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Multilingual Meaning-Making and Linguistic Capital in Reflective Blog Comments: A Qualitative Thematic Analysis

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ABSTRACT

This study examined multilingual language practices, reflective meaning-making, linguistic capital, and language legitimacy through 334 reflective blog comments submitted by Grade 9 students at Sta. Lucia High School, Pasig City, Philippines, in response to the teacher-authored article What Awards Cannot Measure. A qualitative research design employed descriptive language classification and thematic analysis, using individual comments as classification units and meaningful portions as thematic coding units. English-dominant responses accounted for 323 comments (96.71%), followed by mixed Filipino-English responses (9, 2.69%) and Filipino-dominant responses (2, 0.60%). Seven themes emerged: Redefining Success; Perseverance and Growth; Character and Ethical Values; Unrecognized Effort and Invisible Victories; Educational Purpose and Transformation; Social Impact and Relationships; and Faith and Spiritual Meaning-Making. These themes demonstrated how students connected textual ideas with personal experiences, values, relationships, and perceptions of achievement. Guided by Translanguaging Theory and Bourdieu's Sociology of Language, the findings highlight the importance of examining linguistic expression alongside reflective meaning. Teachers are encouraged to incorporate linguistically inclusive reflective writing while supporting academic English development. The study was limited to one school and a single writing activity, with language frequencies representing task-specific practices rather than proficiency, preference, or inequality. The findings contribute to Philippine secondary English education by integrating descriptive language analysis with qualitative interpretations of learner expression and informing inclusive classroom practices.

Keywords: *Linguistic Capital, Language Legitimacy, Multilingual Meaning-Making, Reflective Blog Writing, Secondary English Education, Translanguaging*

1. INTRODUCTION

Language enables learners to interpret texts, communicate ideas, and express personal experiences beyond grammatical accuracy. Guided by Translanguaging Theory and Bourdieu's Sociology of Language, this study examined multilingual language practices and reflective meaning-making in Grade 9 students' blog comments in relation to linguistic capital and language legitimacy.

1.1. Background and Context of the Study

Academic recognition through grades, rankings, medals, and awards serves important educational purposes but may overlook perseverance, integrity, kindness, and personal growth. The teacher-authored article What Awards Cannot Measure challenges the tendency to equate academic achievement with personal worth while recognizing the value of accomplishments.

Grade 9 students responded to the prompt: "What line or phrase impacted you the most? Write your reflection in the comment section." They were permitted to write in English, Filipino, or Taglish and connect textual ideas with personal experiences and realizations. Artificial intelligence (AI) assistance was allowed, provided that it supported rather than replaced independent thinking and composition. The activity prioritized reflective substance and engagement over strict adherence to formal linguistic conventions.

1.2. Research Problem

The presence of multiple languages in students' written responses does not fully explain their role in meaning-making. This study addressed how Grade 9 students used linguistic resources to interpret a teacher-authored text and communicate personal reflections. It examined these practices in relation to linguistic capital and language legitimacy without assuming that language choices indicated proficiency, preference, or institutional advantage.

1.3. Research Gap

Previous research has examined multilingualism and translanguaging in educational settings, including Philippine elementary classrooms (De Los Reyes, 2019, 2024). Scholarship on linguistic capital and digital reflective writing has also explored linguistic recognition and learner expression. Bataller-Català (2025) highlights the potential of blogs to facilitate reflective thinking, personal expression, and communicative interaction in educational settings. However, the intersection of multilingual language practices, personal meaning-making, and linguistic capital in secondary-level blog commenting warrants further investigation. This study addressed this gap through the complementary perspectives of Translanguaging Theory and Bourdieu's Sociology of Language.

1.4. Purpose and Objectives of the Study

This study aimed to identify multilingual language practices in Grade 9 students' reflective blog comments, examine their role in meaning-making and personal expression, and interpret these practices in relation to linguistic capital and language legitimacy.

To achieve these objectives, the study addresses the following research questions:

1.What multilingual language practices are evident in Grade 9 students' reflective blog comments?

2.How do students draw on their linguistic resources to construct meaning, articulate personal reflections, and engage with the ideas presented in the teacher-authored article?

3.How may students' multilingual language practices be understood in relation to linguistic capital and the legitimacy of language practices within the educational context?

1.5. Significance and Practical Contribution of the Study

The study contributes to Philippine secondary English education by providing context-specific insights into multilingual meaning-making, linguistic capital, and learner expression. Its findings may guide English teachers in designing reflective writing activities that recognize linguistic diversity while supporting academic English development. Instructional leaders and administrators may use these insights to inform professional development and inclusive assessment practices. Future researchers may extend the investigation across grade levels, subject areas, and digital writing contexts through interviews, observations, and learner reflections.

1.6. Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Alignment

This study aligns conceptually with Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4): Quality Education, particularly Targets 4.5 and 4.7 on equitable educational access and knowledge and skills for sustainable development. Its findings may inform inclusive English language teaching, classroom participation, and meaningful learner expression while supporting academic language development. Its contribution is pedagogical rather than a direct measurement of SDG indicators or educational outcomes.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1. Research Design

The study employed a qualitative research design supported by descriptive language classification and thematic analysis to examine 334 reflective blog comments submitted by Grade 9 students. Descriptive classification established the distribution of language practices, while thematic analysis identified recurring reflective meanings. A combined data-driven and theory-informed approach guided the analysis, with Translanguaging Theory and Bourdieu's Sociology of Language informing the interpretation of linguistic resources, linguistic capital, and language legitimacy.

2.2. Research Locale

The study was conducted at Sta. Lucia High School, a public secondary school in Pasig City, Philippines, involving Grade 9 students from multiple sections who completed a reflective blog activity as part of their English subject requirements.

2.3. Sampling Technique

Criterion-based selection was employed to screen more than 500 blog comments for originality, relevance, and reflective content. Empty, duplicate, and unrelated entries were excluded, while incomplete responses containing meaningful and relevant reflections were retained. The final analytic corpus comprised 334 comments, representing individual responses rather than 334 distinct student participants.

2.4. Data Gathering Procedure

Data were gathered through a take-home reflective blog activity based on What Awards Cannot Measure. Students responded to the prompt described in Section 1.1 using English, Filipino, or Taglish. AI assistance was permitted provided that it did not replace independent thinking and composition. Following submission, comments were screened according to the established eligibility criteria. Original language choices, spelling, grammar, and punctuation were preserved. Seven unnumbered continuation paragraphs were incorporated into their corresponding comments rather than counted separately. Identifying information was removed, and each retained comment was assigned a unique numerical code.

2.5. Data Analysis

The 334 comments underwent descriptive language classification and qualitative thematic analysis. Individual comments served as units for corpus counting and language classification, while meaningful portions or ideas served as thematic coding units.

Comments were manually classified as C1 (Filipino-dominant), C2 (English-dominant), or C3 (mixed Filipino-English or Taglish). English and Filipino words, including repetitions, were counted, excluding proper nouns, numbers, and other non-classifiable expressions. Isolated words from another language did not alter the dominant-language classification, whereas meaningful combinations of both languages in phrases, clauses, or sentences qualified as mixed-language responses regardless of differences in word count. Frequencies and percentages were calculated using the 334 comments as the denominator. All comments were manually rechecked against the established criteria.

Thematic analysis involved repeated reading, descriptive coding, grouping conceptually related codes, and refining categories against the original comments and research questions. Initial coding was data-driven, while subsequent interpretation was informed by Translanguaging Theory and Bourdieu's Sociology of Language. Coding emphasized expressed meaning rather than keyword occurrence, allowing individual comments to contribute to multiple themes. Selected excerpts were preserved in their original wording. The analysis focused on reflective meanings and contextualized language practices rather than assessing students' proficiency or academic performance.

2.6. Ethical Considerations

The study observed ethical measures to protect privacy, confidentiality, and voluntary participation. Permission was obtained from the English Department Head and School Head of Sta. Lucia High School. Parental or legal guardian consent and student assent were secured before comments were included. Students were informed about the research, and identifying information was removed and replaced with numerical codes. Analysis focused on written reflections rather than individual learner evaluation. AI assistance was permitted for translation, vocabulary clarification, organization of ideas, and language improvement, provided that it did not replace independent composition. Actual AI use and its extent were not independently monitored or verified; therefore, individual responses were not attributed to AI assistance.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Distribution of Students' Language Practices

Table 1 presents the distribution of Filipino-dominant, English-dominant, and mixed Filipino-English responses based on the classification criteria described in Section 2.5.

Table 1. Distribution of Students' Language Practices (N = 334)

Code	Language Practice	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
C1	Filipino-dominant	2	0.60
C2	English-dominant	323	96.71
C3	Mixed Filipino-English / Taglish	9	2.69
	Total	**334**	**100.00**

Percentages were calculated by dividing each category's frequency by the total number of comments (N = 334) and multiplying by 100. English-dominant responses prevailed (323, 96.71%), followed by mixed Filipino-English (9, 2.69%) and Filipino-dominant responses (2, 0.60%). English predominance should be interpreted within the context of an English-subject

activity involving an English-language article. Nevertheless, Filipino and mixed-language responses demonstrate that reflective meaning-making extended beyond English.

These practices align with García's (2009) conceptualization of translanguaging as maximizing communicative potential through available linguistic resources. Tai and Wei (2025) similarly emphasize the dynamic mobilization of multilingual, multimodal, and other meaning-making resources. Espino et al. (2021) highlight linguistic diversity in English language teaching, while De Los Reyes (2019) and Gatil (2021) discuss multilingual resources in supporting communication, understanding, and participation. Libradilla (2024) likewise identifies opportunities for expression alongside challenges and varying levels of educational acceptance.

The distribution represents task-specific language practices rather than students' overall linguistic proficiency, preferences, or repertoires. Classification relied on manual coding and rechecking without independent inter-coder validation.

3.2. Thematic Categories in Students' Reflections

Thematic analysis identified seven recurring categories reflecting students' interpretations of What Awards Cannot Measure in relation to personal experiences, values, and perceptions of achievement.

Table 2. Thematic Categories Identified in Students' Reflective Blog Comments

No.	Thematic Category	Central Focus
1	Redefining Success	Understanding success beyond medals, awards, grades, and academic recognition
2	Perseverance and Growth	Persistence, learning from difficulties, and personal development despite setbacks
3	Character and Ethical Values	Honesty, integrity, kindness, respect, and the importance of moral character
4	Unrecognized Effort and Invisible Victories	Personal struggles, sacrifices, and accomplishments that remain unseen or unrewarded
5	Educational Purpose and Transformation	Education as a process of learning, personal development, and becoming a better person
6	Social Impact and Relationships	The importance of relationships, treatment of others, and one's influence on people's lives
7	Faith and Spiritual Meaning-Making	Reflections connecting success, character, and personal experiences with faith and spiritual beliefs

The themes were nonexclusive, allowing individual comments to contribute to multiple categories.

3.2.1. Redefining Success

Students recognized success beyond academic awards, certificates, and grades, emphasizing personal development, character, and meaningful experiences.

"A score can only measure what you know, not who you are or what you're capable of becoming." (Comment 25)

This reflection distinguishes measurable academic performance from personal worth and potential for growth.

3.2.2. Perseverance and Growth

Students viewed difficulties, failures, and setbacks as opportunities for learning and personal growth.

"It reminds me that I do not have to understand everything immediately because learning takes time and effort." (Comment 287)

The reflection portrays learning as a gradual process requiring patience, persistence, and sustained effort.

3.2.3. Character and Ethical Values

Honesty, integrity, kindness, and respect emerged as important dimensions of moral character and personal worth.

"To my mind, honesty is always victory." (Comment 23)

The comment prioritizes honesty over grades obtained through cheating, emphasizing the ethical choices involved in achieving success.

3.2.4. Unrecognized Effort and Invisible Victories

Students acknowledged personal struggles, sustained effort, and accomplishments that may remain unnoticed or formally unrewarded.

"I've worked tirelessly before without getting a stage recognition, and I felt like those efforts didn't count at all!" (Comment 265)

The response illustrates how limited recognition may influence perceptions of personal effort while emphasizing resilience and sacrifice as meaningful achievements.

3.2.5. Educational Purpose and Transformation

Education was viewed as a transformative process that extends beyond academic achievement, emphasizing personal development, character formation, and becoming a better individual.

"It not only teaches us to learn something new but also teaches us how to be a better version of ourselves or even the best version of ourselves." (Comment 36)

The comment presents education as a means of developing personal values and improving oneself, emphasizing its broader purpose beyond grades and academic recognition.

3.2.6. Social Impact and Relationships

Students associated personal worth with interpersonal relationships and an individual's influence on others rather than external recognition.

"What they'll remember is how you treated them and how your presence impacted their lives." (Comment 269)
The reflection emphasizes kindness, consideration, and meaningful relationships as indicators of lasting social impact.

3.2.7. Faith and Spiritual Meaning-Making

Faith emerged as a lens through which some students understood personal worth, character, and achievement, drawing on religious beliefs and spiritual experiences.

"Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart." (1 Samuel 16:7, Comment 3)

The comment connects the biblical passage to the student's experience of feeling unsupported, emphasizing faith in God as a source of strength and determination during personal struggles. It illustrates how spiritual beliefs shape the interpretation of human worth, perseverance, and personal character.

3.3. Linguistic Resources, Meaning-Making, and Personal Reflection

The seven themes demonstrate how students connected textual ideas with personal experiences, academic struggles, ethical values, relationships, educational aspirations, and spiritual beliefs. Their reflections extended beyond identifying memorable statements, illustrating the role of linguistic resources and prior experiences in constructing personally meaningful interpretations.

This finding aligns with García's (2009) discussion of translanguaging as maximizing communicative potential through available linguistic resources. Tai and Wei (2025) likewise emphasize the dynamic mobilization of multilingual and other meaning-making resources. These perspectives contextualize students' use of linguistic and experiential resources in reflective writing.

Sudirman et al. (2024) highlight the contribution of reflective writing to self-reflection, critical thinking, and deeper learning, while Long (2011) and Novoa-Echaurren et al. (2025) emphasize the role of task design and pedagogical conditions in reflective engagement. Görtzen et al. (2026) further highlight the importance of structured writing tasks and teacher guidance in supporting deeper reflection among secondary learners. In the present study, the blog activity provided opportunities for personal interpretation beyond conventional academic essay requirements.

Language classification and thematic analysis provided complementary descriptions of language practices and reflective meanings. However, the study did not separately examine how specific linguistic features contributed to each theme or measure improvements in comprehension, writing proficiency, and academic performance.

3.4. Linguistic Capital and the Legitimacy of Language Practices in the Educational Context

Bourdieu's Sociology of Language provides a framework for interpreting linguistic capital, linguistic markets, and legitimate language. Hoa et al. (2024) explain that linguistic value and recognition depend on social contexts and power relations that shape acceptable and valued forms of expression. Although the activity involved an English-language article within an English

subject, students were permitted to respond in English, Filipino, or Taglish. The predominance of English reflects observable language use within this context rather than students' motivations or perceptions of its academic value. Similarly, permission to use different languages does not necessarily establish equal institutional recognition or legitimacy.

Mixed Filipino-English responses illustrate the use of multiple linguistic resources in reflective meaning-making. Translanguaging Theory contextualizes their communicative function, while linguistic capital and language legitimacy provide perspectives for examining their institutional value. Hoa et al. (2024), Jamil (2026), and Lavalle and Protacio (2025) discuss associations between linguistic competencies, academic opportunities, social recognition, and institutional advantage. Reagan (2016) further emphasizes the relationship between language legitimacy, dominance, and power.

Bonacina-Pugh (2020) examined the relationship between institutional language policies and everyday classroom interactions through practiced language policy. Mendoza et al. (2024) emphasize the institutional, social, and ideological conditions shaping translanguaging, while Phyak (2024) illustrates how institutional language policies can reinforce linguistic hierarchies and the symbolic value of English. These perspectives highlight the importance of interpreting multilingual practices within institutional expectations and power relations.

The study supports a contextual interpretation of linguistic capital and language legitimacy rather than conclusions regarding unequal linguistic capital, marginalization, or linguistic discrimination. By permitting varied language practices and prioritizing reflective substance, the activity illustrates how classroom tasks can accommodate diverse linguistic expressions while recognizing the institutional conditions that influence language legitimacy.

3.5. Synthesis of Findings

The findings demonstrate that multilingual language practices and reflective meaning-making are complementary dimensions of textual engagement. While English predominated, Filipino and mixed-language responses illustrated alternative forms of linguistic expression. The seven themes further revealed how students connected textual ideas with personal experiences, ethical values, relationships, educational development, and spiritual beliefs.

Translanguaging Theory contextualizes the use of interconnected linguistic and meaning-making resources (García, 2009; Tai & Wei, 2025), while Bourdieu's Sociology of Language emphasizes their socially situated value and legitimacy (Hoa et al., 2024). Classroom interactions, institutional expectations, and language ideologies further shape multilingual practices (Bonacina-Pugh, 2020; Mendoza et al., 2024). Together, these perspectives position reflective writing as an individual communicative practice situated within a broader educational context.

4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study concludes that reflective blog comments provide a meaningful context for examining multilingual language practices and personal interpretations of written texts. English-dominant responses prevailed (96.71%), while mixed Filipino-English (2.69%) and Filipino-dominant responses (0.60%) demonstrated alternative forms of linguistic expression. The seven themes revealed students' multidimensional understanding of achievement, encompassing perseverance, moral character, unrecognized effort, educational transformation, relationships, and spiritual beliefs. Translanguaging Theory and Bourdieu's Sociology of Language provided

complementary perspectives for interpreting these findings. Collectively, the study highlights the importance of examining reflective meanings alongside language practices without equating language frequency with proficiency, preference, or linguistic inequality.

English teachers are encouraged to incorporate reflective reading and writing activities that connect textual ideas with personal experiences. When appropriate to instructional objectives, learners may respond in English, Filipino, or Taglish while developing formal academic English. Assessment should consider reflective depth, relevance, clarity, and appropriate linguistic conventions. School administrators may support professional development on multilingual instruction and inclusive assessment. Future researchers may extend the investigation across grade levels, subject areas, and digital environments, incorporating interviews, observations, and learner reflections to examine language choices, participation, and meaning-making.

The study was limited to 334 reflective blog comments from Grade 9 students in one school responding to a single teacher-authored English-language article. The corpus represented comments rather than distinct participants. Language classification relied on manual coding without independent inter-coder validation. Although AI assistance was permitted, actual use and its extent were not monitored or independently verified. The study examined expressed meanings rather than changes in language proficiency, reading comprehension, or academic performance. Consequently, the findings support context-specific interpretations rather than causal conclusions, generalized language preferences, or determinations of institutional linguistic inequality.

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