word level. Charts and tables were used for the interpretation of the graphical data. The table of keywords was also discussed descriptively. This study also provided syntactic interpretation of all the comments of English Language Teaching YouTube channels at the level of words and with the frequency with tabular representation with frequency list.

Results & Discussion

The details given were the frequency distribution of word tokens and word types from YouTube commentator videos of all four channels for English language teaching. 11,835-word tokens (individual instances of words) and 1,815-word types (unique words) combine to make up the data. From a linguistic point of view, it is clear that "i", which makes up 5.40% of all word tokens in these films, is the word that is used the most frequently, followed by "to," "the," "and," and "you." This implied that these commentators frequently employ the pronoun "I" and common conjunctions such as "to," "the," and "and" to link concepts. The use of "you" suggested that these viewpoints may interact with their audience directly. The dominance of the terms "English" (ranked eighth) and "speaking" (ranked seventeenth) further indicated that the emphasis of these videos is probably on the teaching or discussion of the English language and

speaking abilities. The words "it is," "is my," and "that it" were used to explain or describe particular subjects. It is interesting to note that the term "video" is 20th on the list, suggesting that these commentators may use or allude to videos as a teaching tool. With a focus on individual involvement, language education, and the use of YouTube channels for teaching, the data generally directed the prevalent linguistic patterns and areas present in ELT comments on YouTube videos.

Table 1. Keywords List
Word Tokens:11835
Word Types: 1815

Rank	Frequency	Words	Percentage
1	643	i	5.40%
2	380	to	3.20%
3	295	the	2.50%
4	272	and	2.30%
5	255	you	2.20%
6	225	in	2.00%
7	218	a	1.90%
8	214	English	1.80%
9	190	it	1.60%
10	164	is	1.40%
11	160	my	1.30%
12	157	this	1.30%
13	156	that	1.30%
14	145	for	1.20%
15	140	of	1.10%
16	108	your	0.90%
17	107	speaking	0.90%
18	103	but	0.80%
19	97	speak	0.80%
20	93	video	0.70%

Discussions
Discussions on Question 1
Vocabulary & Syntax:
The word order that was used by commenters was followed by s-v-o, which was an informal method of online conversation (Vanwynsberghe & Verdegem, 2013). The sentences were shorter and had complete meanings in them (Ranginwala & Towbin, 2018). The users followed a complete command of English. Some

sentences were formal and followed by subject and verb. This command is usually used by digital technology and social media users to deliver messages more concisely. The commenters usually used the present tense to share their personal experiences and views. Apart from this vocabulary level was from basic to advanced. Different levels of competency and proficiency were also reflected in the comments. Contractions were also employed in the process of language learning along with different abbreviations. This was a clear example of an online and typical way of online conversation, which is a causal view of commenting.

Emotional Language:

The commenters used emoticon language to convey their views regarding the learning of language. Different emotional terminologies, such as "suffer, difficult judge, confident, and loneliness", were utilized by the commentators (Sánchez-Rada & Iglesias, 2019). These terms expressed struggles and personal challenges in the process of language learning. This type of language was used because of the expandability of the commenter's views to the other online platform users.

Cultural Diversity:

Different commentators used their specific countries and cultural backgrounds, such as "Netherlands, USA, Malaysia, Japan, and Canada". This added the international community to participate in the process of discussion during language learning (Derks et al., 2007). This would not only give chance to interact and communicate with users from different social contexts but also to learn more about language usage in different environments.

Positive Feedback:

Different admiration and appreciation words were also used to show support for the content creators (Dudeney & Hockly, 2012). The commenters used "wonderful, love, amazing, superb"-like terms to show admiration for the creators of content in the

process of language learning. This will not only enhance the context and design of language learning but also engage other members to take part in this setting.

Language Competency:

The language of discourse reflected a wide variety of proficiency and competency levels in the text of the comments. Some users struggled and sought information in the process of language learning, and others disclosed wide fluency. Different environments for speaking English were also indicated in the comments (Lambton-Howard et al., 2021). This was the result of language learning that how more we learn the more comprehension and proficiency level we will have.

Discussions on Question Number: 2

Textual Dimension:

This dimension interpreted that most commenters followed informal and casual language with the collective use of personal narration, and ideas and seeking more content in the future. The metaphorical style showed comments to express emoticons such as "storyteller and throughout the career". This dimension interpreted that most commenters used a wide range of language proficiency and competency (Greenhow et al., 2019). Some commenters used the strategies of code-switching and different linguistic techniques to deliver their ideas. In addition, the words of gratitude and support were also used by the respondents. Pronouns were also utilized by the users to establish a fair relationship among the commentators to demonstrate the value of familiarity. The commentators also followed a range of language variations such as "complements, gratitude, positive feedback, questions, and experiences" to maintain the validity of the text. The most supportive and appreciative language used by the commenters was "love, fabulous, amazing, and obliged" to appreciate and support the teachers. Different references and anecdotes were also present in the comments.

Discursive Dimension:

Different discourse strategies, such as self-confidence, self-belief, intellectual thinking, and self-comparison, along with mutual experiences were used by the individuals in the comments. These strategies not only conveyed the message adequately but also maintained the coherence of the text. Apart from this, these techniques were aimed at valuing and boosting one's confidence and involvement in English language learning. Furthermore, the strategy of comparison allowed one to improve their weakened areas of English public speaking (Ashraf et al., 2017). Self-perseverance was also promoted during the speaking and communication process. Intellectual thinking was also another main concern of the comments to share personal difficulties and struggles, which allowed not only the users but also other individuals to improve their language skills. Different speech acts such as gratitude, willingness, requesting, and advice were made by the audiences in the comments. Commenters also demonstrated their personal experiences to establish a positive attitude toward language learning techniques (Van Dijk, 2011). Interactive and different ways of practical learning were also followed by commenters such as "WhatsApp group & Group discussion" to learn more in the future. References and supportive statements were also referenced to ensure the content's authenticity.

Social Dimension:

A wide variety of social contexts, identities, and cultural backgrounds were reflected in the comments, including learners from different nationalities and language variations. Power relations were also shared by the commenters towards the content creators as language instructors to recognize and understand their expertise (Van Dijk, 2006). Society-centered language was also revealed by the commenters by sharing their personal views and notions regarding language learning. Different limitations were also acknowledged by the users through comments in the process of English because of specific geographic and social practices. The influence of social media and digitalization was revealed in the comments. Different social standards regarding public conversation, education, and social experiences were also shared by the commenters (Van Dijk, 1983). A diverse variety of different social contexts and backgrounds were shown by the commentators to approach users from different identities. According to the situation, different social contexts were reflected by the users. Belonging to several countries and different sociocultural backgrounds such as "Turkey, the USA, the UK, Algeria, and Brazil", the commenters shared their views and experiences by using different variations and linguistic techniques (Törnberg & Törnberg, 2016). A diversity of comments and strategies of several ideas contributed to the process of English language learning and communication skills to maintain a healthy environment. The dynamics of power and ideology were also referred to from the perspective of language competency and learning. Some commenters showed jealousy and frustration towards other users who speak English more fluently and mentioned the imbalance of power and wish to gain efficiency like native English speakers. Being confident and fluent in speaking English was also another prestigious and prevailing phenomenon to boost and maintain an individual's confidence.

Conclusion

The current study concluded that language varies according to the context. The conclusion of this study provided valuable insights and revealed that online commenters used formal and straightforward sentence structures to convey their opinions in the comment section. Moreover, it was also observed that the commenters used ellipsis and emoticon reactions to show their interest. The research also concluded that the

reason for using short and formal syntax was that the users of other online platforms were in the view that their idea could be understood fully as it was relevant to the topic being discussed and did not require any background information. The study also reflected the social context of different participants from different countries. This not only helped the other commentators to understand their use of English in their native context but also shared different sociocultural backgrounds to engage the users in an effective learning community. Firstly, the commenters used simple and easy language to create a positive and relaxed atmosphere by allowing other learners to participate in the language learning process vigorously and naturally. This participation aligned with a simple conversational style that invited other learners to deliver their messages more effectively. Secondly, the use of simple language and grammar was driven due to concise and clear conversation, which is a manner of online conversation. By using this technique, commenters believed that their opinions and messages were understood more rapidly and effectively by considering the word's limitations. Thirdly, the commentators deployed a basic sense of vocabulary and syntax in the comment section of online ELT platforms according to the different diverse learners and proficiency levels. This approach ensured that learners from different social and linguistic backgrounds could also understand and participate in discussions. Lastly, after analyzing the results, it was found that these comment sections facilitate users to communicate efficiently along with the exchange of culture while maintaining the accuracy and formal aspects of the language learning process. These formal choices of language usage served as a key factor in language learning that allowed users and commenters to express, engage, and create an aesthetic sense of confidence in their English language speaking skills.

Recommendations

This study utilized the data of ELT comments from YouTube channels, but for future studies, the researcher can use online blogs, Facebook, newspapers, magazines, and other language-learning platforms for deeper insights

Limitations

The following are the limitations of the current study:

- The researcher used a sample of YouTube channels for the current study.
- The results can vary depending on the size and platform of the samples.
- The researcher considered the sample a true representative of the target population and extrapolated results from the sample to the population.

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