

**LANGUAGE POWER in ACADEMIC SETTING:
A CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS**

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ABSTRACT

Using critical discourse analysis, a theoretical framework designed to analyze language in discourse settings where interlocutors hold asymmetrical rank, this study examined language power in oral defenses of graduate students. It attempted to see how power and dominance is detected in the utterances of the defense panel and examined how linguistic features revealing power and dominance correlated to four variables, namely: 1) the panelists' position in the school; 2) the panelists' role in the defense; 3) the panelists' gender; and 4) the panelists' age.

Two groups of speech acts were found to contain the linguistic features that reveal power and dominance; these are directives and questions. A third group of speech acts consisting of declarations, appreciations, censure, complaints, etc. was also examined along with the directives and questions to show how these related to the four variables. All the 3 groups of speech acts were classified into 3 categories, namely: forceful, mitigated and weak.

The study showed that the panelists' position in school and the panelists' role in the panel, greatly influenced their ability to perform more number of speech acts in the defense. Also, these two variables were found to correlate with the panelists' tendency to word speech acts either forcefully or weakly. Based on the findings, it can be said that the higher the panelists' position in the

school and role in the panel, the more frequent they perform speech acts that are forcefully expressed.

Due to the imbalance in the number of male and female panelists, no conclusive findings can be said about the relationship between gender and speech acts performed. The same can also be said as regards the age variable because the panelists belonging to the younger group is greatly outnumbered by those belonging to the older group.

Addressing the fourth research problem, the analysis pointed out, socio-cultural discourse practice in the academic institution that either facilitate or deter the student-candidates' performance in the defense. However, it was noted that deterrent discursive practice prevailed over those with facilitative effects.

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